

FIGHT RACISM!

FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

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LABOUR PARTY AND TUC CONFERENCE REPORTS

LABOUR TAKES CARE OF ITSELF

Last month Brighton and Blackpool were the sites of two of the most nauseating public displays of hypocrisy and chauvinism to disgrace the British working class movement in the last year: the TUC and Labour Party Conferences.

The TUC should really be renamed the Association for Betraying the Workers. Last year saw the disgusting betrayal of ASLEF, the attrition tactics designed to wear down the health workers, the ineffectual series of 'Marches for jobs' as unemployment climbed past the 3 million mark and nearly 600,000 people left the TUC.

The tone was set at the beginning when the President of the local Trades Council called on the delegates to boycott the Brighton Council's £88,000 reception in protest at its reactionary financial, housing and educational policies. The thought of all that champagne and caviar going to waste spurred Alan Sapper into vitriolic condemnation of the proposed boycott. Of course the TUC attended the reception. What else could you expect?

Forced by massive pressure into a show of supporting the health workers, the TUC chose 22 September - when a large part of the engineering industry was closed down for its holidays. Even as Congress gave the health workers a standing ovation, the dreadful Albert Spanswick was busy behind the scenes trying to negotiate a betrayal in secret talks with the government. Spanswick urged power workers to scab on his members, hot on the heels of his appeal in August to newspaper workers to stab his members in the back.

The Congress voted opposition to government legislation against trade unions. But with Frank Chapple as President, the government will have an easy ride over the TUC. Congress went on to reject incomes policy in one motion and to accept it in another. It obviously doesn't care - out in the real world it was announced that living standards had fallen by 2%.

But what overwhelmingly united the TUC was the insufferable selfishness and sickening chauvinism that poured forth from every corner. The textile workers wanted protection from Third World imports. AUEW/TASS com-

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GENOCIDE IN WEST BEIRUT

'I accuse the United States and Israel of having planned the liquidation of the Palestinian people' - Arafat

The brutal massacre of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in the Sabra and Chatila camps of West Beirut was the logical and ruthless continuation of Zionism's war against the Palestinian people, the PLO and their Lebanese allies. When on 16 September units of the Lebanese Phalange and some from fascist Major Haddad's forces, based in Israeli occupied South Lebanon, entered the camps the Begin Government and the Israeli army knew exactly what was going to happen. For three days the fascist militia set about systematically butchering unarmed men, women and children. When they left on 18 September, *Washington Post* journalist Loren Jenkins described some of the scenes:

'In a garden, the bodies of two women lay on a mound of rubble out of which a baby's head poked, its open eyes glazed. Next to them lay the headless body of a baby in diapers.

Around the corner, in another alley, two girls perhaps 11 or 12 lay on their backs, legs flung apart, each with a bullet hole in the side of her head. Twenty feet away eight men had been machine gunned against a cinderblock house.'

Over 1500 people lay dead. Babies had been carved up, children hacked to death, women and girls raped and then shot. The marauding killers spared no one who crossed their path - old men and women, doctors and nurses - all were slain. Their bodies were tipped into mass graves and houses bulldozed over them.

The Day of Action, on 22 September, called by the TUC in support of the NHS workers, resulted in widespread solidarity strikes throughout Britain, and a massive demonstration of 120,000 in London. The strikes were in defiance of Tebbit's Law. They were a welcome, if small, sign that more workers in Britain are prepared to treat such anti-working class legislation with contempt. The support shown was a great boost to the NHS workers, now in their seventh month of action for a wage demand which, even if won, would fail to lift literally hundreds of thousands of NHS workers above the official poverty line of £82 per week.

One of the most impressive acts of solidarity came from the prisoners in Hull who went on strike on 22 September. They forfeited a day's pay, money which buys them their few 'luxuries' to lighten the oppression of the prison regime. Heartening though this is, the success of the strike ultimately depends on whether the working class is prepared to show even greater solidarity with a section of the workforce (predominantly women, black and immigrant workers) traditionally scabbed on by the TUC. The Day of Action, albeit a day of great solidarity, was a cover-up by the TUC of its own treacherous treatment of those workers, and in addition



DAY OF ACTION

for the disgraceful defeat it inflicted on ASLEF in June. The TUC is a past master in the art of spectacular 'Days of Action' called to hide months of inaction and backroom scabbing. Even in the days before 22 September, it is now clear, that trade union leaders (including the infamous Spanswick, whose every miserable word is an apology to the ruling class) were secretly negotiating with Fowler, and only government intransigence prevented the TUC from selling out.

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ISRAEL SUPERVISES AND ORGANISES FASCIST MASSACRE

Zionist complicity in the massacre, so brutal and savage, was so clear that in Tel Aviv, Israel's capital, 400,000 people took to the streets and demonstrated to demand Begin's and Sharon's resignation. So powerful was the pressure within Israel itself that the Israeli Cabinet was forced to call a full scale inquiry. Yet no inquiry is needed to demonstrate Zionism's responsibility for the massacres.

As the fascist militias carried out their deadly work, the Israeli army in full control of West Beirut offered its assistance. Its army units ringed the camps preventing civilians from escaping. And during the hours of darkness they shot flares into the sky to light up the camps for the killers. Fascist Begin and his bloody Defence Minister Sharon attempted to deny Zionist complicity.

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NON-STOP PICKET SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE

MASSIVE MEETING SHOWS SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS

On Monday 4 October 450 people packed into Conway Hall in London to show their support for the non-stop picket of South Africa House. Chris Fraser spoke on behalf of City Branch AAM, who called the meeting. Members of the Kitson family outlined the aims of the picket, the long struggle of David Kitson and the freedom struggle of the ANC. Picketers spoke of why they supported the picket and about their experiences.

They were supported by a broad platform of speakers. A major commitment was given on behalf of the Labour Party by Stanley Clinton Davis MP, opposition spokesman on South Africa. He pledged the Labour Party to support mandatory UN sanctions against South Africa, close down all Anglo/South African trade associations, strengthen the ban on arms sales, and discuss with the OAU and the UN 'our wish to provide direct financial and military aid to the liberation movements'. If implemented, this would represent a sharp break with Labour's past record of shameful betrayal of the people of South Africa.

The meeting was chaired by David Reed. Other speakers included Bob Hughes MP - Chairperson of AAM, Reg Race MP, Frank Dobson MP, Gerry Pocock CPGB, Eddie Abrahams FRFI, Vanessa Redgrave WRP, Jake Ecclestone of the NUJ and George Jerrom NGA.

The collection raised £370. The proceedings were punctuated with singing and chanting led by the magnificent youth who are the backbone of the campaign.

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DAY OF ACTION

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es. The government's brazen-faced refusal to move can only be explained by their longer term determination to smash not only working class organisation, but the 'Welfare State' itself.

The NHS strike is not a question of wages for a specially-devoted section of the workforce who have 'as good a case as the police', to quote a COHSE leaflet. (This is a disgraceful argument. The NHS workers need money to live irrespective of what the state pays its repressive police force, who have attacked picket lines and raided sit-ins throughout the strike.) The strike is in defence of the NHS itself as an essential service for workers, which has suffered significantly by government cuts. The NHS is already totally inadequate to deal with the ill-health of the 4 million jobless and the millions of others on or below the poverty line.

All the major diseases among the working class come from poverty and exploitative work conditions. Ruling class priorities in Britain put the health of working people bottom. That is why a third world country like socialist Cuba, liberated from imperialism a mere 20 years, can provide for its people better than an imperialist nation like Britain. The infant mortality rate in Cuba is now lower (ie better) than parts of Glasgow and the occupied North of Ireland. A disease like whooping cough kills where poverty is its ally. The last major epidemic in 1977-79 killed 27 children in Britain. Yet in Sweden, with a better health service and standard of living, as many cases of the disease resulted in *no* deaths; there has not been one single death from whooping cough since 1971 in Sweden. The government attack on the NHS and the standard of living of the working class is responsible for numerous and uncountable deaths.

In fact the British ruling class is turning back history to try to defend its shaking system. The so-called Tory Think-Tank produced a Cabinet paper outlining how to privatise the NHS entirely in the next government period, and proposed in addition an ending of the automatic uprating of state benefits in line with inflation, for 24 million people. Moves are afoot to facilitate private health insurance schemes (already



shamefully subscribed to by some unions); private hospitals are one of the biggest growth areas in the economy at present; the first private medical school in Britain is planned to open in 1983 in London. And on 1 October, the new racist pass laws introduce checks in hospital based on suspicion of patients' immigrant status, ie if you're black or look or sound foreign. The effect of this legislation will be to introduce a widespread system of charges for services into NHS hospitals—a vital experiment prior to privatisation. Those who cannot prove their 'right' to free treatment will be charged huge sums. The government is using black and immigrant people to experiment with.

The health workers' struggle continues to grow in significance. It is a struggle to defend the NHS itself as the only provision, albeit inadequate, for health care for the working class free at time of use. The struggle is also against exploitation of oppressed workers in the NHS. But most of all it must now stand against privatisation of the NHS and for the vast improvement of health facilities for the working class.

The success of the struggle continues to depend on solidarity action from the rest of the trade union movement. In the weeks ahead, the struggle will increasingly find itself up against the like of Spanswick and Co in the TUC, fearful of confrontation with the government, a confrontation inevitable if the interests of the working class are to be defended. The health workers are fighting a battle for everyone.

John Roberts

The low paid — everyone's fight

LABOUR PARTY

CONFERENCE

LABOUR SUPPORTS BRITISH TROOPS IN IRELAND!

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plained that contracts for the Trident nuclear missile were placed abroad and called for a strategy which 'would enable money spent on United Kingdom defence to be used to develop British products'. Never mind that big bang so long as it's British. Keep plastic bullets British!

It was decided to leave the Common Market after delegates heard that though the EEC might be a larger market, trade with oppressed nations was more profitable.

The shipbuilding workers objected to buying ships from South Korea—not because it is a fascist police state, but because British workers might lose their jobs! The steelworkers called for import controls. The agricultural workers wanted protection from Dutch tomatoes. Even the Co-op was called upon to buy British. On the sinking ship of the TUC the universal cry was 'everyone for themselves'.

Solidarity shone through the International discussion—solidarity with imperialism. No one said anything about Ireland. El Salvador and South Africa went through 'on the nod'—everyone might as well have nodded off for the interest shown. Israel was condemned—despite strenuous opposition from the General Council—putting an end to the 65 year old tradition of enthusiastic support for Zionism. Yet the Congress accepted the right of Israel to exist within its own 'borders'—quite unconcerned where these 'borders' will be by the next Congress. The only international question which received attention was the Poland debate, where the practical support given to counter-revolution contrasted with the lip-service paid to people oppressed by imperialism. As a stunt Lech Walesa had been invited; there was a Solidarity representative on the platform; and all the people who oppose Irish freedom were up at the rostrum beating their breasts about 'repression in Poland'.

In short, the 1982 Congress was a demoralising pro-imperialist jamboree, which can only succeed in dragging the workers' movement in Britain even further back.

The Labour Party Conference was no

better. On Monday it was agreed that a register of all organisations inside the Labour Party would be set up to ensure that they operate according to the Constitution. The Trotskyists, who hover round the Labour Party like a cloud of flies round dung, were up in arms. Their claims that Labour was moving to the Left would look pretty stupid if they all got thrown out! The Militant policies on all important questions are thoroughly reactionary—they condemn the freedom struggle of the IRA; they attack the ANC in South Africa; they did not oppose the Falklands war; they condemn the fight against racism and sexism as divisive. These are indistinguishable from the policies of the Labour leadership. It seems that the register and the imminent purge of Militant is really to reassure the middle class that Labour is still right-wing, despite media and Trotskyist attempts to pretend it is socialist. So it seems likely that a few heads will roll, including that of Militant leader Ted Grant who, at 68, is believed to be the oldest Young Socialist in the world. The fact that the Labour Party feels it necessary to get rid of the reactionary Militant tendency shows how far to the right the pro-imperialist trade unions have now dragged the Labour Party. This was also reflected in elections of extreme right-wingers to the NEC.

Most of the debate at the Conference was irrelevant to the vast majority of the working class, the unemployed and oppressed. There was a long discussion of Labour's Alternative Exploitation Strategy, designed to step up profitability in Britain. Once again this 'socialist' party voted not to nationalise the blood-sucking banks and financial institutions—in case workers' pension funds and bank clerks jobs might be put at risk! There were calls for the City to be 'patriotic'—as if it has to take lessons from the Labour Party!—and invest in Britain instead of in 'unstable' countries like South Africa.



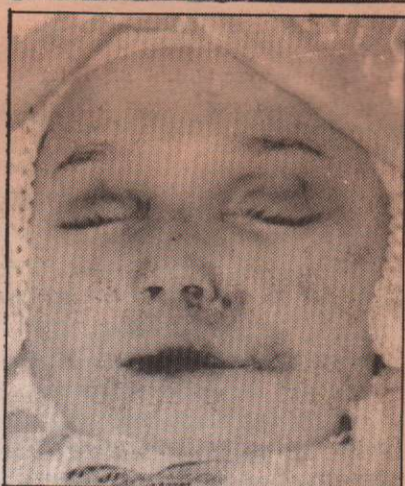
Victims of the plastic bullet. They say the next Labour Government will ban its use. Yet conference affirmed Labour support for partition—so who can believe this 'promise'?

Conference voted to recognise the PLO, a great step forward on paper for the Labour Party which has been the strongest prop of Zionism in the world. Yet it also approved a statement calling for efforts to guarantee the security of Israel—presumably like Operation 'Peace in Galilee'. Conference heard arch-imperialist Denis Healey claim that there were few countries in the Middle East where democratic opposition was able to express its views with impunity—even inside the armed forces while fighting was continuing! Healey did not point out that this freedom only

exists for Zionists in the same way that the joys of democracy in South Africa are confined to white racists. The 'support' for the Palestinians is anyway a cosmetic exercise. The Zionist 'Friends of Israel' group, with a membership of 120 Labour MPs, has been told that although it receives one third of its money from abroad—from the Jewish Agency—thereby breaking the rules of the new Register, no action will be taken against it.

Hypnotised by the vision of all those votes from CND supporters, Conference opportunistically voted for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Meanwhile, the Labour Party showed its support for conventional military aggression against the socialist countries by voting to remain in NATO.

There was a heated discussion on Women's issues. The women's demands were quite modest—given that women are an oppressed majority in this country—that all short lists of candidates should include women; that the women's section of the NEC be chosen by the Labour Party's women; and that the women's section should have the right to table 5 motions to Congress. Naturally all this was voted down. The only surprise was that the Labour women should anticipate anything else. Do they really expect a party controlled by selfish, pot-bellied, corrupt, middle-aged male racists, who



spit on the oppressed everywhere, to treat women any differently from the way they treat blacks, Palestinians or the Irish?

Most international motions—on South Africa etc—were 'remitted'—a polite code word for being consigned to the dustbin. Surprisingly, Ireland was not forgotten. There was a debate on the banning of plastic bullets. Despite a vigorous speech by the disgusting Don Concannon, who explained that if they weren't allowed to use plastic bullets to murder little children, they would gun them down with real ones, conference promised that the next Labour government will ban plastic bullets. Anyone who believes that needs their head examined.

The proposer of a motion calling for British withdrawal from Ireland asked for it to be remitted, on the grounds that the Labour Party was already committed to a United Ireland. This clumsy attempt by the 'left' to cover up for Labour's support for partition was exploded when conference overwhelmingly defeated the motion, thereby reaffirming Labour's long tradition of support for the imperialist occupation of Ireland.

