

# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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## POLICE DECLARE RACIST WAR

The police have begun a major propaganda exercise aimed at justifying their racist onslaught against the black community. This is the real reason for Scotland Yard's well-publicised and disgusting campaign about so-called 'black crime'. The police have chosen this time to take the unprecedented step of releasing a racial breakdown of 'street crime' or 'mugging' as the racists call it. By portraying black youth as 'criminal thugs' they hope to justify the racist police operation which will no doubt intensify this summer when further police street 'swamping' exercises will take place in many black areas. The police have previously whipped up anti-mugging hysteria prior to sending the SPG and other police reinforcements to rampage through areas like Brixton - making the streets unsafe for black youth to walk on. Obviously they plan to do the same again with a vengeance this summer.

In this blatantly racist campaign, for the purpose of which the police have chosen to focus attention on a category of petty crime which makes up less than 1% of all crime, they have had enormous help from the lying racist millionaire press. Hysterical headlines screamed 'Black Crime: The Alarming Figures', 'Black Muggers Blamed by Yard', 'London Streets of Fear'. The British press threw itself into producing this National Front-style garbage with enormous zest. With sickening hypocrisy they churned out reams about old people afraid to leave home 'frail white prisoners of Britain's new urban ghettos' (never have they found such sympathy for the plight of old people dying in their thousands of cold and hunger each winter). Neither has the press ever expressed a fraction of such interest and sympathy for the thousands of black people who are injured, maimed and killed by fascists. Nor for the black victims of police raids, beatings, frame ups and murder.

Neither the statistics nor the motives of the police would have withstood even casual scrutiny by the press. But instead the papers chose to fall in with the plot and simply parrot police figures and police lies. Most readers would have believed that over 18,000 violent 'muggings' took place last year, over half by black youth with most victims being old, white and women. In fact the much-quoted 18,763 includes 2,684 robberies from business premises and 7,330 muggings involving no violence. Nor were most victims elderly and the police kept no record of whether victims were black or white. 'Frail white prisoners' were, therefore, merely a symbol for the racist campaign, a symbol conjured from the bottomless sewer of the police/press imagination.

*continued on page 4*



## CENTRAL AMERICA REVOLUTION ON THE OFFENSIVE

The steadfast, confident and relentless political and military advances of the Central American workers' and peasants' revolution has, in the first 3 months of 1982, pushed US imperialism in the region to the edge of defeat.

On Sunday 28 March, the day of the El Salvadoran junta's undemocratic, rigged and corrupt 'election' farce, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front launched a devastating military

offensive. Their aim was to sabotage elections in which only the ruling class and their fascist political parties took part. And they succeeded admirably. Throughout the night of 27 March and all day on 28 March San Salvador, the country's capital, resounded to the sound of exploding bombs and fierce gun battles between FMLN and junta forces. The National Palace was raked with FMLN gunfire, 1 in 10 of the city's polling booths were destroyed and in working class districts junta soldiers fell victim to hundreds of guerilla snipers. As the FMLN offensive swept across the country, the southern provincial capital of Usulután was captured by the FMLN while San Francisco Gotera, capital of the northern province of Morazan was completely cut off from the rest of the country. To prevent landowners and employers from forcibly bussing their workers to polling booths, the revolutionaries carried out a sustained sabotage campaign and have destroyed entire bus fleets in the capital and elsewhere. On Saturday 27 March guerillas succeeded in turning back a convoy of 37 petrol tankers guarded by a military escort hoping to deliver fuel to landowners and employers in eastern El Salvador. The FMLN, in control of 25% of the country, now stands in a stronger position to challenge whichever corrupt and reactionary faction of the ruling class is declared 'winner' in the elections.

Meanwhile in Guatemala, the serious demoralisation and division within the junta and the ruling class has been further exposed since their own rigged elections on 7 March. Following these, an even more reactionary wing of the junta took power in a military coup in the vain hope of stemming the advance of the Guatemalan revolution. They will have no success. The recently formed Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union, which unified the country's armed revolutionary organisation, has already announced the opening of a

military campaign to topple the fascist US backed regime.

The approaching victory of the revolution in Central America will destroy the imperialist grip over a region strategically vital for the overall defence of imperialist political, economic and military interests in Central and Latin America and the Caribbean. It will allow the people of Central America, for the first time, to enjoy the fruit of their own labour and will give a tremendous boost to the revolutionary movement throughout the entire continent.

US imperialism, desperate to prevent such an eventuality, desperate to defend its system of reactionary military alliances and the profits of its multinationals, is lining up its allies in a major counter-revolutionary offensive. All the forces of counter-revolution from US imperialism to the Vatican, from Latin American dictatorships to the Red Cross, from British imperialism to the Zionist state of Israel, are garnering their strength to defeat the Central American workers and peasants revolution.

*continued on page 11*



### ANC OFFICE BOMBED

On Sunday 14 March, the same day as the 10,000 strong Anti-Apartheid Movement demonstration, the African National Congress's London office was bombed by agents of the racist South African government. Only hours before the beginning of the march, an apparently expertly placed 10lb bomb exploded wrecking the offices and destroying much of the equipment. It was pure luck that there was only one person in the building at the time and he escaped injury in a blast that shattered windows 400 yards away.

This terror attack on the ANC offices in London is only the latest in a number of vicious apartheid assaults on ANC members, residences and offices. In January 1981, South African commandos raided Matola in Mozambique and murdered 13 ANC members, in July 1981, Joe Gqabi, ANC representative in Zimbabwe was shot dead outside his home, in November 1981 famous ANC lawyer Griffiths Mxenge was brutally murdered in Durban, South Africa. Speaking on the murder of Griffiths Mxenge, Oliver Tambo, ANC President said:

'These acts of brutality can only serve to strengthen our determination to

free ourselves.'

The same message of defiance was given by ANC General Secretary Alfred Nzo speaking at the London AAM demonstration of the day of the bombing. He not only warned that the struggle will continue, but declared: 'The ANC will respond in kind by stepping up the armed struggle.'

Two days after the bombing, the *Guardian* of Tuesday 16 March reported that the police at Scotland Yard, disregarding Whitelaw's 'concern', decided not to put on extra security measures to protect the ANC officers and personnel. Home Secretary Whitelaw did not, of course, insist.

INSIDE	
Editorial: We must build anew	2
South Africa: British banks back apartheid	3
Anti-racist fightback: Newton Rose, Paul Conroy, Barry Prosser trial, Torturer rejoins Yard	4 & 5
Notes and Comments	6
The Communist tradition on Ireland Part 11: Labour government prepares new regime of terror	7, 8, 9 & 10
Paris Commune anniversary	10
Nicaragua/El Salvador/Guatemala	11
Reports from Ireland North London petition	12
Interview with IRA volunteer	13
RCG/FRFI Monthly round-up and letters	14 & 15
Hands Off Ireland!	16

# EDITORIAL

## WE MUST BUILD ANEW

As long as capitalism exists it will need a repressive apparatus – police, army, prisons, judges and courts, to defend the profits and privileges of the wealthy minority who rule Britain. In a time of growing crisis the ruling class strengthens that apparatus to meet and attempt to crush the inevitable opposition of those suffering the burden of unemployment, poverty and racism. In such a period parliament is exposed for what it is – an impotent shell in which a privileged elite goes through the charade of debate and discussion in order to rubber stamp what the ruling class has already decided. Real power lies outside parliament, in the hands of the bankers, industrialists and parasitic elite whose sole concern is to defend the system which guarantees their profits.

It is in this context that the demands to strengthen the police and the army and to create new repressive laws should be seen. The ruling class knows that the crisis is deepening and will get far worse. Wages must be driven down and unemployment made to grow before profits can be restored and a cowed and disciplined labour force exists for them to exploit. But they also know that this process brings resistance in its wake. In last summer's uprisings they recognised the beginnings of revolutionary resistance of the kind they have been fighting in Ireland over the past 13 years.

As revolutionaries have time and again predicted, the apparatus of repression that the British ruling class has been allowed to build and test in Ireland is now to be unleashed in Britain. It is no coincidence that Sir Kenneth Newman, the very man who presided over a regime of terror and torture in the Six Counties of Ireland, is now to use that experience here in Britain. For the past 3 years he has been training British police to use his techniques. Now he has been promoted to be Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police because the ruling class needs to put these techniques into practice on the streets of London.

The ground is being well prepared for this development. As the uprisings were led by black working class youth, the ruling class knows it must crush them. So it has stepped up its racist campaign against black youth. The police, the media and reactionary politicians are screaming loud and clear that black youth have to be attacked, repressed and imprisoned. Hence the racist campaign of lies and propaganda that surrounded the police's carefully planned announcement of crime statistics. The rantings and ravings of the right-wing religious fanatic Anderton, head of police in Manchester, have a similar function. They are preparing the ground for a vicious police assault on working class youth, and black youth in particular, who take to the streets to defend themselves.

The Thatcher government, responsible for driving millions to poverty and despair, has enthusiastically seized the law and order issue as its only possibility for hanging on to political power. A major campaign, led by Thatcher herself, has been launched against those who dare to resist, however mildly, these policies.

'Those who call for extra-parliamentary action and the sacking of judges and chief constables; those who viciously attack the newly appointed commissioner of police for the metropolis six months before he has even taken up his appointment; councillors who openly urge others to defy the law by not paying their full fare – these are the men and women who are guilty of eroding respect for the law and the values by which society lives.'

To criticise the man responsible for murder and torture in Ireland, to attack racist police and judges, to demand low fares on London Transport, is indeed eroding respect for the law and values by which Thatcher and the people she represents live. Their values, their privileges, are based on the brutal repression of working class people both in Britain and throughout the world. We do totally reject them and it is because more and more people here in Britain will begin to do so that the ruling class, using Thatcher as its mouthpiece, has launched this campaign.

The prime responsibility for the ease and confidence with which the ruling class has been able to take the offensive rests with the British labour and trade union movement. Only concerned to defend their narrow, sectional interests, the British labour movement has refused to resist Thatcher on any front. Even on matters of central importance to trade union organisation such as Tebbit's law – it has complained and whined, but done nothing.

judges, it refused to mount a campaign. No wonder the ruling class feels so confident that the British labour movement, having tolerated torture and repression in Ireland, will do nothing to prevent it taking place here in Britain.

It is clear that the corrupt and bought-off British labour and trade union movement will never defend the fundamental democratic rights of the working class. The working class must build new organisations if it is to defend itself. This process must begin today before it is too late. Every police assault, every frame-up, every murder in prison, every racist attack, every assault on democratic rights, every attack on living standards must be resisted. Campaigns must be built locally and nationally to organise the fightback against the ruling class offensive.

The traditional and now corrupt organisations of the British working class, the Labour Party and the trade unions, are designed to prevent and contain any fightback – to restrict such a fightback to constitutional, parliamentary and ineffectual forms of protest. We must build anew. The youth that have shown such courage and determination on the streets, must now use that courage and determination to build organisations of their own.



FRFI has decided to reinstate the Jack Woddis Memorial Award this month. We feel that only this award could do justice to the imperialist hypocrisy displayed by the *Morning Star* over the recent appointment of Sir Kenneth Newman as London's police chief. After Newman's appointment was announced the *Morning Star* expressed alarm that London's police would

'rest in the hands of the man who for years turned a deliberate blind eye to the systematic beating of suspects in Northern Ireland.'

Quite so. But the question to ask is why, in 1977 when Newman was busily sanctioning torture in the 6 Counties, did the *Morning Star* sing quite a different song about him. In those days the *Morning Star* thought the Irish people were lucky to be in the hands of a British policeman like Newman. They said:

'The new Chief Constable of the RUC, Kenneth Newman, with his background in the English police, has played a major role in moderating the tacit toleration of the known Unionist gunmen by the RUC Special Branch.'

The *Morning Star* did not tell us that the reason the RUC was restricting the activities of loyalist murder squads was because they were no longer so necessary. The army and Newman's police force were in full flow beating, torturing and murdering the nationalist minority. However, it appears that while in 1977 Newman's brutal techniques were evidently good enough for the Irish they are not acceptable in Britain in 1982.

## ACT NOW! JOIN THE FIGHTBACK

FRFI needs your support!

**No other newspaper**

in Britain champions the cause of the anti-imperialist movements in Ireland, South Africa, Central America, Iran and elsewhere.

**No other newspaper**

consistently exposes the ruthless and oppressive role of British imperialism.

**No other newspaper**

consistently reports and supports the fightback in Britain against the racist British state – its police, courts and immigration controls. For example every issue of FRFI since last summer has documented in detail the fightback in Liverpool 8 against racist police terror and frame-ups.

Many new readers are being gained for FRFI – 509 copies were sold on the 14 March AAM demonstration in London. Every month thousands of people buy FRFI outside tube stations, in pubs and on the streets.

Regular readers recognise the invaluable role of FRFI. More readers are becoming FRFI supporters – selling it, writing for it and raising money to secure FRFI's work. But we need many more of you to do the same. 50 readers selling just 20 copies each of FRFI would mean an extra 1,000 copies getting to new readers. So don't just read FRFI. Think how the British state is preparing to repress those who resist growing poverty and racist oppression. Don't just sit and watch this happen.

**If you agree with FRFI you must Act Now! Join the Fightback!**

What can you do? Look at the suggestions below. Think about which of them you can undertake and let us know by sending in the form below.

### I want to build FRFI

I am willing to (please tick):

- Take \_\_\_\_\_ copies of each issue to sell
- Make a monthly pledge to FRFI's fund drive.

I will pledge \_\_\_\_\_ per month

- Become an FRFI supporter – I enclose £5 and want to receive a year's subscription and details of the work you do in my area.
- Organise street sales in my area
- Organise supporter meetings for FRFI in my area.

Further please send me details of how I can join the work of FRFI in my area

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to FRFI BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX

# SOUTH AFRICA IN BRIEF

## ● Nyanga squatters fight on

Fifty-seven black squatters have taken sanctuary in Cape Town's St George's Anglican Cathedral in defiance of the South African Government's order deporting them to the 'homelands' of the Transkei and Ciskei. The squatters, who lost their South African citizenship with the so-called 'independence' of these two 'homelands', are from the camp near Nyanga which was demolished by the authorities in August 1981. Then, the apartheid police arrested and deported over 1,000 men, women and children. But this did not break the squatters' long history of resistance. The fifty-seven squatters have stated their intention to remain in the church until the Government grants them the right to remain in Cape Town. As part of their protest, they have gone on a fast. White racists have urinated in the church and have thrown in stink bombs and rotten fish to leave the impression that the blacks are befouling it. But this has not moved the squatters.

The squatters' fighting spirit, despite their suffering, was demonstrated by Mrs Priscilla Kunjuzwara, who three days after the fast began was taken to hospital and suffered a miscarriage. Against doctors' advice, she returned the next day saying: 'It is better to die than to live out there as a vagabond.'

## ● Bubonic plague

The deadly bubonic plague, seen in Britain last during the 17th century, is now beginning to hit black people in South Africa. Carried by rodents and fleas it has been detected in the black settlement of Coega near Port Elizabeth. So far 20 people are either under observation or confirmed to suffer, and one man Henry Poela has died. The vicious barbarism of apartheid speaks now with the language of one of the deadliest killers known in history. Black people, denied all medical, sanitary and health care are now being left victim to a plague which disappeared from Europe hundreds of years ago.

## ● British cricketers aid apartheid

The British Government which has consistently opposed sanctions against South Africa has given yet another demonstration in support of the apartheid regime. When at the beginning of March, 12 British cricketers went to play in South Africa, the Government did nothing to stop them. Despite repeated calls and challenges Thatcher refused to condemn these parasites who in exchange for their public relations exercise on behalf of apartheid are said to be receiving £40,000 apiece of money robbed from South Africa's black workers. In this exercise, the entire British media has cooperated with its regular press and TV reports of the matches played by the team. This contrasts with the press's efforts two years ago to limit coverage of the Moscow Olympics, which the British government boycotted in an anti-Soviet move.

## ● South African forces invade Angola

Meanwhile the apartheid war against Angola and the liberation forces of SWAPO continues. On the weekend of 13/14 March, troops from 32 Battalion conducted one of South Africa's largest raids into Angola since last November. Claiming to have 'wiped out a SWAPO base' they are still occupying parts of South-Western Angola. The Angolan Embassy in Paris quoting sources from South Africa, has issued a statement warning that the apartheid regime was preparing for a further major invasion into Angolan territory. The racist regime plans to use 10,000 troops led by South African officers and mercenaries to make helicopter attacks on Angolan towns, including its capital Luanda. The plan is being prepared with the support of British, West German and US imperialism.

## ● Disguised Leyland investment

Unipart, one of the world's leading suppliers of spare parts, with an annual turnover of R1.2 billion, is planning to open up plants in all the major towns of South Africa. It will begin its operations under apartheid with an initial capital investment of R6 million. Unipart, established in 1969, is a subsidiary of British Leyland which already has massive and increasing investments in South Africa bringing in huge profits whilst its workers starve and are denied the right to organise themselves in trade unions.

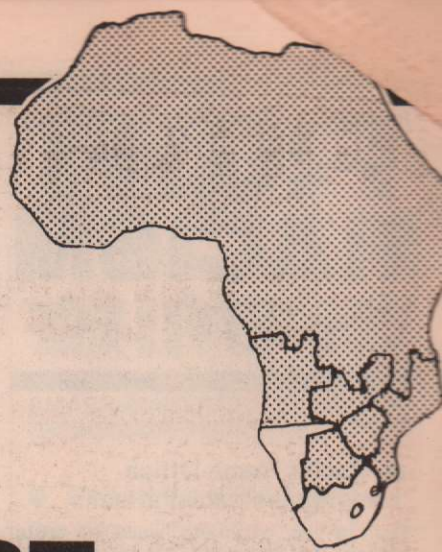
## ● Island in Chains

Ten years on Robben Island by PRISONER 885/63 (Penguin Books £1.95 – available from Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX. Add 30p p&p.)

This book must be read by every communist and revolutionary. Its author is Indres Naidoo, ANC member and one of the first Umkhonto we Sizwe militants. Captured by apartheid authorities after an Umkhonto military operation he was sentenced to 10 years on Robben Island in 1963. This is the story of those ten years – the story of indomitable resistance by prisoners to the ruthless barbarism of their jailers.

FRFI will review this outstanding testimony to resistance in the jails of apartheid in a forthcoming issue. We urge all our readers to study and learn from it.

# SOUTH AFRICA



## BRITISH BANKS BACK APARTHEID

'Each trade agreement, each bank loan, each new investment is another brick in the wall of our continued existence'. J. Vorster (ex Prime Minister of South Africa)

'Companies like Barclays are playing a predominant role in creating and sustaining the institutions of apartheid and cheap labour... We demand that Barclays cease in their super exploitation and the resulting misery of our people'. African National Congress (ANC)

The British media and politicians are silent about the scope and extent to which British capital, and in particular British banks, are involved in and sustain the apartheid regime in South Africa. Yet two British banks, Barclays International and the Standard Chartered Bank, virtually control the economy of South Africa which is based upon the racist system of apartheid and the brutal oppression of 20m black people. Through this control these British banks are responsible for a system which means oppression, exploitation, poverty and starvation for the black masses of southern Africa.

Barclays and Standard operate in South Africa through their majority control of Barclays National and the

Standard Bank of South Africa. The Standard Bank has 837 branches in South Africa and 28 in South African occupied Namibia (making up 67% of all Standard Chartered's branches); Barclays National has even more with 1216 branches. Each one is firmly rooted in the racist system of apartheid - as the Managing Director of the Standard Bank boasted:

'We have a strong board of South African business people. They would never agree to anything which is not in the interests of South Africa. This is completely accepted in London'.

Between them these two banks control 58% of the total assets of the 20 largest banking institutions in South Africa -

Barclays National alone holds assets of £4,886m. This control is exercised solely in the interests of maintaining the apartheid system and hence the banks' profits - last year Barclays made record profits in South Africa of £60m!

To defend their interests and profits Barclays and Standard play a direct and major role in building and strengthening apartheid's military apparatus. Indeed, 4 directors of the Standard Bank and one from Barclays National sit on the South African Defence Advisory Board which was set up by South African Prime Minister to advise their armed forces on the 'best business methods and other matters' (including arms manufacture). Barclays association with the South African Defence Force (SADF) is not new. The Soweto uprisings of 1976 shook the foundations of apartheid and the South African state sought more money to increase repression against black people. This was willingly provided by Barclays. In December 1976 it became the largest single purchaser of 'South African National Defence Bonds'. On presenting the cheque to the head of the SADF, Barclays National's Managing Director stated that:

'The bank regards the subscription as part of its social responsibility not only to the country at a particular stage in its history, but also to our staff members who have been called up to do service on our borders'.

Besides direct loans to the South African military, British banks have given numerous others to the South African government which have directly helped it militarily and economically. Hill Samuel, Barclays National, the Standard Bank and the British state Export Credits Guarantee Department have all either paid for, arranged loans for, or given credit to the South African oil from coal 'SASOL' plants. This finance is vitally important for South Africa since oil is one of the only minerals which she does not possess; fear of oil sanctions has made rapid development of SASOL a priority for South Africa.

There have been a number of other major loans to South African industries. These include numerous loans (including £280m by Barclays in 1980) to the South African Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM); ESCOM has financed South Africa's development of the Koeberg nuclear power station and hence South Africa's development of the nuclear bomb. They also include loans of £30m by both Barclays and National Westminster to South Africa's largest private industry, African Explosives and Chemical Industries (AECI), which is 40% owned by the British company ICI. Further examples of the joint interests of the British banks and South African capitalists come from their boards of directors. The ex-Chairman of Barclays, A Tuke, is now Chairman of the British owned company RTZ. As well as owning the largest copper mine in South Africa, RTZ owns the Rossing mine in Namibia which illegally provides uranium for British power stations. The Chairman of South African

## RELEASE ALL DETAINEEES

The South African government and police authorities are still detaining nearly 200 people arrested during a series of mass detentions carried out in October and November 1981. The majority of the detainees have now been held for between 4 and 7 months without access to lawyers, doctors or family. As a result of the torture they have been subjected to - torture which has already led to the murder of Dr Neil Aggett - many of the detainees have been transferred to hospital.

