

ANTI-APARTHEID  
WOMEN'S  
NEWSLETTER

autumn 1988 no. 36

30p



Photo graph : Jrene Slegt

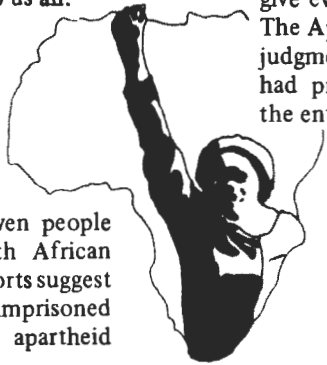
# NEWS BRIEFINGS

Dulcie September was treacherously murdered on 29 March 1988 in Paris by a hired killer of the apartheid regime. Those who knew Dulcie remember her as an always friendly, smiling, committed ANC activist – a comrade who loved to see things done.

In the 1950s Dulcie became involved in struggles around education. She was arrested and detained without trial in October 1963. Early in 1964, with nine others, she was charged with conspiring to commit acts of sabotage and inciting acts of politically-motivated violence. In April 1964 she was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment. When she was released in 1969, she was banned for five years. She left South Africa in 1974 to pursue her studies in Britain, and she joined the ANC.

The bitter irony about her murder is that, although she had received death threats over the previous eight months and had told the French authorities, she had been given no protection. As a result, there are no clues to the identity of the killer. All that is said is that this was a 'professional job'.

Comrade Dulcie September will always be remembered and her name will live on as an inspiration to us all.



On Friday 30 September seven people were executed by the South African authorities. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the seven may have been imprisoned for their resistance to the apartheid regime.

On Tuesday 4 October, a further six people are to be executed. They include Similo Lennox Wonci (24), Mziwoxolo Christopher Makeleni (24), Ndumiso Silo Siphenuka (27) and Mackenzawana Menze (45), all from the Addo Youth Congress – an affiliate of the anti-apartheid SAYCO (South African Youth Congress).

No reports of political executions have been received from South Africa since March, when world attention was focused on the case of the Sharpeville Six. Though two people were executed in the fortnight following the Six's stay of execution, it was clear that the South African authorities have not until now felt confident enough to resume their practice of executing their political opponents.

An emergency all-night vigil is to be held on 3 October outside the South African embassy in London. For further information contact: SATIS, c/o Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW, tel 01-387 7966.



It will probably be at least 10 days – and possibly two months – before the Sharpeville Six learn the outcome of their petition to the South African Chief Justice on 7 September. The application for leave to appeal a previous procedural reversal amounts to their final opportunity to persuade the courts to reopen this sad and volatile case.

The legal focus of the arguments was the now well-publicised confession by Joseph Manete, one of the key state witnesses in the case, that he had committed perjury during the original trial and that police had forced him to give evidence against two of the accused. The Appeals Court had ruled in an earlier judgment that if Mr Manete's evidence had proved unreliable 'a reappraisal of the entire case would be called for'.

Sydney Kentridge, the South African born QC leading the defence team, argued that the circumstances of Mr Manete's confession had led to a 'peculiar and unprecedented situation'. Mr Kentridge further argued that the court had the right to exercise an inherent jurisdiction to re-open a case 'whenever justice cries out for it to do so'. Johannes van der Merwe, for the state, argued that the court had no right to re-open the case; that the defence's only legal option was to petition P W Botha again for clemency.

Prakash Diar, the lawyer representing the Six, emerged to brief the families on the day's proceedings. Things had gone better than expected, he said, but it was wise to be cautious.

## HOW TO ORDER POSTCARDS OF THE FRONT COVER . . . . .

The photograph on the cover of the *Newsletter* is a mural painted by a women's painters collective in central Amsterdam. The Dutch Anti-Apartheid Women's Group have published this mural as a beautiful colour postcard which is now available from the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London. The price is 35p per card. If you wish to order one or more cards, please use the order form below.

Please send me ..... full-colour postcard(s) at the cost of 35p each plus 10% p&p

Name .....

Address .....

Town ..... Code .....