Stephen Palmer

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Anti racists - gaol sentences

The Precinct 6 Defence Campaign against fascist attacks and police harassment in Leeds is continuing despite police efforts to suppress it. So far the police have made 10 arrests, restricted and banned marches and silenced or stopped court pickets. Most serious of all, Mohan Pipial and Les Haw have received gaol sentences of three months and six weeks respectively. Both are now out on bail pending appeal against this disgraceful sentence. But harsh bail conditions have been imposed, curfewing them from 8pm to 7am every day.

The campaign began after the police did nothing to prevent a series of fascist attacks taking place in Leeds which resulted in 5 people being stabbed by fascists. Instead, the police began to arrest black and anti-racist youth. Les and Mohan were arrested when the police ordered a group of black and white anti-racist youth merely walking in Leeds City centre to disperse. They were both charged with behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace and with this began the Precinct 2 Defence Campaign. Local youth were determined to fight back. It is now the Precinct 6 Defence Campaign because the police have consistently harassed and arrested those involved in the campaign. They even opposed bail for Mohan (on a minor breach of the peace charge!) and the campaign's lawyers had to go to a Judge to win bail for Mohan. He spent 17 days in prison whilst bail was fought for.

The police record of harassment is clear:

24 July Precinct 2 Defence campaigners told they would be arrested after they gathered to begin a march they had called.

7 August Les Haw, Chas Andrews and another youth arrested after a successful demonstration had been held. Charged with obstruction.

17 August Mohan Pipial and Charlie Stuart arrested when a drunk attacked them as they were putting up Defence Campaign posters. Charged with fly-posting and behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace.

21 August Les Haw, Mohan Pipial and Garvey Harris violently assaulted and arrested by police after another successful demonstration. Garvey Harris' eardrum perforated. All charged with breach of the peace and Garvey additionally with criminal damage to a police van.

23 August Garvey Harris, Les Haw and Mohan Pipial appear in court. Police oppose bail. Mohan remanded in custody, Les Haw is given bail on condition that he keeps away from the City Centre. The picket outside the court is told by police to stop using the megaphone.

24 August 6 of the campaigners appear in court. Mohan is again remanded in custody. Picketers outside the court threatened with arrest.

25 September A march held by the Islamic Centre in Chapeltown to protest against the massacre in Lebanon. The Precinct 6 Defence supported the march with its banner and a contingent. The police insisted that the organisers remove the banner from the march. The banner remained in the march with the organisers' agreement.

The police have consistently restricted the Precinct 6 Defence Campaign marches to short routes. When the campaign called a march for 9 October from Chapeltown to the City Centre, the police said it could not go ahead. Superintendents Newton and Exley gave the grounds for this political ban as: the people of Chapeltown wouldn't want the march, the march had nothing to do with Chapeltown and the police didn't

want 'disruptive influences' in Chapeltown! After numerous protests about this ban, the police suddenly reversed it - but too late for a march to be effectively mobilised. At an earlier meeting Superintendent Newton told campaign members: 'You can't have any democratic rights'.

Mohan Pipial has particularly been singled out by the racist Leeds police. He has already spent over two weeks in prison and if his appeal fails he faces another three months. Of his experiences he said:



'Obviously the police are fascist themselves - they protect the fascists from militant youth. On 3 July when the fascists ran riot in Leeds there were no police to be seen but when the police see the black youth getting the best of the fascists they think it is time to stop the youth fighting back. The police get scared when people know their rights and how to organise'.

On prison:

'Some of the screws were really fascist. When I got FRFI sent to me the screws had written "Fight Immigration" across the bottom. When I got bail one said to me "We should deport all you bastards". I got letters of support from all over - London, Newcastle, Liverpool. One from the non-stop picket of South Africa House. It really cheered me up'.

The fight is on in Leeds to prevent Mohan and Les from being sent to prison and to defend the Precinct 6.

Police and fascist attacks must be resisted and democratic rights to organise defended. In the second court case so far heard, Mohan Pipial and Charlie Stuart were cleared of breach of the peace, but fined £98 for flyposting.

The campaign needs your support. There is a petition with hundreds of signatures - it needs more! There is a public statement which well known people have signed, including Tarlochan Gataura, one of the Bradford 12. Most vital, the campaign needs money to pay legal and campaign costs. As its next

major activity the campaign is organising a protest delegation about police harassment to the Chief Constable of Yorkshire.

Give Support Now!

● Send donations, messages of support and requests for petitions and leaflets to the Precinct 6 Defence Campaign, c/o LAP, 59 Cookridge St, Leeds 2.

● Send a letter of protest to the Chief Constable Ronald Gregory, West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police, Police HQ, Laburnham Rd, Wakefield, Yorkshire.

● MONEY IS URGENTLY NEEDED. Make cheques and postal orders payable to the Precinct 6 Defence Campaign c/o LAP, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2.

Maxine Williams

Croxteth fights for its school

At the end of last summer term, parents occupied Croxteth comprehensive school, determined to prevent its closure. When it became clear that the Government would not re-open it, the parents took matters into their own hands. On 20 September 360 pupils arrived for the first day of term - Croxteth was open, but under the control of the parents. The next day, eight pupils who had been transferred to nearby Ellergreen School transferred back to Croxteth. The campaign, organised by the Croxteth Community Action Committee, has proved a complete success. The Committee have organised everything - from teachers to cleaners, from school meals to school books. In doing so, they have mounted a serious challenge to government education cutbacks.

The closure of Croxteth was set in motion at the end of 1980. Using the excuse of falling rolls as a result of inner-city decimation, the City Council had advanced proposals early in 1980 for the closure of no less than six comprehensives. Croxteth was not amongst these, although Paddington school, which serves Liverpool 8 was. But on 10 November 1980, four hours before a meeting of the Working Party discussing these six closures, a story broke in the *Liverpool Echo* that Croxteth was to be included. There was no mention on the agenda of this proposal, but it was discussed and three weeks later the Education Sub-Committee, on the casting vote of the Chairman, approved the closure. The next meeting of the Education Sub-Committee reversed this decision, but this did not prevent the full Council from ratifying it at the end of

January 1981. In summer 1981, five of the six schools were closed. The exception was Paddington, a direct result of the uprisings in Liverpool 8. Closure of Croxteth was deferred till this year.

The Croxteth Community Action Committee was formed by the parents after the 10 November 1980 meeting. Despite the fact that there had been no attempt to consult the parents over the closure, and although there were over 500 pupils out of a possible maximum of 750 in attendance, the Government had no intention of overturning its approval of the City Council's decision. On the last day of the summer term, the parents occupied the school. The closure was a further step in the destruction of the community. The population of the Croxteth area is about 26,000. Adult unemployment is 40%; amongst school

leavers it is over 90%. There are no facilities for the youth at all. There is not even a post office to cash giro's in. No cinemas - just nothing, apart from the school a few shops and a small library.

Originally expecting no more than 100 children to return this autumn, the Action Committee have now to obtain more teachers, equipment, books and food than they thought necessary, for a roll-call that is little short of the year before its closure. All this is being financed out of collections from estates and factories. In addition, they are having to cope at present without electricity, cut off soon after the occupation started, although the Committee are determined that by hook or by crook, it will be restored. They have also had to face press vilification, with the usual smears about intimidation. There is no doubt that the state will make every effort to smash the occupation, since it cannot tolerate any section of the working class establishing control over any part of its life. The work of the Action Committee represents a major political challenge to the government, and has succeeded where trade union and Labour Party opposition to the cuts has failed miserably. Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! expresses its full support to the people of Croxteth.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to Croxteth Community Action Committee, c/o 45 Finch Road, Liverpool L14.

Liverpool Correspondent

Brutal police attack in Moss Side

On Wednesday 22 September a black man was followed by two drug squad officers into Moss Side precinct, where they attempted to arrest him for alleged possession of drugs. The police then started to beat him in broad daylight in front of 100 horrified black and white onlookers.

One youth ran to the Hideaway youth club and asked the youth workers there to come to the aid of the man. By this time youths, who were incensed by the brutal treatment meted out to the black man, were attacking the police.

Two youth workers were attacked by the police and thrown into the back of the police van where they were severely beaten. They were again beaten in Moss Side police station. In all four people were arrested, beaten and charged with police assault. They are due to appear at Manchester City Magistrates Court on 30 September. A picket has been called.

On Saturday 25 September 100 people marched to Moss Side police station where they handed in a letter addressed to Chief Constable Anderton condemning the assaults. While the letter was being handed in, the marchers were chanting 'Anderton out!' and 'what do we want, Freedom! When do we want it, Now!' and 'Coppers off the streets'. There were two police photographers on top of the police station taking pictures of the marchers outside the police station.

Alan McDonald

FIGHT RACISM IN BRIEF

● The Alcock Family

Last January (see FRFI 17), the Alcock family was brutally attacked by Operations Support Division (OSD) of Liverpool police. Debbie Alcock, eight months pregnant at the time, was punched and knocked to the ground when the police tried to force their way into the house. Her sister Maxine and friend Marlene were beaten up when they went to her assistance. Their father Kenny and brother Floyd were set on by the police.

Both Debbie and Marlene were charged with obstruction, were found guilty and got £30 fines. The most serious charge was reserved for Kenny-possession of an offensive weapon. But rather than go through a trial in Crown Court, which would have at least partially exposed the racist brutality of the OSD, the police offered Kenny a 'deal': they would drop the offensive weapon charge if Kenny signed a statement agreeing not to pursue a complaint against the police and agreed to plead guilty to a charge of common assault. Facing the possibility of being sent to prison Kenny felt he had no choice but to agree. But whereas the normal consequence of a conviction for common assault is a fine, Kenny got a three month prison sentence suspended for two years. Such is the 'justice' meted out to the victims of Liverpool police violence.

● Free Phil Robins Campaign

The campaign to free Phil Robins has continued to organise activities exposing the treatment of Phil and other victims of CS gas. A picket was held outside a 2,000 strong pre-conference Labour Party rally addressed by Benn. Characteristically none of the eight speakers mentioned the role of the police at all. The Conference itself shows the indifference of the Labour Party towards the use of CS gas - there is only one motion on the matter and it is stuck right at the end of the agenda. A writ has now been served on Chief Constable Oxford claiming damages for Phil's severe injuries. The Campaign will continue its work of publicising Phil's case and that of Kenneth Anderson also shot with CS gas and due for retrial on 4 October on rioting charges.

Robert Clough

● Bradford deportations - Home Office backs down

The campaign to defend the 18 Bradford Asians under threat of deportation and removal, has scored its first successes. The Joint Committee Against Deportations has forced the racist Home Office to back down in three of the cases.

These victories have come as the campaign has stepped up its activities against this wave of racist repatriations. On 2 September an 800-strong National Demonstration was held in Bradford in support of the 18.

Others, however, remain under threat including Mahmud Khan, whose two-year fight against deportation has been reported in previous issues of FRFI.

Your support is vital. Send messages of support and donations to Joint Committee Against Deportations, c/o Bradford Law Centre, Sedgfield Terrace, Bradford BD1 2RU.

Bill Hughes

● Halimat Babamba

Halimat Babamba is a 25 year old Nigerian woman living in Leeds with her two small children. She faces the threat of deportation by the racist Home Office. Halimat was forced to leave her husband because of his extreme violence to her. He has since returned to Nigeria and if deported to Nigeria she will face a violent husband who will try to take the children from her.

Friends of Halimat Babamba are campaigning to force the Home Office to allow Halimat to remain in Britain. They are asking for letters to go to MPs and to Timothy Raison at the Home Office. Send for further information to 'Friends of Halimat Babamba', Box HB, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds LS2 3AW. Send donations to the same address.

SOUTH AFRICA IN BRIEF

● Political Police at Barclays Bank

Barclays National Bank (South Africa) as well as extracting its blood-stained profits in racist South Africa, acts as a political police for the apartheid regime. The bank which is controlled by British Barclays International recently sacked a black worker, Bradley Potgieter. Bradley, who is chairman of the Durban branch of the Azanian People's Organisation, was thrown out of his job after being convicted of wearing an illegal T-shirt and putting up posters for a meeting to commemorate the 1960 Sharpeville massacres. The British controlled bank followed up this measure by issuing a circular prohibiting its employees from engaging in political activity. The penalty for any black worker who ignores this ruling is unemployment – the sack. Barclays National Bank issued the circular in order to maintain the Bank's 'impartial political image'. This is an outrageous demonstration of British collaboration with apartheid against the black workers of South Africa. The Bank sacking an anti-apartheid activist, forbids its workers to engage in political activity to maintain its 'impartial political image'! What a gem of hypocritical British imperialist argument! Clearly sacking black political activists is the bank's way of thanking apartheid for allowing it to rob the profits created by the black working class in South Africa.

● RTZ – Profits Slump... except in Namibia

Rio Tinto Zinc, Britain's largest multinational mining company, has issued its latest profit and loss figures. These once again reveal the manner in which the racist apartheid regime in Southern Africa helps bolster capitalists hit by the international economic crisis. RTZ, which operates throughout the world, recorded a £160m collapse in profits for 1981. In the first 6 months of 1982 the group's profits fell by £73.1m and its Australian operations made a loss of A\$29.22m. Earnings in nearly all of RTZ's mining operations fell or remained stable, except for those in the Namibian Rossing Mines. In the first half of 1982 Rossing Mine's profits rose to £13.5m and by the end of the year are expected to exceed the hoped-for £22m profits. The reasons for the profitability of RTZ operations in Namibia are not hard to discover. Under the heel of the apartheid regime, RTZ workers are paid starvation wages, are treated worse than animals, and every attempt to organise against their super-exploitation is suppressed by apartheid armed forces and the private armies which RTZ is allowed to run on the mines.

● Cartown for black homeless

While white immigrants to South Africa are guaranteed jobs and luxurious housing conditions, homelessness amongst the black people of South Africa mounts inexorably. Black families in Jabuvu, Soweto, are now being forced to use scrapped cars and vans for homes. Now – besides the numerous squats and shantytowns – a new phenomenon is appearing: 'cartown'. In Jabuvu, 50 families are living in derelict cars. But the apartheid regime will not even let them remain there. One woman said 'I have two children and had no place to go, and now the West Rand Administration Board officials have come round and warned me that I must get out or they will demolish it.' The apartheid regime, after having destroyed numerous squatter camps such as Crossroads, is now bent on demolishing cartown. As one resident remarked, 'Cartown is scheduled to become a tow-away zone.'

SOUTH AFRICA SOUTH AFRICA SOUTH AFRICA

RELEASE MANDELA

On 5 August Cde Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress, called for an intensified world wide campaign to demand the release of Nelson Mandela and all South African Political Prisoners:

'on the 20th anniversary of the arrest of Nelson Mandela, 5 August 1982, and on behalf of the entire membership of the African National Congress, the militants of Umkhonto we Sizwe who are fighting the apartheid regime on South African soil, and the oppressed people of South Africa, we call for an intensified world-wide campaign to demand the release of Nelson Mandela and all South African political prisoners.'

LONG LIVE THE ANC!

On 7 September Patrick Maqubela, Mboniswa, Maghutyana and Seth Gaba were sentenced to 20 years for fighting for freedom in South Africa – especially for acts of sabotage against government buildings in Durban. In addition, during the course of the trial 5 people were imprisoned for refusing to give evidence against their brothers. When the 3 were sentenced, they raised clenched fists, shouting: 'Long Live the ANC! Long live Umkhonto we Sizwe! and Forward the people's revolution!' Their supporters in the courtroom joined in the chant, but were forced outside by police using teargas.