Particularly vicious treatment, it appears, is being meted out to members of the South African Allied Workers Union for their militant defence of black workers' interests and their uncompromising opposition to apartheid and its 'Bantustans policy'. The SAAWU president, Thozamile Gqweta who was detained, tortured and transferred to hospital was released on 3 March. He was sent to the Mdantsane township in the Ciskei where the Ciskei security police re-arrested him the following morning only to release him later on. This harassment is being meted out to a man who as a result of his torture still suffers from amnesia, severe headaches and has difficulty in speaking. Sam Kikine, the SAAWU General Secretary has also been transferred to hospital as has Eric Mntonga, an official of the union in East London.

The Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC) which was established after the first wave of mass detentions in a statement issued said:

'...detention is being used in an attempt to crush opposition to apartheid and minority rule with security laws being used to label opposition to apartheid as "criminal".'

Meanwhile, Johnson Lubisi, Petrus Mashigo and Naphtali Manana who are awaiting execution in the death cells of South Africa's prisons, still await the outcome of their appeal. They are part of the ANC 6, all sentenced to death for the struggle to free black people from the yoke of apartheid. The need for solidarity with them is more urgent than ever. As a first step readers of FRFI should write to the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square and to Prime Minister Botha, Union Buildings, Pretoria, South Africa, demanding an end to all death sentences and the release of all detainees.

**Release all detainees!  
Stop the hangings!  
Free all political prisoners!**



## SMASH APARTHEID!

On Sunday 14 March, in a massive demonstration organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, over 10,000 people marched through the centre of London demanding 'Forward to Freedom in South Africa and Namibia!' and 'Sanctions Now!'. The demonstration which was supported by the ANC, SWAPO and contingents from many AAM branches, trade unions, student organisations, the RCG/FRFI, as well as the CP and NCP, received warm support and sympathy from bystanders.

At the end of the demonstration thousands of people poured into Trafalgar Square for a mass rally. The crowds enthusiastically cheered Alfred Nzo, ANC General Secretary and SWAPO Central Committee member Hidipo Hamutenya who denounced the racist apartheid regime and declared the liberation movements' determination to fight until victory. Anwar Ditta pledging her support for the liberation struggle in South Africa received warm applause when she reminded those assembled not to forget, and to fight the racism of the British state oppressing thousands of black people in Britain. The rally, which concluded this successful demonstration, ended after a number of other speakers and a final statement by AAM President Bishop Trevor Huddleston.

FRFI/RCG supporters came to the demonstration from Birmingham, Liverpool, Bradford, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol and London. The over 250 strong contingent maintained sustained and militant chants of 'Victory to the ANC! Victory to SWAPO! Smash Apartheid Now! Death to British Imperialism!' throughout the march. The militancy of the FRFI/RCG contingent of black and white demonstrators, led to many people joining it along the route so that by the end, it was double its original size! The great enthusiasm shown towards the FRFI/RCG contingent was demonstrated again by the fact that 509 FRFIs were sold at the demonstration.

multinational Anglo-American, Harry Oppenheimer, is on the board of Barclays International. Anglo-American is Barclays largest customer in South Africa, and is 44% British and American owned. It owns three of the largest mines in South Africa at which it pays black workers approximately one tenth of the white workers' wages.

An even more explicit example of the complicity of the British banks in apartheid slavery is the practice of the African Pension Trustees (APT) pension fund which is wholly owned by Hill Samuel. In 1973 APT initiated a programme for domestic servants' pensions. Employers pay into the scheme to attract servants. A servant who leaves within 10 years is entitled to nothing, and one who survives for over 20 years is entitled to a lump sum of £250. The third largest insurance company in South Africa, Bibsol, is owned by Barclays.

These are just some examples of the activities of the British banks in South Africa which extend to virtually every part of the apartheid economy. Their massive interests have been built upon the exploitation of the black people and resources of southern Africa. Faced with this it is essential that communists, socialists and democrats in this country both actively support the liberation struggle in South Africa and demand the isolation of the apartheid regime.

Chris Fraser

## STOP PRESS Kitson Visit

On 29 March Amandla Kitson returned from South Africa after visiting her father David Kitson. David is serving a 20 year sentence as a political prisoner. This visit followed the arrest and torture of her brother, Steven, and the murder of her aunt. Amandla was accompanied by Stanley Clinton Davis, Labour spokesman on South Africa, and a family friend to ensure her safety.

On the visit David and Amandla were separated by thick glass and they were only able to communicate by shouting. Amandla was refused extra visits - the visits she had were deducted from the yearly quota, so that David will not get any visits in April.

David Kitson's morale and spirit remain unbroken and he has the solidarity and support of the prisoners in Pretoria Central. When Amandla first entered the prison black prisoners triumphantly sang her into the gaol.

At the press conference Stanley Clinton Davis committed himself and the Labour Party to make further efforts to secure remission for David Kitson and conduct a campaign to isolate apartheid. Amandla Kitson appealed to all British people to support the campaign to free all political prisoners in South Africa for, as she said, pressure from British people can have a crucial effect.

MK

# FIGHT RACISM IN BRIEF

## ● Racist Home Office 'investigates' racist attacks

Due to the mounting wave of brutal attacks on black people by fascists, Home Secretary Whitelaw was forced by public pressure to appear to take some action at the end of last year. His first ploy was to suggest that the problem was due to lack of 'reliable information' and thus to set up a survey into racist attacks over a two month period.

The inquiry was itself racist in its guidelines. It was decided that this survey into 'racist attacks' would include 'handbag snatches' from white people if it was felt there was a 'racial' motive. This obscene move was designed by the Home Office — desperate to conceal the full extent of attacks against black people — in order to give the impression that white people too suffer racist attacks. Even so the survey failed to conceal that Asians are 50 times and West Indians 36 times more likely to be attacked and this is based on the low estimate of 7000 racist attacks per year. But there has been no outcry or concern from the racist Home Office, police or press about these statistics.

Ace Kelly

## ● Bradford police cover up racist murder

Readers of FRFI will already be familiar with the barbaric murder of Mohammed Arif — the Asian taxi driver who was the victim of a fatal racist attack last November. After this horrific murder the police simply said that it was a 'robbery gone wrong', and denied any racial motive for the attack. However evidence found by an FRFI supporter proves that the man charged with the murder, Thomas Allen, was an active British Movement supporter. A press cutting from the Yorkshire Evening Post has shown that in May 1981, Thomas Allen was arrested on a BM demo to free the imprisoned Nazi leader Rudolf Hess. The police are of course fully aware, then, of Allen's fascist links — yet are making sure that this fact is suppressed. Jenefer Thomas

## ● Police harassment

Theodore Aymer, a black youth from London's East End has just been released on a six month sentence following a trial which had little bearing on the events after his arrest last September. He was kept at the station for 9 hours without access to a lawyer and by the time he was allowed to make a call it was too late and there was no reply. He panicked, ran upstairs and fell through the window breaking his back, shin and ankle. After the fall he was charged with criminal damage to the window. Still not content with their deeds, the police made sure he was handcuffed to the bed in hospital even though he could barely sit up. For Mark Phillips, Theo's solicitor, the case illustrates 'how clumsy the criminal system is' and how the police created 'a continual cycle of emotional turmoil.' He added that the police were 'heavy handed' and 'all sorts of complaints may be pursued'. None of the above was raised at the trial and the blatant brutality of the police was never questioned in court.

KA

## ● Lloyd Christie attacked by the police

Mr Christie and his family were celebrating his son's tenth birthday in their home in Walworth South London. At around 5pm his wife answered the front door to find 12 officers from Carter Street Police Station on the step. One of them pointed at Mr Christie and said 'That's the one who was driving the white Jag.' Mr Christie was promptly arrested and assaulted.

Once at the police station he was informed by the police that they had got the wrong man and he was free to go. Amazingly the police explanation is that they were looking for someone who had double parked their car.

To add insult to injury a Scotland Yard spokesman said 'It's hardly earth shattering. It's not the first time this type of thing has happened and it won't be the last.' Carol Owen

continued from front page

## Police declare racist war

The police planned this campaign carefully. They aim to use it for many purposes — all of them racist, anti-democratic and anti-working class. First the police are actively lobbying for an increase in their already extensive powers. In this they have been extremely successful. Less than two weeks into Scotland Yard's propaganda campaign the Home Secretary has said that new stop and search powers will be given to the police as well as powers to raid houses without a warrant. More sweeping than even the hated SUS law these new police powers represent a major attack on democratic rights and those of black youth in particular.

Second the police aim to whip up a climate of racist hysteria in which revolutionary opposition to police racism by black youth and sections of white youth can be put down with brutal savagery. They have spent the months since last summer building up arsenals of CS gas, plastic bullets and other such weaponry. When the inevitable resistance by the youth to police 'occupation' of Brixton, Moss Side or Liverpool 8 breaks out this summer the police want to use these weapons to deadly effect without creating public indignation. Last summer's uprisings and the police brutality used to put them down led sections of ruling class and liberal opinion to question police tactics. This summer the police want no such inconvenient pressure. They are, therefore, *in advance* inventing a 'black crime wave' so that they can portray their racist savagery merely as 'law and order'.

Third the police are consciously rallying the most reactionary elements in Britain. Not only will the Tories latch onto the law and order issue as their sole hope of winning back lost votes but so too do reactionary fascist organisations like the British Movement gain strength from the racist hysteria whipped up by the police and their press friends. During a past 'anti-mugging' campaign the first victim was a 20 year old black youth Leroy Gordon who was murdered by passers by who saw him snatch a handbag in the Bull Ring Centre in Birmingham. His killers were never prosecuted. Already fascist vigilante groups are organising patrols in some areas under the pretext of catching 'muggers'. The level of racist killings — already enormous — will now grow. More black children will be burned alive in their homes as were the Khans and the New Cross Massacre victims. Those who carry out the murders will be fascist thugs, but the police, the press and the Government will also be responsible.

This racist onslaught has been met with only token opposition from the Labour Party and the trade unions. Verbal opposition to police tactics from Tony Benn and others in the Labour Party is hardly going to turn the racist tide. These powerful organisations and personalities clearly have no intention of putting any actions to their words. The police have rightly calculated that a major attack on democratic rights using racism as its vehicle would meet next to no opposition from a Labour movement which is deeply pro-imperialist and racist.

The only challenge to the police, and therefore defence of democratic rights, is coming from the black community who, as has been repeatedly proved, will not tolerate the police unleashing racist terror on the streets but will fight back and challenge oppression.

Ace Kelly, Maxine Williams

# TORTURER TAKES OVER AT THE YARD

The appointment of top torturer Sir Kenneth Newman as Commissioner of Police at Scotland Yard heralds the next phase in the organised state offensive against any opposition to the imperialist state. The ruling class know that as oppression intensifies resistance, led by black workers, will grow and, increasingly, spread to other sections of the working class. Newman is therefore the man for the job as far as running the Metropolitan Police is concerned.

His credentials are impressive. From Not at all:

1946-48, the period in which the racist Zionist Israeli state was established on the backs of the dispossessed Palestinian people, he served in the Palestine Police. From there he went to the Metropolitan Police. In 1973 he became Senior Deputy Chief Constable of the RUC. In 1976 he became RUC Chief Constable. His job? To direct the RUC torture machine. Thousands of Irish men, women and children were brutally humiliated, beaten and terrorised under Newman's supervision. Between 1975 and 1978 12,605 nationalists were taken through the torture centres. Many of them were left with broken bones and bearing for life the physical and mental scars of torture. Hundreds were thrown into H-Block and Armagh on the basis of 'confessions' tortured out of them.

As the exposure of his torture system mounted, Newman issued new instructions to his thugs. To stop the torture?

'In recent months I have found it necessary to issue instructions to the force warning them that they must take precautions to prevent self inflicted injuries by prisoners.' (Guardian 25 June 1977)

He added a threat to this statement:

'A heavy responsibility rests on all those who publicly discuss [expose] this subject to measure their words and consider the possible consequences.'

Police doctor Dr Irwin was subjected to an RUC smear campaign in March 1979 when he publicly disclosed the fact that injuries which Newman claimed were 'self-inflicted' could not have been self-inflicted. By December 1979 the exposure of Newman's torture system was so complete that Newman was moved from the RUC... to train British



police in his techniques at Bramshill Police College.

Now a new job has been found for this 'polite' 'urbane' 'dapper' savage. Loyal as ever, the British press has 'forgotten' Newman's role as a torturer in the Six Counties. The London Standard declared:

'Sir Kenneth earned universal respect for the firm grip he kept on the situation in Northern Ireland during the worst period of the troubles in Belfast.' (19 March 1982)

It is this same 'firm grip' that Newman will be expected to keep round the throat of anyone who fights back against the racist imperialist British state. We predict, however, as much success for Newman here as he had in the Six Counties!

James Martin

# PAUL CONROY FRAME UP COLLAPSES

The conspiracy by the Merseyside police force to frame Paul Conroy whose back was broken when a police Landrover crushed him against a wall during the second July uprising, fell apart at the seams when he appeared in Crown Court facing three charges — causing an affray, throwing a petrol bomb and throwing a brick. Paul was unanimously acquitted of throwing a petrol bomb, the most serious charge. The jury could not agree a verdict on the other two, but whether there will be a retrial must be in doubt as the police case is in tatters.

The case against Paul was cobbled together by the police as a justification for his severe injuries. He had been going home on the morning of 28 July when he was struck by a police landrover as he crossed Crown Street. The jeep had mounted the pavement onto which he had run before crushing him against the wall. The police then dragged Paul, unconscious, and threw him into the back of a transit van. At the main Bridewell, he recovered consciousness to hear one policeman say to another that he was to be done for 'criminal damage to a Landrover'. Paul then blacked out again. When he awoke he was in hospital with a 24 hour police guard. On 15 September, three days after he had had a plaster cast put on him the police arbitrarily and illegally discharged him from hospital and took him, still in his pyjamas, to be charged with throwing a petrol bomb.

The trial, started on 16 March, exposed the conspiracy completely. The police had hoped to impress by sheer weight of numbers — no less than 14 police, of whom three were Inspectors, were to testify against Paul. But their lies were cobbled together too hastily, and were co-ordinated by an evidently incompetent person — DS Douch. DS Douch was adamant that Paul had been charged with throwing a petrol bomb on 28 July. The problem was that there was no charge sheet on which this was recorded nor any other evidence that he

had been in custody such as an itemised record of his belongings on arrest. DS Douch could not explain why there was no earlier charge sheet than that of 15 September — because there had not been one. DS Douch was in charge of taking statements from the nine ordinary constables who were part of the frame-up. In this he showed much zeal, for the statements contained many identical phrases especially when it came to describe Paul's clothing, the clothing of the so-called 'ringleader' observed by so many policemen and whom they were later to 'positively' identify as Paul. 'Blue teeshirt and blue denim jeans' the same phrase appeared in almost every statement. Indeed, so great was DS Douch's zeal, that as Constable Jenkinson, the driver of the jeep, admitted in court, Douch suggested to Jenkinson what should be put in and what should be left out of his statement.

Douch had not made any effort to get Paul Conroy's clothing for forensic examination. Obviously he knew that such examination would disprove the police story.

The policemen who claimed that Paul had thrown at least two petrol bombs were a constable and two Inspectors — MacDonald and Walker, the latter of the Operational Support Division. Both Walker and MacDonald said that they 'definitely' recognised Paul as a 'ringleader' who was organising all the 100 youth there. Closer questioning revealed

that Paul was the only person they were able to recognise that night. As the defence counsel pointed out, it was a bit of a coincidence that the only person they could recognise was the one person to receive serious injuries, the one person to have his picture in the papers and on TV the following day, pictures taken as he was being thrown into the police van. MacDonald himself had to change his evidence. Without Douch's invaluable assistance, he had described Paul's teeshirt as being green in his original statement.

The seven policemen who had been in the jeep which hit Paul fared little better. Owing to the attention of the youths this jeep was rather the worse for wear; its windscreen had been smashed and to replace it, two riot shields had been tied to the grille. Yet despite these restrictions to their vision all seven were apparently able to 'see clearly' what was going on, and to say that Paul had thrown bricks at them, that he had turned and then run into their path.

The defence counsel, Mr Colin Cunningham, put the issues clearly in his summing up. The police had organised a conspiracy to frame Paul Conroy because he had been so badly injured. The absence of a charge sheet for 28 July, the absence of forensic tests on Paul's clothing, the great similarities between various statements which pointed to collaboration, all indicated the existence of such a conspiracy. His description of the Merseyside police force as a 'modern Gestapo gone rampant' was entirely accurate. His concluding question was 'can you convict Mr Conroy on the uncorroborated evidence of 14 Liverpool policemen?' To this question the jury gave the unanimous answer on the petrol bomb charge. That verdict is a severe blow against the police. The fact that their conspiracy against Paul was so easily destroyed augurs well for the trials of Phil Robins who appears on 16 April and Kenneth Anderson.

Robert Clough



CARLOS AUGUSTO IFL

## Newton Rose wins appeal

**Newton Rose Action Committee scored a major victory in gaining the release and acquittal of Newton Rose. Newton Rose had been framed by Inspector Goodall of the Hackney police for the murder of Tony Donnelly. The sole evidence against him was statements extorted from three youths by police threats and intimidation. All three youths retracted these statements. For this they were charged with perverting the course of justice and sentenced to six months imprisonment.**

The first victory of the Action Committee was in securing the release on bail pending appeal of the three youths.

At the appeal the conviction of Newton Rose and the life sentence he was given were overturned. Such is the deceitfulness of the British press that they attributed this victory to the British judiciary correcting its own 'mistakes'. In Newton's original trial the Judge had acted illegally by giving the jury a 15 minute ultimatum to reach a verdict. The British press, which has done nothing to expose the framing of Newton Rose, wish to cover up the fact that this victory was the result of a dedicated and militant campaign by

Newton's family, friends and supporters of the Action Committee. The Newton Rose Action Committee organised a demonstration of over 300 that marched on Hackney Police Station chanting 'Newton Rose is Innocent!' 'Free Newton Rose!' 'Lock up Goodall!': a picket of nearly 100 outside Wormwood Scrubs where Newton was incarcerated; another picket of Hackney Police Station when Home Secretary Whitelaw came to boost Goodall's confidence; and a picket outside the Royal Court of Justice in the Strand during the appeal.

The strength of the campaign forced the appeal court to overturn the verdict

and to claim that it was on the basis of a legal technicality — thus avoiding shedding any light on the frame up organised by Goodall.

Although Newton Rose is now free and legally innocent — as he always was in fact — the struggle is far from over. Even after the acquittal Newton was forced to spend another night in prison whilst the police considered whether to appeal to the House of Lords. Although free, Newton now has to wait whilst the Law Lords decide if they will hear an appeal from the police. If they hear it and the police win then Newton will be back in court charged with a murder he did not commit. The police are determined to do this to maximise the suffering of Newton Rose and his family.

The Newton Rose Action Committee has pledged itself to continue fighting to keep Newton free and defeat the police frame-up.

Tony James

## EXILED BY RACIST JUDGE

**Carl Williams is 18, black and born in Britain. Arrested during the July uprisings in Clapham, South London, he was charged and found guilty of stealing a television and two clock radios. His sentence? Forced exile from Britain for five years.**

By this sentence Judge Clay of Croydon Crown Court has tried to set a most vicious precedent. Whilst Carl Williams's barrister was pleading for leniency Judge Clay interrupted to say he was considering a prison sentence. On hearing that Carl and his mother were going for a holiday in Jamaica, Clay halted the trial while tickets and passports to prove this were brought. He then bound Carl over on condition that he leave Britain for five years.

British courts do not have the power to deport people. Only the racist White-law has that power. Carl's case is therefore a test case to try and deport black British youth even before the racist Nationality law comes into force.

Judge Clay has used the wide ranging powers of the 1361 Justice of the Peace Act to impose this vicious sentence. (It is obviously, despite its age, a handy law for the racists; an FRFI supporter in Bradford was recently charged under this law for daring to make a speech about the Bradford 12 on a street meeting.) In effect Judge Clay forced Carl to face the choice of either a prison sentence or forced exile from the country of his birth. The racist mentality and actions of the British judiciary have once again been exposed.

Ace Kelly

# FIGHT RACISM IN BRIEF

## SMASH IMMIGRATION CONTROLS

### ● Defend the Khan Family

The Home Office has suspended the 'removal' of Mrs Khan and her two children. This is only because the Home Office fears the inevitable uproar from the people of Longsight who support the Khans. Public pressure has postponed the deportation, much more is needed to win the Khan family's right to stay. At present Mr Khan is forced to remain in hiding and Mrs Khan is living in fear and poverty.

The Khan Family Defence Committee has been intensifying its activities but urgently needs support. Come to KFDC meetings every Wednesday at Longsight Library, 7.30pm. Write letters of protest to your MP and send a copy to the KFDC. Send donations (made out to Khan Family Defence Committee) c/o 593 Stockport Road, Manchester 13. Phone 225 5111.

### Malik Sivam

### Demonstration

### Defend the Khan Family!

Assemble corner of Dickenson Road and Stockport Road at 1pm Sunday 25 April. Rally at Longsight Library at 3pm.



### ● Bring Sultan Mahmood's Children Home

On 13 March an angry 200 strong demonstration showed the feelings of the Asian community in Oldham at the Home Office's treatment of Sultan Mahmood's family.

It was in 1971 that Sultan first applied to bring his wife and four children to Britain. For eleven years the Home Office has continually tortured Sultan and his family — through continuous delays and refusals it has succeeded in keeping his family out of Britain. After the second application the Home Office took three years to make a decision during which time Sundar Jan, Sultan's wife, saddened by the long separation, died of TB. Not satisfied with inflicting such pain the Home Office is now saying that two of the children are now too old to enter.

But the struggle to bring the two younger children goes on. The struggle has been taken onto the streets and support is growing. More support is needed.

Messages of support and donations to: Sultan Mahmood Support Committee, 27 Gower Street, Oldham, Lancs. Phone 061 620 0497.