Please make any cheques out to the Anti-Apartheid Movement and address your order to: Anti-Apartheid Women's Committee

c/o Anti-Apartheid Movement

13 Mandela Street

London NW1 0DW



The South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU) has launched a Living Wage campaign to improve the living standards of the lowest paid. SADWU's inaugural congress adopted a minimum wage resolution in November 1986. Then domestic workers demanded R200 a month and a 40-hour week. But most employers still only pay around R100 a month.

SADWU has 66,000 members out of an estimated four million domestic workers in the country and is currently running a membership drive. The union has found it difficult to organise large-scale campaigns since most members are isolated from one another, working for a single employer. The women return from work only to face their own domestic chores and find it difficult to attend meetings.

'Domestic workers are extremely vulnerable,' said Florrie de Villiers, SADWU general secretary. 'No provision is made to regulate their working conditions or pay. Our living wage campaign is aimed at forcing employers to recognise us as people and employees. If we are regarded as fit to maintain someone's house and tend their children, then surely we deserve the basic rights of any other worker who does a responsible and demanding job.'

Soapy water, bicycle spokes, plant stalks, candles, vinegar, turpentine and stomach massages are among methods used by women desperate for abortions – but they often kill the women they are intended to help. But the fact is that women have abortions whether they are legal or not.

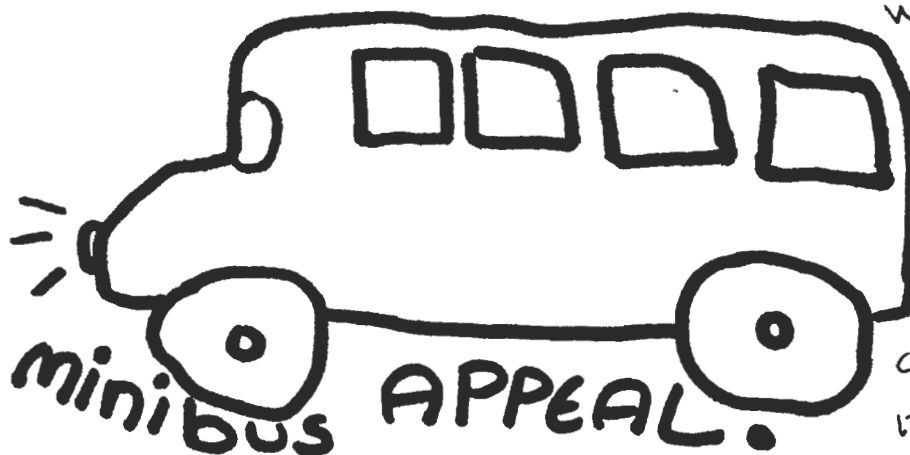
The South African government's statistics for 1982/83 (the latest available) show that at least a quarter of a million women had illegal abortions in that time. Of these, 32,000 were later operated on to repair the damage done to them. Only 450 fetuses were legally aborted, usually after rape or incest cases. According to the Durban-based Abortion Reform Action Group (ARAG), the number of women who risked illegal abortions was probably much higher than the government figure.

Studies have shown that there is an increase in abortion-related deaths. Illegal abortions from unwanted pregnancies are said to cause between 25 and 50% of deaths. A spokeswoman from ARAG said: 'Women do not have access to the family planning services they want or need, and have no access to humane treatment for the complications of abortion.' ARAG has been lobbying the South African regime for 12 years for the right to abortions for all women, but the laws have stayed unchanged.

A group of 10 women in Soweto have formed a voluntary self-help group to teach epileptic people various handwork skills. One of the workers from the 'Soweto Epilepsy Self-Help Organisation', Pinki Zikalala, said the organisation concentrates on the social and economic needs of epileptic people.

The 40 members are taught skills such as knitting, sewing, shoe repairing. Arrangements are made for these to be sold. The project has a lack of funds and materials and has to turn to the local community for support.