Nelson Mandela is the acknowledged leader of the black people of South Africa. He has been in gaol since 1962. In 1964 he was sentenced to life imprisonment – meaning life – along with Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Denis Goldberg, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba, Andrew Mlangeni and Elias Motsoaledi, other leading militants of the African National Congress. They were charged under the Sabotage and Suppression of Communism Acts with campaigning to overthrow the government by violent revolution and with membership of the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe – the people's army.

Their arrests and sentences were part of a campaign of repression and terror by the apartheid regime as it attempted to stem the tide of revolution in South Africa which had reached new heights in the early 1960s. Although the South Africa fascists have incarcerated many



Nelson Mandela – serving a life sentence, has now been incarcerated in apartheid gaols for 20 years.

of the leading militants of the liberation movement – other people have taken their places in ever growing numbers.

The numbers of South African political prisoners is growing. The last eighteen months has seen a sharp rise in the number of detentions without trial, political trials and sentences, and above all murders committed by the apartheid regime either judicially, by murder in detention or by terrorist acts. Griffiths Mxenge, Joe Gqabi, Neil Aggett and Ruth First have all been murdered by South African fascist terror. This is a result of the escalation and success of the struggle for freedom in South Africa in recent years. Umkhonto we Sizwe has carried out more military operations inside South Africa and the struggles of the people in trade unions and the community at large have intensified.

The significance of the call by the ANC for a renewed campaign to free political prisoners in South Africa is

that again the apartheid regime is attempting to crush the ANC and thereby by the oppressed people of South Africa by terror, torture, detentions, imprisonment and murder. The release of Nelson Mandela will represent a victory for all political prisoners in South Africa. It will be a blow for justice and democracy.

The Anti Apartheid Movement begins a campaign to release Nelson Mandela and all South African political prisoners on October 11 with a torchlight vigil at the South African embassy 6-8pm.

NAMIBIA Double dealing

The imperialist powers' dealing and double-dealing over the issue of Namibian independence are intensifying. Whilst attempting to foist a pro-imperialist and collaborationist government on a supposedly 'independent' Namibia, the imperialist powers are also seeking to force the departure of Cuban troops from Angola.

Cuban troops in Angola have played a decisive role in defeating South African attempts to destroy the Angolan revolution. Imperialism is now demanding their withdrawal – no doubt to facilitate further counter-revolutionary attacks by the apartheid regime. One ploy the imperialists are using is to promise to replace Cuban troops with troops from France and Portugal. In other words to replace revolutionary internationalist troops with imperialist ones!

Both the Angolan government and SWAPO are resisting imperialist attempts to link Namibian independence with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, whilst Fidel Castro has declared that Cuban troops will not leave Angola until all apartheid forces have been withdrawn from both Angola and Namibia.

Meanwhile, despite negotiations, the South African Defence Force is intensifying air and artillery bombardment against Angolan army forces in the country's southern Cunene province. Massacres of ordinary villagers in both Namibia and Angola continue. Recent evidence with photographs of a massacre in a Namibian village, committed by South African forces, was given to the *British Observer* – they refused to print the photos on the grounds that they were 'too shocking'.

Chris Fraser

STOP THE HANGINGS

In the last few weeks six young ANC members have been sentenced to death. They were all charged with acts of sabotage against the apartheid regime. They were sentenced to death because they joined the fight against the oppression of their people. Anthony Tsotsobe, Johannes Shabangu and David Moise appealed against their sentence on 3 September. The result of the appeal is yet to be announced. The other three – known as the Moroka 3 – Marcus Thabo Motaung, Jerry Semano Mosololi and Thelle Simon Mogoerane, have not appealed, but made a direct plea for clemency to the State President. Their case is urgent because the death sentences could be carried out immediately.

The Moroka three are members of Umkhonto we Sizwe, charged with daring attacks on Moroka police station, other police stations, an electricity power station and a railway line between 1979 and 1981. The state's evidence against the three rested almost entirely on 'confessions' extracted under torture.

● Thelle Simon Mogoerane's hands were tied behind his back, a rope was put round his neck and he was hung from a tree so that he had to stand on tiptoe. A plastic bag was put over his head. He was further assaulted in the police station and a pistol was placed in his mouth whilst the police faked the sound of a bullet going off. The judge called Mogoerane a 'compulsive liar' when he gave this evidence in court.

● Jerry Semano Mosololi was punched, his hands were tied, a plastic bag placed over his head and a dog was set on him. He was blindfolded and tortured with electric shocks. The judge said his evidence 'was a pack of lies'.

● Marcus Thabo Motaung was shot in the hip and groin when he was arrested.

He was not treated for 2 days while he bled internally. He was examined by a doctor who did not disinfect or dress his wounds, but handed him over to the police for interrogation. He later spent 8 days in hospital. The judge said that Motaung never asked for treatment and had lied about his injuries.

The three appeared in court barefoot and shackled and were treated to a travesty of justice. The judge openly threatened state witnesses with possible prosecution as accomplices if they did not answer questions 'satisfactorily'. South African law permits state witnesses to be detained in solitary confinement for the duration of a trial.

The defence argued that the three should be treated as prisoners of war. The judge said 'We do not need to waste time'. The defence argued that the ANC is regarded as a national liberation movement, as is the PLO; the judge responded 'If it is a lot of dotty people overseas (saying) that a bunch of murderers like the PLO (who) spend their time killing Jews is a liberation movement and that they link the ANC with that, then it does not say much for their

STATEMENTS FROM THE DOCK

'The anger that was caused by this situation in South Africa made me join the military training in order to enable myself to fight against these things.'
Jerry Semano Mosololi

'I elected to be a soldier... primarily I had to fight to have the people at home freed. I regarded myself as a soldier, a person who was fighting for the freedom of his people.'
Thelle Simon Mogoerane

right thinking'. This statement represents the unity of imperialism, Zionism and apartheid ranged against humanity and the liberation movements. The Moroka 3 are condemned to death by these fascists for fighting for freedom and democracy.

Action to save the lives of the Moroka 3 is urgent. SATIS (South Africa the Imprisoned Society) have called a weekly picket of the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square, London, on Wednesdays from 1-2pm. FRFI readers and supporters are urged to attend.

Carol Brown

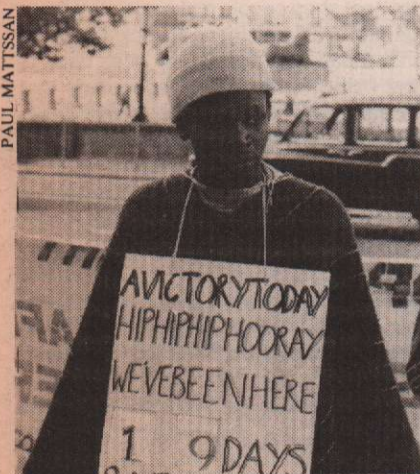
FREE ALL SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

SUPPORT THE
NON-STOP PICKET
SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE

SUPPORT THE
NON-STOP PICKET
SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE

Life on the non-stop picket

There are about fifty 'hard-core' picketers who spend most of their time on the picket, the majority of them youth. A typical day sees about a hundred people joining and leaving the picket and overnight anything between five and twenty-five people sleeping on the picket. Enthusiastic political work goes on almost constantly, leafletting, petitioning and explaining to passers-by, unison singing of South African freedom songs and spirited chanting of militant slogans.



In the mid-evenings the Kitson family chair 'The Picket University'. Everyone gathers round and a volunteer gives a short talk, followed by discussion. The subjects are agreed by majority vote. There have been talks on the struggle in South Africa, British investment in South Africa, the history of the ANC, the liberation struggle in Ireland, police harassment, women's struggles, the American labour movement and many others. The 'picket university' has proved an exciting way of furthering political education - and it's also enjoyable!

A black youth 'I came to this picket because I think what these people are fighting for is right - there should not be a different law set out for blacks and whites. The other reason I joined was because I thought the people on the picket are really putting up a good fight and really determined to win.'

Everyone participates in the work - everyone takes on responsibilities. Getting food and drink, looking after equipment etc. There's also time to rest, read, listen to the radio, chat and tell jokes. Despite the police harassment, the city roar and the driving rain, the life of the picket goes on.



All kinds of groups visit the picket - one night Palestinians came and chanted 'ANC/PLO One Struggle One Fight!' Another time parents of children murdered by the British Army in the Six Counties of Ireland, joined the picket and chanted ANC/Irish People - One Struggle One Fight!

The unity and internationalism of the picket points the way forward to the future.



FREE DAVID KITSON

On the 25th August (my father David Kitson's 63rd birthday) our family began a non-stop picket outside South Africa House/Embassy, in Trafalgar Square, to save his life. My father is in his 19th year of imprisonment. He was imprisoned for membership of the African National Congress, and for the stand which he took against the barbarity of apartheid. Since 1979 he has been held in the section for the criminally insane in Pretoria Central Gaol, without heating, hot water, and with inadequate exercise facilities. For the last two years he has suffered with bronchitis. The South African government has stated many times since 1979 that they will move the political prisoners to a more suitable prison. The latest undertaking, given to the British Government, stated that he would be moved by 1 August 1982. This has not happened. The Kitson family and Anti Apartheid Movement (City Branch) then called the Picket.

We have no doubts that after the vain attempts at breaking my father's spirit the South African fascist regime would try to kill him - they tried to break my father's spirit by: delaying his letters for 3 months, detaining and torturing his son, murdering his main contact with the outside - my aunt, Joan Alison Weinberg.

But nothing will break my father's spirit. When I went to South Africa in March to comfort him he and the other prisoners ended up giving me courage!

The South African fascist regime decided to kill him, but because he is white and well known they would have to do it by 'natural causes'. They are denying him adequate medical care and keeping him in conditions likely to worsen and destroy his health. But they will not succeed!

So far the picket has forced the apart-

heid regime to send a doctor to visit my dad. This was within 3 days of the start of the picket. Later on September 9th the British Foreign Office were informed that my dad would be moved to a new jail on September 11th. They didn't move him but have now said that they will move him at an 'early date'. We are determined that he will be moved to better conditions and that he will be released.

We are using my father's example to highlight the plight of ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH AFRICA most of whom are black.

We have all kinds of support for our picket - a hundred and ninety six MPs from all parties, the whole of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Trade Unions, Trade Councils, the GLC, community groups, political groups and also 'ordinary' people of all ages including the over-

eighties. The mainstay of the picket are the black and white youth - punks, skinheads, rastas - all victims of British capitalism - most of them unemployed and subject to police harassment. (One of them said to me 'I'm a punk with a future in a country that has none!')

All of us have braved the weather conditions and consistent police harassment and out and out racism.

Not only can we save my Dad's life, we are using the picket to build real support for his movement - the African National Congress - and our leaders like Nelson Mandela. The courage and dedication of the picketers especially the youth proves to me that they will be the forces to build a movement capable of winning.

The youth on the picket are learning that in order to take a stand against apartheid they come up against the British state - in the form of police attacks. And they realise this is because it is British imperialism that is the life blood of apartheid. The racism in South Africa starts here!

This is not just a question for South Africans - for to take a stand against apartheid you have to attack British racism and British imperialism.

A victory for the South African people would be a victory for the British people.

Victory to the Progressive people in Britain!

Victory to ANC & SWAPO!

Amandla Kitson

POLICE HARASS PICKET

The support the British state gives to racist South Africa is exposed by the incessant police harassment of the picket, which has included 12 charges against 7 picketers. The police have not succeeded in their attempt to intimidate/stop the picket: organised defence of those arrested has meant that, at the time of going to press, the picket has won 4 charges out of 4 in the courts, and those on the picket line have continued more determined than before.

There have been 10 charges of 'obstruction of the highway'/'obstruction of the police'. Sharon Cunningham and Steve Burrows have been charged with both these 'offences' at 1am on the first night of the picket. Steven Kitson was acquitted of both charges. Uta Parker was charged with obstruction of the highway for selling Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! - she was acquitted. Norma Kitson has twice been arrested for obstruction and also faces a charge in connection with the collection of donations on the picket: ironically the police themselves stole the bucket with £16 and refused to give a receipt! Harassment has not been confined to arrests: on 3 September at 4.30am a police car drew up alongside the picket and proceeded to 'test its siren' until all the picketers were awake! Norma Kitson is filing an assault case against the police, and all cases of police

harassment on the picket have been recorded together with the numbers of the policemen involved.

Harassment has not been confined to the picket itself. On 27 September Derrick Blackwood appeared in court charged with 'insulting words likely to cause a breach of the peace'. To the despair of the police he was acquitted, and to exact their revenge they arrested another black youth, Shafid Rafiq, in the courthouse. He was placed in a cell with 4 skinheads, although, unlike the police, they did not attack him. Charged with 'obstructing the police in the course of their duty', Shafid was not released until the following morning when a barrister spoke in his defence. Meanwhile, outside the court we held a picket to demand Shafid's release. Again we were harassed and insulted by the police, and at one stage Amanda Kitson, who was leading the chanting,

was taken before the Chief Magistrate at Bow Street, who interrupted the trial he was involved in, to order her to be silent upon threat of arrest. In addition to the pressure of defence lawyers, packed courtrooms and pickets of the courts, a growing number of MPs have complained about the police harassment of the picket including Ernie Roberts, Stanley Clinton Davis and Reg Race. Picketers have collected money for the defence of those arrested and back on the picket of the South African Embassy the slogan 'British collaboration with apartheid - out! out! out!' has been chanted ever more vigorously. Many have learnt from the picket that solidarity with the freedom fighters in South Africa necessarily means a struggle against the British state: British imperialism has too much at stake in southern Africa to allow this solidarity to develop unhindered. The picket has shown that the British state will use increasingly repressive methods against those who take the side of the oppressed fighting imperialism. The picket has shown that this collaboration with apartheid can be defeated.

Chris Fraser

FRFI supports the picket

On the 14 September FRFI held a successful public meeting in Camden Labour Centre to build support for the picket. 70 people came to hear Norma Kitson who had recently received a letter from David Kitson saying we should 'cultivate the shoots'. Bobby and Ruby, two black youngsters, explained to the meeting why they are supporting it. Carol Brown from FRFI spoke of the uprisings in Britain last year, of the need to build an anti-imperialist movement in solidarity with the oppressed masses of South Africa and all those fighting imperialism throughout the world... Also speaking at the meeting was Chris Fraser on behalf of the City Branch AAM. A large proportion of the audience were in fact young and from the picket which actually illustrated the central message of all the speakers. The militant feeling of the picket was re-created by singing and slogan chanting.

In addition, every week, FRFI has held a street meeting with picketers in Brixton, Archway and Stroud Green where speeches have been made, money collected and hundreds of people have signed the petition, proving just how widespread is the support among the oppressed in these areas.

A white youth 'I'm here because everyone should have equality. No one should be inferior to anyone else... David Kitson symbolises the fight everywhere of oppressed people... Everyone should have the right to self-determination... friendship and freedom'.



THE MASS PICKET

On 16th September 250 people joined the lunchtime picket amongst whom were many Labour MP's and TU leaders. They included MPs such as Reg Race, Frank Dobson, Stanley Clinton Davis, Roy Hattersley and many others. Trade unions represented included the Fire Brigades Union, the NUJ, USDAW, AUEW-TASS. The ASTMS was represented by Clive Jenkins, the union General Secretary. They joined in the songs and slogans led by the youth of the picket expressing their - the Labour Party and Trade Union movement's - support. The presence of these Labour movement leaders and members of the press meant that the police stood by impotently and made no arrests.