Malik Sivam

### ● Stop Najat Chafee's deportation

State racism, which ceaselessly seeks to terrorise black people in Britain, especially by its attack on women and children, has turned its evil eyes on Najat Chafee. A 22 year old woman living in Willesden, London, she came to Britain in 1979 following her marriage to her husband who had been living in Britain since he was a child. She left her husband because of his brutality and applied to the Home Office to stay in Britain permanently. The state authorities' spying revealed that her husband was already married to somebody else. He was deported. Najat has now been told she must return to Morocco. She has appealed but no date has been set for the hearing. Najat's son, Mohssim, is a British citizen and cannot be deported. The vile Home Office has refused to take account of this and is prepared to split the mother and child, sending Najat to destitution in Morocco. All support must be given to Najat and Mohssim against the racist and sexist immigration laws.

Friends of Najat Chafee can be contacted c/o 138 Minet Avenue, London NW10.

# BARRY PROSSER THE COVER UP CONTINUES

**On Friday 19 March Melvyn Jackson, Eric Smith and Howard Price were acquitted of the murder of Barry Prosser in Winson Green prison on 19 August 1980. The three were escorted from the court by police to protect them from the wrath of an angry crowd outside.**

Jackson was first charged with Barry's murder in December 1980. In February 1981 magistrate John Milward dismissed the case. In April the inquest found that Barry Prosser had been unlawfully killed. The cover up was beginning to crack. Jackson was again charged, along with Smith and Price. In September magistrate Frederick Hatchard dismissed the case. A campaign led by Mrs Prosser forced the DPP to at least go through the motions of bringing the three to trial. The cover up was too blatant given the inquest ruling.

This trial ended with the acquittal of the three despite the evidence. Trustee prisoner Patrick Galvin testified that he saw the three go to Barry's cell and return 'red-faced' with exertion. He also testified to seeing 9 or 10 screws gathering, taking off their watches and rolling up their sleeves. He said he was warned to keep his mouth shut by Smith. Justice Skinner, in a typically 'impartial' summing up, warned the jury to think very carefully about Galvin's evidence referring to 'reservations' about Galvin's character and adding that the jury might think it dangerous to act on his evidence unless confirmed by other 'reliable' evidence. A polite, typically British way of implying that Galvin's evidence was all lies. Galvin was the key witness against the screws.

There is no doubt that Barry Prosser was murdered by screws. He was viciously beaten in his cell. His injuries included a ruptured stomach. The Prosser case joins that of Richard Campbell, Winston Rose, Paul Worrell, five Irish POWs and countless others who have died in the murder machine and whose deaths have been covered up. British imperialism has a long record in this field. In 1957 11 African prisoners were beaten to death in Hola Prison-Camp Kenya. The British admitted that these prisoners had been beaten to death by the camp guards but claimed that they could not decide which guard had struck the fatal blows! Their murderers were never uncovered. British imperialism always protects its highly paid murderous screw thugs. Almost alone Mrs Prosser has fought, and continues to fight the cover up. The day after the acquittals she held a picket of Winson Green prison. Her courage and persistence is an example to all of us and a condemnation of all those 'defenders of civil liberties' who have yet to conduct any serious fight against the rising toll of screw murders in the prisons.

FRFI sends its deepest sympathy to Mrs Prosser and her family. We urge our readers to support her struggle to root out and expose the murderers.

James Martin

# FREE! FREE THE BRADFORD 12!

**The trial of the Bradford 12 opens in Leeds on 26 April. The 12 have been singled out for this police frame-up on conspiracy charges because of their active involvement in the anti-racist struggle. The campaign to fight the conspiracy charges and to free the 12 should have the active support of all anti-racists.**

**20 March saw another successful demonstration in their support. 800 people marched through Manningham and Bradford city centre demanding the conspiracy charges be dropped and their brothers freed. Again the march was led by militant black youth shouting 'Free! Free! Free the 12!'. FRFI supporters formed a noisy contingent and shouted their support. Once again the demonstration confirmed where the fight against the state will come from. The Labour Party while passing countless resolutions could only manage one banner, with a small contingent behind.**

At the rally following the demonstration, Amandla Kitson expressed her solidarity with the Bradford 12 and spoke about the South African freedom struggle. In a speech punctuated with applause she told those assembled about her family's own experiences including the recent detention and torture of her brother. The fascist white regime was attacking her imprisoned father, David Kitson, even more, and had attempted to isolate him completely by murdering her aunt Joan Weinberg. When she said that apartheid would have been dead and buried long ago, were it not for British and American imperialism, the hall erupted with applause. She ended by calling on people to fight for the release of David Kitson and all South African political prisoners.

Anwar Ditta spoke with anger at how Prime Minister Thatcher had been upset when her son went missing for a few days, while her own children were separ-

ated from her for 6 years. She said she would like to ask Thatcher to ask the mothers of the Bradford 12 how they were feeling with their sons facing years in prison.

Messages of solidarity were delivered to the meeting from supporters of the Organisation of Iranian Peoples, Fedaii Guerrillas and FRFI. The FRFI message said that a victory for the 12 would be a powerful blow against the murderers of Barry Prosser and David Moore, who go free while our brothers are imprisoned for fighting for freedom.

Closing the rally, a comrade from the UBYL told how the same conspiracy laws used against the Irish freedom struggle were now being used against the Bradford 12. He strongly urged everyone to build up the maximum support for the national demonstration in Leeds on 3 April, and the national picket of Leeds Crown Court on 26 April.

Bill

## POLICE FILE



### ● Police crime

Even the smallest of the small time racist police crooks is protected by the state. No action is to be taken against police who sold information from the Police National Computer. For sums of £4 to £15 (really small time) they sold details about cars and criminal records to touts and private detectives. But the Director of Public Prosecutions has decided not to prosecute as this would be 'against the public interest.'

### ● Police vandal fined

Readers will remember Chief Inspector Matthews-Stroud who, as I reported in the last issue, vandalised a phone box outside his house to stop the general public blocking his drive. Well, the news is that the Chief Inspector has been convicted and fined £50 with £150 costs.

### ● Countryman show trial

In a sham trial four more London police, slightly bigger fish, were cleared following Operation Countryman investigations. After three and a half years' work and spending £4 million, not one policeman has been convicted. The four acquitted this month were accused of conspiring to pervert the course of justice by planting evidence and concocting confessions. Of eleven officers charged eight have now been acquitted and the other three – no doubt without a care in the world – await their trial. The severest punishment to have come out of these investigations is internal disciplinary charges, while one senior Scotland Yard Officer was transferred for tipping off his men that they were to be questioned about corruption.

### ● Police racism

Recent Home Office statistics on complaints against the police show that black complainants are far less likely to have their allegations substantiated than whites. The report states that it was 'rare' for complaints by black people to be substantiated and 'very rare' (ie never!) when the complainant was under arrest or making a complaint of assault. The report coyly added that 'lack of evidence is perhaps not the sole reason for low substantiation rates; investigations into alleged assaults are not perhaps as thorough as investigations into less serious complaints!'

### ● A new tactic

And now for the good news. A new fad is sweeping the police force: they are shooting themselves! Whether this is a result of guilt, remorse, or just a new tactic of community policing is not yet clear, but on 23 February PC Kim Fletcher was guarding the home of former Prime Minister and imperialist hack James Callaghan, when he took it into his head to shoot himself through his trouser pocket, tearing a nasty hole in his trousers. Inspector Brian Woodhead has a better aim and his wounds were far more serious. While alone on the armory of Bootle Street police station he shot himself clean through the chest and very nearly killed himself.

This is clearly a very progressive move on behalf of the police, but we think Constables Fletcher and Woodhead were misguided if they thought their actions were recommended in the Scarman report.

# NOTES & COMMENTS

## ■ Zionism on the West Bank

The racist, Zionist state of Israel is moving rapidly towards annexing the West Bank which it has occupied since 1967. During 15 years of occupation the West Bank, with a population of 720,000 Palestinians, has been dotted with Israeli civilian/military settlements built on land robbed from the local people. The West Bank has been transformed into a reservoir of cheap labour to meet Zionist and imperialist needs and its economy has been tailored to Israeli interests. In a tactic learnt from British rule in the Six Counties of northern Ireland, Israel, itself a creation of British imperialism, plans to settle 100,000 Zionists on the West Bank. It will thus create for itself a military/social base to subjugate the Palestinian masses.

Palestinian resistance to this occupation has never flagged. It has burned stronger and more fiercely since November 1981 when the Begin Government replaced the West Bank's military administration with a civilian one. Since then there have been hundreds of protests and clashes between Palestinian youth and Israeli forces and their local agents – the settlement population who are all armed to the teeth.

In the middle of March, the Begin regime sacked the anti-Zionist elected mayor of El-Bireh and replaced him with an Israeli army officer. The entire West Bank exploded and resistance spread to the Gaza Strip as well.

The authorities banned the Committee for National Guidance – an organisation of anti-Zionist Palestinian mayors. This move did not work. For over five days fierce fighting took place between Israeli troops and Palestinian youth and women. In El-Bireh groups of youth and 200 women stormed an army patrol, in Asqar, a refugee camp, 400 refugees attacked an army patrol and other clashes took place in Hebron, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Tulkarm, Nablus and elsewhere. A seven day general strike was declared closing down schools and businesses throughout the West Bank.

The Zionist response to this resistance was exactly the same as the British Army's response in the Six Counties of northern Ireland. They opened fire on unarmed youth – with assistance from armed settlers – leaving 6 Palestinian youths dead. In Nablus, Israeli soldiers prevented an ambulance reaching a school where young boys had been injured, and in an even more calculated and brutal move, they evicted an Arab doctor from the premises. In the Jalazoun refugee camp near Ramallah, a young boy, beaten with rifle butts and batons, suffered a brain haemorrhage. In an effort to break the general strike, soldiers forced shop keepers to open up at gun point. To prevent a united resistance whole towns and refugee camps were sealed off, and two more Palestinian mayors have been sacked by the Israeli Government.

Alongside this regime of brutal force, the Israeli Government is trying to bribe a section of the Palestinian people in order to divide and control them. It has helped establish and generously funds so-called Village Leagues to provide certain people with privileges denied to the population as a whole. These Leagues, already denounced by the PLO, are hated by the masses.

The Zionist state of Israel, which survives only due to massive injections of imperialist aid in order to act as policedog in the Middle East, has extended and expanded the Palestinian territory under its rule. Israel is responsible for forcing the majority of Palestinian people to live in degrading and impoverished refugee camps in the Middle East. It engages in constant aggression against the people of Lebanon and Palestinian refugee camps in South Lebanon. Its brutality against the Palestinian population of the West Bank is merely another part of its oppression of the Palestinian people as a whole. And in the West Bank it is being met with the same determined resistance it has met from the Palestinian forces of revolution led by the PLO. Roy Spring

## ■ Budget bites deep for poor

The March 1982 budget contained no surprises. £1.3bn was doled out to industrial capitalists, mostly paid for by increased National Insurance charges on workers, and cuts in benefits. An unemployed man or woman with a family is now about 20% worse off in real terms than a year ago; semi-skilled and manual workers will be about 10% worse off. At the other end of the scale, company directors have seen their real income climb 28% since 1979. And if you are the Queen you will be enjoying a £281,100 increase, bringing your salary to £3,541,300 per year.

While inflation and cuts are steadily forcing down the value of wages and benefits, investment and capital assets have now been inflation-proofed. Investors can now purchase index-linked gilts – government stock – which will never lose their value and which will bring a steady return of 2-3% above the rate of inflation. Capital assets – antiques, houses, paintings, stocks and shares – will benefit from indexation. In the past, the entire increase in value between purchase and sale was taken into account when calculating capital gains tax; now part will be deducted to account for inflation. A steady redistribution of wealth is going on – from labour to capital.

On the day after the budget, the government announced that the 60p per week increase in child benefit will be cut by 50p to 10p per week if the recipient is sick, disabled or unemployed. Truly government by the rich for the rich.

Stephen Palmer

## ■ Asbestos – killer dust

The fact that asbestos kills has been known since 1900 when asbestosis (lung scarring) was first recognised. Limited regulations were introduced in the 1930s and little more was done until 1976 when the extent of the massacre of workers at Cape Industries' factory at Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire was revealed. Of 2,200 workers employed there from 1941 to 1971, 262 had, by 1979, got crippling asbestos diseases and 77 were dead. In the face of a Government 'inquiry', the butchers who run the industry spent £500,000 on propaganda to convince people that asbestos is safe.

Asbestos is a natural rock whose tiny fibres cause fatal disease. There are six types, all of which are deadly; there is no safe level of exposure.

Asbestos is everywhere, in brake and clutch linings, in cookers, in toasters, ironing boards etc. Demolition of old buildings causes massive pollution. Thousands of schools are rotten with asbestos, as are many hospitals.

Exposure can cause any of three diseases – asbestosis, lung cancer, mesothelioma (cancer of the stomach and lung linings, due almost solely to asbestos). All take at least 10 years, and up to 40 years to develop, which helps the industry to avoid responsibility. There is no cure for any asbestos disease. In some jobs 40% of the workers have died from these diseases.

Exposure to asbestos is unnecessary, there are safer substitutes for nearly all uses. However, while it's OK for most of us to be exposed, in 1978 when asbestos was found in the House of Commons it was immediately removed and regular pollution checks were carried out. Clearly MPs are anxious to act when it suits them. For the rest of us, the Asbestos Regulations 1969 are the best they can manage. The standards in these rules are based solely on data provided by Turner and Newalls, Britain's biggest asbestos firm. In 1977 the average fine for breaking the regulations was a punishing £182.

The involvement of the British firms, Cape Industries and Turner and Newalls, in asbestos mining in South Africa is a prime example of vicious imperialist exploitation. In 1976, dust levels in South African mines were 4 times higher than allowed in Britain. According to Capes' 1976 annual report,

mining of blue asbestos in South Africa is higher than ever, yet blue asbestos is effectively banned in Britain. A Commons Select Committee has accused Turner and Newalls of paying starvation wages to its black workers.

So, who protects us? Certainly not the Government's Health and Safety Executive who merely act as establishment mouthpieces when they bother to act at all. Nor do the TUC bureaucrats bother too much. Although the GMWU has demanded tighter rules, rank and file workers have encountered obstruction and sell-outs from union leaders. A leading activist in Glasgow, John Todd (an ex-lagger who now has asbestosis) has actually been banned from Scottish TUC health and safety schools because he attacks the GMWU's inaction. Nor do doctors and scientific 'experts' emerge with much credit. They erect a reassuring smokescreen to convince us of the safety of asbestos. Most research on asbestos is paid for by the industry to aid its cover-up and make it look 'responsible'.

Some gains have been made, all due to rank and file action, including a ban on asbestos use in the shipbuilding industry and a refusal to handle the material by London dockers. What is clear is that we can rely on nobody but ourselves to win the only reasonable demand – a complete ban on all asbestos.

Readers who want to know more about asbestos and how to fight it should see *Asbestos – Killer Dust* by Alan Dalton (from BSSRS, 9 Poland Street London W1) **South East Scotland Work Hazards Group**

## ■ The Times biased

The Times (newspaper group) is still in business, after it was threatened again with closure by its owner Rupert Murdoch. This pillar of Fleet Street, champion of good quality journalism with its 'liberal' reporting has a biased line on Ireland. Not newly acquired either. In 1887 *The Times* published a series of articles under the title 'Parnellism and Crime', implying that all that Charles Stewart Parnell stood for was criminal. (A common line from Fleet Street papers on Ireland's struggle for freedom and unity, indeed for all the oppressed people of the world, be they in South Africa, Palestine or Latin America.)

On 8 May, 1981 *The Times* reporter in Belfast, Christopher Thomas, reporting on the funeral of Bobby Sands (IRA volunteer, H-Block hunger striker and MP) said 'The Roman Catholics buried Robert Sands yesterday as Protestants lamented their 2,000 dead from 12 years of terrorism', and later he said 'The 2,000 victims of his (Sands) collaborators...' As everyone knows this was yet more slander against the IRA's struggle for freedom, everyone but Christopher Thomas and *The Times* editors.

Irishman Donal Kennedy immediately wrote to *The Times* and demanded that they correct this absurd statement. (What about the Bloody Sunday massacre, the Shankill butchers, and 12 years of UDR murders?) The reply was amazing. Only such a distinguished British paper could reply in this manner and hope to get away with it. It read 'our Northern Ireland correspondent has checked the figures and confirms it from several sources'. Kennedy immediately took this to the Press Council.

While they dealt with this, on 25 September, 1981 *The Times* published an article that Tony Benn MP found offensive. The next day a letter featured prominently in the paper from Benn complaining about the article. He also got an editorial apology. How quick *The Times* are to apologize to a fellow Brit.

After many months Donal Kennedy won his case and the Press Council severely criticised *The Times*, saying that 'They regard this as a most serious error on a highly sensitive matter.'

It appears that over 2,000 people killed in Ireland as a result of British imperialism is a trivial matter compared to offending a man

(in an article) who shares in these murders, a former government minister – Tony Benn.

Sometimes I wonder if we would be better off with *The Times* closed.

Cathal

## ■ Gormley's Golden Handshake

Brother Joe Gormley, Order of the British Empire and director of British Investment Trust Ltd., has now retired from the National Union of Mineworkers after 11 years as its president. He will receive a £35,000 handshake, an annual pension of £12,000 and a free Jaguar. He will continue to live in his luxury NUM owned home, equipped with a private swimming pool, for a peppercorn rent. The whole package was approved by the Union's finance committee which includes CPGB members Mick McGahey, president of the Scottish miners, and George Rees, secretary of the Welsh miners.

It is no surprise that Gormley who sums up his career as '30 years fighting the left' should now be actively touting for a peerage. It is only fitting that a lifetime spent serving the capitalists and betraying the workers should be crowned by taking a seat amongst his peers in the Lords.

Stephen Palmer

## ■ West Germany – Repatriation for Foreign Workers

The West German government announced on 5 March that it is launching a scheme for the repatriation of foreign 'Gastarbeiter'. As the capitalist crisis deepens firms are shedding labour in order to maintain the rate of profit and unemployment is rising above 1½ million. The bourgeois press and prominent public personalities are blaming unemployment on the 'foreigners' who 'take jobs away from Germans' and who 'threaten German national culture'. The 11% of the two million plus cheap labourers from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Italy etc who are without a job are denounced as 'scroungers'. The government will give about £2,500 to any migrant worker who becomes unemployed and agrees to get on a plane home. There will also be stricter immigration controls to prevent the entry of any more 'foreigners'. As in Britain with black and Irish jokes, so too in West Germany there is a spate of vile racist jokes about Turks and Slavs going the rounds. Thus the West German capitalist state exposes the basis of its 'economic miracle'. It is nothing miraculous at all, but simply the exploitation of cheap immigrant labour.

Gerald Jonson

## ■ The Free World – But not for walking blacks

California State Law 647E states that a person is guilty of a misdemeanour if he or she 'loiters or wanders upon the streets or from place to place without apparent reason or business and refuses to identify himself and to account for his presence.'

Sounds familiar? Not surprising if it does to British ears because this SUS law has its origins in England, according to the defence lawyer of one Mr Edward Lawson. Mr Edward Lawson, a respectable middle-class business man has peculiar tastes. He likes to go for a stroll of an evening after a day in the office, even through the pleasant and wealthy streets of Los Angeles and San Diego.

The price of his daily strolls over the last 18 months has been to be stopped and questioned by the police 20 times, arrested 15 times and he has spent various spells in prison including a fortnights sentence. Now Mr Lawson has taken his case against the police for contravening his rights to the Supreme Court in Washington. Since similar laws operate in many American states would seem that the right to take a stroll in the land of Free Enterprise is very much at risk. But then again, Mr Lawson is black. Sue Davidson

# LABOUR GOVERNMENT PREPARES NEW REGIME OF TERROR

**The fall of the power-sharing Executive in May 1974 showed, yet again, that the Six Counties statelet was unreformable. The attempt to isolate the IRA and undermine its support in the nationalist minority by offering a share of power to the anti-IRA sections of that minority had failed. No viable alternative could be created, no overall improvement in the social position of the nationalist minority was possible in the sectarian statelet that had been created to preserve British imperialist rule in Ireland. The Ulster Workers Council strike had forcefully reminded the British government that the price of 'loyalty' to British imperialism was the preservation of loyalist privileges and loyalist supremacy in the Six Counties of Ireland. It was a price which the British Labour government was quite prepared to pay.**

The power-sharing policy had been used by British imperialism as part of an overall strategy to isolate and defeat the IRA. It did not succeed. On the contrary the actions of the SDLP, in attacking the rent and rates strikers during its brief taste of political power, only undermined the SDLP's support among the nationalist minority. And finally the collaboration of the RUC, UDR and British army with the UWC strikers in bringing down the power-sharing Executive demonstrated all too clearly that behind the loyalist statelet stood British imperialism. No social progress would be possible until British imperialism was driven out of Ireland. The failure of power-sharing had in fact totally vindicated the political standpoint of the Provisional IRA.

The emphasis of British policy had to change. There was no longer any way other than outright repression to defeat the nationalist threat to British imperialism's interests in Ireland. And, as had happened time and again in such circumstances, it was left to a British Labour government to take the new path and demonstrate British imperialism's resolute commitment to maintain the sectarian loyalist statelet in the Six Counties of Ireland. In 1949 it was a British Labour government which introduced the Government of Ireland Act offering constitutional guarantees to maintain loyalist supremacy in the Six Counties statelet. In 1969 it was a British Labour government which sent British troops into the Six Counties of Ireland to support loyalist supremacy and prop up the increasingly unstable loyalist statelet. And in 1974 it was a British Labour government which laid the basis for, and later administered, the regime of terror known as 'Ulsterisation' – yet another attempt to destroy the IRA and break the back of its support in the nationalist minority.

## First steps to 'Ulsterisation'

There was a great deal of confusion about British strategy in the period following the UWC strike until the appointment of Roy Mason as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. With the failure of power-sharing the ruling class openly discussed its options. There was talk of a new round of constitutional initiatives, of phased withdrawal, and of open and direct repression to defeat the IRA. Events during this period until mid-1976 encouraged all sides to make confused and wrong assumptions about what was taking place. In particular, the truce in February 1975, the lowering of troop

levels in 1975 and the impact of the economic crisis in the Six Counties in the form of closures, redundancies and rising unemployment, led many to believe that withdrawal was being given serious consideration.