Three prominent activists, including United Democratic Front (Western Cape) publicity secretary Mrs Hilda Ndude, have been detained under the emergency regulations. The others detained are United Women's Congress executive member Mrs Nabom Sonto and Mrs Rayi Madikawa. Mrs Ndude, a mother of five, who was detained at her Guguletu home, took her youngest child, 20-month-old Noluthu, to prison with her. Her husband, Mr Alpheus Nkwana Ndudu (45), was arrested in October 1987. He and 10 others have been charged with treason and are reported to be on hunger strike in Pollsmoor prison. *Star 4.6.88*



We are fundraising for a minibus for the ANC creche in Tanzania  
All contributions welcomed.  
Please send cheques to "Minibus Appeal"  
40 Anti Apartheid Womens Committee  
13 Mandela St. London NW1  
ODW

# WOMEN BEHIND

## DETENTIONS

**Elderly  
woman  
dies in  
detention**

## Diepkloof women detainees on hunger strike Detainee miscarried, court hears

Since the state of emergency was called in June 1986, over 30,000 people have been detained in South Africa. About 3,000 are women. Women have been detained under almost every section of the regime's security legislation. There are no accurate figures on how many women have been detained, mainly because names are not automatically released. The number of women who have been convicted for political activities is also not accurate, and the list that is available is compiled from newspaper reports.

In some ways, prison conditions for women are worse than those for men. Provisions for women are often shown to be inadequate for their special needs.

In a recent publication, *The Women's Place is in the Struggle, not behind Bars*, women testified that they were denied sanitary towels during their periods. Some women have been detained while pregnant:

- **Daisy Matlou** was given no special diet or proper medical attention.
- **Deborah Marakalla** was also pregnant when detained. At the time when she was due to give birth, she was alone in her cell, called for help and no one came. The baby died before help came. She also had one of her fallopian tubes removed while in detention. She has since been released, but with restrictions on her movements and political activities.
- Another pregnant woman, **Julia Mathebula**, was tortured by a group of policemen. After her release from detention, she miscarried.
- **Rose Dimpe** was arrested and detained for two months. In that time she was blindfolded, stripped naked, tied to a chair for several hours, water was poured over her and electric shocks applied to her. She was interrogated for long periods without food or use of the toilet. She has since filed a complaint against the police.

Life for women in detention is made even harder by the fact that the South African regime is reluctant to let political and non-political prisoners mix. So often women are forced to spend their time in solitary confinement.

In 1985, for example, two young girls, **Joan Gqeba** (14) and **Monica Thabethe** (16) were held in solitary confinement for 77 days before being released without charge.

Despite the difficulties of being a woman in prison and despite strict regulations, women are fighting back in whatever ways they can. Here are some examples:

- At Johannesburg prison, Diepkloof, 11 of the 12 women detainees are on hunger strike. They had given the minister of law and order (Adriaan Vlok) a 14-day ultimatum — to improve the quality of food and demands for proper medical attention. They also demanded an end to their detention without trial. When Vlok ignored their demands, they went on hunger strike. This is not the first hunger strike. In January this year, 20 detainees went on hunger strike and one was hospitalised.

**Caesarina Makhoere** has written a book (reviewed elsewhere) describing how she and other women detainees went on hunger strikes to protest against their treatment. In many cases, they were successful and the prison authorities made some changes.

- In July this year, **Ms Rose Dimpe** of Mamelodi, Pretoria, had some success. The minister of law and order paid R22,000 in an out-of-court settlement for the way she was tortured. A spokesperson for the police public relations department has refused to say if any action will be taken against the policemen.

Earlier this year, the Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC) launched a campaign to highlight the plight of women in detention. It also declared February as the month of 'Women and Detention' and, during that time, tribute was paid to women detainees, political prisoners, wives, mothers, sisters of detainees and political prisoners. There is a lot of concern for the psychological, emotional state of detainees, and support from family and community is very important.

Unlike convicted political prisoners, detainees are allowed to get letters. If you would like to write a letter of support to women, it is possible. You can also send books to read.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Recently, three women have been detained and charged with ANC surveillance. You can write to Jenny Shreiver, Gertie Vester, at:

Black Women's Section  
Pollsmoor Prison  
Post Bag X4  
Takai  
Cape Town 7966  
South Africa

It's important that women feel our support in the struggle against apartheid.

If you would like to write to women in prison, the AAM office will send you a list of women political prisoners. Contact: Patricia Bakker, 01-387 7966.