NOTES and COMMENTS.

■ 'Beat the Foreign Devils'

Mrs Thatcher's visit to Beijing (Peking) has exposed the disgusting hypocrisy of British imperialism yet again. Her speech in the Great Hall of the People was an insult to the Chinese nation. She arrived, hoping to do a deal over British occupied Hong Kong. In her speech she claimed 'We believe firmly in self-determination'. After the Falklands war we know this only means that the imperialists want to determine for themselves what everyone else should do. In fact the British claim to Hong Kong rests on three treaties, all extracted from the Chinese at gunpoint in blatant violation of self-determination.

Following the first Opium War, when the British refused to stop the opium trade, the defeated Chinese were forced to cede Hong Kong island to the British under the Treaty of Nanking. At that time (1842) the opium trade to China paid for all of England's tea imports, all her cotton exports to India, and much of the expenses of the Indian colonial administration.

In 1860, after the British had invaded Peking, looted the Forbidden City and burnt down the Summer Palace, the Chinese were forced to cede Kowloon peninsula, opposite Hong Kong island.

Finally, in 1898, following the Japanese victory over the Chinese in 1895, which precipitated a new scramble for concessions, the British acquired a 99 year lease - free - on part of Kwantung Province. This area is now known as the 'New Territories' and forms 90% of the land area of the British colony.

Yet this predatory and brutal history was recalled by Thatcher with nostalgia:

'Cultural and scientific contact went from strength to strength through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.'

Under British rule, Hong Kong has become an imperialist sewer. It has the worst drugs problem in the world - some 10% of the population are opium or heroin addicts. It has the highest TB rate in the world. There are an estimated 25,000 prostitutes. It has a greater share of its labour force working in industry than anywhere else in the world. Child labour is rife, and workers are brutally exploited without protection - the British government has refused to ratify many ILO conventions for its colony. Social services are laughable. The government boasts about its rehousing programme. Yet this is designed to sweep the sprawling shanty towns into high rise cupboards, freeing the land for lucrative property development. As a result, entire families are crowded into single rooms - ten foot square.

The high level of income per head is a result of the fabulous amounts 'earned' by the European and Chinese exploiters. Income tax is actually regressive: the more you 'earn', the lower it gets.

Less than 40,000 of the 5,200,000 population are eligible and registered to vote for the toothless Urban Council. In fact the colony is run by the local ruling class, members of the the Jockey Club, with the blessing of British imperialism.

The police force is one of the most vicious and corrupt in the world. It is standard practice for the Metropolitan Police to send its most corrupt officers to Hong Kong for more advanced and lucrative work. The police are heavily involved in drugs, prostitution, protection rackets and gang warfare.

It is a base for imperialist spying into socialist China. Special Branch officers form 20% of the force, and there is a 'Police Tactical Unit' for dealing with riots. Recently the Metropolitan Police sent two of its senior officers - Chief Superintendent David Stevens of G Division (Hackney) and Inspector Fred Stazicker who is involved in shield training at Hendon Police College - to study anti-riot techniques in Hong Kong. When popular demonstrations took place in 1967 the police, under a Labour Government, shot

dead between 100 and 200 Chinese people. An officer recently said:

'We simply told our marksmen to shoot dead the people they thought were the ringleaders... Our philosophy is a deadly and efficient one that works well in Hong Kong because it is rule by fear.'

This is what Thatcher means by 'self-determination'.

The profits from this colonial cesspit are enormous. The casual attitude to company behaviour and activities has attracted more than 200 banks and insurance companies as well as spawning the enormous Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Hong Kong is Asia's largest financial centre. Its manufactured exports are higher than those of India - mainly textiles, plastics and electronic goods. Finally, there is the fabulous rake-off received by the British government - estimated in the early '70s to be providing half of all backing for the pound.

With all these profits at stake, the imperialists are naturally very worried at the idea of the Chinese people regaining sovereignty over their territory. The Chinese attitude is very clear: Zhou Enlai stated in 1967 that:

'Hong Kong's destiny will be decided by our patriotic countrymen there and the 700 million Chinese people as a whole, definitely not by a handful of British imperialists.'

Yet the British continue to expect some sort of compromise which stops short of restoring Chinese sovereignty. However, the ripening contradictions of imperialism are undermining British rule within Hong Kong itself. At the end of 1981, thousands of jobless Chinese youth surged through the streets of Hong Kong, attacking the racist police and shouting 'Beat the foreign devils; destroy the British colonialists; destroy the foreigners.'

Steve Palmer

■ Massive swoop on unemployed and homeless

While the government quietly prepares its attack on the unemployed and sick with new rules and regulations (as reported in FRFI 22) the police arrested 286 so-called dole fiddlers in Oxford amidst a blaze of publicity.

On Thursday 2 September over 100 police and DHSS investigators waited at the side of the disused St Aldate's school opposite Oxford police HQ. The school had been converted into a bogus unemployment office for a massive raid, code-named Operation Major. As claimants left the building they were intercepted by the police and held on suspicion of obtaining payments by giving false bed and breakfast addresses in the town. Many had come to Oxford to look for work and were homeless.

Most were held for nearly five hours and none were allowed to contact a solicitor. 172 were finally charged with obtaining money by deception and many were remanded in custody. Five special courts were set up to process the defendants.

The cases of two black claimants, Jayantilal and Rashillal Khambhatta, illustrate the kind of treatment dished out to those arrested. They were denied access to legal advice, photographed, forced to wear numbered wrist bands, had their property confiscated and detained for 36 hours before getting their supplementary benefit. Jayantilal's wife, Carol who is not even a claimant and was only there because she is an epileptic and cannot be left on her own, was also detained. When Jayantilal was released before his wife, he insisted on waiting for her. The police then threatened that his wife would 'get into trouble' if Jayantilal made a fuss.

Operation Major was clearly a carefully planned and organised exercise in harassment and intimidation. It was designed to strike fear into the unemployed

and homeless. Unlike the government's new ethnic monitoring, sick pay and voluntary registration schemes, Operation Major was given sensational coverage in the bourgeois press.

Since the recent increase in DHSS snoopers and the government's declared objective of stamping out benefit fraud, the Oxford raid may well be a try out for more large-scale direct attacks on the unemployed.

Benefit 'fraud' amounts in fact to 0.027% of total benefits claimed, while £400 million worth of benefits go unclaimed by those eligible to receive them. Contrast this with the several thousand million pounds worth of taxes evaded by the rich and their companies, the generous tax cuts handed to the rich, plus the numerous expense accounts and 'perks' they enjoy and we can see how vicious this attack was.

The ruling class must attack the oppressed people in order to bolster its own ill-gotten gains. The oppressed must organise an Operation Major in reverse!

Gerald Johnson

■ Solidarity supporters back British imperialism

Following the revelations of the racism of Polish Solidarity supporters in South Africa (see FRFI 19) further evidence has emerged of the counter-revolutionary and pro-imperialist sympathies in Solidarity. In February 1982, nine Solidarity members jumped ship at the Falklands/Malvinas demanding political asylum. Negotiations were still in progress when the Argentinians re-occupied the islands in April. While denouncing the Soviet Union as 'imperialist' and calling for 'restoration of the Polish nation', the Solidarity members immediately leapt to the side of British imperialism, bending over backwards to help British imperialism restore its domination. They refused to help what they referred to as 'the Argies' - enthusiastically repeating racist British abuse. When they saw the Argentinians shoot down one of their own aircraft 'We started hugging and kissing and showing them the victory sign'. When the British landed at Bluff Cove, they helped shift British ammunition - and have a thank you letter from the second in Command of the 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment to prove it. These scum do not even have the excuse of having been brainwashed and bribed by the British for years and years. As counter-revolutionaries they spontaneously adopted the racism of their imperialist mentors. Yet these blood-thirsty racists are touted round by opportunists and trotskyites as representatives of democracy! Imperialist hypocrisy clearly knows no bounds.

Steve Palmer

■ Police try to slur Welsh MP

After appearing at Cardiff magistrates court for the tenth consecutive week (only to be remanded in custody again for another week) Nicholas Hodges charged with 6 other men under the Explosive Substances Act, claimed that he was pressurised into making damaging remarks about Dafydd Elis Thomas MP. Mr Thomas, the Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalist Party) MP for Merioneth told the press that he would seek redress in every way possible if the claims were true - including police resignations and compensation for damage to his reputation.

Mr Thomas has registered a formal complaint with the South Wales Constabulary. Mr Thomas in a statement to the press said that 'The whole thing as far as I'm concerned is absolutely intolerable. I find it inconceivable that the police should think of such a thing. My only brush with the law has been a speeding ticket on the M4'. Mr Thomas went on to say 'I have been critical of the use of 'sus' in South Wales and police tactics - maybe some junior officer might want to

get back at me. If this did happen I would want the officer to be immediately dismissed because it is a threat to democracy'.

Nicholas Hodges, who the police wanted to lie, so as to incriminate an innocent MP is a member of the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement.

The other six men are also WSRM members and like Nick, they are in jail. A week before this incident, Adrian Stone, one of Nick's imprisoned comrades was promised bail - if he turned Queen's Evidence.

The South Wales Constabulary are using the same tactics that the RUC have used in their oppression of Irish nationalists in the unfree six counties, and both organisations wish to destroy that revolutionary force that will destroy British imperialism - republican-nationalism!

South Wales Correspondent

■ Riots in India

250,000 textile workers in Bombay (the industrial and financial centre of India) had been on strike for 6 months when the police, too, began to demand better wages and working conditions. The authorities responded on 8 August by arresting 69 'leaders' and dismissing 90 others.

The city's 20,000 policemen went on strike and immediately an uprising began: buses and trains were set ablaze and shops ransacked - all in the absence of any 'forces of law and order'. The Indian army (nearly 10,000 soldiers) moved in to crush the rebellion: at least 5 people were killed and over 100 arrested, including 9 policemen. Such repression can only provoke more militant resistance from the oppressed workers and dispossessed youth of the region.

David Jackson

■ Ron Brown arrested

Ron Brown MP was arrested during Thatcher's visit to Scotland last month. He stood on the steps of the Holiday Inn, Glasgow and attempted to address her before she went in to meet the Scottish CBI. His arrest was immediately broadcast on Scottish Radio and Television and was witnessed by at least 200 protestors who had gathered to picket. Despite this, Ron Brown had to spend over 6 hours in Stewart Street police station before being charged and released. Telephone enquiries from FRFI supporters were told that the police had to 'verify his identity' before releasing him - this despite positive identification by the media and his wife's presence at the station. At the police station was his wife, a Labour MP and FRFI supporters arrived to show support and solidarity.

Ron Brown has distinguished himself by being one of the few Labour MP prepared to put his principles before his parliamentary career. He has been lambasted for his fact-finding trips to Afghanistan and his support for the government there against the reactionary rebels.

He was also suspended from the House of Commons for calling the Solicitor General for Scotland a liar when that person denied the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act against FRFI sellers.

Ron's wife, May Brown, told reporters that if she had got the chance she would have strangled Thatcher!

Ron Brown has pleaded not guilty and his trial is fixed for 25 November in Glasgow Sheriff's Court.

Gerald Cameron

□ Horror camp for the unemployed

Plawsworth is situated between Chester-le-Street and Durham. This place is a resettlement/rehabilitation centre and was built in 1945 for the Bevin boys. The centre has been used and is being used today.

The Unemployed Workers Group came across people who complained about the place and after a visit to Plawsworth in

July, we also came to the conclusion that Plawsworth has nothing and will never have anything. We in no way blame the manager or the workers at Plawsworth but, the fact remains that Plawsworth is not fit for pigs to live in, let alone people.

The nissen huts are from 1945 and people sleep and eat in these. Plawsworth looks like something from the prisoner of war camps. The homeless go to Plawsworth for simply being unemployed - it is not voluntary. If people do not go, the DHSS stop the money.

Plawsworth is meant to get people back into the habit of working again. These people do such things as plant cabbages, carrots and move stones. In the tool shop people make such things as garden seats and these are sold to private individuals and the money goes back to the DHSS. With all the technology that exists today doing such menial tasks does nothing but penalise the long-term unemployed and the homeless.

The huts have an asbestos compound covering them and we have recently found out that this is dangerous, but the inhabitants of this place in no way realise this and few people know about this place at all. People are kept in the dark until the day when they are threatened with Plawsworth.

The Unemployed Workers Group are advocating that Plawsworth be closed down. The whole of Plawsworth needs to be renovated altogether! The DHSS say that the money is not there to do this, but new flats were built for the clerks, new toilets and also a new reception centre was built. 430 million pounds of benefit are unclaimed each year, isn't it about time this money went into giving people a decent roof over their heads?

Our conclusion about Plawsworth: the place is kept a secret and when we asked if we could tour the place only 4 of us could go, no cameras and no tape recorders! We took a picture outside the horror camp and the manager soon appeared. Plawsworth is used for men only. There have been reports that untested delousing powder is tested at such places and, as we know that drugs are tested on prisoners in prison, we are investigating this claim further.

If you feel you can help us by moral support, or you have been to such places, please contact us at: UWG Unemployed Centre, 2 Jesmond Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. We need unions to back this campaign. Reports and pictures are available



JIM REILLY

Jim Reilly, Luton Sinn Fein and Home Counties Organiser for Sinn Fein (Britain), died on Friday 26 September 1980. Right up to the moment of his death Jim Reilly continued his lifelong struggle as a revolutionary Republican to free Ireland from British rule. For this he earned the hatred of British imperialism which hounded him to his death and framed his close comrade Gerry Mac Lochlainn, now imprisoned in Maidstone prison.

The Revolutionary Communist Group and Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! salute the courage and dedication of comrade Jim Reilly whose death was a great loss both to the Republican movement and the British working class. His memory lives on amongst all anti-imperialists fighting today for Irish freedom.

COMMUNIST TRADITION ON IRELAND PART 16

The political prisoners, some of whom had been on hunger strike for nearly five weeks, had, in fact, been granted Special Category status in 1972 as one of four IRA conditions for truce negotiations with the British government (see FRFI 17). The British government had been forced to agree to truce negotiations and the four IRA conditions because of the intensity of the IRA's military and sabotage operations, and the growing militancy in nationalist areas as street fights with the British army and RUC, and large protests and demonstrations in support of the hunger strikers, took place. In the language of the imperialists, Special Category status was indeed won by an 'enormous outburst of lawlessness'. That is to say, the anti-imperialist struggle was beginning to undermine the stability of British rule in the Six Counties of Ireland. British imperialism would only give ground when confronted by revolutionary force.

On 10 October 1980 a statement smuggled out from the H-Blocks announced that a hunger strike would commence on 27 October 1980.

'We, the Republican Prisoners-of-War in the H-Blocks, Long Kesh, demand, as of right, political recognition and that we be accorded the status of political prisoners. We claim this right as captured combatants in the continuing struggle for national liberation and self-determination ...

Bearing in mind the serious implications of our final step, not only for us but for our people, we wish to make it clear that every channel has now been exhausted and, not wishing to break faith with those from whom we have inherited our principles, we now commit ourselves to a hunger-strike.'