One important factor which allowed the British ruling class to openly review its options in this way was the complete absence of any pressure from the British working class movement on the issue of Ireland. There was no movement in Britain which was able and prepared to seize the opportunity to argue that the fall of power-sharing conclusively demonstrated that the loyalist statelet was unreformable. There was no movement able to use the fall of power-sharing as the basis of a major campaign for British withdrawal from Ireland. Further by passing the Prevention of Terrorism Act in November 1974, the British Labour government provided a legal cover for the systematic harassment of the Irish community in Britain. In so doing it effectively blocked a politically conscious section of the working class from playing a central role in a campaign for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. Finally, while appearing to review its options, the British Labour government did in fact throughout its term of office gradually increase repression in the Six Counties until it became a daily onslaught against the nationalist minority. And it was able to do this without any serious interference from within Britain.

Important components of the new policy were already being prepared before the fall of the power-sharing Executive. However the significance of such developments was not immediately clear. In April 1974 Merlyn Rees, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, outlined some new proposals. They included a phased programme for the release of detainees, structural changes in the RUC to increase its efficiency, greater flexibility of troop movements with a smaller Army 'to make way for normal policing', and the setting up of a committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Gardiner, to review the working of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1973. Significantly, on security Rees said that the community in Northern Ireland must help itself to 'return to normality' and not believe law and order was a matter for the United Kingdom 'rather than for them'.

All this talk of a 'return to normality', of 'normal policing' was preparing the way for 'Ulsterisation' – for the 'primacy of the police' in fighting the IRA and for 'criminalisation' of the revolution-

ary national struggle led by the IRA to free Ireland from British rule. When the Gardiner Report appeared after the fall of the power-sharing Executive, this emphasis became much sharper. One of its most important recommendations was to remove Special Category status from Irish political prisoners. That is, to deny the political legitimacy of the IRA's military campaign to free Ireland from British rule.

With these April proposals Merlyn Rees announced that he intended to lift the ban on Sinn Fein and the Ulster Volunteer Force. This occurred in May 1974. That Rees was prepared to lift the ban on the UVF, a known loyalist paramilitary organisation centrally involved in the sectarian assassinations of Catholics shows the totally cynical direction of British government policy. As justification for this move it was said that the UVF had ceased terrorist activity by forming a political organisation called the Volunteer Political Party. However, it soon became embarrassingly clear that the activity of the UVF was much the same as before – including the assassinations of Catholics – and the UVF had to be banned again in 1975.



Cartoon from  
Republican News  
6 March 1976

The lifting of the ban on Sinn Fein was clearly an attempt to suck revolutionary Republicans into the 'political' sphere of electioneering and ineffectual peaceful protest. It was part of the overall effort by the British to undermine support for the armed anti-imperialist struggle. Legitimate 'political' activity was to be defined in such a way as to exclude the armed struggle against British imperialism. Those engaged in that struggle were to be regarded and treated as 'criminals'. So while the legalisation of Sinn Fein offered revolutionary Republicans a legal platform for anti-imperialist propaganda and protest, the British would continually attempt to use it to depoliticise the armed anti-imperialist struggle. It was a danger that had to be continually borne in mind.

## Rees and Internment

No one should be deceived by Rees's term of office. If anything his record was as bad as, if not worse than, Whitelaw's. And he was just as committed to defeating the nationalist threat to British rule in Ireland. When he was opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland Rees visited Long Kesh and spoke to James Moyne, a Republican internee in Cage 8. Rees told him he was disgusted with internment and would end it within six weeks of Labour

returning to office. James Moyne died in Long Kesh as a result of medical neglect on 13 January 1975, nearly 11 months after the Labour Party had won the election. In fact, in the first three full months of Labour's term of office March-May 1974 there were 134 new internees, a net increase of 64 after 69 releases and one escape. Only three of the releases were the direct result of powers held by the Secretary of State, Rees. The rest were due to the reviews and appeals machinery set up before Rees was in office. It was Merlyn Rees who stepped up the internment of women – a punitive measure against the nationalist community. All the women interned were Catholics and of the 31 interned up to 1 February 1975, 20 occurred while Rees was Secretary of State.

During the first six weeks of the truce from 10 February to 24 March 1975 at least 11 Catholics were brutally murdered and over 30 Catholic premises and buildings were bombed by loyalist paramilitaries – the UVF/UDA operating under various flags of convenience. During this period not only were no loyalist assassins and bombers interned but Rees released all the remaining UVF/UDA internees. At the same time only 24% of internees alleged to be members of the Provisional IRA had been released despite the truce. On 17 April 1975 – again during the truce – Rees made a statement in the House of Commons to the effect that if internment were ended 'at a stroke' there would be civil war in the North by morning. This led to a bitter comment by Fr Dennis Faul and Fr Raymond Murray – reproduced in their pamphlet *The Shame of Merlyn Rees* – that Mr Rees' statement 'confirms our opinion that he has no intention of ending it [internment]. He never had.' Essentially they were right. Internment without trial would be ended only to be replaced by judicial internment – a vicious process of incarcerating Republicans. The legal and political foundation for judicial internment had been systematically prepared during Merlyn Rees's term of office.

The conditions that internees and other political prisoners were subjected to in Long Kesh were appalling. The following gives some idea of what they had to endure:

'Here in Cage Six, 67 men live in accommodation meant for 35. Maybe we should be grateful in a way because it used to house 80 men, but due to the very rare releases the numbers have shrunk slightly.'

Six months ago, during a British Army raid on the cage one of the huts was so badly damaged by soldiers that the authorities deemed it unlivable and demolished it completely. This meant that the men from this hut had to move into the other two huts which were already at this time overcrowded.

Subsequent raids have rendered the canteen and the study hut useless. In the shower house we are left with three showers, three WCs and six wash-hand basins. The rest have been wrecked and smashed by some sick Brits. The health hazard from the conditions in this cage are obvious, but the authorities refuse to move on the subject and will not let any man transfer to another cage.

We are left now that confessions are heard, Masses celebrated, food is eaten and all studying is done in one of the living huts.'

(PRO, Internees, Cage 6, 21 August 1974)

There had been a great deal of organised protest by both Republicans and Loyalists to improve the quality of the food and living conditions in Long Kesh. The medical treatment was also appalling. The authorities refused to act. When the prisoners went on strike and increased their protests in September and October 1974 refusing prison meals etc, they were penalised by having food parcels, cigarettes and visits stopped. Even Paddy Devlin (SDLP), an inveterate enemy of the Republican movement, was forced to say that 'after this the burning down of Long Kesh was inevitable'. On Tuesday 15 October 1974 Republican prisoners attacked prison officers and set fire to most of the huts in the camp. The flames could be seen for miles. Soldiers were brought in. They attacked the prisoners brutally beating them up. Helicopters flew over the cages spraying CS gas into the compounds. Next day Republican women prisoners in Armagh gaol seized the Governor and three prison officers and held them as hostages in an attic. The women demanded assurances that none of the political prisoners (including Loyalists) would be maltreated. Troops and police surrounded the prison. The Governor and the prison officers were released the next morning after reassurances were given by two clergymen. Clashes took place between prisoners and prison officers in Crumlin Road gaol, Belfast, in the afternoon. And that same evening prisoners at Magilligan Prison, Co Derry, set fire to their huts. On Thursday 500 more British troops were brought into the Six Counties bringing the total to 15,600.

The morning after the events in Long Kesh the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) put out a statement saying that three prison officers had been injured. It also said that no prisoners had been hurt and there had been no contact between the security forces and prisoners. At midday Rees issued a statement saying nine prisoners were in hospital and a number had been treated at the prison. Rees lied. In one hospital alone out of the three used to treat prison casualties, 16 prisoners were suffering from severe injuries and many more were treated elsewhere. Paddy Devlin maintains that he had a photostat copy of a document issued by the NIO saying 21 prisoners were in hospital receiving treatment for injuries.

When a protest was made about the discrepancies, all hospitals were cleared except for eight prisoners - no doubt to bring the figures in line with Rees's first public statement. Of those excluded from hospitals were prisoners suffering multiple and major injuries like bone fractures, concussion, bruises and abrasions. They were returned to the prison to lie on concrete slabs and amidst ashes and dirt were exposed to outdoor conditions. The Provisionals claimed that a hundred prisoners were injured. The NIO eventually said that 29 had been injured together with 23 soldiers and 14 prison officers.

Immediately after the events at Long Kesh, Rees announced that 'such demonstrations will not influence me in any degree to change the policy... in relation to detention'. The same day Austin Currie (SDLP) felt it necessary to say that the Secretary of State should be recalled as he had no credibility left. And even a member of the moderate Unionist Alliance Party argued that 'the whole credibility of British Ministers has suffered to such an extent that it is difficult to see how any of them can ever be believed again'. Quite!

## Constitutional Convention

The totally cynical disregard which the Labour government has for the legitimate interests and grievances of the nationalist minority was demonstrated afresh on 4 July 1974. The government issued a White Paper calling for elections to a Constitutional Convention so that the people of Northern Ireland could play 'a crucial part in determining their own future'. The functions of the Northern Ireland Convention were mainly 'to consider what provisions for the Government of Northern Ireland would be likely to command the most widespread acceptance throughout the whole community there'. There was never the slightest doubt about its outcome. The Labour government simply required a breathing space. It was biding time as it prepared the next stage of its policy of repression. Since the February 1974 General Election it was clear that the United Ulster Unionist Council (the bloc of anti-power-sharing Loyalists) would win crushing majorities in all forms of elections. The October 1974 General Election only confirmed that with the UUUC winning 58% of the total vote on a platform of uncompromising opposition to

power-sharing or a Council of Ireland. The Faulknerites were almost annihilated, with even the Officials' Republican Clubs getting more votes.

The Convention elections took place on 1 May 1975. Revolutionary nationalists called for a boycott and the total poll of 64% was fairly low. The result was a massive victory for the UUUC which won 46 out of the 78 seats: together with the seat of an independent Loyalist associated with the UVF, the anti-power-sharing Unionists had an overall majority of 16. Faulkner's party won a mere five seats with Faulkner himself just scraping in on the ninth count in South Down. The SDLP lost two seats leaving a total of 17, the Alliance Party had eight and the almost defunct NILP got one. The Officials' Republican Clubs now more and more in alliance with British imperialism, did disastrously with none of their candidates coming near to winning a seat.

The Constitutional Convention inevitably called for the restoration of Stormont, that is, for devolved government without power-sharing. It rejected any Irish dimension and called for increased security measures and the defeat of 'terrorism', by which it meant the IRA. The Convention Report was discussed in the House of Commons on 12 January 1976. Before the debate Harold Wilson made a statement on security in Northern Ireland. After announcing that the Spearhead Battalion had been moved from Great Britain to Armagh and was being joined by troops of the notorious Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) he said

'Without a solution to the formidable security problems, the necessary conditions will not exist for constitutional advance and reconciliation'.

In the debate on the Convention Report Merlyn Rees made it clear that the government had no intention of withdrawing from the Six Counties of Ireland since it would threaten the stability of British imperialist rule both sides of the border.

'The Government are in no doubt that this would be a grave mistake. It would solve nothing. I have no doubt that withdrawal and abandonment of our responsibilities towards citizens of the United Kingdom would precipitate violence on an even greater scale than we have seen so far. And we must not assume that violence could be confined to Northern Ireland. It would spread to Great Britain and also to the Republic of Ireland.'

In the debate 'power-sharing' was replaced by much vaguer talk of 'participation' and John Biggs-Davidson dispensed with the much talked of Irish dimension when he said

'... combined border operations, action by the Republic and the United Kingdom to deny equipment, respite or hiding place to those who have been rejected at the ballot in Northern Ireland and the Republic and who resort to the bullet and the bomb, the speedy enactment of the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill as a second best to extradition - that is the Irish dimension that matters today.'

The so-called Irish Republic was only too happy to oblige with a series of vicious anti-Republican laws passed during 1976. It was clear by early 1976 that the British ruling class through its faithful servant the British Labour Party was now ready to concentrate its energies on its primary task of repression, that is, of defeating the nationalist threat to its rule in Ireland led by the IRA.

## The Second Truce

A second truce occurred within the period between the White Paper on elections to the Constitutional Convention in May 1974 and the Convention Report of November 1975. The Provisional IRA wanted a truce not only because they shared the nationalist minority's desire for an end to the six-year old war but also because they believed that the British intended to withdraw quite soon from the Six Counties of Ireland. The British wanted a truce primarily because they needed to take pressure off the security forces while the reorganisation of the RUC into an effective 'anti-terrorist' force was taking place. They were also concerned about the effects on the British public of the Provisional IRA's bombing campaign in England. An additional consideration for sections of the British administration in the Six Counties was that a truce might create a more conducive response to the Constitutional Convention elections to take place in May 1975.

There can be little doubt that an influential sec-



The burning of Long Kesh concentration camp

tion of the Provisional IRA leadership believed that a phased withdrawal of British troops was a real possibility. On 4 May 1974 *Republican News* carried a front page headline 'English Withdrawal Date? 31 Dec 1974.' It spoke of the call of Liberal MP John Pardoe for a withdrawal of troops by that date, and went on to argue:

'As England totters towards economic collapse and bankruptcy she must cut every conceivable cost. The last outposts of Empire are to be abandoned and with Cyprus, Malta and Singapore, Ireland is also to be evacuated. But Mason's terms are: when the RUC and UDR are ready to take over.'

Mason was at that time Secretary of State for Defence. The kind of withdrawal he had in mind was that associated with 'Ulsterisation' and not a united Ireland. Nevertheless, the Provisional IRA felt that the pressure on the security forces in the Six Counties and most importantly the bombing campaign in England were having a significant impact on the British ability and determination to continue the war. According to the *Sunday Times* 18 June 1978, Commander Huntley of the Bomb Squad went some way to acknowledging as much in relation to the bombing campaign in England. In a secret report he said:

'If the campaign is accentuated even marginally... it is extremely doubtful as to whether there are sufficient trained investigators to successfully combat it, in manpower or technical support terms'.

The threat was significant. The security forces in the Six Counties numbered over 30,000 and they were unable to seriously impair the IRA's ability to wage war against the British forces. The equivalent figure for Britain would be over a million. It was therefore not unreasonable to assume that the British could be bombed to the negotiating table. It was after all the *only* way it had happened in the past.

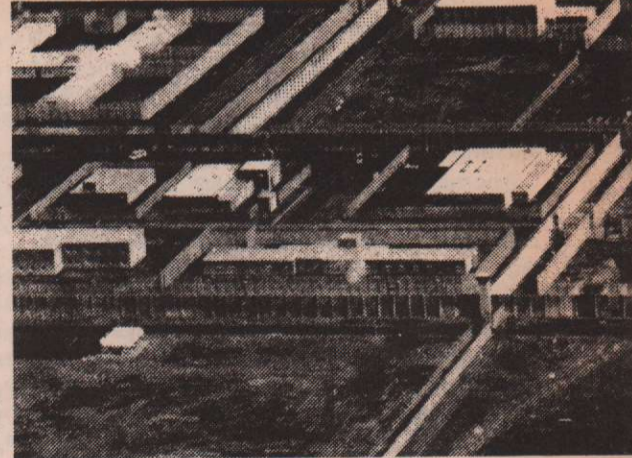
On the British side their political initiatives were in disarray. No one could seriously entertain any useful outcome from the Constitutional Convention. The British were under quite severe pressure to take some action. They had not managed to undermine in any serious way the Provisional IRA's ability to continue its military campaign. Their programme of 'Ulsterisation' required a wholesale reorganisation of the RUC. It still needed more time. This reorganisation, it should be remembered, was one of the key elements in Merlyn Rees's proposal of April 1974. Kenneth Newman, an ex-detective of the Palestine Police 1946-8 and an ex-Commander in the Metropolitan Police, had been brought to the Six Counties in September 1973 and was playing a central role in this reorganisation. He was concerned with the investigative and detective work of the RUC. The aim was to make the RUC into a force capable of gathering and using information of the kind needed to defeat the IRA and break the back of its support in the nationalist community. This reorganisation still had some way to go if it was to be effective. A truce would take the pressure off the security forces while it was completed. Newman was promoted to Chief Constable of the RUC in 1976. Together with Roy Mason he was to sanction a system of brutality and torture carried out in specially constructed interrogation centres. That system, a vicious assault on the nationalist minority, was the central component of British imperialist policy to defeat the IRA between 1976-1979. Newman gained a great deal of experience for the British ruling class during this period in the Six Counties of Ireland. That experience is now to be used in England. Less than one year after the uprisings in British cities in the summer of 1981,

Newman has been made Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

Steps towards a truce began when a Protestant clergyman Rev William Arlow made contact through Maire Drumm with the Provisional Army Council. The Provisionals knew that Rev Arlow was informally in touch with Sir Frank Cooper, Permanent Secretary and a key policy maker at the Northern Ireland Office at Stormont. Very soon a meeting was arranged at a small inconspicuous hotel at Feakle, Co Clare, on 10 December 1974. The Provisionals took the meeting very seriously. Rev Arlow, a number of Protestant clergymen and a retired Methodist headmaster, Stanley Worrall who had recently been in touch with Frank Cooper, met Ruairi O'Bradaigh, Maire Drumm, Seamus Loughran, Billy McKee, David O'Connell, Seamus Twomey, Kevin Mallon and J B O'Hagan - all key figures in the Provisional movement. Frank Cooper was informed that the meeting was to take place and although he declined to send an observer he asked to be kept informed. The meeting was however interrupted by a tip off from Dublin Castle that the Irish Special Branch was on its way. The members of the Provisional IRA on the run quickly disappeared, the others from Sinn Fein and the clergymen remained and waited for the Irish Special Branch to arrive. Discussions however had got under way despite the interruptions.

Secret and discreet negotiations continued around the possibility of a truce. Speculation was widespread. Provisional IRA sources in Dublin made it clear they had been offered nothing. They had made three demands: the withdrawal of British troops to barracks, an immediate end to internment and an acknowledgement of the right of the people of Ireland to control their own destiny. No ceasefire would take place while internment lasted and British troops continued to occupy Republican areas in the North. The

## Aerial view of the H-Blocks



Provisionals also demanded an increased opportunity to express their views both through negotiations with the British and through local political activity. The issue of the Price sisters was also raised. In June 1974 they had ended a hunger strike of 206 days - for 167 days of that period they had been forcibly fed - to demand transfer from Britain to a prison in the Six Counties. Roy Jenkins, Labour Home Secretary, had agreed when under pressure that they would serve the 'bulk of their long sentences near their homes in Northern Ireland'. So far no change had occurred.

On 15 December the Price sisters were moved from Brixton prison to Durham. Three months later they were transferred to Armagh gaol in the Six Counties. Negotiations continued with Rev Arlow acting as intermediary between the Provisional IRA Army Council and the British Northern Ireland Office. On 19 December the Ministry of Defence announced it would pay £41,717 to the relatives of the 13 people murdered by British soldiers on Bloody Sunday 30 January 1972, 'in a spirit of goodwill and conciliation'. The next day the Provisional Army Council announced a Christmas 'suspension of operations' from midnight Sunday 22 December to Thursday 2 January 1975. In a statement it said that the suspension of operations had been ordered on the 'clear understanding' that a positive response would be forthcoming from the British government. It was designed to give the British government an opportunity to consider proposals for a permanent ceasefire.

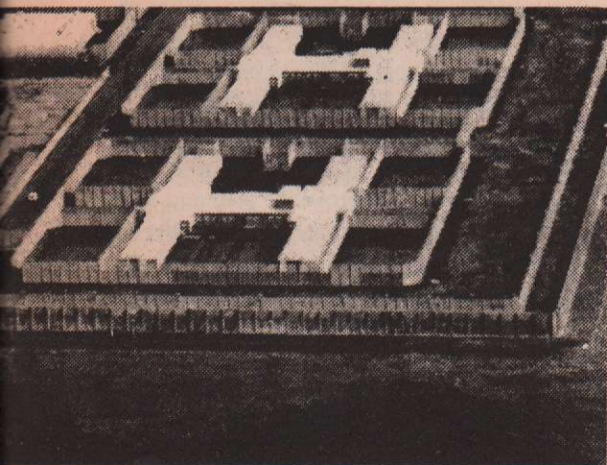


Rees offered nothing tangible in response to the ceasefire. In a statement on the same day he said that 'the actions of the security forces will be related to the level of any activity which may occur. No specific undertakings will be given'. However he ended by saying that 'a genuine and sustained cessation of violence over a period would create a new situation'. The Northern Ireland Office said it would not be pushed into releasing large numbers of detainees because of the unilateral ceasefire but promised a 'more relaxed atmosphere' over detention if the ceasefire were to be extended. The Provisional IRA continued with its military campaign right up to the ceasefire. Three hours before midnight 22 December a bomb was thrown at the London home of Edward Heath in Belgravia, blowing out the windows on the first floor balcony. At midnight the Provisional IRA ceasefire came into effect.

Not unexpectedly the loyalist politicians condemned the British government, which they accused of having negotiations with the IRA. Harry West, leader of the Official Unionist Party said that the IRA was on its last legs militarily. It desperately needed a breathing space to re-form and re-group. It had now been given one and 'it would set the cause of peace back many years if the security forces adopted a low profile'. Inevitably the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the DUP, accused the British government of accepting IRA 'conditions' for a truce. The Loyalists only wanted peace on their terms, that is, through a return of a Stormont government that would sustain loyalist supremacy. A little pressure came from the other side. On 27 December the *New Statesman* in an editorial 'An Ultimatum for Ulster' urged a start to the withdrawal of troops from Northern Ireland by 30 June 1975, coupled with the resignation of Merlyn Rees.

On 31 December Merlyn Rees announced the release of 20 detainees and offered a three day New Year parole to 50 others. This was hardly significant given that there were still well over 500 detainees. However he also said that 'if a genuine and sustained cessation of violence' occurred the government 'would not be found wanting in response', that he would give further details of how the army could make a planned, orderly and progressive reduction in its present commitment and that once violence had ceased it would become possible to release detainees progressively. On 1 January 1975 the Provisional IRA announced a two-week extension of the Christmas ceasefire.