# BARS

The funeral of Nobandla Elda Bani, 56, who died of a stroke in the North End prison on 29 July, was held at the Reformed Presbyterian Church in New Brighton at the weekend. Relatives from as far as Johannesburg came to be with Johnson Bani and his seven children and 10 grandchildren, and about 500 mourners packed into the small church.

Tension between two camps built up during the proceedings, with ministers – aware of the security forces outside – wanting to prevent politics from dominating the funeral, while members of the community refused to divorce it from its political context. The platform was finally given to Mama Francis Holo, a Port Elizabeth Women's Organisation member, who said: 'We know who killed Nobandla.'

Vanessa Brereton, the lawyer for the family, took the platform and said Ms Bani had died 'because of apartheid' and would still be alive had she not been detained. Nobandla Bani, a Pewo member, had suffered from diabetes for 11 years and was on a special diet of fresh fruit and vegetables. She was also receiving medication for hypertension, in addition to her two insulin injections a day.

At the time of her detention on 29 August last year, Ms Bani was a former street committee member and member of the Mother's Union at her church. According to her family, she had stopped going to street committee meetings as she became too ill.

Ms Bani was held in the North End prison in Port Elizabeth, but according to Vanessa Brereton she had spent most of her detention in hospital. When she applied to see Ms Bani in prison on 29 August, she was told that her client had died of a stroke.

Nobandla Bani is the fourth person to die under state of emergency detention and brings the total number of deaths in detention to 65.



The Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw) has launched a campaign to focus attention on the plight of women political prisoners. Fedsaw decided to concentrate on women, rather than on political prisoners in general, because women often do not receive the publicity or support men receive. At a service on 9 August, South Africa Women's Day, activist Phumzile Ngcuka said: 'Women are not just the wives, mothers and sweethearts of activists. Sometimes they are the ones behind bars. How often do you hear of a man who has waited 15 years for his woman to come out of jail?'

The harshest form of incarceration is section 29 in terms of which access to the outside world is severely restricted. In addition to the needs common to all prisoners, women have special needs. Women have complained about poor sanitation, a lack of soap and shampoo, and being given insufficient sanitary protection when menstruating. Pregnant women require special medical attention and diet.

Generally male prisoners are held together, while women are often kept apart. Trialist Jenny Schreiner went on hunger strike before she was allowed to spend one hour a day with other women prisoners. While ultimately aiming at the freeing of all political prisoners, in the short term Fedsaw hopes its campaign will help improve conditions in prison.

*South 14.9.88*

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ANC**

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BIDBOROUGH STREET  
LONDON NW1  
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**ANNUAL BAZAAR**

# IN PRISON UNDER APARTHEID



Caesarina Kona Makhoere was imprisoned following the 1976 student uprisings against bantu education. Throughout her book *No Child's Play* Caesarina gives an account of her personal bravery in standing up to the authorities; she went on hunger strike many times because of the terrible food. 'I spent most of my time eating tablets, not proper food. I was allergic to many things after my stay in prison, the tablets and food helped to do this I am sure. My face and body would get swollen, my skin would come out in a rash and hurt, I now have heart problems, and bronchitis, still my ears hurt, even now the pain is terrible.'

Ms Makhoere's five-year sentence was preceded by a year in detention. Over three years of her incarceration were spent in enforced solitary confinement. 'I don't know whether I was crazy or not crazy. But struggling kept me sane rather than insane,' she says.

Caesarina vowed to make her jailers serve her sentence with her. 'I did 50%. Period. I told myself they were going to get hell, and hell they got... For me it is "a luta continua", even inside prison. When they got their pay cheques I wanted them to say, "whew, we really had to work for this"!'.

Caesarina and her comrades demanded that they should get milk, fruit, peanut butter and other items in their diets — as white prisoners received — but were often met with crude racist responses.

As well as prison hardships, Caesarina felt the absence of her family and comrades. Her six-year-old son was brought to visit her in 1978, but the warders forbade them to see each other. She still feels bitter about her father's death. 'When my father died they knew about it, but they kept it quiet,' she says in her book.

Caesarina Makhoere wrote *No Child's Play* to publicise the conditions of black women political prisoners.

'There are books exposing what it is like on Robben Island, but with us as women — we don't have any record about the war we are fighting inside,' she says. 'The men started their struggles in the early sixties. With us we had to start from scratch.'