The British government was all too aware of the serious implications for its rule in Ireland if it recognised the political legitimacy of 'captured combatants' in the revolutionary national struggle for self-determination. That is why it had made a determined stand on the issue of political status. The prisoner campaign of disciplined peaceful protest led by the National H-Block Committee had so far failed to move the British government. As a result the political prisoners felt they had no alternative but to go on hunger strike. The question now raised was whether a prisoner campaign built on a specific appeal to those 'wider forces' who did not support the revolutionary national struggle for self-determination could force the British government to grant the prisoners the 'five Demands' (see FRFI 22) - demands which the political prisoners and the British government viewed as tantamount to political status. The courage and example of the hunger strikers would undoubtedly lift the whole protest campaign. The strategy of the National H-Block Committee was now to face a decisive test.

THE FIRST HUNGER STRIKE

The same issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* (AP/RN) which carried the announcement of the hunger strike also reported the brutal murder of two leading H-Block campaigners and members of the IRSP, Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle. At 4am on 15 October two gunmen broke down the front door of the Buntings' home, ran up the stairs and cold-bloodedly fired on the Bunting couple who had come out on the landing. The gunmen then burst into the bedroom of their 18-month-old son, Ronan, and shot dead Noel Lyttle who was sleeping in the same room. It was said at the time that the shootings were either carried out by Loyalist assassins with the assistance of the British army/RUC who pinpointed the targets, or by the SAS, given the brutally efficient style of the murders and their location in the heart of nationalist West Belfast. Dramatic evidence of British army/RUC involvement in the assassinations of H-Block activists was, in fact, revealed in early 1982 at the trial of three UDA men convicted of the murder of John Turnly (see FRFI 22). At the end of the trial one of the three UDA men, Robert McConnell, stood up in court and read out a statement. In it 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-Block activists such as John Turnly, Miriam Daly and Bernadette McAliskey.

On 19 October 1980, a few days after the murder of Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle, 20 masked armed SAS men smashed their way into two homes in the nationalist West Belfast Twinbrook estate,

HUNGER STRIKE

In a remarkably explicit interview given to Ulster TV's 'Counterpoint' documentary programme on 24 September 1980, Michael Alison, then the British Minister for prisons in the Six Counties, explained why the British government gave Irish political prisoners 'Special Category status' in 1972:



Special category status was won not just by a hunger strike, it was won by the enormous outburst of lawlessness, concentrated like a dam bursting into a particular moment in history which made it impossible to build in our prisons, to introduce a normal prison regime.

and terrorised the occupants at gunpoint. The occupants were manhandled and tied up and two young men, who understandably attempted to get out of one house fearing assassination, were shot and then severely kicked and beaten. A widely-publicised Twinbrook Relatives Action Committee meeting to organise support for the forthcoming hunger strike was due to start in one of the houses belonging to H-Block activist Moyra Berkery an hour after the SAS hit it. These developments clearly indicated the determination of the British government to use all means available to crush the H-Block campaign.

On 26 October, the day before the hunger strike began, Belfast saw the largest demonstration to date in support of the H-Block and Armagh prisoners. Over 25,000 took to the streets led by a cavalcade of 32 black taxis and a lead banner across the street proclaiming *Victory to the hunger-strikers*. AP/RN (1 November 1980) said that the march 'served as a clear warning to the British government of the consequence of the anger of the Irish people should any of the seven hunger-strikers die'.

The seven H-Block men who began the hunger strike on 27 October 1980 were: Leo Green (Lurgan), Brendan Hughes (Belfast), Ray McCartney (Derry city), Tom McFeeley (Co Derry), Thomas McKearney (Co Tyrone), Sean McKenna (Newry) and John Nixon INLA (Armagh city). A few days earlier the British government had made an offer of 'civilian-type clothing' for all prisoners. The political prisoners issued a statement on 24 October rejecting this offer as 'meaningless' and as a 'cruel attempt to diffuse the growing support for the blanketmen'. Their statement pointed out that the women political prisoners in Armagh had the basic right of wearing their own clothes and this had not 'met their requirements'. It made it clear that the 'wearing of our own clothes' was 'only one of our five demands' and concluded by stating

'We are not criminals and we are ready and willing to meet an agonising death on hunger-strike to establish that we are political prisoners'. (AP/RN 1 November 1980)

A week after the hunger strike began AP/RN was reporting a 'tremendous and heartening tidal wave of support' throughout Ireland and abroad for the H-Block men and Armagh women political prisoners. This support, it said, had been evoked by the 'courageous commencement' of a hunger strike to the death by seven blanket men. The lead article, in commenting on this support, gave very clear

expression to the political thinking behind the ongoing prisoner campaign:

'People are taking to the streets in public displays of solidarity in such impressive numbers that the British collaborators in the leadership of Fianna Fail and the SDLP are going to quake in their shoes and go crawling to their British masters pleading with them to grant the prisoners' five demands on a humanitarian basis to restore "normality". (AP/RN 1 November 1980)

This confidence was however immediately tempered by the warning that there must be 'no false illusions'. That despite the tens of thousands on the streets and the movement on the political status issue 'even amongst British and Irish establishment circles' not nearly enough had been done to break 'the cruel intransigence of the British government'. However what was now clear was that an important aim in attempting to break that intransigence was to build massive street protests and demonstrations to pressurise the Fianna Fail and SDLP leaderships into supporting the prisoners. And this in turn was to dictate the political character of the protests and demonstrations organised by the National H-Block Campaign.

AP/RN (8 November 1980) argued that

'This necessity of building street protests of unprecedented size dictates... in order not to alienate potential support during this building process, that all street protests be as dignified as possible, with the natural temptation to riot in the North, against British troops and RUC gunmen, being resisted.'

Further, winning the Fianna Fail and SDLP leaderships behind the prisoners would open the way to even wider support.

'The effect of forcing Britain's chief nationalist collaborators, both North and South, into a stance behind the prisoners will have the double benefit of embarrassing the British and opening up, through "the seal of establishment respectability", unprecedented fresh channels for winning further massive support, especially in the South.'

The political standpoint behind the National H-Block Campaign contained a number of crucial assumptions and begged a number of important questions. First, given that the massive, disciplined and peaceful protests of the 'wider forces' were built, could they force the leadership of the SDLP and Fianna Fail to act - against their will - in the interests of the political prisoners? Second, if they were forced to act in such a way, could their polit-

ical pleading with the British government force change its determined stand on political status. Finally, in placing reliance on collaborationist forces, was there not an inherent danger that far from forcing them to fight for the prisoners' cause they would be placed in a position of such influence they could eventually betray the prisoners?

These questions were not unreasonable ones to ask. Fianna Fail had a consistent history of betrayal of the revolutionary national struggle, and, as has been argued, its collaboration with British imperialism was designed to undermine and crush the struggle of the Republican Movement (see FRFI 11, 12, 17, 22). The SDLP was only of value to British imperialism if it could be used to draw support from the nationalist minority away from the revolutionary national struggle to unite Ireland. The SDLP was used in this way during the power-sharing period (see FRFI 17). It had taken no part in the hunger strike campaign. Less than two months before the hunger strike began, AP/RN (6 September 1980) itself reported on an RUC document, which had fallen into the hands of the IRA, giving 'some details' of private meetings the RUC held with middle-class nationalists and unionists in the Six Counties. These private talks were aimed at improving the RUC image and acceptability, discrediting the Republican Movement. They were primarily concerned with helping the RUC to gain credibility within the nationalist areas of the Six Counties. Those involved in one or more of 'seminars' held between October 1979 and January 1980 included representatives of the Catholic Church, the entire Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU, members of the SDLP and other middle-class nationalists - members of the law profession, businessmen, and the medical profession. AP/RN commented at the time:

'The leaders of the nationalist middle-class should note that their attempts to worm the RUC back into the ghettos, their advisory role to these butchers and torturers, who lie behind painted smiles, will not only fail, because of nationalist hostility, but will rebound on the

Collaborators would only get the ear of the British government and their views be given prominence if they were thought to have some real influence amongst the nationalist minority and were acting in the interests of British rule in Ireland. Only in such circumstances were they of use to British imperialism. Was it now possible that such people, having refused to back the prisoners so far, and rapidly losing nearly all credibility with the nationalist minority, could positively influence British policy in favour of the political prisoners? It would not be long before the answer to this question was given.

On 6 November the seven hunger strikers were isolated from their fellow blanket men and placed in individual cells in 'A' wing of H-Block. Reports of continual harassment of the hunger strikers and baiting by warders soon began to filter out. Harassment and beatings of political prisoners on protest were stepped up in the H-Blocks. They were especially aimed at men who had gone back on the blanket protest in support of the hunger strikers. This however did not break their resolve. By December there were over 500 men on the hunger strike.

In November the women political prisoners in Armagh prison decided to go on hunger strike as an intensification of their campaign for political status'. This was in spite of appeals from the Republican Movement advising them against such action. This decision immediately undermined attempts of the British government and others to make the issue of 'civilian clothing' the central point of dispute in order to confuse and divide the supporters of the prisoners. This courageous action of the women political prisoners made it clear to all those involved in the prisoner campaign that the political prisoners were fighting for political status. On Monday 1 December 1980 Mairead Doyle, Mairead Farrell, and Mairead Nugent, from Belfast, began a hunger strike to the death. A statement they said

'We women in Armagh wear our own clothes but we refuse to do prison work, or to co-operate with the prison regime, which is under orders from the British government to criminalise us. We have struggled for - Irish freedom. The cause of Irish freedom is not a criminal cause, but a political cause, and in order to assert this we are going on hunger-strike...'

continued page

HUNGER STRIKE

The hunger strike evoked a massive public response which grew continually throughout the period. Militant protests – marches, torchlight processions, road blocks, occupation of shops, offices and government offices, and pickets on streets and British army barracks – took place daily throughout the Six Counties. Industrial action also taken on several occasions in support of the hunger strikers. The lead was given by 400 dock workers in Belfast, members of the ITGWU, who picketed on 11 November and marched to the Northern headquarters of the ICTU to protest at the inaction of the ICTU on the H-Block issue. The following afternoon workers from all over Derry picketed out in solidarity with the hunger strikers and converged on the city centre where a crowd of nearly 10,000 listened to speeches in support of the hunger strikers.

On 27 November workers stopped work in Dún na nGall, Coalisland, Omagh, and Cookstown in Tyrone. The most widespread action took place on 10 December in response to a call for a National Day of Action by the National H-Block/Armagh Committee. Thousands of workers throughout the Six Counties defied the ICTU leaders and stopped work in support of the hunger strikers. In Belfast a walkout was followed by a rally in Dunville where trade union speakers attacked the ICTU leadership for refusing to support the Day of Action. Many nationalist councillors left the council chambers refusing to return until the hunger strike was honourably settled.

In the 26 Counties there were numerous marches and meetings but the most significant events were two mass marches in Dublin. On 22 November 30,000 marched to the Parliament buildings in Leinster House bringing the centre of Dublin to a standstill. On 6 December an estimated 60,000 people converged on the British Embassy and were stopped short by riot-clad gardai. The marchers vented their hatred of the British government – burning Union Jacks and effigies of Margaret Thatcher and Humphrey Atkins – as well as caricatures of Haughey and the 'Free State' government chanting *Who's a Brit? Gerry Fitt! Who else! Haughey! and Brits Out! North and South!* directed at the massive force of gardai around the Embassy. As the marchers approached the line of riot-clad gardai blocking their path about 200 yards from the Embassy, some of them reacted violently looking for stones and other missiles to throw. They were stopped from this by stewards determined to preserve the peaceful character of the march. *AP/* commented at the time

As the head of the march arrived at this point a number of over-enthusiastic and unthinking marchers allowed their natural feelings full rein and reached for stones and whatever missiles came to hand. But immediate order was restored from the platform and a line of stewards was quickly interposed between marchers and gardai. (13 December 1980)

The clash between the militant youth, who wanted to fight on the streets and the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, which wanted peaceful protests in order not to alienate 'broad support', was to be a recurring event especially in the 26 Counties.

This massive protest however had so far failed to drive 'Britain's' chief nationalist collaborators, both North and South, into a stance behind the prisoners. Not only had the SDLP and Fianna Fail come out in support of the five demands but so had the Catholic Church, the Gaelic Athletic Association or the ICTU. In commenting on this failure in an interview given to *AP/RN* (13 December 1980) Gerry Adams, Vice-President of Sinn Féin, argued

The nature of these organisations means that prominent members have indicated to H-Block activists and prisoners' relatives that they sup-

port the prisoners' five demands, but that they can't – for whatever reason – do this publicly. To get over this obstacle it is vital that pressure be exerted from grass-roots.'

Adams believed that these organisations could still be won round as grass-roots pressure built up and that even John Hume (leader of the SDLP after Fitt's resignation in November 1979) and Charlie Haughey might be forced to do something about the five demands 'when they see the way the land lies'.

International support for the hunger strikers rapidly built up. In the USA, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, France, West Germany, Holland, Italy, Canada, Australia, Portugal and Greece marches, pickets and protests were organised. In the USA 4,000 marched on the UN to hand in protests and resolutions including resolutions from six State legislatures – New York, New Jersey, California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. In Iran a massive anti-imperialist demonstration of a million people cheered banners calling for Victory to the Irish Hunger Strikers.

A measure of the worldwide support was the fact that the Portuguese National Assembly on 17 December voted unanimously in support of a motion condemning British treatment of the prisoners and calling for political status. The Soviet Union gave support to the hunger strikers describing them as 'freedom fighters', reporting their struggle in *Pravda* and printing a letter from the prisoners to the Soviet people.



Paris – solidarity with the hunger strikers

Major trade union organisations throughout the world including the World Federation of Free Trade Unions, the CGT in France, the OUT in Portugal, the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour in Canada and the Australian CTU gave support to the prisoners. The Longshoremen's Union in the USA voted to boycott all British goods if any prisoner died. And the California Labor Union sent a telegram demanding that the British TUC gave support to the prisoners.

In Holland, militant supporters of Irish prisoners burnt down a factory owned by the honorary British Consul. The British Consul office in Aarhus, Denmark, was burnt down. In Lyon, France, supporters of the hunger strikers petrol bombed the British Leyland Agent's offices, while Belgian supporters, protesting against the British Queen's visit, battled with the police.

On 4 December there appeared to be some movement in the British government's position. Humphrey Atkins, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, made a statement in the House of Commons soon after a ninety minute meeting with SDLP leader John Hume. In it he said:

'We have always been, and still are, willing to discuss the humanitarian aspects of the prison administration in Northern Ireland with anyone who shares our concern.'

The National H-Block/Armagh Committee requested a meeting with Atkins. Atkins refused. The SDLP offered to negotiate but urged the hunger strikers to abandon their strike. The SDLP got the backing of both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. John Hume offered his services as mediator. Nine of the ten hunger strikers' families (one could not be contacted) immediately issued a statement pointing out that neither John Hume, nor even they, were in a position to negotiate on behalf of

the hunger strikers nor the 500 protest prisoners who they represented.

On 8 December the 'Dublin Summit' took place. Thatcher, Carrington, Atkins and Howe met Haughey and his ministers in Dublin. A meaningless communiqué was put out, which typically was open to contradictory interpretations by the two sides. The communiqué noted the close cooperation at all levels between the two governments since the May 1980 meeting in London at which Haughey had accepted the loyalist veto on constitutional changes in the Six Counties of Ireland. Haughey had also promised the relatives of the hunger strikers to raise the issue with the British government. However all that came out of the meeting was a restatement of the Atkins 4 December position. A commotion and contradictory interpretations arose over the mention of the setting up of 'joint studies covering a range of issues including possible new institutional structures...'. This empty drivel was used by Haughey to claim that 'historic progress' had been made on the issue of the 'Six Counties'. Thatcher, of course, vigorously denied it. The only 'cooperation' that both parties were really interested in was that of 'security cooperation' primarily directed at defeating the IRA.