On 9 January Rees rejected direct or indirect negotiations with the Provisional IRA. The IRA Army Council had no choice, it ended the ceasefire on 16 January saying there had been no response to the peace proposals and also an increase in British army activity. The Army Council also mentioned the fact that Rees had only released three detainees at Christmas, whereas the previous year (under a Tory administration) 65 had been released. The military campaign began again.



REPUBLICAN NEWS

Very quickly Rees and Cooper agreed to secret talks. On 19 January the Rev Arlow drove two Provisionals to a secret meeting with two British Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials, James Allan and Michael Oatly. Further pressure was applied on the British when more bombs went off in Belfast and a blast at Walthamstow pumping station left thousands of London homes without water. This was the first bomb in England for a month. Another meeting took place.

In the continuing talks the British negotiators said they believed the IRA was unable to control its Active Service Units in England. The IRA replied by stating that there would be a spate of bombings in Britain ending at midnight 27 January 1975. On 27 January six bombs went off in Manchester and London - after that there were no more explosions. The Provisionals had made it clear to the British that they could turn the bombs on or off as they wished and unless they were offered something tangible the talks would get nowhere. When Allan next met the two Provisionals he was authorised to offer terms. On 9 February 1975 the Provisional IRA Army Council announced an indefinite truce for 6pm the following day, 10 February.

A substantial agreement drawn up between the Provisional IRA and British government representatives lay behind the truce. There was no jointly signed document but both sides kept minutes of the discussion. The agreement included:

1. Detainees being progressively released over the next period. Internment without trial in fact ended in December 1975 - it was however to be replaced by judicial internment. Many of the internees were found jobs in government sponsored schemes in West Belfast.

2. British soldiers adopting a much lower profile in the Six Counties with large scale army searches in nationalist areas being abandoned. Specified Provisional IRA leaders were given immunity from arrest.

3. 'Incident centres' were set up with government money to monitor the ceasefire. Provisional Sinn Fein would run their own centres reporting breaches of the truce to the Northern Ireland Office. They would also use them to run community advice centres for local people. These advice centres angered the politicians of the SDLP who furiously complained that local control had been handed over to the Provisionals.

4. The Provisionals were given a verbal commitment of a planned and orderly British withdrawal from the Six Counties over a period of years. There was never to be a public commitment but there can be little doubt that a private assurance was given by the British representatives. The grounds for refusing a public commitment were the difficulties associated with the British commitment to the Unionists and the consequences for the British government of the dangers of a 'bloodbath' should they withdraw. The promise of withdrawal clearly did not have Cabinet sanction and came up at no meeting where Wilson was present. During further discussions between the two sides, evidence of the intention to withdraw was said to be the exclusion of Harland and Wolff, the Belfast shipyard, from the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill to be presented to parliament by Tony Benn. It was already known that Short Brothers and Harland, the Belfast planemakers, were not to be included - together these were two of the biggest British firms in the Six Counties. The same period was also to see the closure of five Government bases in Northern Ireland - an air traffic control centre, an FCO radio station, two RAF establishments and a Royal Navy depot. There was also the closure of the Belfast and Heysham ferry. The British government almost certainly intended these developments to be seen as symptoms of withdrawal.

On the basis of these and other commitments the truce went ahead and deaths and injuries on both sides dropped dramatically. The truce in fact never officially ended. It ultimately petered out in November 1975 with the closure of the 'incident centres'. Discussions between British representatives and the Provisionals however were to continue intermittently until July 1976. However, while these talks were taking place, the British were actively implementing the recommendations of the Gardiner Report - a crucial component of Ulsterisation.

### The Gardiner Report

The Gardiner Report was published on 30 January 1975. The committee was set up by Merlyn Rees, under the chairmanship of the Labour Peer, Lord Gardiner, to consider measures to deal with terrorism in Northern Ireland and to review the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1973. The first meeting took place on 19 June 1974 after the fall of the power-sharing Executive. Its meetings were held in private and it did not publish the evidence it received. It began by making its political assumptions clear. This was necessary, the Report said, because the work was being undertaken 'in something of a political vacuum' and at 'a time of growing questioning in Britain on the future relationship of Northern Ireland to the rest of the United Kingdom'. The first and most important was that

'Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom for the foreseeable future, whatever form of political devolution from Westminster to Stormont may eventually command consensus. It follows that the Government at Westminster and the people of Great Britain cannot divorce themselves from responsibility for the political, social and economic development of Northern Ireland.'

This assumption was not new. It was contained in all British reports on events in the Six Counties of Ireland. However it surely has added weight at a time when a truce was about to start based on a verbal commitment from representatives of the British government of 'a planned and orderly Brit-

ish withdrawal from Ireland over a period of years'. Something quite definitely concerned with 'the foreseeable future'. Other assumptions included security remaining the responsibility of the British government and the need for some form of power-sharing arrangement. The Constitutional Convention elections were to take place in May.

The Report gets down to business very quickly and is very precise where it matters. On 'Terrorism and Subversion' it states

'...terrorists who break the law...are not heroes but criminals, not the pioneers of political change but its direst enemies'.

The Report was published at a time when the British government was in the process of conducting serious political negotiations with the so-called 'terrorists' and 'criminals'. This is typical of imperialist hypocrisy and the lies which the British government reserves for the British public.



Sir Kenneth Newman

Gardiner strongly argued for continuing to use most of the important recommendations of the Diplock Commission embodied in the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1973. These recommendations have already been discussed and are a fundamental assault on basic civil liberties (see FRFI 17). On Diplock courts the Report had the effrontery to say

'But for the fact that there is no jury, the non-jury courts are ordinary courts, sitting in public with variations in the law of evidence which, on the whole, are not major ones'.

In a language only the British ruling class are capable of, Gardiner recommended these 'ordinary' courts, typical of imperialist justice, should continue. The Report also said that the 'increased success of the RUC in bringing prosecutions against alleged terrorists' had resulted in the average time spent in custody before trial increasing from 25 weeks in October 1973 to 35.5 weeks in September 1974. This was an official indication of the first stages of 'judicial internment'. A RUC prosecution meant at least nine months in custody before even being brought before a Diplock Court.

Gardiner recommended the continuation of Section 6 of the 1973 Act. This allowed a confession made by the accused to be admissible as evidence provided the court was satisfied that in all probability it was not obtained by torture or inhuman or degrading treatment. Given the 'court' amounted to a loyalist judge appointed and paid for by the British, it explains the so-called 'success' rate of the RUC. It was also the recommendation that led to the systematic torture of those arrested and brought to interrogation centres like Castle-reagh from 1976-1979 for the purpose of obtaining confessions.

The main new recommendation from Gardiner was the ending of Special Category status for political prisoners. This was a central feature of 'Ulsterisation'.

'Although recognising the pressures on those responsible at the time, we have come to the conclusion that the introduction of special category status was a serious mistake... We can see no justification for granting privileges to a large number of criminals convicted of very serious crimes, in many cases murder, merely because they claim political motivation. It supports their own view, which society must reject that their political motivation justified their crimes... We recommend that the earliest opportunity should be taken to end the special category.'

While the British government was recognising the political legitimacy of the IRA's struggle for

national liberation through the truce negotiations, the Gardiner Report was recommending far-reaching steps to take that political legitimacy away.

Finally in line with the ending of Special Category status, Gardiner advocated the building of the H-Blocks - a cellular system of prison accommodation, rather than the compound type which now housed some 71% of prisoners.

'Prisons of the compound type, each compound holding up to 90 prisoners, are thoroughly unsatisfactory from every point of view; their major disadvantage is a total loss of disciplinary control by the prison authorities inside the compounds...'

In the compounds, political prisoners wear their own clothes, receive extra visits, etc and are segregated according to the political organisations to which they belong. In the compounds the political prisoners through their leaders direct a great deal of the day to day activities in the prison. It was this that Gardiner wished to end. For it was a clear acknowledgement of the political character of the offences for which those inside had been detained. Those inside the compounds acted and were treated as 'prisoners of war' - for that was what they were and still are.

Gardiner reported that the prison population had risen from 727 at the beginning of 1968 to 2,848 in November 1974. It was clear that this fourfold rise in the number of prisoners was directly associated with the political conflict and therefore was primarily of a political character. Yet this was what Gardiner wished to deny. New prison accommodation was soon being built as the Labour government took active steps to implement the fundamental recommendations of Gardiner.

Gardiner did not recommend the ending of internment without trial because of the 'risks of increased violence', although he did say that internment could not 'remain a long-term policy'. The decision to end internment, the Report said, had to be made by the government. Much of the public debate centred around this aspect of the Report so obscuring its essential recommendation - the 'criminalisation' of the revolutionary national struggle to free Ireland from British rule.

### The truce breaks down

The Provisionals' representatives who were negotiating with the British at the time of the Gardiner Report told them that any attempt to remove Special Category status would be resisted by all means possible including the shooting of warders. Nevertheless the talks went on presumably because of the private assurances from the British representatives of an 'orderly and planned withdrawal' from Ireland. And they continued to the sound of building work progressing apace on the new cellular prisons. Tim Pat Coogan claims that the leaders of the different political organisations in the compounds were even allowed out of the prison to inspect the H-Blocks while they were being built. As a 'concession' in an attempt to make the abolition of Special Category status more acceptable, the British offered a fifty per cent remission of sentences to all prisoners. There could be little doubt what the British had in mind. The only 'withdrawal' they were considering was 'Ulsterisation', the 'primacy' of the paramilitary RUC and the UDR in maintaining the loyalist statelet.

During the truce deaths and injuries continued but seldom involved the Provisionals or the security forces. There was a feud between loyalist paramilitary organisations in this period and just before the main truce was declared Charles Harding-Smith of the West Belfast Brigade of the UDA was shot. As during the first truce in 1972, the loyalist assassination and bombing squads moved into action during the period of the truce, and in the first five months of 1975 35 Catholics were murdered. The greatest number of sectarian killings have always occurred when IRA activity has been low. And they mostly result from the activities of loyalist assassination and bombing squads.

At the end of 1974 a split occurred in the Official IRA and the Irish Republican Socialist Party was formed. The IRSP had been formed mainly by those who had left the Officials in protest against the organisation's ceasefire and increasing collaboration with British imperialism. Derry Officials went over to the IRSP en bloc. The military wing of the IRSP, the Irish National Liberation Army, arose out of a bloody feud with the Official IRA in Belfast just after the truce began. When the Belfast

continued over page

The chauvinism and expansionism of the French regime had caused a war with Prussia. Prussia was winning and advancing into France, and the Paris 'deputies' (MPs) formed a 'Government of National Defence'. The working class stood firmly behind them, in full force since the great majority of the men were in the National Guard and armed to defend their city.

Four months later, starving, Paris surrendered, or rather the bourgeois politicians did. But the National Guard did not hand over its guns, and continued to assert its authority over most of Paris. The politicians, safely re-assembled in Versailles, tried to disarm the National Guard and steal the guns that the Parisian workers had paid for themselves. As long as the working class was armed, the bourgeoisie could not feel safe. The whole working class mobilised and civil war was declared between Paris and the French Government. That is how the Commune came to be elected: to run the affairs of Paris by the Parisians themselves...

The workers took several decisions of crucial importance for self-government. Firstly they abolished the army as it existed, and made the National Guard the only armed force: ie an army of all citizens capable of carrying arms. Then they decided that no-one would earn more than a set wage. The most important officials in the Commune would receive a salary no higher than any other worker.

What is more, every official in the administration, including judges and magistrates, the State institutions would become the servants of society instead of the masters. The State would be the property of the working class, not the tool to crush and enslave it. No longer could someone claiming to serve the people rise up on their backs and enjoy the power and wealth of a State functionary. All the officials would be truly responsible to the people who had elected them—and not just at election time. As Karl Marx put it

'Instead of deciding once in three or

# ANNIVERSARY



# THE PARIS COMMUNE

**On 28 March 1871 the Paris Commune was proclaimed. For two months the Parisian working class ruled themselves in the first organised attempt at workers' power. Ever since then the Commune has been a model of revolutionary heroism rich in lessons for all future generations.**

six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people...

The Commune also acted to get rid of Church repression, by removing its influence over the schools. Religion was to be a matter of private conscience, not forced down children's throats as part of their education. Priests were no longer paid from taxes either. Instead the parishioners would support them.

The Commune also used its political power to try to reorganise industry—planning to open all the factories which had closed, to be run by the workers themselves in cooperative societies. In one decree after another the Commune acted directly in the interests of the working class: abolishing night work for bakers, closing down pawnshops, shutting the corrupt employment offices, banning employers' fining workers out of their wages. It made some deeply political gestures, like

burning the guillotine, and demolishing the Victory Column that Napoleon had made from captured guns. To the Communards this was a symbol of chauvinism and incitement to national hatred, while for them 'the flag of the Commune is the flag of the World Republic'.

When the bourgeois army finally crushed the Commune they massacred thousands of these heroic men, women and children. They hounded those who escaped, branding them as Red extremists, murderers, traitors etc. In fact if the Commune had a fault it was that of being too 'reasonable'. While the bourgeois army shot dead the Communards it captured, the workers did not even imprison its hostages. While in full command of Paris they did not touch the Bank—which would have given them a lot more power in negotiation. Many of their plans they could not accomplish in their besieged city, fighting to the death against the bourgeois army. But they showed the possi-

bilities for the working class movement of the future. They had to work out their needs as they went along but some of their lessons never have to be learned again. The revolutionary movement knows from the Communards' experience that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'. (Marx)

It is only the false 'Communists' of the Communist Party and their allies in the Labour Party who pour scorn on the idea of destroying the State, and claim it can be reformed in the interests of the working class. They try to brand us as 'extremists' and 'ultraleftists' but they have forgotten that Engels himself drew this lesson from the Paris Commune:

'The state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy; and at best an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at once as much as possible until such time as a generation reared in new, free social con-

ditions is able to throw the entire lumber of the state on the scrap heap.'

The thousands of misguided supporters of Mitterrand in France have refused this lesson, but will see all too soon that no 'Socialist' government will act in the interests of the working class as long as the capitalist state has not been overthrown. There will be a similar rude awakening for all those 'leftwingers' clinging to the Labour Party as their chosen road to socialism.

Let us remember our heritage this month and salute the martyrs of the Commune who did not die in vain, all those years ago. As Engels wrote on the 20th anniversary of the Commune: 'Look at the Paris Commune. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat.'

**Sheila Marston**

Further reading  
Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* 30p + 25p p&p  
V I Lenin, *The State and Revolution* 40p + 25p p&p  
Lissagary, *History of the Paris Commune* £3.50 + 50p p&p  
All these are available from Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX. Please make cheques or POs payable to Larkin Publications.

## COMMUNIST TRADITION ON IRELAND CONTINUED

IRSP members left the Officials they took their weapons with them to supply the armoury of INLA. The Officials attempted to wipe out IRSP/INLA before it got off the ground, pistol-whipping and kneecapping its members and, on 20 February, shooting dead Hugh Ferguson. The Official IRA, while refusing to take up arms against British imperialism, were however quite prepared to use their arms against the IRSP and INLA. After Ferguson's death INLA hit back. The battles went on until May as the Officials tried unsuccessfully to put down what they regarded as a mutiny. In October and November 1975 the Officials through a series of provocations in Belfast caused another feud this time with the Provisional IRA. Before this came to an end eleven people had been killed and fifty wounded. Little wonder that in 1977 Long Lartin POWs, in a debate on socialism and nationalism, described the Official IRA as 'a bunch of mixed-up, left-wing social democrats who happen to have arms which occasionally they use against Republicans'.

From January to April 1975 according to David O'Connell there was a conscious effort on the part of the military to observe the truce but on the part of the police there was a conscious effort to wreck it. RUC Chief Constable Flanagan refused to adopt a low profile and far from making his men less visible, he pulled them in from all over the Six Counties to send them into the nationalist West Belfast. Violations of the truce increased and the Provisionals began to retaliate although both sides continued to insist they would observe the truce. By October 1975 the Provisionals had logged over 1,500 violations of the truce in Belfast alone.

'Apart from raids, arrests, searches, harassment of the local population in nationalist areas, the British army committed several murders'.

The Convention elections in May 1975 had made it clear, to even the most optimistic liberal dreamers, that no political compromise was achievable. After this and the Gardiner Report, the British declaration of an intent to withdraw was rapidly being exposed for the cynical deceit it always was. The bombing campaign in England was reactivated in September to remind the British of the price of refusing to withdraw. It was to no avail. The war began again. The truce was now more nominal than real. In the first fortnight of November the incident centres were closed down. The Provisionals continued to use theirs as advice centres. The same month Merlyn Rees made a key announcement in the House of Commons. After 1 March 1976 Special Category status would no longer apply to anyone convicted of offences committed after that date. There would be no further flow of new prisoners to the compounds but existing prisoners would retain most of the privileges associated with Special Category. On 5 December 1975 the last internees were released from Long Kesh. By the end of 1975 a new legal and judicial framework existed for putting Republicans away. Judicial internment replaced detention without trial. Diplock together with Gardiner was to make the struggle in the prisons the central political issue over the next six years.

Even as late as the end of October 1975 there were those in the Republican Movement who believed that British disengagement from Northern Ireland was 'now inevitable'. This was based on an underestimation of the political importance for British imperialism of its occupation of the Six Counties of Ireland. The 'economic cost' to British imperialism was not the ultimate consideration. The revolution in Ireland, as Marx and Engels argued over 100 years ago (see FRFI 7), posed a critical threat to the stability of British imperialism not only in Ireland but also in Britain. The Irish revolution is the key to the British revolution.

Merlyn Rees instinctively recognised this fact when he said during the Constitutional Convention

debate in the House of Commons in the speech already quoted, that British withdrawal would lead to the violence spreading to Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. A J Beith, then Northern Ireland Spokesman for the Liberal Party blurted out something along the same lines in the same debate when he said

'I do not see how we can contemplate creating something akin to Angola 20 miles off our own shores...'

T E Uteley at the time a leader writer for the *Daily Telegraph* gave expression to the nightmare that haunts the ruling class in relation to Ireland

'... The instant withdrawal of British Troops... would plunge the whole of Ireland into anarchy on a scale hitherto unimagined. Whatever side emerged victorious would almost certainly be anti-British and would tend to look for support to Britain's enemies.

... British security is hardly compatible with the existence of a Cuba a few miles from her Western shores...'

Finally it was left to John Biggs-Davidson to voice the essential connection

'What happens in Londonderry is very relevant to what can happen in London, and if we lose in Belfast, we may have to fight in Brixton or Birmingham. Just as Spain in the thirties was a rehearsal for a wider European conflict so perhaps what is happening in Northern Ireland is a rehearsal for urban guerrilla war more widely in Europe, particularly in Britain.'

The Republican movement itself later recognised that the belief in a British withdrawal, which was the main factor in the lengthy truce, was a mistake. In 1977, delivering the keynote Bodenstown oration, Jimmy Drumm stated:

'The British government is NOT withdrawing from the Six Counties and the substantial pull-

out of businesses and closing down of factories in 1975 and 1976 [the period of the truce] were due to world economic recession though mistakenly attributed to symptoms of withdrawal.

Indeed the British government is committed to stabilising the Six Counties and is pouring in vast sums of money to improve the area and assure loyalists' support for a long haul against the Irish Republican Army.'

That the truce was a mistake was strongly hinted at in 1978 in an interview given by a senior member of the IRA leadership on behalf of the Army Council:

'There is absolutely no question of another ceasefire or truce. In my opinion the last one went on far too long and it would be almost impossible for anybody to persuade the volunteers that another one would be in the interests of the movement or its objectives.'

The objective effect of the truce for the British was to give them valuable breathing space in which to re-organise RUC/British army intelligence gathering. This resulted in significant damage to the IRA. To such an extent that the IRA in 1977-8 were obliged to carry out a major, and successful re-organisation establishing the present cell structure. As the Army Council spokesman said in the same interview

'The reason for this was that the British were penetrating the old structure, which was too susceptible to good intelligence work.'

During its first two years of office, the British Labour government had laid the basis for, and was now to administer a regime of terror known as 'Ulsterisation'—yet another attempt to destroy the armed vanguard of the Irish revolution, the IRA.

**David Reed**  
March 1982  
*To be continued*

# CENTRAL AMERICA IN BRIEF



**FMLN Guerrillas blow up minibus in San Salvador**

continued from page 1

## Nicaragua

Revolutionary Nicaragua has been imperialism's first target. Described by the revolutionaries as 'verbal terrorism', the US State Department and the CIA are orchestrating a massive campaign of staggering lies and deceptions. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, US Ambassador to the United Nations opened the latest stage of this campaign in March with the declaration that:

'Nicaragua probably stands in the first place as a human rights violator in the region... [the Sandinista government] has carried out a campaign of systematic violence against the Miskito Indians...'

President Reagan has spoken of 'men, women and children killed', while the US Secretary of State Mr Haig referred to 'atrocious genocidal actions'. Challenged to produce evidence, the US Administration offered one photograph from a French newspaper, *Le Figaro*, which on *Le Figaro's* own admission was taken four years ago under the Somoza tyranny! Despite repeated exposure of such lies, the tirade against Nicaragua continues and all the while Reagan and his criminal gangsters are silent over the 30,000 El Salvadoran workers and peasants murdered, tortured, raped and killed by an army trained and supplied by US imperialism. They pass over in silence the 13,500 Guatemalan workers and peasants murdered in 1981 by the US-backed junta.

The Sandinista revolutionaries, who overthrew the US puppet Somoza in July 1979, have set about eliminating the heritage left by US imperialism - an infant mortality rate of 46 per thousand, 57% illiteracy, 40% unemployment, life expectancy of 53 years and a country in which the bottom 50% of the population shared only 15% of GDP, the remainder going largely to imperialist multinationals, banks and the local ruling class and its agents. Imperialist capital is free no more to rob and plunder the Nicaraguan people who, since their revolution, have eliminated illiteracy and taken great strides in the organisation of workers and peasants, the provision of health, social and educational care. The US government has cut off all economic assistance in the hope of starving the people into submission. It has armed and trained ex-Somoza National Guards with \$19m of CIA funds. On the weekend of 13/14 March, imperialist mercenaries destroyed two important bridges in Nicaragua while other criminal bands operating from Honduras have killed Nicaraguan soldiers and civilians. US imperialism supported by European NATO states has carried out naval manoeuvres in the area and stationed an electronic spy ship in preparation for an invasion of the country. Repeatedly US government spokesmen have refused to

rule out a direct US military intervention.