'Unlike male political prisoners, who had a long history and many victories, conditions were much worse for black women — so much so that at one stage we campaigned to get transferred to Robben Island.'

'We had to show people that it was not only Robben Island. Our status as women political prisoners had to be recognised,' she says.

In the last year of her sentence, Caesarina was placed with two non-political prisoners. She suspected that they were there to spy on her, but she befriended them and even taught one literacy. Her book describes how the non-political prisoners 'came to feel that we were fighting for them, that they were part and parcel of the struggle.'

When Caesarine Makhoere was released from prison in 1982, her jailers paid an indirect tribute to her struggles. 'If you get arrested again, the security police must build a new prison for you,' they told her. 'They must look after you yourselves.'

*No Child's Play* by Caesarina Kona Makhoere is published by The Women's Press, price £3.95.

It is also available by post (£3.95 plus 10% p&p) from the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW.

## FILM REVIEW

Set in Johannesburg in 1963, against the background of growing resistance to apartheid, the brutal and grotesque world of apartheid is witnessed through the eyes of a 13-year-old white girl, Molly Roth. Her mother, Diana Roth, is deeply involved with illegal political groups who are working in opposition to the apartheid system. The story centres around Molly's relationship with her mother, who is arrested for her political activities and imprisoned without trial for 117 days. It also deals with the arrest and subsequent death in detention of a black political activist, Solomon Mabusu (whose character is partly based on Looksmart Ngudle Solwandle, who died in detention — 'suicide by hanging' according to the police).

The film was written by Shawn Slovo and based on the life of her mother, Ruth First, a prominent journalist and member of the South African Communist Party, and the first white woman to be detained under the 1963 90-day law, who was assassinated by a parcel bomb in 1982 in Mozambique.

The film, which won its three leading actresses awards at the Cannes Film Festival, has received wide press coverage and some criticism that it is yet another film concentrating on the whites of South Africa.

Wally Serote of the ANC rejects this criticism: 'It is actually very important that these are white people because we see that they have a vision of a world that can exist in South Africa, a world without racism, and among white people that is a rarity! So, it shows that the struggle for democracy affects everyone. We see a family torn apart by apartheid, but we also see the plight of the oppressed black majority.'

The AAM has produced a special leaflet for distribution at screenings of the film. Contact AAM HQ to order copies.

*117 Days* by Ruth First (published by Bloomsbury 1988) is Ruth First's own account of her imprisonment, originally published in 1965.

*A World Apart: film study guide* for use in schools has been produced by British Defence and Aid Fund, 22 The Ivories, Northampton Street, London N1 2HX, tel 01-359 7729, price £1 per copy.

# LOCAL EVENTS

## EDINBURGH . . . .

Scottish Committee and Edinburgh Students Anti-Apartheid held a joint meeting on 16 June for a dual purpose – both to launch the new women's subcommittee and to commemorate Soweto Day. Elanor McLaughlin, Edinburgh's first woman Lord Provost, welcomed the platform of women representatives of the liberation movements and local speakers. The commemoration ceremony took place at the 'Woman and Child' statue, which was commissioned by Edinburgh District Council to honour all those killed or imprisoned for their stand against apartheid. Following a minute's silence for the dead of Soweto, Sandra Brown of Edinburgh Students AA group spoke on the significance of the anniversary and the importance of solidarity with youth organisations in Southern Africa.

Olive Smiles then spoke on the formation of the new subcommittee, which will work to increase awareness of the contribution of women to the struggle for liberation in Namibia and South Africa with commemorations, public meetings, fundraising and material aid collections. The women's subcommittee will also take up the 'Free the Children' campaign, which fights for the release of children from detention, ensuring that the resolution of the Harare Colloquium which took place in April will be publicised throughout Scotland.

The gathering heard messages of support from Janey Buchan MEP and from the Natal Organisation of Women, which welcomed the formation of the new subcommittee as an inspiration to its members in their fight for justice and peace. Jessica Jacobs, of the ANC Women's Section, closed the meeting with a moving speech welcoming the development of this new dimension to AAM's work in Scotland and describing the vital contribution of women as workers, combatants, breadwinners, educators and mothers to the fight for freedom in Southern Africa.