However pressure was clearly building up on the British government to avoid the dangerous political consequences in Ireland, both North and South, which could follow the death of a hunger striker. On Wednesday 10 December, after 44 days of the hunger strike, a senior member of the Northern Ireland Office, Mr Bledlock, met the seven hunger strikers in prison and informed them of the prison reforms that were then available. The prisoners immediately issued a statement stating that the concessions fell short of their demands and that the hunger strike would continue.

On Friday 12 December six loyalist prisoners in the H-Blocks went on hunger strike demanding political status and segregation from Republicans. The UDA was split on the strike and the prisoners were persuaded to give up after only six days.

After the Bledlock meeting, the Republican prisoners in the H-Blocks decided to step up their protest. On Monday 15 December another 23 prisoners joined the hunger strike and on Tuesday 16 December a further 7 joined them. There were now 37 Republican prisoners on hunger strike in the H-Blocks and three in Armagh prison. At this stage the hunger strike reached a crisis point. Sean McKenna, after 51 days on hunger strike, had completely lost his sight and by Wednesday 17 December was unable to keep down the drinking water which was barely keeping him alive.

On Thursday afternoon, 18 December, Atkins postponed a statement he had been due to make in the House of Commons and ensured it was delivered to the original seven hunger strikers now in the prison hospital, together with a 34-page document explaining the prison rules. This document was a major elaboration on how far the British government was prepared to go to meet the 'five demands'. Atkins stated that if the hunger strike was called off by the prisoners 'the conditions available to them meet in a practical and humane way the kind of things they have been asking for'. Sean McKenna was on the verge of death. The document appeared to meet the prisoners' demands by a more flexible interpretation of the prison rules. The hunger strike was called off.

Speaking at a 1,000 strong march and rally in Belfast on the Sunday after the hunger strike ended, Gerry Adams, while seeing the outcome of the hunger strike as a victory warned the people to 'be alert, be vigilant, be patient'. He called on Churchmen and politicians to now ensure 'perfidious Albion' behaves in a manner 'to actually resolve the "blanket/no-wash" protest'. The weeks ahead he said would be the most crucial since the protest began.

The ending of the hunger strike initially brought about a conciliatory atmosphere within the H-Blocks. Bobby Sands, Officer-in-Charge (O/C) of all IRA prisoners in the H-Blocks, was given facilities to meet the O/Cs of the four other H-Blocks to discuss the terms of settlement. He had regular meetings with the Prison Governor, Stanley Hilditch, and even met an official from the Northern Ireland Office. But this atmosphere ended within a matter of days. All the document's phrases about the situation not being static, work not being interpreted narrowly and the prison regime being progressive, humane and flexible were shown to be worthless as soon as the pressure on the British government was removed.

The blanket men hoped to move about 30 men off the blanket and no-wash protest before Christmas



IRA volunteers pay a final tribute to Bobby Sands

day but were stopped by Governor Hilditch. He told them that nobody could move anywhere until they put on prison-issue clothing and conformed. In Armagh prison, the women prisoners met with a similar response. The prison Governor refused even to discuss with them the self-education classes as outlined in the document until they conformed. On 9 January 1981, Atkins, in a public statement reversed the order in which the men in the H-Blocks would receive their own clothes. Initially, it was said that the men would first receive their own clothes and then be given civilian-style prison clothing. Now this was to be reversed. The prisoners made another attempt to de-escalate the protest step by step in a principled fashion after further discussions on Sunday 11 January between Bobby Sands and the prison authorities. They agreed to move the next day to clean cells and not soil them. They expected they would receive their own clothes by the end of the week. At the end of the week the prison Governor asked for a week's grace to give them time to ensure things were running smoothly. The prisoners agreed. On 20 January after two requests to have their own clothes they were told that they could not have them until they conformed. On 27 January 96 prisoners smashed up their cell furniture in an act of determined anger and opposition to the treachery of the prison authorities. The prison authorities reacted savagely. Men were brutally beaten and left in cold urine-soaked cells overnight without bedding and clothes of any kind. It was back to square one. A new hunger strike was inevitable.

THE SECOND HUNGER STRIKE

It was clear that the Atkins' document and statement were used by the British government as a 'holding operation'. And as soon as the immediate pressure was off with the ending of the hunger strike and the cessation of active campaigning the British government reverted to its original intransigent stand. They possibly believed that demoralisation would set in both inside and outside the prisons and that it would be some time before they would be confronted with another campaign on anything like the same scale as before.

The National H-Block/Armagh Committee announced on 5 January that it was remobilising local action groups throughout Ireland due to the deterioration of the situation in the H-Blocks and Armagh prison following the end of the hunger strike. A special conference was held in Dublin on 25 January to discuss remobilising the campaign in support of the prisoners. The large number of people attending the conference (more than 600) from all parts of Ireland indicated the readiness of activists to resume the campaign. It became clear in the course of the conference, however, that opinions were divided as to how the new campaign should be conducted.

Speakers from the National H-Block/Armagh Committee argued that the campaign should again be conducted on a 'broad front' basis, with more pressure being put on the SDLP and Fianna Fail to support the five demands of the prisoners. This view did not by any means receive universal support at the conference. Members of H-Block/Armagh Action Groups in Derry and Belfast in particular called for a different strategy this time. The Chairperson of the Derry H-Block/Armagh Action Group argued that in Derry during the hunger strike there had been a very militant campaign which had disrupted the city, but there had been little to show for it when the hunger strike ended. He emphasised that those who took part in the campaign in Derry did so not on a 'humanitarian' basis but because they were Republicans. He wanted the issue clearly defined this time – political



status and Brits Out. His speech received loud applause and was endorsed by a number of other speakers from Belfast and Dublin.

Two issues attracted particular attention at the conference – the attitude to be adopted to Fianna Fail and the SDLP, and the question of industrial action. The call by the National Committee for greater pressure to be put on the SDLP and Fianna Fail to support the demands of the prisoners was strongly challenged by a number of speakers who argued that such a tactic served to foster illusions about these parties, both of them in fact completely being on the side of British imperialism. Several speakers, in backing up this argument, reported the intense harassment of H-Block/Armagh activists by the 26 Counties gardai during the last campaign. Later it was reported that people leaving the conference itself were being stopped and questioned by the Special Branch.

On the question of industrial action, a number of speakers argued that a much more systematic and determined attempt could be made to mobilise the working class in support of the prisoners with a general strike as the ultimate goal, rather than merely organising token days of action as in the previous campaign. Speakers from the National Committee correctly described this view as unrealistic and a general resolution calling for workers' "when necessary to show their solidarity with the prisoners through industrial action" was passed. A number of speakers in the debate pointed to the neo-imperialist nature of the trade union leadership, which had been exposed by their actions during the hunger strike and by their call 'in chorus with Mrs Thatcher, on the hunger strikers to capitulate'. This fact alone showed the massive barrier against a general strike.

The conference approved the resolutions put forward by the National H-Block/Armagh Committee and backed by Sinn Féin. These included demands on the Fianna Fail government to end all diplomatic and military collaboration with the British government and to end the harassment of H-Block activists. The SDLP and the Irish Independence Party were called on to withdraw from council chambers in the Six Counties until the demands of the prisoners were met. John Hume, the SDLP leader, Cardinal O'Fiaich and the ITU, all of whom had called on the prisoners to end the hunger strike, were now called on to demand publicly that Britain honour the settlement. Activities including a mass protest of Armagh prison on 8 March, International Women's Day, and a demonstration in solidarity with the prisoners on 1 March in the Six Counties were agreed. The conference, however, had shown that many activists in the local H-Block/Armagh Groups were not satisfied with the tactics of the previous campaign. They wanted the new one to be a strong and militant campaign based on the nationalist working class. This view was very clearly expressed in a letter from the Markets/Ormeau H-Block/Armagh Action Group in Belfast published in the *Irish News* on 26 February after a new hunger strike had been announced. It said

"While many groups are calling on the British to 'honour their word' we in the Markets/Ormeau area believe this is to a degree naive. We see this coming hunger strike as the most crucial development and believe that it is only through our strong, unified, militant agitation that the British will concede. We must accept the limitations of calling on establishment, political and Church leaders to call on the British to implement the five demands. Instead we should ensure that we are on the streets in force and determined to employ any methods necessary to end the

British policy of criminalisation in Ireland and to win the five just demands for the men and women in the H-Block/Armagh.'

On 5 February 1981, in an agreed statement jointly issued by the blanket men and the women on protest in Armagh prison, a new hunger strike was announced for 1 March. The British had been given 'every available opportunity' to resolve the issue but had failed to do so, placing 'obstacle after obstacle' in the way of the prisoners. The statement contained a bitter rebuke of those who had called on them to end the previous hunger strike in order to allow the resolution of the prison protest.

'Our last hunger-strikers were morally blackmailed by a number of people and politicians who called upon them to end the fast and allow the resolution of the protest. The hunger-strikes ended seven weeks ago and in the absence of any movement from the British we have not seen or heard from these people since.

It needs to be asked openly of the Irish Bishops, of Cardinal O'Fiaich and of politicians like John Hume, what did your recommending ending of the last hunger-strike gain for us? ...'

The leadership of the Republican Movement again attempted to stop the hunger strike. According to *Magill*, Gerry Adams again wrote to Bobby Sands – during the first hunger strike Adams had told Sands that 'we are tactically, strategically, physically and morally opposed to a hunger-strike' – and stated categorically that he believed that Sands would die as the British would not concede in the present climate. The prisoners, however, believed they had no choice. This time the hunger strike would be staggered, with men going on strike with intervals between them. Bobby Sands, as O/C, insisted he led it off. Once decided upon by the prisoners the Republican Movement gave the hunger strike their full backing.

There had been almost an unofficial 'ceasefire' with very few operations by the IRA during the period of the first hunger strike. Once the treachery of the British government became clear, after the strike had been called off, the IRA stepped up its military offensive. On 9 January 1981 the IRA in a statement claimed a number of recent operations in Britain – the bomb attacks on the Hammersmith Territorial Barracks in London on 2 December 1980, the gasworks explosions at Bromley-by-Bow on 31 December 1980, and the bomb attack on the Uxbridge barracks on 8 January 1981. The IRA also claimed responsibility for the shooting attack on Christopher Tugendhat, Britain's EEC Commissioner, on 3 December 1980 in Brussels. But it was in the Six Counties where the IRA significantly stepped up its military operations.

In the first two months of 1981 eight members of the 'security forces' were killed (including one killed by INLA) and several others were seriously injured. The RUC barracks at Clogher in Co Tyrone was devastated by a bomb attack on 25 February. There were numerous bomb attacks on commercial targets, the most spectacular being the sinking of a British ship in Lough Foyle on 6 February. On two occasions there were simultaneous co-ordinated bomb attacks on commercial targets in different towns. On 26 January bombs exploded in towns throughout the Six Counties, targets being hit in Belfast, Derry, Armagh, Portadown, Newry, Omagh and Lisnaskea. Nearly 100 commercial premises were either destroyed or damaged by these attacks, and at the same time a bomb attack closed the railway line between Belfast and Dublin. Less than a month later, on 21 February, a co-ordinated series of firebomb attacks destroyed or damaged fifteen commercial targets in Belfast, Derry and Armagh. In all the attacks on commercial targets warnings were given to avoid civilian casualties.

On 21 January the IRA assassinated two 'unionist aristocrats', Sir Norman Stronge and his RUC Reservist son, James, and destroyed their mansion at Tynan in Co Armagh. An IRA statement said that 'this deliberate attack on the symbols of hated unionism was a direct reprisal for a whole series of loyalist assassinations and murder attacks on nationalist people and nationalist activists which has gone on far too long'. It pointed out that such reprisals represented a real departure from previous IRA policy. A number of H-Block activists had been recently murdered (see above) and a few days earlier on 16 January a loyalist (UDA) murder gang shot and seriously wounded Bernadette and Michael McAliskey after breaking into their house with a sledgehammer. The Loyalists were arrested 'on the scene' by a British army patrol which 'by

chance' happened to be in the area.

The loyalist bigot Ian Paisley chose February to deliberately incite Protestant sectarian hatred in pursuit of his own personal political ambitions. He was able to exploit the ambiguous pronouncements of the Thatcher/Haughey December communiqué, in particular the section on 'joint studies' (see above), to mobilise and build up his own loyalist following under the banner of protecting the loyalist heritage. On 5 February at about midnight on an Antrim mountainside, near Ballymena, Paisley laid on a sinister show of strength in front of a selected half-dozen pressmen. In the semi-darkness five hundred Loyalists were drawn up in military formation. At the blast of a whistle they jumped to attention and each displayed what Paisley described as 'a legally held firearms certificate'. 'This is a token of the many thousands who are at the ready to defend our heritage', Paisley warned the pressmen. There were, it appeared, no British army, UDR or RUC patrols in sight. RUC and UDR men were thought to be numbered among Paisley's 500 men.

On 9 February, at a press conference in Belfast's city hall, the venue for the launching of Carson's original 1912 covenant to resist Home Rule (see FRFI 9), Paisley launched his own covenant to be circulated for signatures. It was aimed at committing the signatories to 'using all means which may be found necessary' to defeat what he claimed was a British government conspiracy through the Thatcher/Haughey Dublin summit to bring about the re-unification of Ireland. He also announced eleven mass rallies throughout the North culminating in a major demonstration at the Carson monument at Stormont the following month. As there was no conspiracy, but only a British government determined to hold on to the Six Counties of Ireland, these rallies did not amount to a great deal. However Paisley was giving clear notice that any attempt to undermine Protestant ascendancy would be met with naked sectarian force on the streets.

Bobby Sands began the hunger strike on 1 March 1981. A 'several thousand' strong march took place in atrocious weather in Belfast on that day. Also, on the 1 March Bishop Daly, addressing a conference of Catholic youth in Derry, attacked the hunger strike as not being 'morally justified' and urged the nationalist youth not to support hunger strike protests by H-Block action groups unless such groups dissociate themselves from 'groups which have a policy of guerrilla warfare'. Bishop Daly also attacked the continuation of the no-wash/no-slop-out protest. In fact the prisoners had decided to end the no-wash/no-slop-out protest and announced this a day later on 2 March. They did this to 'highlight the hunger-strike and the issues behind our demand for political status'. This decision, needless to say, brought no response from Bishop Daly.



Bobby Sands: revolutionary MP

On 5 March the Independent anti-unionist Westminster MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone, Frank Maguire, died suddenly. Immediately there was speculation as to who would succeed him. Sinn Féin declared that they were 'actively considering contesting the seat'. There was talk of Bernadette McAliskey, Noel Maguire (Frank's brother) and an SDLP candidate being put forward. Eventually it was agreed that Bobby Sands would be the anti-unionist candidate. The electorate would be called upon to vote for Bobby Sands to save his life and show their support for the political prisoners' struggle against Britain's criminalisation policy. The by-election was called for Thursday 9 April.

On Sunday 15 March Francis Hughes (South Derry) joined the hunger strike. *AP/RN* described

him as 'one of the most fearless and active young republicans to emerge out of the armed struggle against British occupation forces in Ireland this decade'. A week later, 22 March, Ray McCreesh from South Armagh and Patsy O'Hara (INLA) from Derry city went on hunger strike.