Responding to this aggression, thousands upon thousands of Nicaraguan peasants and workers are joining the people's militia in readiness to defend revolutionary Nicaragua - symbol of successful anti-imperialist revolution.

## El Salvador

The imperialist propaganda campaign against Nicaragua is also being used to justify US intervention in El Salvador. CIA director, Mr Casey said on 1 March:

'This whole El Salvador insurgency is run out of Managua (Nicaragua's capital) by professionals experienced in directing guerrilla wars.'

Needless to say he produced no evidence. CIA and State Department lies and bluster are designed also to conceal the serious reversals the junta has suffered at the hands of the FMLN. Repeated and major offensives against the FMLN strongholds have ended in dismal failure. After the February offensive against the FMLN on the Guazapa volcano, retreating junta soldiers were informed by their commanding officer: 'You are perhaps most lucky just to be alive'. The FMLN offensive stretching from Santa Ana in the west to San Miguel in the east, from Chalatenango in the north to Usulután in the south and now taking in the capital San Salvador too, is doing devastating damage to the junta's army, to the ruling class's morale and to the capitalist economy.

The Salvadoran army is incapable of sustaining the war without an immediate injection of \$80m more US aid. US imperialism is having to train two more rapid deployment battalions which will need 30 helicopters for which the junta has neither pilots nor maintenance facilities. The desperate position of the junta is turning it to even more brutal genocide against the people. During the Guazapa campaign General Garcia, leading the offensive, declared the entire population of the area 'subversives' and therefore legitimate targets for junta bullets, napalm and bombs.

In the heat of the battle, amidst the vicious brutality of the junta's army, the class character of this war should not be lost sight of. US imperialism is defending a dependent capitalist system in which only 16% of the population has full time employment, 75% of children under the age of 5 suffer severe malnutrition, 61% of the people have no sanitary facilities. In San Salvador 50% of the workers live in mud or tin shacks. Whilst the majority of the people are poor peasants, 60% of the best land is owned by 14 families growing tobacco and coffee for export whilst the peasants starve. It is to overthrow these

conditions that the FMLN is leading the workers and peasants of El Salvador in the battle against imperialism. And it is in defence of a vicious dependent capitalist state that allows imperialist multinationals massive profits, that US imperialism along with British imperialism is backing one of the bloodiest regimes of the day.

In its attempts to crush the revolution, the US government is openly encouraging fascist Argentina and Zionist Israel to send assistance to the junta. Israel has already sent teams of 'experts'



in sabotage and psychological warfare to El Salvador whilst the Argentinian regime is preparing to send troops to the aid of the regime. The US government is stopping at nothing. Following a poll indicating that 70% of the US population opposed direct US intervention in El Salvador, Mr Haig announced on TV that:

'... the conduct of American foreign policy cannot be (based on) the lowest common denominator of the populist view of our people.'

This cynical disregard for the views of the American people comes from a politician who readily denounces Nicaragua for being 'anti-democratic' and 'totalitarian'. This 'democratic' gangster set up farcical elections in El Salvador on 28 March in which communists, socialists and democrats could not participate and which they boycotted.

These elections, designed solely to give 'democratic' credibility to further US arms supplies to El Salvador were nevertheless supported and given legitimacy by the Pope, the Red Cross and British imperialism. The Pope, active in counter-revolutionary moves against socialist Poland, issued an appeal to the Salvadoran people not to boycott the elections, but to accept them as just. And the President of the Red Cross declared of one of its candidates, the current murderer President Duarte:

'I have discovered in Mr Duarte an authentic democrat...'

The British Government was the only European state to send observers to the

'elections' despite appeals from revolutionaries, and amidst the most horrible murder of El Salvador's workers and peasants. Meanwhile British Barclays, Lloyds, National Westminster and Midland banks in yet a further demonstration of their bloodsucking nature have denied normal free Giro facilities to the Disasters Emergency Committee collecting for Salvadoran refugees, on the grounds that:

'... being seen to be too closely involved might offend the countries where they are doing business.'

And whilst Reagan promotes a murderous war against the revolution in El Salvador and Central America, the British Government has invited him to address the House of Commons. What more fitting spectacle of the unity of British and US imperialism against revolution.

The steely determination of the FMLN will nevertheless overcome all manoeuvres and aggression. Already the successes of the FMLN have forced the US State Department to consider getting round the negotiating table. Whether an admission of weakness or yet another ploy, this proves that all the military backing to the junta has come to nothing and the FMLN goes from strength to strength.

## Guatemala

The task of the FMLN is today made easier by the advancing revolution in Guatemala. On 8 February, Guatemalan armed revolutionary organisations occupied three radio stations in Guatemala City and announced the formation of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union. In their statement they said that the armed struggle in 1981:

'... moved from the stage of taking over villages and farms to taking over municipal centres and provincial capitals. We moved from armed propaganda actions to general harassment and we began to systematise our operations.'

Evidence for this came during the 7 March 'elections'. These were, in line with a call from the revolutionary leadership, boycotted by 70% of the people. Prior to and during the election the revolutionaries blew up bridges and blocked highways. In one case, the Pan American Highway, the revolutionaries chopped down pine trees four miles along the highway and prevented its use for days! On election day junta radio broadcasts were interrupted as the revolutionaries transmitted revolutionary songs and appeals for a boycott.

The desperate position of the Guatemalan ruling class and junta was revealed after the elections when its different factions started accusing the junta of 'fraudulent elections', and came to blows on the streets. Meanwhile both generals and rich businessmen are rapidly sending out their wealth in anticipation of worse times ahead for the ruling class and imperialism in Guatemala. President Reagan and Mr Haig have also declared that the loss of Guatemala (to imperialism) would be a more serious blow to imperialism than that of El Salvador, and have cited Guatemalan oil and natural riches as evidence for this, as well as the fact that Guatemala bordering on Mexico could ignite the Mexican revolution. So Reagan is urgently attempting to get Congressional approval for a resumption of military aid to the junta without which it will not survive. Meanwhile Zionist Israel remains the regime's main supplier of arms, transport equipment, ammunition and technological facilities, assisted by fascist Argentina.

## Walter Rodney Inquiry

The revolutionary Guyanese historian and Working People's Alliance leader, Walter Rodney, was killed by a car bomb on June 1980. No inquest has ever been held and the Guyana Government has even gone to the lengths of jailing Walter's brother, Donald, for alleged 'possession of explosives'. All available evidence points to the Guyana Government itself as responsible for the killing. A committee has been formed to press for an independent international inquiry. Donations and requests for information should be sent to: Rodney Campaign Committee, 24 Park Farm Close, London N2.

## Costa Rica

Costa Rica has a population of 2m. Its government supports US imperialism. The average income per person per year is £290 (ie £5.50 per week). The government is in debt to imperialists to the tune of £2,220m: the highest per capita debt of any country in the world. Upon the orders of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other bankers, the new President-elect, Senor Monge, has announced a '100 day emergency programme' which will mean a greater reduction in living standards, increasing poverty, and greater repression against the people.

## Grenada: revolutionary unity

On 13 March, at Hammersmith Town Hall a historic meeting addressed by Cuban, Nicaraguan, El Salvadoran and Grenadian revolutionaries took place before an audience of over 500 people. The occasion was the 3rd Anniversary celebration of the Grenadian revolution. Fennis Augustine, who spoke on behalf of the Grenada High Commission, declared that revolutionary Grenada sided with the struggling oppressed of Southern Africa, of the PLO in Palestine, of the Polisario and stood with the other peoples of Central America as well as revolutionaries in Iran and millions of people fighting imperialism throughout the world.

Imperialism has declared its true interest in Central America - opposition at any cost to the popular democratic revolution being fought by the working class and peasant masses of the region. Mr Haig speaking on the relation between the Central American revolution and US imperialism's counter-revolutionary war against Vietnam said:

'... the Central American case is very, very different... this is a profound challenge to the security of our hemisphere, to the whole character of the southern hemisphere, its political orientation and its compatibility with traditional hemispheric values.'

In other words, it is a challenge to the capitalist, imperialist 'traditions', 'orientations', and 'values', it is a challenge in the name of social revolution, in the name of progress, democracy and socialism. And it is a challenge being made with tremendous success despite terrible suffering and terrible sacrifice.

As the war becomes more bitter, as imperialism becomes more savage and barbaric in its attempts to destroy the Central American revolution, communists, democrats and all progressive people in Britain have a duty to mobilise their strength and energy to stop British imperialist collaboration in the counter-revolutionary war being waged against one of the most heroic fronts of the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle.

Eddie Abrahams

# HANDS OFF IRELAND IN BRIEF

## ● 'Free State' collaborates

The Free State puppet regime has once again revealed the complete dependence of the 26 County neo-colony on its imperialist British master. The person at the centre of the latest demonstration is Irishman Gerard Tuite, who staged a dramatic escape from London's Brixton jail in December 1980.

On 4 March, gardai raided a flat in Drogheda County Louth, arrested the British 'Public Enemy No 1' as Tuite had been dubbed, and preferred him before the Special Criminal Court on 6 March, to face charges in connection with explosive offences alleged to have been committed in Britain.

Tuite's arrest and charging were in direct response to a request from the British Director of Public Prosecutions. They hold particular significance in that for the first time since the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act was introduced in 1976, a person is being charged with offences alleged to have been committed on the British mainland.

The purpose of the 1976 Act was to circumvent a ban on extradition for political offences, with reference to the security of the states, north and south of the Border. The new interpretation has been adduced as part of expanding collaboration with British imperialism and advancing imperialist designs on Ireland.

Morrigan

## ● 'Free State' justice

Consistent application of the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act 1976 has led to the jailing of four more of the 8 Republicans who staged a spectacular escape from the confines of Crumlin Road prison in June 1981. The total number of Crumlin Road escapees now in jail in the south under the Act has, therefore, risen to six. Only Gerard Sloan and Joe Doherty have managed so far to evade recapture.

During the month of February last, the non-jury Special Criminal Court became a focus because of evidence supplied by RUC men and prison warders who were specially escorted across the border for that purpose. The evidence of a proven force of torturers was used to substantiate charges of the Republicans having broken out of jail whilst on remand. The Special Court's verdict being a formality it proceeded to impose sentences of ten years penal servitude on Angelo Fusco, Michael McKee, Paul Magee and Anthony Sloan.

In sharp contrast to the sustained repression of Republicans the Free State authorities have been releasing on 'humanitarian' grounds convicted loyalist paramilitants and self-confessed British spies. UDA man Frederick Parkinson had served less than five years of a twelve year sentence imposed for firebombing in Dublin at Easter 1977, when the Free State 'Justice' Department intervened to order his release. Representations had been made to the government by the sectarian UDA and backed up by prominent bourgeois politicians of one of the (then) government parties.

Last September the Coalition government extended the maximum remission normally allowed for good behaviour to effect the release of the Littlejohn brothers. Hypocritically the government gave as its reasons the severity of incarceration whereby the Littlejohns were compelled to associate with 'ordinary' criminals, whilst opposing the H-Blocks POWs' demands, including one on association.

Morrigan

## ● British terror

Dramatic evidence of the way in which the British Army uses loyalist gangs to carry out its dirty work was revealed by a loyalist killer himself after a recent trial in Belfast in which three UDA men were convicted of murdering John Turnley, a prominent H-Blocks activist, who was shot dead in June 1980.

At the conclusion of the trial one of the three men, Robert McConnell, stood up in court and read out a statement in which he gave details of how two members of the SAS had supplied him with weapons and other equipment and had discussed with him the activities of H-Blocks activists such as John Turnley, Miriam Daly and Bernadette McAliskey. Miriam Daly was also assassinated in June 1980, two other leading IRSP members and

H-Blocks activists - Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle - were assassinated on October of that year, while an assassination attempt was made on Bernadette McAliskey at the beginning of 1981.

In all these cases there were strong suspicions at the time that they were the work of undercover British Army assassination squads or at least were done with the help and co-operation of the official 'security forces' - those suspicions have now been shown to have been only too well founded.

Irish Correspondent

## ● March Commemorates Hunger Strike

On 28 February several thousand people marched in Belfast to commemorate the start of the hunger strike last year. Many more people lined the route of the march to Andersonstown and joined the marchers as they passed by. The size of the march showed that the nationalist people remain undaunted despite all the repression and suffering which has been inflicted on them over the past few months since the end of the hunger strike.

The speeches at the rally after the march reflected the mood of defiance among the marchers. The first speaker, Mrs Margaret Doherty, mother of murdered hunger-striker Kieran Doherty, thanked all those who had given their support during the hunger strike and urged people to continue to work in support of the prisoners. Statements from the prisoners in Long Kesh and Armagh which were read out at the rally likewise reminded people that they must remain vigilant to ensure that the demands of the prisoners were met by the British government.

Chris McKenna, speaking for Youth Against H-Block and Armagh, received great applause when he said:

'As we grow up as youth, we see people incarcerated in the filthy holes of British jails, we've seen too often the murder, hate and imprisonment of our people. And we say to Maggie Thatcher today: "We will not be put down!" Like the poster says: "She may kill the revolutionary, but never the revolution". We know there's a war in this country and we will show Prior and Thatcher and all the other British lackeys that we, the Irish people and the Irish youth, will never be put down!'

Finally, Richard McAuley of Belfast Sinn Fein urged the crowd to remember not only the hunger-strikers but all those who had given their lives in the course of the struggle. He went on:

'Be true to their memory. Be true to their objectives and remember that no matter how long the road nor how many setbacks might assail us we shall, on this occasion, finish once and for all the centuries' old struggle against Britain.'

Irish Correspondent

## ● SWFP sinks into Haughey's gutter

The degeneration of the pro-imperialist Sinn Fein - The Workers Party reached yet another low point following the election of 3 SWFP TDs to the 'Free State' Dail. The SWFP are taking over the role of the openly exposed Irish Labour Party which has betrayed the Irish working class time and time again, particularly in its alliance with the ex-Blueshirt Fine Gael party.

With their 3 members, the SWFP effectively holds the balance of power. They are using this power to support British rule in the Six Counties of northern Ireland. Haughey who desperately needed votes if he was to again become Irish Premier negotiated and got the SWFP vote. In return the SWFP demanded that Haughey give no support to 'coercion' against the 'majority' in the North - that is that Haughey does nothing to upset British imperialism and Loyalism, that Haughey support 'devolution' in the Six Counties - that is the restoration of Stormont and that Haughey does not 'interfere' with 'British initiatives' - that is that Haughey accept without any objection all British imperialist plans for Ireland.

The SWFP now acts openly as a broker for British imperialism in the supposedly 'independent' 26 Counties.

James Martin

# 1200 SIGN NORTH LONDON PETITION

The NLISC petition campaign is going from strength to strength. The petition, which calls for the right of the Irish people to self-determination and for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, now has over 1200 signatures. And the figure is growing every week. Indeed supporters of the petition's demands from outside London have now started to collect signatures. A supporter from Yorkshire recently returned a petition sheet filled in along with a generous donation, while another from Edinburgh wrote to the NLISC asking for copies. In London many workers are now taking copies away to get their friends to sign it.

Whilst ordinary British workers are readily signing the petition and showing their support for Irish self-determination, 'left' Labour MPs touted around by the middle class socialists as 'friends of the Irish people' have joined the list of shame and refused to sign. They include Tony Benn, Reg Race, Sydney Bidwell, Alf Dubbs and others. Mr Alan Sapper of the TUC, who declares himself 'a Marxist' (!?) refused to sign because, he said, 'the right wing of the TUC' would have 'my guts for garters'!

Signatories now include Fennis Aug-

ustine (Grenadian High Commission), Ken Livingstone (leader of the GLC), Steve Bundred and 21 other GLC Labour Councillors and Martin Jacques (Editor of Marxism Today, the journal of the CPGB).

The NLISC urges all readers of FRFI to write in, collect petition signatures and build support for Irish self-determination. Copies of the petition can be obtained from NLISC Petition, BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX.

Mark Peters

# MAY DEMONSTRATION

A national demonstration has been called in London on Saturday 8 May to commemorate the first anniversary of the heroic sacrifice of IRA Volunteer Bobby Sands and his nine IRA/INLA comrades murdered in the hunger strike last year.

This march should be an important opportunity to gather together all those prepared to conduct systematic active work in solidarity with the Irish people's struggle. Unfortunately the present methods of the 8th May Organising Committee are designed to prevent a successful march and thus undermine any campaign. For the Organising Committee has decided to exclude the very forces who have been conducting systematic work on the streets among the most oppressed sections of the working class ever since the end of the hunger strike.

The Organising Committee - comprising TOM, LCI, Sinn Fein, IRSP, IWA (GB), Veterans Against the War - has decided to exclude all other organisations and individuals from the committee. This decision is sectarian, undemocratic and threatens the success of the march itself.

At a meeting of sponsors (RCG,

NLISC and SLISC have all agreed to sponsor the march) on Thursday 11 March sponsoring organisations were told outright that they had no rights and the meeting could make no decisions. The NLISC called for the Organising Committee to be an open body. The discussion on this was terminated by the moving of next business. The NLISC put forward the following proposal: That the 8th May Organising Committee be open to all groups and individuals committed to building the demonstration. This was rejected by 11 votes to 6 with 9 people abstaining.

Since then the Organising Committee has decided to maintain its sectarian and destructive course. It has even formally taken a decision not to reply to any letters from the NLISC! Whatever happens RCG and FRFI supporters will continue to fight for support for the 8 May demonstration.

Terry Marlowe

# TERRORISING ACT

The Prevention of Terrorism Act has been renewed yet again in order to harass, detain, deport and terrorise thousands and thousands of Irish people. The PTA exists to prevent the Irish community in Britain from supporting the anti-imperialist struggle.

It was the Labour Party that introduced the PTA in 1974. Today it opposes it.

The nature of the Labour Party's 'opposition' is shown in Roy Hattersley's remark that 'the Act's existence is consciously exploited by law and order opponents [anyone who supports democracy] who continue to say that the British Government are behaving in a way which is, in itself, a threat to the freedom that the British Government claims to protect.' Support for the crushing of 'terrorism', anti-imperialist struggle, might be put in jeopardy. Hattersley's opposition was so profound that he abstained!

But token opposition was shown. Some 50 Labour MPs voted against the PTA. One of these was a mistake. Austin Mitchell went into the wrong lobby and found himself voting against! None of those who voted against attacked British rule in Ireland - they attacked the IRA. 'The Act is a recruiting Sergeant-Major for the IRA' said Robert Parry so he voted against.

The PTA is an imperialist terror weapon. It will exist as long as the imperialists need it. The PTA is part and parcel of the imperialist war against the Irish people.

A Greene

# GIFAC

GLASGOW IRISH FREEDOM  
ACTION COMMITTEE

## ● Defend Donny Bowers

Donny Bowers from Royston Hill Glasgow has a proven record of supporting the struggle of the Irish people. As a result he has faced continual police harassment and was only recently imprisoned for the 'crime' of flying an Irish Tricolour.

On Saturday 20 February Donny was arrested while taking part in a Victory To The Irish People! demonstration organised by the Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee (GIFAC). He was twice assaulted by the police while being arrested for wearing a balaclava. This outrageous police harassment has provoked widespread anger among the local community. Over 300 people have signed a petition calling for the charges against Donny to be dropped and numerous people have come forward to be defence witnesses should this case ever go to court.

GIFAC have lodged a complaint with the police over this wrongful arrest and Michael Martin MP and the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties have expressed an interest in the case.

Write to the Procurator Fiscal, Clyde Street, Glasgow demanding the dropping of the charges - send copies of your letters to GIFAC, Box 15, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.

**Defend Donny Bowers!**  
**Drop the Charges**

## ● Strathclyde Regional Council - Liars

In an attempt to silence the widespread support that exists in the West of Scotland for the Irish liberation struggle, the Labour controlled Strathclyde Regional Council (SRC) have banned the use of their property, schools etc, for all meetings in Ireland. This ban is a direct attack on the basic democratic right of political free speech on Ireland. The SRC, recognising the widespread public anger that would follow if their ban was made public, launched a cover-up to hide their undemocratic policy. On 3 occasions, while refusing permission to the Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee (GIFAC) to use Council property, the SRC lied about the reason for their refusal. It was only after receiving a formal letter of complaint from the GIFAC accompanied by a letter from Neil Carmichael MP, that the SRC admitted that as a matter of routine it banned all meetings on 'Irish affairs'.

The GIFAC has launched a public campaign to have this political censorship ended. Already the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties, Neil Carmichael MP, Michael Martin MP and Ron Brown MP have expressed an interest in this campaign, while Regional Councillor Ian S Davidson has agreed to raise the question on the Council's Education Committee.

The GIFAC urges all anti-imperialists to write to the Chief Executive, Strathclyde Regional Council, Glasgow demanding that they stop their undemocratic political censorship.

We also call on all anti-imperialist organisations, MPs and Councillors to endorse this following statement: 'We, the undersigned, believe that the right to political freedom of speech should be defended. We therefore condemn the policy of the Strathclyde Regional Council to lift its ban on the meetings.'

Write to GIFAC, Box 15, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh with copies of your correspondence.

**End Political Censorship on Ireland!**

**Victory To The Irish People!**  
**Mike Henderson - GIFAC**

**NATIONAL  
DEMONSTRATION  
Get Britain Out of  
Ireland!**

**Self-Determination  
for the Irish People!  
Saturday 8 May  
London**

**Called by May 8th  
Demonstration  
Organising Committee**

**FRFI** There has clearly been a massive increase in repression over the past three or four months since the end of the hunger strike and recently especially there has been a wave of arrests in nationalist areas. In view of this how would you assess the current situation in the Six Counties?

**IRA** The increase in repression comes as no surprise to me – it was an inevitable reaction of the Brits to the effect of the hunger strike and the whole prison campaign which had developed over the past few years.

**FRFI** Do you think it was a reaction specifically in relation to the hunger strike or to the general development of the Republican Movement?