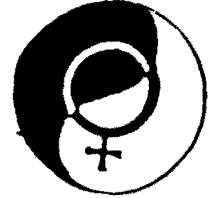
For more information about the Women's Subcommittee, contact Olive Smiles (convenor) at 266 Clyde Street, Glasgow G1 4JH, or on 0324 35578 (home) or 0786 73111 ext 251 (work).



## CARDIFF . . . .

Cardiff Women's Centre was the venue for a celebration of South African Women's Day, 9 August, jointly organised by Cardiff AA and the Cardiff Women's Centre.

The all-day event included screenings of the videos 'Women Awake' and 'Winnie Mandela', stalls, music and food. Guest speaker Thobanka Thamage, of the ANC Women's Section, outlined the double apartheid under which black women suffer in South Africa. She also stressed the necessity of sanctions being imposed on the apartheid regime: 'Their imposition could cause little more hardship to the oppressed majority, but could hasten the end of apartheid.' Encouraged by the success of the event, Cardiff AA women's officer, Sonia Kirby, is already planning a larger-scale celebration for next year.



## HARINGEY . . . .

Haringey Anti-Apartheid Group's women's subcommittee recently had a very successful meeting. Guest speakers were two women from the ANC who gave a powerful and moving talk and led a discussion on women in detention in South Africa and what the women's subcommittee could and should do in future activities.

What emerged from the talk was the particularly horrendous conditions which women in South Africa are being subjected to every day – in relation to issues such as poverty, hygiene, pregnancy and sexual assault.

All women at the meeting were inspired and spurred on to organise and coordinate various campaigning activities and events to highlight and make widely known the plight and integral role of women in South Africa, Namibia and the Front Line States. The group will be working closely with the Anti-Apartheid Movement's Londonwide and national Women's Committees.

# NAMIBIA

## WEEK OF ACTION

Namibia was first invaded over 100 years ago by Germany, which carried out a murderous campaign against the indigenous population. Then, during the first world war, South Africa invaded on Britain's behalf. That occupation continues to this very day, with the Namibian people still suffering under the illegal occupation of the apartheid Pretoria regime.

On 27 October 1966, the UN General Assembly finally declared South Africa's occupation illegal, after years of manoeuvring in which South Africa has refused to move. In September 1978, the UN Security Council, in resolution 435, adopted a plan for Namibian independence, including UN-supervised elections, which even South Africa finally accepted.

Despite this, South Africa has refused to get out of Namibia. It has poured over 100,000 troops into the country to maintain its occupation and has forced one in 10 Namibians into exile. Eye witnesses report that, far from preparing for a peaceful withdrawal under the terms of the UN independence plan for the territory, the South African army has reinforced its position in northern Namibia.

Journalists have reported seeing convoys of at least 400 vehicles (including armoured cars and heavy artillery) heading for the north of Namibia – in exactly the opposite direction to the much-publicised South African pull-out from Angola resulting from the tripartite Angolan / Cuban / South African agreement.

Under the terms of this agreement, signed on 8 August, South Africa committed itself to a starting date of 1 November for the implementation of

the UN independence plan for Namibia. So far, however, Pretoria's forces on the ground have shown no sign of any intention to leave Namibia or to abandon their usual tactics of intimidation, torture and other atrocities.

The 1988 Namibia Week of Action (27 October to 3 November) aims to mobilise public opinion in support of the Namibian people's struggle for independence. *For further information, details of events and how you can get involved, etc, please contact your local AA group or the AAM HQ.*



## KEEP IN TOUCH!

- I/We want to subscribe to the AAM Women's Committee Newsletter and enclose a cheque/postal order for £\_\_\_\_\_ (Annual sub – 6 issues: £3 unwaged, £4 waged/organisations, £5 overseas)
- I/We want to join the Anti-Apartheid Movement and enclose a cheque/postal order for £\_\_\_\_\_ (Individual membership: £9 waged, £5.50 students and apprentices, £3.50 unwaged. Organisations: £12)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ORGANISATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Anti-Apartheid Movement  
Women's Committee

13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW. Tel: 01-387 7966