Election workers for Bobby Sands were continually harassed by the RUC and UDR in the run up for the Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election. The SDLP told its supporters to boycott the by-election. A despicable and desperate intervention on polling-day came from British Labour Party opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland, Don Concannon – a man who had played a full part in implementing the British government's 'criminalisation' policy from 1976-79. He arrogantly told the voters of Fermanagh/South Tyrone that they had 'a unique opportunity to denounce the men of violence'. He said a vote for Bobby Sands was a vote for the perpetrators of 'senseless murders'. His outburst was fully reported in the media on the day of the election. However it totally backfired.

In a very high poll of 86.8% Bobby Sands (Anti H-Block/Armagh Political Prisoner) received 30,492 votes against the 29,046 for the official Unionist Harry West. The people had indeed denounced the real 'men of violence' – those like Concannon who were responsible for the whole apparatus of torture and repression by which Britain maintains its hold on the Six Counties of Ireland. Even the British media were forced to acknowledge the significance of the result. *The Guardian* 11 April said

'Years of myth-making go out of the window with the election of Bobby Sands as MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone. And the biggest myth is that the IRA in its violent phase represents only a tiny minority of the population.'

The Guardian also pointed out that if Sands should die after such a vote of confidence, 'how can the electoral system be said to reflect the views of the people'. *The Guardian* chooses to forget that parliamentary democracy and constitutionality are only evoked by British governments in Ireland when they strengthen British imperialist rule. Just as the results of the 1918 election were ignored and brushed aside (see FRFI 10) so would the victory of Bobby Sands be ignored. Indeed so great is the British ruling class' contempt for democracy that it soon changed the 'rules' of the game by passing a new law which would effectively prevent political prisoners from standing in elections.

By mid-April tension in the nationalist areas began to rise as Bobby Sands moved close to death having passed 45 days on hunger strike. Widespread and persistent street fighting between the nationalist youth and the British army/RUC took place over a period of ten days in Derry city as 'a genuine expression of popular anti-British sentiment'. The anger and determination of the youth intensified when British troops and RUC gunmen fired lethal plastic bullets randomly at nationalist youth on the streets. One youth, 15 year-old Paul Whitters, shot at very close range, suffered a massive fracture of the skull and later died. Another youth lost an eye having been hit in the face. On 19 April two army landrovers driven at very high speed ploughed into a crowd of fleeing youths. Two Bogside youths, Gary English (19) and Jimmy Brown (18) were deliberately run over and killed. This double killing was cynically described by the RUC as a 'road accident'. The angry youths' reply to these murders was soon evident. They fought the 'security forces' with bricks, petrol bombs, acid bombs and the occasional hand grenade. *AP/RN* (25 April 1981) reported at the time, that the youths, 'with the approval of the community', turned the Bogside and Creggan into semi 'no-go' areas for the 'security forces', erecting barricades throughout the nationalist areas.

On 20 April three Irish Euro MPs, independents Neil Blaney and Dr John O'Connell and Fianna Fail's Sile de Valera, were, at the request of Bobby Sands, permitted to visit him in the prison hospital. No doubt the British authorities hoped they would persuade him to come off hunger strike. In the event only one tried – John O'Connell – but to no avail. After the visit the MPs requested a meeting with Mrs Thatcher but were arrogantly rebuffed on the grounds that it was not her 'habit or custom to meet MPs from a foreign country about a citizen of the United Kingdom resident in the United Kingdom'.

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COMMUNIST TRADITION ON IRELAND PART 16

HUNGER STRIKE



A few days later there was an attempt to 'resolve' the hunger strike through a Haughey-inspired intervention of the European Commission of Human Rights. This came about at a meeting in Haughey's home between himself and the Sands family—a day after he had refused to meet the family. At this meeting, using a combination of deceit and emotional exploitation, Haughey bulldozed Bobby Sands' sister Marcella into signing a form to get the Commission to intervene. He told her that if she didn't sign it, she could go home and prepare a funeral. He also said that the British government wanted to get 'off the hook' and would accept the recommendations of the European Commission—which would satisfy the prisoners—and thus end the hunger strike.

The political prisoners were extremely reluctant to co-operate with the European Commission. Four H-Block prisoners had petitioned the European Commission in 1978 on nine specific breaches of human rights. The prisoners did not seek a ruling on political status. Nevertheless in its report two years later in June 1980 while criticising the British government's 'inflexibility', the Commission ruled that there was no case for 'political status'. Bobby Sands, therefore, was opposed to the intervention of the Commission because he realised it could not possibly come up with anything in time to save his life—it appeared that 18 days would be required for the Commission to agree to an enquiry—and it could possibly be used at a later stage to undermine the position of the other hunger strikers, as the initial report of the European Commission had been. However not wanting to appear intransigent and allow Haughey's manoeuvre to be turned against the prisoners, he agreed to meet the Commissioners (who arrived in Belfast on 25 April) in the presence of Brendan McFarlane (O/C of prisoners on protest) and two external advisors, Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison. The British government would not permit this and so the European Commission did not intervene.

Towards the end of April the Pope dispatched to Ireland his personal secretary Fr John Magee, as a moral envoy to plead with the hunger strikers to end their protest. He got nowhere with the hunger strikers nor with the British government.

As Bobby Sands came closer to death leading H-Block organisers were arrested. In the week beginning Sunday 26 April nearly 60 were pulled in and put on 7-day detention orders. The arrests began on the day of a massive 20,000 strong march in support of the hunger strikers in Belfast. On 5 May 1981, after enduring 66 days on hunger strike Bobby Sands died. He was buried with full Republican military honours in Belfast on 7 May. Over ninety thousand people, many carrying black flags, joined the funeral procession or lined the five mile route as the procession made its way from Twinbrook to Milltown cemetery. The coffin, covered by a tricolour and a black beret and gloves, was flanked by an IRA guard of honour. When the procession reached Andersonstown, it stopped briefly while a volley of shots was fired over the coffin. At the graveside the mood of the thousands of mourners was not just one of grief at the loss of a brave comrade but also one of defiance and determination to continue the struggle for which Bobby Sands gave his life.

On 12 May Francis Hughes died after 59 days on hunger strike. Just over a week later on 21 May Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara died after 61 days on hunger strike. British imperialism had slowly and brutally murdered four heroic fighters for Irish freedom. Massive crowds of Irish working class people attended their funerals to pay their last respects to these courageous men. Other political prisoners determined to carry on the fight against criminalisation immediately joined the hunger strike and replaced those who had died. On 9 May Joe McDonnell (Belfast), 14 May Brendan McLaughlin (North Derry), 22 May Kieran

Doherty (Belfast), and on 23 May Kevin Lynch INLA (North Derry) began their hunger strikes. When Brendan McLaughlin was forced to call off his hunger strike after 14 days due to a perforated stomach ulcer he was replaced on 29 May by Martin Hurson (South Tyrone).

In May the anger and outrage of the Irish people exploded throughout Ireland. In the Six Counties the British army and RUC came under constant attack in nationalist areas as working class youth took to the streets with stones and petrol bombs. These battles and street fights intensified as the British army and RUC went on the rampage and fired thousands of rounds of lethal plastic bullets killing and maiming predominantly young people as they stood on the streets. Julie Livingstone, 14 years old, was shot at from the rear of an armoured car with a plastic bullet on 12 May as she walked home from a local shop. She died two days later. A group of people, mainly women and children, were banging binlids in a protest following the death of Francis Hughes when two British army Saladin armoured cars came up the road. As the protesters ran for cover plastic bullets were fired and Julie was found lying on the ground, fatally injured. Carol Ann Kelly, 12 years old, was shot at by British soldiers on 19 May and knocked unconscious by a plastic bullet striking her head. She died three days later. There was no trouble in the area at the time. A widower with seven children, Henry Duffy, aged 45, was hit in the chest and temple by plastic bullets on 22 May as he was returning to his Creggan home from a city centre pub. He was in the vicinity of a street fight taking place in the Bogside soon after Patsy O'Hara's death. He died on the same day. Of the many injured by plastic bullets in May, one lost an eye, others received serious head injuries, fractures and severe bruising. In May alone, 16,656 rounds of these lethal plastic bullets were fired—more than the total fired from 1973 to 1980 (13,004). British army and RUC gunmen had clearly been ordered on to the streets to terrorise the nationalist people into submission. They could not and did not succeed.

In May Dublin saw the emergence of a new force in the prisoner campaign—the dispossessed working class youth of Dublin. These youth from the worst areas of poverty in Dublin brought a new revolutionary spirit to the hunger strike campaign in the 26 Counties. They followed the lead given by the nationalist working class in the Six Counties and took to the streets determined to take on the forces of reaction in the 26 Counties. Their most popular slogan 'Gardai—RUC' expressed their understanding of the close relation between the 26 Counties regime and British imperialism.

Following the murder of Bobby Sands on 5 May the Dublin youth took action. On 7 May a group of gardai in riot gear were driven out of the Sean McDermott Street/Gloucester Diamond area by masked youth hurling petrol bombs. This area is at the heart of the worst slums in Dublin. The youth hijacked and burned buses and cars in protest at the murder of Bobby Sands. They attacked shops which had refused to close on the day of mourning. On 12 May following the murder of Francis Hughes, a peaceful march to the British Embassy in the luxurious Ballsbridge area was met by a horde of helmeted, baton wielding gardai. The youth met this threat with a hail of stones. The gardai, in the tradition of imperialist police forces throughout the world, baton charged and viciously beat anyone they could get hold of. A nurse who tried to attend wounded victims of gardai brutality was beaten to the ground. The youth moved back into the city centre attacking symbols of British domination as they went. In particular two of the imperialist banks, Lombards and Ulster bank, were attacked.

On 13 May the youth came back armed with the weapons of the revolutionary youth in the Six Counties, petrol bombs and bricks. As another protest march moved into O'Connell Street it passed ranks of gardai, with shields and batons ready, ostentatiously guarding the British Home Stores. Petrol bombs were hurled into the British Home Stores. Litter bins, bricks and other missiles were thrown at the gardai and British owned shops. As the youth disappeared into the tenements and estates of Sean McDermott/Gardiner Street the gardai proceeded to beat up any demonstrators caught in O'Connell Street. Men, women and children were knocked to the ground batoned and kicked. The emergence of the youth in the hunger strike campaign sent a wave of fear through the Irish ruling class. It also had a dramatic effect on the National H-block/Armagh Committee. It began to expose the weaknesses and contradictions

inherent in the strategy of the prisoner campaign.

On 14 May the National H-Block/Armagh Committee announced that a vigil that night at the GPO, a march on the British Embassy the next evening, and another in the city centre the following Saturday afternoon were cancelled. The Committee expressed concern at the events of the previous night:

'Small and unrepresentative elements seem set on obstructing the national committee's stated policy of peaceful and dignified demonstrations by engaging in ill-advised and counter-productive confrontations.'

The events had been cancelled to prevent the recurrence of such confrontations.

The AP/RN (16 May 1981) report of the Dublin events began to reflect the confusion that the action of the militant youths had created among certain forces in the prisoner campaign. The article by Kevin Burke, which had earlier pointed out that 'condemnation of the...rioters displayed small effort to understand the justifiable anger of newly-aroused youth', spoke of evidence of a tiny group of 'agents provocateurs' at work distributing leaflets calling for an end to peaceful protests and for people to come to demonstrations 'prepared to defend themselves'. Kevin Burke went on

'This group apparently wishes to turn the anger of concerned youths from British targets, against Free State "cops, courts and prisons" and presumably see the demonstrations fizzle out in total confusion.'

The youth, however, quite obviously did not require 'leaflets' to turn their anger against the Free State 'cops, courts and prisons' protecting British imperialism's interests in the 26 Counties. The real issue at stake was the direction of the prisoner campaign in the 26 Counties.

On the whole, with certain qualifications, the actions of the youths taking to the streets and fighting the 'security forces' in the Six Counties was given support. After the murder of Bobby Sands AP/RN (9 May 1981) reported

'The intensity of the rioting, spearheaded by angry youths, and with the approval of the bulk of the nationalist community, has provided a welcome sign of the revived spirit of republican resistance amongst the saddened people.'

And after the murder of Francis Hughes AP/RN (16 May 1981) was reporting in an article 'Popular anger flares' that

'... it was clear that within the nationalist areas there are growing numbers who are losing faith in the feasibility of peaceful protests in the face of British intransigence in the H-Blocks and armed force on the streets.'

Why then was the new development of the dispossessed youth of Dublin following the lead and example of the nationalist youth in the Six Counties being condemned? The report, by Seamus Boyle, of an emergency open conference organised by the National H-Block/Armagh Committee on 9 May after Bobby Sands' death begins to answer this.

'Genuine impatience was expressed by the speakers... fearful that the national committee's strategy of peaceful mass mobilisation and hard lobbying work, particularly of Fianna Fail and the SDLP, and among the trade unions in the South would be incapable of saving the life of the next hunger-striker...'

However such speakers, and the sizeable numbers who voted with them (who were defeated on a crucial vote threatening the existence of the committee) seemed unable to grasp that our strategy for success (of destabilising the six and twenty-six county states, and thus forcing the British government to grant the prisoner's demands) needs to encompass two sharply differing, but mutually re-inforcing, aspects: one peaceful the other involving physical force.

On the one hand there needs to be the ongoing vital work of the national committee strategy, particularly in the South, but also in the North, of drawing the broadest possible forces on to massive peaceful parades, of building towards a workers' indefinite general strike, and of committing the bulk of the rank-and-file of Fianna Fail and the SDLP to the five demands.

On the other hand, and generally restricted to the North, there urgently needs to be popular street riots, the erection of barricades against the

British forces, and other violent acts of civil disobedience building towards the establishment of no-go areas in the nationalist ghettos; plus, of course the armed action of IRA volunteers against military occupation forces...

Many of those speaking, and especially those voting for a different role of the committee, along implicitly "violent" lines, were mistaking the necessary role of the broad-based committee of organising protests, with the revolutionary role of the Republican Movement.' (AP/RN 16 May 1981)

With the death of the hunger strikers it became increasingly clear that the British government would not respond to peaceful protests however popular, widespread and well supported. Further, Fianna Fail, the SDLP, the ICTU etc had not been forced by the 'broad-based' protest campaign to 'quake in their shoes and go crawling to their British masters pleading with them to grant the five demands' (see above). On the contrary the leadership of these organisations had played a central role in undermining the prisoners' struggle. To accept that a strategy for success would require 'destabilising the six and twenty-six county states' was realistically to call for a mass revolutionary campaign directed not only at British imperialism but also against its collaborationist agents North and South. Such a campaign was not compatible with the 'broad-based' campaign of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee and the dignified and peaceful protests it called for 'in order not to alienate potential support'. The 'broad forces' the National H-Block/Armagh Committee wished to attract were opposed to the revolutionary national struggle to free Ireland from British rule and were only prepared to support the prisoners on a 'human rights' basis. These 'broad forces' were totally against the growing revolutionary violence of the youth on the streets and the armed struggle of the IRA being used to force the British government to grant the prisoners' five demands. The two 'aspects' the 'one peaceful and the other involving revolutionary force' were not in reality 'mutually reinforcing' as events after the deaths of the hunger strikers so clearly demonstrated.