**IRA** There is no doubt that the Republican Movement has developed considerably over the past few years. The last determined effort to break the Republican Movement was by Mason and the Labour government, with the introduction of the H-Blocks, the Diplock courts and the Castlereagh-type interrogation centres. This criminalisation strategy, with the ending of political status, was the greatest attempt so far by the Brits to 'normalise' the situation. That was a particularly difficult time for the Republican Movement, but the Movement responded and became more successful politically and militarily.

**FRFI** What form did this response take?

**IRA** There was a reorganisation of the military side, but there were also radical political changes. Military operations continued, but the prisoners began their own struggle, so there were closer links between the struggle inside and outside the prisons – the prisoners showed that the national liberation struggle does not end at the prison gates. The prison struggle necessitated political developments outside the prisons in order to highlight the protest against criminalisation.

**FRFI** How successful do you think this response has been?

**IRA** It has been successful – 100,000 people came onto the streets for Bobby Sands' funeral even after all the repression which the nationalist people have suffered at the hands of the Brits, the RUC and the UDR. 'Normalisation' simply meant repression for the nationalist community. Loyalist gangs were also active at this time – shooting members of Sinn Fein and the IRSP and H-Block activists – when they thought the Brits were not doing enough to suppress the prison struggle.

**FRFI** The loyalists saw the prison struggle as a major threat?

**IRA** Of course – the nationalist community was reasserting itself even after years of repression.

**FRFI** So the prison struggle was vitally important?

**IRA** Yes, it was a major effort by the Brits – millions of pounds were spent on the H-Blocks to try to break the people inside and outside prison. But military operations by the IRA continued. The prisoners showed their determination to continue the struggle inside the prisons and the same determination was shown outside the prisons with operations such as the Warrenpoint attack which killed 18 Brits. People in nationalist working class areas showed they still identified with the Republican movement, and last year there was a tremendous mobilisation of people, with prisoners being elected North and South. It is obvious that the Brits now see that people have seen through the 'normalisation' policy – that the state is seen as being as repressive as ever, with areas sealed off, houses wrecked and even funerals harassed. The people see that the Brits, the RUC and the UDR have not changed – the Brits are still the same as when they came in in 1969 as 'protectors'. The most repressive force is always used by the Brits when the nationalist community resists – they will go to any lengths to try to prevent such mobilisation. It is clear that the nationalist working class will never trust the SDLP so the Brits are now clearly intent on achieving a military victory in order to re-establish partition. They would like to have arrested people during the hunger strike but they couldn't because of international pressure. Now that there is less international attention they are arresting people. Prior's schemes for 'devolved government' will not be listened to by the nationalist working class so it is back to a search for a military solution, abandoning the 'normalisation' strategy.

# INTERVIEW WITH IRA VOLUNTEER



The following interview was given to Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! by a Volunteer of the Irish Republican Army. The interview is given in a personal capacity and does not necessarily represent the views of the IRA as a whole.

**FRFI** How capable is the IRA of resisting this new wave of repression?

**IRA** The IRA has shown it is still here – it is still carrying out successful military operations and the war is continuing. The IRA could go on for the next ten or twenty years if necessary.

**FRFI** Have the recent arrests not affected the morale of volunteers at all?

**IRA** It wouldn't matter how many were arrested – the IRA can and will continue because it is clear in its aims. Each volunteer is ideologically motivated towards a specific goal. All volunteers know that they are fighting a just war. There is a steered determination to succeed and succeed we will. I know several volunteers who are in prison and they are all still totally convinced that the Republican Movement will achieve victory. A lot of prisoners will be coming out of prison in the next few years who will be even more dedicated and determined than when they went in.

**FRFI** It is generally thought that the hunger strike brought forward many new people into the IRA. Has this been the case?

**IRA** The number of new recruits is not that important. It is not necessary for a large number of people to be actually involved in the IRA – it is not quantity but quality that is important. It is a mistake to think that the IRA relies on exceptional events, or on an emotional or spontaneous response, to gain new recruits. I was not attracted into the IRA by the hunger strike and I haven't left because of the recent arrests. No one comes into the IRA without knowing that he or she might be killed or jailed or suffer in some way. That is part of a revolutionary struggle – the liberation of an oppressed people is never easy. It's not us that are demoralised and committing suicide – it's RUC men. It's the RUC that is in crisis, with the revolt against Hermon (the Chief Constable). We see the recent arrests as vengeful frustration by the RUC because of their lack of success. The arrests may well be connected with the Hermon episode – the most sectarian elements within the RUC demanded from Hermon a massive attack on the nationalist people. The arrests are Hermon's response to the vote of no confidence in him and to the 'Third Force' – there had to be some response. So the arrests had to be done to try to boost the morale of the RUC. The RUC have to live in protected areas – there are housing estates that are virtually limited to policemen. They have to come in to the police stations in nationalist areas from a long distance away and then they have to be escorted home again by unmarked police cars. So the idea of the RUC being a 'normal' police force is absurd. Local people laugh at the RUC trying to patrol 'normally' when all the time they are backed up by unmarked police cars. The police are petrified when they patrol in nationalist areas. You can't move in the nationalist ghettos without seeing the

Brits and the RUC – yet the IRA can still mount operations against them.

**FRFI** Why is this?

**IRA** Because the people support us. The majority of the nationalist people are working class people and we have the support of the people in those areas. How otherwise could volunteers mount operations and then simply disappear?

**FRFI** There has been a lot of publicity recently about informers. Do you see this as a major threat?

**IRA** No – it shows how desperate the Brits are, that they are reduced to using such methods. It can easily backfire on the Brits as the trial of McCormick [an RUC Special Branch sergeant who has been charged with murdering one of his colleagues] shows – the RUC gave an informer guns, got him to mount phoney operations to try to infiltrate the IRA, and it ends up with one RUC man shooting another – and the Brits claim the situation in the North is 'normal'! Of course, the use of informers is a standard counter-insurgency tactic – Kitson [the British Army's leading counter-insurgency expert] was strongly in favour of it. But the Brits are only claiming to have three or four informers – and a lot of their information is probably out of date – and what's that when you consider the thousands of nationalist people who don't inform, who may see things but would never tell the Brits?

**FRFI** Turning to the Twenty Six counties, how do you see the situation there at the moment, especially in the light of the recent election there?

**IRA** The result of the election was significant. Both the main parties – Fianna Fail and Fine Gael – toe the British line. They both represent bourgeois interests and have done for the last sixty years. Usually people vote for one or other of these right-wing parties, but in the last election neither achieved a majority – thousands of people voted instead for independent candidates and these now hold the balance. So for the first time people are starting to question the role of the two main parties – their absolute failure to give any proper leadership when the economy is about to collapse and the IMF is probably going to be called in. 50% of the population in the Twenty Six counties is under 25 – it's the youngest population in Europe – and such a young population will now start to look to alternative types of government and begin to realise that partition and control by the Brits over the economy is the main reason for the present situation.

From this I believe that the mobilisation of young people, especially in Dublin, by Sinn Fein will begin to bear fruit. Moderate left-wing groups may offer temporary solutions – and the election of people from such groups shows the disillusionment with the two main parties – but experience will show that these are no different from Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. Then people will turn to the

only real alternative – Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein is beginning to politicise people through ad centres, talking to factory workers, and sorting people's day-to-day problems. People are beginning to see Sinn Fein as a political alternative for the first time since 1918.

Most politicians in the Dail have got through family connections – now workers are saying why should we elect such people who are £20,000 a year while we do all the work? Fianna Fail have created factories to buy votes – but factories only last a few months. Now workers are questioning all this. They will probably in the next few months turn to moderate left-wing groups like Sinn Fein and the Workers Party – which is similar to the Labour Party in Britain – but Provisional Sinn Fein is educating people so that they will eventually see where the true interests of the working class people lie.

Class differences in Dublin especially have become very accentuated over the past ten years. In areas like Belfast there are wealthy middle class residential areas and at the same time there is the absolute poverty of the inner city areas. There are ghettos in Dublin like Summerhill and Ballybrannigan where people are constantly harassed by the gardai where there is saturation policing, areas are sealed off and houses raided. Instead of spending money on jobs and housing the government is building Loughlan House – a new correction centre for young working class people in Dublin.

There are a vast number of working class people in the courts in Dublin for property offences – crimes against the bourgeoisie. The gardai are determined to protect the middle class working class in Dublin have always seen the gardai as being hostile to them. While the so-called 'leaders' of the Irish people live out in middle class areas like Howth, in working class areas of Dublin there has been a rise of self-help groups over the last few years – community associations, tenants associations, family planning centres (which are illegal since they are not run by doctors), etc. There is evidence of a moving away from the Church/Sinn Fein alignment – a realisation that what is said from the pulpit isn't necessarily good for you, that you don't have to accept your lot and that you can bring about change.

**FRFI** And the Republican Movement will provide the leadership to bring about this change?

**IRA** Yes, exactly.

**FRFI** Finally, how do you see the situation in Britain at the moment? What did you think of the riots that took place last year?

**IRA** The riots showed that the belief that British people are incapable of revolution is untrue – the riots were a revolutionary act against the oppressor. I think the reason why the riots didn't develop further is because as yet revolutionary Britain have not made a strong enough impression among working class people to provide the leadership which they so desperately need.

It is obvious that there will not be a speedy economic recovery in Britain. The government has determined to reduce the level of wages to make it attractive for people to invest, but investment is not happening because it is more profitable to invest in areas like South Africa. So the question is whether the British working class will allow their wages to be reduced to the same level as workers in South Africa – that is, three or five times less than they are getting now. The British working class may eventually see that the government that is set on reducing their wages is the same government that is exploiting us and has done for centuries.

It is the task of revolutionaries in Britain to inform the British working class of this and to prepare them for the inevitable bloody war that they will have to fight to maintain even their basic living standards. The British ruling class has been preparing for years to ensure that it maintains its power through the police and the army, its enslavement of the Irish and British working class people. It's up to the revolutionaries in Britain who realise this to act as a vanguard in the same way as the Republican Movement in Ireland and lead the working class towards control of its own destiny.

# RCG-FRFI MONTHLY Round-up



## Coatbridge Demonstration

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! supporters from Dundee, Edinburgh and Falkirk travelled to support the Clyde-side Troop Out Movement hungerstrike commemoration march on 6 March in Coatbridge near Glasgow.

Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee, Dundee Irish Republican Solidarity Committee and FRFI supporters kept up a constant chant of 'Victory to the Irish People!' and 'Troops Out Now!' on what otherwise was a musical but chant free demonstration.

Despite 50 or so rabid Loyalists heckling and threatening along the route, the march, including half a dozen bands, was well supported by local people.

## Defend Ace Kelly

As readers of FRFI know, on 25 February Ace Kelly was arrested whilst distributing FRFI on the YOPs lobby of Parliament. On 18 March at Bow Street Magistrates Court he was found guilty of obstructing the highway and conditionally discharged for a year.

An LPYS supporter who saw the arrest came to court as a witness. We thank this comrade for giving his support. Embarrassingly for the police he

recounted the period he was in the lobby queue showing clearly that Ace could not have obstructed anyone as most of the time the queue was not moving.

Nonetheless the magistrate, Bartel, who appeared to be asleep throughout the proceedings, ignored the police lies and contradictions, ignored the defence witness and found the case 'proven'.

Hopefully this will prove to be only a temporary victory for the police as an appeal is being considered. Funds are still needed to pay for the case so far and to make an appeal possible. The purpose of the appeal is to defend the right to distribute socialist newspapers. We appeal to all readers and supporters to send money to:

Ace Kelly Defence Campaign c/o BM Box 4835 London WC1N 3XX.

Collection sheets also available from this address.

## Defend the Leeds 3

As was said in FRFI 17, the police have gone to unprecedented lengths in their attempts to harass, intimidate and convict sellers of FRFI in Leeds by taking the case of Gordon Teal and Bill Bollothen (of the Leeds 3) to a Divisional Court hearing in London. Supporters of FRFI had hoped the case was over

when the two won their appeal against charges of obstruction and peddling without a licence. Clearly the police were infuriated by this success.

With this renewed attack on the democratic right to sell anti-racist and socialist literature the Leeds 3 Defence Campaign needs your support to fight back against the police and the courts. Already many people have signed the petition protesting against this latest police action. Signatories include Pat Wall and Anwar Ditta.

Please send your donations and messages of support (Cheques and postal orders payable to the Leeds 3 Defence Campaign, LAP Box 10, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2. Petitions and leaflets are available from the same address.

## Edinburgh open-air meeting

FRFI supporters in Edinburgh held a successful open air meeting at the Mound on Saturday 20 March. Over 90 FRFI's were sold, along with other communist and anti-imperialist literature. In addition AAM leaflets and stickers were distributed. The success of this meeting came in the face of the Tory District Council's refusal to allow the use of a megaphone and also despite (or

## Bradford South Africa meeting

On March 4 Bradford RCG organised a public meeting under the title of 'Smash Apartheid! Victory to the ANC!' at which Shirley Talbot a representative of the African National Congress and FRFI spoke. Nearly 200 black and white workers, youth and students packed into Queens Hall to show their solidarity with their struggling black South African brothers and sisters, and their vanguard organisation the ANC. That the meeting brought together comrades from Bradford, Liverpool 8, Iran, Zimbabwe, Chile, Malaysia, Pakistan and the Caribbean (to name but a few) testified to its internationalist anti-imperialist character.

perhaps because of) a solid police surveillance for the first hour of the meeting.

## 20 March demonstration

Over 150 people marched from Archway to Islington Green on the North London Irish Solidarity Committee demonstration in North London on 20 March. The size of the march, significantly larger than the last NLISC dem-

onstration in January, shows the growing success of the NLISC's work.

The marchers - from NLISC, Sinn Fein, IRSP, OIPFG, Peykar, FRFI, SLISC, RCL, TOM, RCP and Workers Party - kept up a spirited and vigorous chanting through working class areas where many black and Irish workers live. The march got a great response.

At the rally afterwards, despite a downpour, a good crowd gathered to hear the speeches. Messages of support from Tyneside TOM, Haringey TOM, Peykar and Brent South CLP were read out. Speakers were NLISC, Sinn Fein, OIPFG, FRFI, TOM, RCL, RCP and Workers Party. The NLISC called for all possible support for the national demonstration on 8 May.

To contact the NLISC write to NLISC BM Box 4835 London WC1N 3XX.

## South London Irish Solidarity

Anyone wanting to participate in the work should write for details to SLISC BM BOX 4835, LONDON WC1N 3XX. Details of Committee meetings are publicised below, these meetings are open to all who want to work in solidarity with the Irish people.

## Dundee Anti-Imperialist Rally

Despite a history of Dundee police harassment, FRFI supporters there organised a successful anti-imperialist rally on Saturday 14 March. The rally was supported by FRFI and members of the Dundee Irish Republican Solidarity Committee. Speakers addressed passers-by on a variety of issues from the way ahead for the struggle in support of the Irish people to the wave of police terror reprisals in England since the summer uprisings of 1981 to the savagery of imperialism in El Salvador and Central America and to the highly critical and counter-revolutionary imperialist campaign against Poland.

## EVENTS

### 3 - 9 APRIL

**LIVERPOOL**  
Public Forum: The struggle against Apartheid  
Friday 2 April  
Stanley House 7.30pm  
Upper Parliament Street

**LONDON**  
Week of Solidarity with Political Prisoners in Iran  
International Solidarity Front - For the Defence of Democratic Rights of Iranian People  
Saturday 3 April  
Assemble 1.30  
Speakers Corner  
Rally at Trafalgar Square

**LEEDS**  
Public Meeting  
Stop Police Harassment!  
Defend Democratic Rights!  
Defend the Leeds 3 and FRFI!  
Tuesday 6 April  
Leeds Trades Club 7.30pm  
Saville Mount Leeds 7

### 10 - 16 APRIL

**SOUTH LONDON**  
Street Meeting  
Saturday 10 April  
Tooting Broadway Tube 1.45pm  
Called by South London Irish Solidarity Committee

**DEFEND MIKE DUFFIELD,**  
arrested for proclaiming support for the Irish Hunger Strikers.

Flood the Procurator Fiscal, Clyde Street, Glasgow, with letters demanding the dropping of the charges - send copies to GIFAC, Box 15, Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

### 17 - 23 APRIL

**DUNDEE**  
Street Meeting  
Victory to the ANC!  
Smash Apartheid!  
Saturday 17 April  
2.30pm City Square

**NLISC**  
Street Meeting  
Saturday 17 April 1.45pm  
Archway Tube

**NORTH LONDON**  
Video and Public Meeting  
Thursday 22 April 7.30pm  
John Barnes Library  
(Parkhurst/Camden Road) N7  
Called by NLISC

**LEEDS**  
FRFI Forum on South Africa  
Thursday 22 April  
Leeds Trades Club 7.30pm  
Saville Mount Leeds 7

**MANCHESTER**  
FRFI Public Forum  
Central America  
Friday 23 April  
Lass O'Gowrie 7.30pm  
Charles St  
(Next to BBC, Oxford Road)

### 24 - 30 APRIL

**EDINBURGH**  
Street Meeting  
Saturday 24 April  
12-2pm  
The Mound Edinburgh

**SOUTH LONDON**  
Street Meeting  
Saturday 24 April  
Balham Tube 1.45pm  
Called by South London Irish Solidarity Committee

**GLASGOW**  
Mike Duffield - No Case to Answer!  
End Police Censorship on Ireland!  
Picket Glasgow District Court (St Andrews Street)  
Tuesday 27 April 10am  
Called by Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee and Glasgow Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! Supporters Group

**EDINBURGH**  
Public Meeting  
Act Now!  
Join the Fightback!  
Tuesday 27 April  
Edinburgh Trades Council  
7.30pm Picardy Place

**DUNDEE**  
Public Meeting  
Victory to the ANC!  
Smash Apartheid Now!  
Video Film Show - ANC Film 'Towards a People's Republic'  
FRFI Speaker, others invited  
Thursday 29 April 7pm-9pm  
Wellgate Conference Room  
Wellgate Library  
Organised by FRFI Supporter Group

**SOUTH LONDON**  
Public Meeting  
Mobilise for May 8 Demo  
Victory to the Irish People!  
Troops Out Now!  
Friday 30 April 7.30pm  
Lambeth Town Hall Room 2  
Called by South London Irish Solidarity Committee

**FREE**  
THE BRADFORD 12  
National Picket of Trial  
Leeds Crown Court  
Monday 26 April 10am

## COMING SOON

**LONDON**  
Commemoration of BOBBY SANDS MP  
Guest of Honour Owen Carron MP and other speakers  
Live music, food and bar  
Thursday 6 May  
7.30pm in the McNamara Room, The Irish Centre, Murray St Camden Town

**LIVERPOOL**  
Public Meeting  
The Struggle Against Apartheid  
Film: 'Towards a People's Republic'  
Speakers:  
Amanda Kitson and FRFI  
Friday 7 May, 7.30pm  
Stanley House, Upper Parliament St.  
Tickets 50p in advance, 60p at the door.

**NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION**  
Get Britain Out of Ireland!  
Self-Determination for the Irish People!  
Saturday 8 May  
London  
Called by May 8th Demonstration Organising Committee

**DUNDEE**  
Hunger Strike  
Commemorative Street Meeting  
Saturday 8 May  
City Square 2pm-3pm  
called by FRFI Supporter Group

**LEEDS**  
FRFI Public Forum  
Central America  
Thursday 13 May  
Leeds Trades Club 7.30pm  
Saville Mount, Leeds 7

**GLASGOW**  
March and Rally  
Remember the 10 murdered Hunger Strikers!  
Saturday 15 May  
Assemble 11.30am  
Royston Hill  
Victory to the Irish People!  
Organised by the Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee

**SUPPORT COMMITTEES**  
**North London Irish Solidarity Committee**  
Camden Labour Club, Carol Street  
Wednesday 14 April 7.30pm  
Thursday 29 April 7.30pm

**South London Irish Solidarity Committee**  
Lambeth Town Hall, Room 29, 7.30pm  
Thursday 8 April  
and  
Thursday 22 April

**GLASGOW IRISH FREEDOM ACTION COMMITTEE**  
Meets weekly to organise work in Glasgow in support of the struggle for Irish liberation.  
For details, write to GIFAC  
Box 15, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

**TYNESIDE TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT**  
meets each Wednesday, 7.30pm  
For further information contact c/o 4 Commercial Buildings, Railway Street, Dunston, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

## DEADLINE FOR FRFI 19 26.4.82

**SPONSORED RUN**  
FRFI is fielding a runner in London marathon on 9 May. We want sponsorship for every mile completed over 15, and each minute of a completed below 3 hours 11 minutes. Sponsorship forms available from FRFI BCM Box 590 London WC1N 3XX

## FRFI SUPPORTER GROUPS

■ **LEEDS** meets fortnightly, Tuesdays at 7.30pm. Next meeting: 27 April at 7.30pm. Leeds Trades Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 7. Details from FRFI, Box LAP 10, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2.  
■ **LEEDS Park Lane College FRFI** meets every other Wednesday at 12.30pm. Next meetings 14 & 28 April.  
■ **BRADFORD** meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 7.30pm. Next meeting: 29 April at Conference Room (Upper Queens Hall, Morley Street).  
■ **BIRMINGHAM** Details from FRFI sellers.  
■ **NORTH LONDON** meets fortnightly Tuesdays at 7pm. Next meetings: 7 & 14 April at 7.30pm. Next meetings: 14 & 28 April. Tooting Way (off Holloway Road) and Tooting April at 7.15 at Camden Labour Club, Carol Street, NW1. For details write NLFRFI BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX.  
■ **SOUTH LONDON** meets fortnightly Tuesdays at 7.30pm. Next meeting: 27 April at 11 May at Jeffrey's Lib, Jeffrey's Road, Stockwell. For details to SLFRFI, BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX.  
■ **EDINBURGH** meets fortnightly on Tuesdays at 7.30pm. Next meetings: 8 & 25 April at First of May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.  
■ **DUNDEE** meets fortnightly on Saturdays at 7.30pm. Next meetings: 8 & 26 April at 7pm. Details from FRFI or from Box 40, First of May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.  
■ **MANCHESTER** Details from FRFI sellers.  
■ **LIVERPOOL** Details from FRFI sellers.  
■ **BRISTOL** Details from FRFI sellers.

# Letters

Please note our new address is:  
FRFI,  
BCM Box 5909,  
London WC1N 3XX  
**SEND US YOUR LETTERS**  
We welcome letters from readers. Please keep them as short as you can

## Fares fair in Moscow

Dear FRFI,  
As the cold war offensive reaches new heights and the bourgeois press grabs at any chance to smear the socialist countries, FRFI can play an important part in defending the gains of victorious revolutions. Last month's FRFI carried a very good article on the third anniversary of the Grenadian revolution. While being primarily concerned (and correctly so) with exposing the continuing US and British imperialist offensive against Grenada and indeed Cuba and Nicaragua, the article at the same time very usefully highlighted the considerable achievements of the Grenadian people under the leadership of the People's Revolutionary Government. This, I think, is of great importance and FRFI can and has a duty to counter the lies of the bought British press by taking every opportunity to show the gains of the socialist countries. I include therefore, a small but topical example:

While Londoners are experiencing unprecedented fare rises readers may be interested in comparing fares here with those of Soviet cities. As the already exorbitant price of travel on London's underground rises to a *minimum* of 40p, Muscovites pay 5 Kopeks (less than 5p) for any distance travelled on the Metro. The same price (5 Kopeks) will cover any distance by bus (compared with around 40p for a mile on London's buses) and trolley-buses and trams are even cheaper! I don't know the price of local transport in Grenada or Cuba but I wouldn't mind betting that workers in those countries are not practically prohibited from travelling like those in the crisis-ridden capital of British imperialism.  
Fraternally  
AS  
Leeds

## Sanctions in Bristol

Dear FRFI,  
During March a group of us living in Redland, an inner city area of Bristol, noticed that a new and increasingly popular wine bar was advertising an evening's promotion of South African wines and foods. We visited the bar to talk to the owner and attempted to dissuade him from holding the promotion. However this had no effect as clearly indicated by his final comments: 'If it brings the people in then it's OK' and 'We've held promotions for lots of countries - maybe next week we'll have a Polish evening!'. We then decided to deliver a letter stating how we felt, supported by about 50 signatures collected from other sympathisers. If this attempt also failed, we planned to picket the bar on the evening of the promotion. Eventually, however, the evening was cancelled due to 'delays in shipments of South African wines'. A very poor excuse under the circumstances! However if they attempt to hold the evening again, this time there will be no warning!

The only way to make the sanctions work is for you to support them. Boycott South African products. Campaign against those retailers who support the racist regime by selling their products. For too long we remained prisoners of our own apathy. The only way to make sanctions work is to make them hurt!  
SS & CF  
Bristol correspondents

## Racism in Dundee hospital

Dear FRFI,  
I am writing this letter to express my anger at the amount of racism in Dundee. I work in a hospital in Dundee as an auxiliary nurse where I have come across many cases of pig-headed assholes. On one occasion last week our ward was short staffed and a male nurse came to the ward to help out. He was asked to go and sit with a patient while the staff nurse and I attended another. While attending this patient she commented about the other nurse saying THE BLACK BASTARD, he should not be here in this country etc etc etc. On hearing this I lost my temper with her calling her a racist, ill-mannered idiot (she's a proper Tory). She then went on to call me a Paki lover and said things like those people came over here, take our jobs, get their black paws on white women and infest our country with diseases. My grandfather was killed for his country and these Blacks think they should own a country other men have died for. Well I find them totally disgusting. To this I answered her with a lot of abuse including a few F's and C's. She was disgusted with me for sticking up for the chap and proceeded to report me to the nursing officer. The next day I was called into his office to be reprimanded if I did not apologize to the staff nurse. I refused on the grounds that she should not be allowed to talk like that about anyone.

It has now been written in my assessment that I used foul language to Senior Staff and therefore showed disrespect for the trained staff and did not write the reason I blew my top and therefore I feel that he is the one who is showing disrespect for his nurses - not just myself but the chap who came to give us a hand.

I would just like to finish by saying it's about time some people got it into their thick senseless brains that it is not because of coloured people that there are no jobs. It is not because of COLOURED people that our standard of living has fallen. It is not because of these friendly people that there is discontent. It is because of our present government. It's they who are causing havoc with the lives of the working class. It's they who treat us like the underdogs and it is time that we joined together and everyone fighting for their rights that will demolish the demon Thatcher and her government. So get out there and fight, fight for your rights.  
EB  
Dundee

## Congratulations

Dear FRFI,  
I would like to subscribe to FRFI for one year, and I enclose a £5 postal order.

Unfortunately I cannot be an active supporter of the movement but do send me details of your activities anyway.

I salute your courage and congratulate you on the work you are doing.  
Best Wishes  
IS  
Ireland

## Support in Markinch

Dear FRFI,  
Your editorial in the February issue was an excellent 'call to arms'.

I hope I do not sound too egocentric when I say that I have recently woken up this politically sleepy backwater of Fife, by distributing to 1000 homes in the area copies of the United

Nations Declaration of Human Rights, two issues of what I believe are political stories the local press will not handle.

Copies of FRFI have been sold at CND meetings, and I was amazed when I recently sold 13 copies at the gates of a local whiskey firm (Haig's of Markinch) and I have made sure that my Regional and District councillors both have a free copy of FRFI.

Wouldn't you townies be surprised if the revolution started in the sticks?

In reply to your editorial, what can I do?

DA  
Markinch, Scotland

Some of these letters have been shortened for reasons of space.

## Poland

Dear RCG  
On Saturday 30 January a broad based demonstration took place in Nottingham. So broadly based in fact that participants included, Tories, Labour, SDP, SWP, IMG and the Nazi British Movement. Fittingly, a large cross and a Union Flag preceded the main contingents - how many people have been massacred in the name of the British flag and religion?!

Main slogans on the march were 'Down with Communism!', 'Russians Out!', and 'Poland belongs to the Polish People.' The last patently inaccurate - Poland 'belongs' to the Western Banks, the second conveniently forgetting that the Soviets lost 600,000 people in liberating Poland from fascism, the first speaking for itself as to the pro-imperialist nature of the event.

Speakers from the major bourgeois parties spoke at length about the 'Free World' - where is this 'Free World' does anyone know? They omitted to mention Palestine, South Africa, Ireland, Chile, El Salvador, Haiti etc, etc, etc. But this is only to be expected. Perhaps the 'left' could do better.

John Peck from the Communist Party at least had the guts to speak on behalf of his own organisation and to condemn imperialism in Chile and El Salvador (he 'forgot' about Ireland). It was perhaps just a little marred by the fact that the front of the platform was adorned with a Union Flag the size of which would have made Ian Paisley green(!) with envy!

The next speaker however was Julian Atkinson a long time Political Committee member of the 'far-left' IMG. Perhaps he would denounce this vile imperialist hypocrisy. It was not to be. Seeing the nature of the gathering he - wisely! - slunk on merely as a member of the Nottingham Trades Council. The Union flag seemed larger than ever!

Needless to say that none of the 'left' lovers of freedom and democracy turned up on the next day's annual 'Bloody Sunday' march.  
EH

## Hull PoWs speak

Editor  
In British prisons there are approximately 400 Category A prisoners, those considered top security, and nearly 25% of these are Irish political prisoners. It is a fact that out of 44,000 prisoners in jail, 400 are category A and the Irish prisoners are all placed in this category. And even within this small minority, Irish political prisoners are discriminated against further, being called variously 'Special A' or 'Irish A' prisoners, the main form being the terrible visiting conditions which are imposed under the pretext of security, exclusively against the political prisoners.

Despite the Home Office recognising that Irish prisoners are different from other prisoners, albeit in the harsh measures taken against them, they refuse to transfer us to prisons in North-East Ireland. None of the objections made by the government stand any kind of scrutiny and their only fallback is the fact that they have the physical power to do whatever they like. The first objection, that people should serve sentences where they are convicted, does not hold water when we see that nearly a hundred soldiers have been moved to England and Scotland after conviction in Ireland. The second objection, that there is no procedure in the bureaucratic machinery for transfers, is exposed as a lie when we see that a large proportion of Loyalists convicted in Britain are transferred to Ireland as well as four Republicans who underwent a mammoth hunger strike in which Michael Gaughan died and for which Frank Stagg later died.

Mrs Thatcher made a venomous refusal to move prisoners recently and made it clear that the refusal was to add a degree of vindictiveness to an already oppressive punishment. This desire to keep Irish prisoners in Britain does not extend past the prison gates as when a sentence is completed, the Special Branch are waiting to whisk the free man off to Ireland under an Exclusion Order.

Added to this is the savage beatings meted out to Republicans some of whom have been offered compensation for their injuries. Warders have been convicted of assault, only to receive paltry sentences. The plight of the prisoners is made worse by the anguish suffered by the relatives who have not only financial restrictions placed on them by travelling over from Ireland, but also restrictions on visits placed by the police and restrictions placed on mail by the prison censor. Although every visitor is photographed and passed as 'suitable' weeks before a visit by the Special Branch, many are arrested and questioned, the most tragic being the case of G Conlon who was arrested in London visiting his son and died in prison from a neglected illness.

## PRO Republican prisoners Hull Prison.

PS We thank Owen Carron MP for visiting us on Wednesday 24 February 1982 and for the work which he is doing on the transfer of Irish prisoners to Irish prisons. Anyone wishing to help should contact: O Carron MP, The Clinic, 7 Market Street, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, Ireland.

## Dundee Trades Council complains

Dear comrades,  
The article on page 12 of FRFI 16 has been brought to our attention. The article, under the headline 'Dundee Trades Council Backs Censorship' constitutes a vicious libel against our Council, our Executive, our chairman and

our secretary. The kindest assumption we can make is that your publication of this article was based on the receipt of false information. We would therefore like to set the matter straight.

As stated in your article, our Council passed a resolution to effectively organise to uphold the democratic rights of free speech and civil liberties, which we have not revoked and is, indeed, still binding. This resolution was based on the report of the NUPE delegate to our Council: that when he and others had tried to exercise these rights on behalf of Irish people, the police had prevented them from doing so. As instructed by our Council, our secretary raised the matter with our District Council regarding the correct interpretation of the local Bye Law concerning these civil liberties. Our District Council agreed with us and assured us that these rights would be protected. Indeed, as you note, the charges against the people involved were dropped.

However our District Council pointed out to our secretary that there were other events leading up to the arrests which put a different light on it. According to the police report during the march, connected with a demonstration from a suburb of our city into the city centre, some of the participants from out of our town, had publicly urinated as they marched along! The police claimed that they decided that a continuation of this demonstration constituted a threat to public order, so they intervened.

Our secretary decided, correctly in our opinion, not to pursue the matter further until he had reported back to our Council. On receipt of the above information at the following Trades Council meeting the NUPE delegate was asked if the police allegations of public urinating were correct. He acknowledged that they were. Our chairman, David Thompson did remark that it would be a mistake to associate ourselves in support of 'piss-artists' as it would be counter-productive of what we intended. He did not say, as you allege that 'we could not'. Any fool could. What he said was 'we should not', and Council agreed; which, incidentally puts us upside with James Connolly according to your opening paragraph. Anyway, our Council decided to refer the matter to our EC for consideration and further referral back to Council.

Our executive, which, incidentally is composed of democratically elected members from all our affiliates, considered the matter. The executive may also include a minority of communists. We do not check as we are not McCarthyites. Who are the smear artists? After full consideration our executive agreed that we had upheld the purpose of our resolution to defend civil liberty. Our District Council had upheld our interpretation of the Bye Law which was also acknowledged by the Police. To proceed further with the matter at this stage we considered would only promote further antagonism to no useful purpose. We therefore decided to leave well alone and continue to keep a vigilant eye on our civil liberties in the future, as, indeed, we have always done. The NUPE delegate has made no protest at our AGM or to our secretary.

We trust that you will indulge us the civil liberty of publishing this reply.

Yours fraternally  
David Thompson  
Chairman Dundee Trades Council

We stand by MT's article about Dundee Trades Council's failure

to defend democratic rights in the town.

The issue at stake was whether the City Square is open to the public to hold meetings or not. If so, the police had no right to arrest eight supporters of the Hunger Strike Committee in and August last year. This has now been acknowledged and the charges have been dropped thanks to a campaign mounted by FRFI supporters.

What FRFI finds inexcusable is that the Trades Council should have been willing to be privy to the police practice of writing secret and scurrilous reports on local activists and organisations, and that, together with the ruling Labour group of councillors, they should choose to take the police account without thought or question. The police report quoted from contains a complete distortion of the truth. Apparently they believe the Police to have amazing powers of foresight: the demonstration referred to in the police report took place in November 1981. The arrests took place in August 1981!

As for the public urinations - it did take place. This in the context where a peaceful and orderly demonstration barracked and physically attacked by a group of fascist thugs and where the police chose to take no action to defend the participants. A 14 year old boy urinated in the street rather than leave the demonstration and risk physical attack. The police were quick to arrest him without checking his age or seeking relatives or friends.

However this 'slip of manners' is viewed, the Trades Council were only asked to defend the right of free speech. This right had been attacked four months earlier by the police. The eight victims, far from being 'piss artists', were all local working class youngsters, several of them in unions affiliated to the Trades Council.

The smug use of the term 'piss artists' to describe supporters of the murdered Irish hunger strikers is evidence enough of the decline and corruption of the Trades Council since the days when it supported the Irish revolutionary James Connolly.  
Dundee FRFI supporter

## BECOME A FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! SUPPORTER

If you are willing to help the work which FRFI is doing, become an FRFI supporter.

We need more people to sell FRFI and to involve others in the fightback. We need more people writing for FRFI about their local struggles and campaigns.

Fill in your name and address on the form below, and send £5. You will receive a supporter card, a year's subscription to FRFI and details of all our activities in your area and nationally. (Postal orders and cheques payable to Larkin Publications)

Name .....

Address .....

Send this form to Larkin Publications BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX

# HANDS OFF IRELAND

## H-BLOCK/ARMAGH The Struggle Continues

Since the end of the hunger strike in which ten Irish POWs were murdered the struggle in the prisons has continued. The opportunists who called for an end to the militant struggle for political status on the grounds that reforms would be implemented as soon as the hunger strike ended have fallen silent on the prison issue. In fact, inside H-Block and Armagh, the previous system of naked terror has been replaced by systematic vindictive harassment—major and minor—designed to break the resistance of the POWs who are still fighting for the rights of political prisoners.

During the no-wash protest the prisoners were frequently moved about—and beaten—whilst their cells were cleaned. Since the no-wash protest ended on 2 March 1981 the prison regime has refused to clean excreta off the walls or paint the cells. They have also refused the POWs offer to do the work.

In many cells the windows were replaced by grilles which cut out light but not draughts. Over the winter months when temperatures fell to 20° or more below freezing, prisoners were left in cells with these grilles letting in freezing air. The prisoners demanded that the grilles be replaced by windows. Nothing was done.

In Armagh the women prisoners are also getting almost daily cell and body searches. The prison authorities are punishing those who refuse body searches by seizing personal effects such as family photographs. Anne Marie Quinn's photo of her mother was seized on the grounds that the censor's stamp had faded! Photos of the hunger strikers are banned on the grounds that they are 'politically-motivated and subversive'!

Protesting prisoners are being refused educational facilities on the grounds that these are privileges and therefore not available to 'non-conforming' prisoners. Under this ruling all non-fiction books have been classified 'educational' and banned. This also applies to any books on Irish culture and Irish language.

Association between wings was one of the specific promises that were made at the ending of the hunger strike. After five months no steps have been taken to implement this promise. Even the three hours per day of ordinary association has yet to be received. Protesting prisoners are also being denied their full one hour exercise per day although again it was specifically promised that denial of exercise would not be used as a punishment against protesting prisoners.

As for the much vaunted 'right to wear own clothes': this right has been undermined by the almost daily issuing of new rules as to what clothes can be worn. Short-sleeve teeshirts are banned. Sportswear must be of one colour and bear no badges, crests, motifs or brand-names. Wrangler jeans have been banned! It seems that the prison Governor has decided what 'own' clothes the prisoners can wear.

A whole series of minor rules are being used as a pretext for punishing protesting prisoners. Prisoners are being put on punishment for such things as refusing to give a prison number, taking too long in the toilet, entering a

cell without permission, not emptying ashtrays on visits and even for taking showers which they have been ordered to take!

No resolution whatsoever has been reached on the prisoners' demands for segregation and for not doing menial prison work. In the face of the broken promises of the British imperialists and the petty tyranny reigning in the prisons, the POWs are continuing to fight for their rights as political prisoners. About 300 are still on protest. For every day of their protest they lose part of the 50% remission which is supposed to bribe political prisoners into conforming with criminalisation.

The British ruling class clearly hoped Terry Marlowe

that the defeat of the hunger strike would allow them to destroy Republican resistance inside the prisons. The continuing struggle of the POWs has proved them wrong. No amount of tyranny and harassment will break the resistance of these prisoners. But where, today, are yesterday's 'humanitarians' who claimed to support humane conditions in the prisons? Relieved of the pressure of the hunger strike campaign, these opportunists and traitors have once again turned their backs on the POWs. Their only concern, as proved by their silence today, was to defuse the revolutionary potential of the prison struggle for political status. That achieved they are satisfied. The Labour MPs who claimed to support 'compromise' and 'agreement by negotiation' remain silent whilst every promise is broken. The fact is that the only reliable source of support for the POWs are the oppressed and exploited working class of Ireland and the revolutionary forces within the working class in Britain.

## EXTRADITION EXPOSES BRITISH

The attempt to extradite William Quinn, an alleged former IRA volunteer, from the United States in order to stand trial in Britain for allegedly killing a policeman has backfired badly on the British government. Defence witnesses have given evidence pointing to the fact that it is British terrorism, not the 'terrorism' of the IRA, which is at the root of the situation in Ireland.

An academic expert on nationalist movements, Dr Bowyer Bell, told the court that the purpose of all nationalist movements that had emerged within the British Empire was to 'put pressure to allow the establishment of a nation and in this the IRA is no different.' He went on to say that the wars fought by the British state against nationalist movements in Malaya, Palestine, Southern Arabia and Aden, Cyprus, India and Kenya were directly comparable to the war currently being fought against the IRA.

On the following day another defence witness, Jack Holland, a journalist who used to work in Belfast, gave evidence of the methods used by the British state in fighting its war against the nationalist community in the Six Counties. He said that in 1972 British paratroopers planted a bomb outside a Catholic club in the Ardoyne. The resulting explosion destroyed the club and injured over 40 people, some seriously.

As the extradition hearing continues, therefore, much to the embarrassment of the British government, it is becoming more and more clear just who are the real 'terrorists' in Ireland.

Robert Blake

## RUC MORALE DISINTEGRATES

While the RUC tirelessly promote the myth that the IRA is demoralised and near to defeat, further evidence of the disintegration of the morale of the RUC has come from within its own ranks.

On 22 March Alan Wright, the Chairman of the RUC Police Federation (which represents all ranks of the RUC up to the rank of Chief Inspector) revealed that a medical expert has been called in to examine the effects of the stress from which members of the RUC are suffering as a result of the war it is fighting against the IRA. Mr Wright said:

'I am not a medical expert but stress seems the most logical reason for a number of things which have manifested themselves amongst members of the force over the past 12 years. We



REPUBLICAN NEWS

## IRA HITS BACK

During the first three weeks of March the level of IRA operations continued to escalate, demonstrating the resilience and determination of the IRA in the face of the intense repression which is currently being inflicted on nationalist areas in the Six Counties. The month began with a daring attack by the IRA on the Lord Chief Justice of the Six Counties, Lord Lowry. IRA volunteers opened fire on the North's top judge as he arrived in his armour-plated car and surrounded by police bodyguards to give a lecture at Queen's University in Belfast. Although Lowry survived the ambush the fact that IRA volunteers were able to launch such an attack in the heart of middle class south Belfast and then make good their escape, despite the tight security which surrounds the Lord Chief Justice, shocked the British and Loyalist establishment.

The attack itself, however, should have come as no surprise. The Belfast Brigade of the IRA, in claiming responsibility for the attack, pointed out that:

'Lowry's position as the head of a corrupt and bigotted loyalist judiciary, enforcing the repressive and inhuman legislation of a foreign colonial power in Ireland, made him an inevitable target.'

The IRA also launched several attacks on the occupation forces during the month, inflicting casualties on the British Army, the RUC and the UDR. On 25 March, the IRA, using an M-60 machine gun, ambushed and killed 3 members of a British army patrol as they entered one of the forts in West Belfast. Attacks on commercial targets were also stepped up. On 8 March, for the second time in less than a month, the IRA launched a co-ordinated series of bomb attacks on the railway system of the Six

Counties. Two bombs exploded on the main Belfast-Dublin line just outside Lisburn, another bomb was left on the main line in South Armagh, while other lines were also closed by warnings of further bombs. One week later a massive co-ordinated bomb blitz by the IRA wrecked commercial targets in five towns. In the space of one hour car bombs exploded in the centres of Belfast, Armagh, Banbridge and Newton-stewart and a bomb also wrecked commercial premises in the centre of Newry. Another car bomb left in the centre of Lisburn was eventually defused. As usual, warnings were given in all cases to avoid civilian casualties, but unfortunately confusion over the warning in Banbridge led to the death of a boy who was standing near the bomb when it exploded. The IRA later issued a statement expressing its regret at the death of the boy and announcing that it had begun an enquiry into the circumstances surrounding the warning in Banbridge, but at the same time it emphasised that it necessarily remained committed to pursuing its bombing campaign against commercial targets.

The scale of these attacks which have been launched over the past few weeks shows the emptiness of the claims which have recently been made and energetically promoted by the British media that the IRA is demoralised and on the verge of defeat. Such claims have been made on numerous occasions over the past ten years and have been proved false every time. On this occasion the British state is attempting to use a few informers and defectors from the Republican Movement to back up such claims in a vain attempt to sow mistrust and discord among the nationalist community. The IRA's response to such efforts by the British state has once again been shown to be swift and effective. On the day after the Chief Constable of the RUC repeated his claim that the IRA was 'reeling' the IRA launched the major ambush in Belfast which left three British soldiers dead. In a statement claiming responsibility for the attack the IRA pointed out that this operation was 'a practical demonstration that the IRA is here to stay.'

Irish Correspondent

Irish Correspondent