This had less immediate consequence in the Six Counties where a tradition of revolutionary street fighting had existed for over a decade and support for the armed struggle was widespread amongst the nationalist minority. But in the 26 Counties that tradition had long since disappeared and if the prisoner campaign was to succeed it had to be rebuilt. When the courage, determination and example of the hunger strikers led to the dispossessed youth of Dublin taking to the streets attacking the symbols of British domination and taking on the 'Free State' forces of collaboration, the National H-Block/Armagh Committee called a halt. The violence of the youth would have alienated the 'broad forces' thought necessary to put pressure on Fianna Fail etc to support the prisoners. But the refusal of Fianna Fail to move and the resulting deaths of the hunger strikers was precisely what led to the youths taking to the streets in the first place. To go forward it was necessary to build on their revolutionary spirit and risk alienating the, on the whole, ineffectual 'broad forces'. This the National H-Block/Armagh Committee refused to do. As a result of this the militant youth and the nationalist working class in the Six Counties were to become increasingly isolated. The inevitable consequence of such isolation was the defeat of the hunger strike.

During the first hunger strike the IRA had restricted its military campaign in order to create, what were considered at the time to be the most favourable circumstances for the settlement of the prison crisis. Once the treachery of the British government was clear for all to see the IRA renewed its military offensive. In May this offensive was significantly stepped up. After the murder of Francis Hughes AP/RN reported, under a headline 'A fitting response', an IRA RPG-7 rocket attack on a RUC jeep killing one RUC man and wounding 4 others. On 9 May an IRA bomb went off at the Sullom Voe oil terminal on the Shetland Islands only a quarter of a mile away from where the Queen and Prince Phillip were attending an inauguration ceremony. Throughout May there were almost daily attacks on the 'security forces' with one RUC man killed and other RUC men and British soldiers injured. Bomb attacks on commercial premises added to the massive damage to property from the petrol bombs thrown by the nationalist youths.

The result of the local election which took place



Glasgow Hunger Strike Rally April 4 1981

in the Six Counties on 20 May indicated the increasing polarisation of political forces as a result of the hunger strike. Paisley nearly doubled the seats of his Democratic Unionist Party from 74 to 142. The Official Unionists got 152. Gerry Fitt got his just deserts for his despicable stand against the hunger strikers. He lost the council seat he had held for 23 years. While the SDLP won 105 seats, SDLP chairman Sean Farren and Alisdair McDonnell leader of the SDLP on Belfast city council were defeated. 3 (Official IRA) Republican Club councillors were also defeated. The Alliance Party lost 32 seats. Among those elected on an anti H-Block/Armagh ticket were 2 IRSP members, 2 members of Peoples Democracy, a dozen independents and 21 members of the Irish Independence Party including Francis Hughes' brother, Oliver. Sinn Fein did not stand.

A general election in the 26 Counties in June saw the defeat of Haughey's Fianna Fail administration and the eventual return of the Fine Gael/Labour Party Coalition with the help of the anti-republican independent Jim Kemmy. The most important development during the election was the intervention of nine H-Block/Armagh prisoner candidates. This took place despite the opposition of several members of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee who wanted 'prominent personalities' to contest the election on behalf of the prisoners. The election victories of H-Block man Paddy Agnew for Lough - he topped the poll on first preferences - and hunger striker Kieran Doherty in Cavan/Monaghan, and the 42,798 first preference votes amassed for all the prisoner candidates, dramatically indicated the support for the hunger strikers in the 26 Counties. The votes for the prisoners came almost entirely from border areas, working class areas, and poor rural areas in the West of Ireland - areas which have been and still are hardest hit by the British imperialist domination of Ireland.

Four more prisoners joined the hunger strike in June: Thomas McElwee (South Derry) on 8 June, Paddy Quinn (South Armagh) on 15 June, Micky Devine INLA (Derry) on 22 June and Laurence McKeown (Co Antrim) on 29 June. In June another 'attempt' to resolve the hunger strike was made through the intervention of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP), a body established by the Irish hierarchy in 1967. Its five members included two Catholic clergymen, an academic, a solicitor and a member of the SDLP. The ICJP kept in regular contact with the Dublin government and other Free State parties and almost certainly with the SDLP. It attempted to use the hunger strikers' relatives as a vehicle for an imposed settlement and drew up proposals for the settlement of the hunger strike which it put to the British government and the prisoners. The prisoners rejected them as they were 'so far removed from our five demands'. But the ICJP continued meeting hunger strikers' families, the Northern Ireland Office, the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, politicians, and members of the Republican Movement. Eventually they met the hunger strikers.

On 4 July the prisoners put out a 'conciliatory' statement on the five demands. They explained they were not seeking treatment different from that which would be on offer to other prisoners and that the granting of the five demands would not 'mean the administration forfeiting control of the prison'. It was as far as they could go without abandoning their demands. At the same time the ICJP believed it had achieved an agreement with the British government on an acceptable basis (to the ICJP but not the prisoners) for resolving the prison crisis. Joe McDonnell was on the point of death. It was imperative to act quickly. The NIO, through Michael Alison, agreed to send a senior official into the prison on 7 July to explain the 'agreement' to the prisoners. This did not occur and on 8 July at 5.12am Joe McDonnell died after 61 days on hunger strike. That same day at 10am a senior NIO official was present when the Prison Governor read a statement to the hunger strikers which reiterated previous public positions of the British government. The ICJP accused the British government of

'duplicity' but the damage had been done.

On 8 and 9 July two teenagers, Danny Barrett and John Dempsey, were shot dead by the British army and a woman, Nora McCabe, died after being hit by a plastic bullet. On 10 July the funeral of Joe McDonnell was attacked by the British army while it tried to arrest the IRA firing party. The British government was not out for compromise. Its only concern was to undermine the prisoners and their steadfast supporters. The prisoners remained unbowed and the nationalist youth gave their answer on the streets. The IRA continued its military actions. Pat McGeown joined the hunger strike on 10 July. On 13 July Martin Hurson died after 46 days on hunger strike. He was replaced by Matt Devlin on 15 July. In Dublin on 18 July the gardai brutally attacked a demonstration in support of the hunger strikers outside the British Embassy. The homes of H-Block activists in Dublin were raided. Many were arrested.

On 31 July Paddy Quinn's family asked for medical intervention to save his life when he became unconscious after 47 days on hunger strike. Kevin Lynch died on 1 August after 71 days on hunger strike. Kieran Doherty died on 2 August after 73 days on hunger strike. Tom McElwee died on 8 August after 62 days on hunger strike. Nine political prisoners had now been slowly and brutally murdered by the British government. In spite of all this AP/RN (15 August 1981) continued to argue for the very strategy adopted by the National H-Block/Armagh Committee which had so clearly failed to shift the British government

'The key to real progress, which is the saving of the hunger-strikers' lives, remains, whether palatable or not, the ability of the prisoners' supporters to move the Catholic hierarchy, the SDLP, and the Free State government.'

The prisoners remained unbroken. Five more joined the hunger strike on a week by week basis in August; Liam McCloskey, Pat Sheehan, Jackie McMullan, Bernard Fox and Gerry Carville. Three more joined in September, John Pickering, Gerard Hodgins and Jim Devine.

On 20 August Micky Devine, the tenth and final hunger striker to give his life for political status, died after 60 days on hunger strike. The same day Owen Carron won a significant victory in the Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election standing on behalf of the political prisoners. Not only did Owen Carron gain even more votes and a larger majority than achieved by Bobby Sands but he did so in the face of interventions by the pro-British Alliance Party and the (Official IRA) Republican Clubs. This victory indicated the mass of popular support for the demands of the hunger strikers.

During August pressure began to be put on the relatives of the hunger strikers to end the hunger strike, with Catholic priests and bishops calling on them to seek medical intervention as soon as the prisoners went into a coma. The Catholic hierarchy, far from putting pressure on the British government, was again undermining the hunger strike by pressurising the relatives. Fr Faul was the leading figure in this 'insidious campaign of moral exploitation'. On 20 August medical intervention was sought to prevent Pat McGeown from dying after 42 days on hunger strike. The same occurred in the case of Matt Devlin on 4 September, and Laurence McKeown on 6 September. Bernard Fox dropped out of the hunger strike on 25 September after a serious premature deterioration which would have led to his death within days. On 26 September Liam McCloskey came off the hunger strike after 52 days on being told his relatives would intervene in the event of him lapsing into a coma. Eventually all but one of the families of the hunger strikers, after attending a meeting with Fr Faul, indicated they would seek medical intervention. Faced with this development the prisoners had no choice - they formally announced the ending of the hunger strike at 3pm on Saturday 3 October 1981.

In their statement ending the hunger strike the prisoners said that it had exposed 'the true face of

the present Irish establishment, consisting of the Catholic church, the Dublin government and the SDLP'. They claimed a 'massive political victory' because the 'hunger strikers, by their selflessness, have politicised a very substantial section of the Irish nation'. They paid special tribute to the families of their dead comrades and thanked all those who had supported them. They would continue to struggle for the five demands.

THE HUNGER STRIKE AND THE BRITISH LEFT

A decisive political factor in the defeat of the hunger strike was the fact that no political pressure was placed on the Thatcher government in Britain itself. While demonstrations, pickets, protests and even street fighting took place in Europe, Asia, America and Australia, the British Labour and Trade Union movement not only remained passive and silent but actually collaborated with the British government. The most despicable example of this was the Labour MP Don Concannon visiting Bobby Sands - close to death - in order to tell him that the Labour Party did not support him. How shameful then that the main emphasis of the British 'left' during the hunger strike was to seek an alliance with a section of the imperialist Labour Party. At the start of the first hunger strike the main political groups on the left in Britain mobilised on the basis of the demand 'Don't let Irish Prisoners die'. The vehicle for this campaign was 'Charter 80', an alliance of the Labour Party 'left', the CPGB, the SWP, the IMG and a small group of Young Liberals (see FRFI 22). The dominant force in it was the SWP, backed by IMG and a few people still active in the Troops Out Movement. Groups such as Militant and the WRP did nothing at all. The RCG and supporters of Hands Off Ireland, now organised through the paper *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*, attempted to build a campaign around the demands 'Victory to the Hunger Strikers! Political Status Now!'.

The SWP backed 'Charter 80' campaign from the beginning attempted to depoliticise, in order to defuse, the Irish prisoners' struggle. It declared that if the prisoners die

'It will mean, as the Guardian said "that there is little hope of preventing the undying conflict from taking on an even more bitter form now or in another generation".'

This was not a call to support the prisoners' struggle but a plea to avoid further conflict. When the prisoners were near to death a statement instigated by Gerry Fitzpatrick (SWP) implicitly attacked the Republican struggle by calling for concessions for the prisoners on the grounds that any death would 'strengthen the hand of those who favour force rather than democratic political campaigning'. This standpoint was taken as part of the continuing attempts to build an alliance with the 'left' of the Labour Party. It was argued for on the grounds that 'broader forces' had to be drawn into the campaign. But these 'broader forces' had over the years of the prison struggle refused to take any action at all. And so the British middle-class left in order to maintain the unprincipled 'alliance' with the 'broader forces' refused to demand they actually do anything, and eventually was forced into a position itself of doing nothing at all.

Throughout the hunger strike the SWP/IMG/TOM alliance refused to put any pressure on the Labour Party/Trade Union 'lefts'. At the Hunger Strike Coordinating Committee set up during the period of the hunger strike, consisting of British left and Republican organisations, the RCG proposed that the Labour MPs who signed the 'Charter 80' petition on the five demands be asked to attend a picket of Parliament on its opening day. This was *rejected* on the grounds that it was an attempt to 'expose' Tony Benn and the Labour lefts. It was Gerry Fitzpatrick who argued strongly against this attempt to make Tony Benn and others back up their signatures with action - something which would have been of real *practical* assistance to the campaign.

Not once did the SWP/IMG/TOM mobilise a sizeable proportion of their members and supporters on activities. On 15 November a Campaign for withdrawal from Ireland demonstration of only 3000 took place. It had a 'Victory to the Hunger Strikers' contingent organised by the RCG of 200. On 7 December a second demonstration took place as the prisoners neared death and again only mobilised 3000. The 'Victory to the Hunger Strikers' contingent had grown to over 300.

When the first hunger strike ended on 18 Decem-

ber 1980 the SWP attacked the prison struggle and described the hunger strike as an 'elitist tactic'. It went on to attack any renewal of the armed struggle of the IRA

'There will be pressure on the IRA to adapt its tactics to the new situation. A return to isolated military acts will be hard to justify.'

In so doing it was following in the footsteps of one of the 'broad forces' in the 'Charter 80' alliance - the CPGB. It had called on the IRA 'to declare a ceasefire here and now, for all time' two weeks after the hunger strike started.

The only really positive development during the hunger strikes occurred in Scotland. On 20 December, two days after the ending of the first hunger strike, 1000 people, predominantly workers, marched through Glasgow in support of the prisoners. The march initiated by the Scottish Hunger Strike Action Committee was built mainly by Sinn Fein and the RCG around the slogans. 'Victory to the Hunger Strikers! Political Status Now!'. This success was built on during the second hunger strike when on 14 February 1981 over 1500 marched two miles into Glasgow for a rally in the city centre. The march organised by the Glasgow H-Block/Armagh Action Committee fended off loyalist attacks to reach the city centre - the first pro-Republican march to go through the city centre for 10 years. The march again mainly built by an alliance of Republicans and communists, was supported by TOM and the IMG. The SWP and CPGB refused to support it. So successful were these Glasgow marches that a third march called by the Glasgow Hunger Strike Action Committee for 4 April came under a 3-month ban enforced in the Strathclyde region under the guise of 'loyalist threats'. A huge march of over 3000 had been expected. Needless to say all the 'broad forces' including the SWP, CPGB and IMG refused to campaign against the ban.

During the first hunger strike the SWP/IMG/TOM strategy of appealing to Labour lefts and other dignitaries totally failed. So for the second hunger strike they consciously decided not to expose their chosen allies any further by doing next to nothing. In April a national demonstration came under a ban. It was decided to ignore it. Less than 500 turned up. A demonstration - all-London - in Staines, the constituency of Humphrey Atkins, mustered only 50. While, internationally, the murder of Bobby Sands led to massive protests and demonstrations in many capital cities, in London it was marked by a picket of Downing Street of only 300. A demonstration in London on 13 June mobilised only 2000. The 'national' demonstrations after six hunger strikers had died called for 18 July in Manchester and 29 July in Leeds, were both around 400-500 people. For the 29 July demonstration - timed to coincide with the Royal Wedding - only the RCG of all the left groups mobilised fully. The London H-Block/Armagh Committee meetings dwindled in attendance, pickets, marches etc became no more than token gestures. By the end the SWP/IMG were hardly pretending to campaign. With the exception of a handful of individuals the TOM too had ceased to campaign. When the second hunger strike ended - after 10 political prisoners had been murdered - on 3 October, FRFI with some justification declared

'The list of those who must take responsibility for the murder of the ten Irish revolutionaries who died in the hunger strike includes these traitors to the cause of the Irish prisoners: the Labour Party, TUC, CPGB, SWP, IMG and TOM.'

These organisations put every obstacle in the way of communists and others who fought to take the message of the Irish prisoners into the British working class. The official British Labour and trade union movement and its middle-class socialist friends had shown yet again that they will never be allies of the Irish people in the struggle for Irish freedom. However in 1981 a remarkable new development did take place in Britain. Following the path of Irish revolutionaries, black youth, supported by sections of white working class youth, took to the streets in many British cities to fight the same enemy that faces the Irish people - the British imperialist state. At last the forces of revolution and therefore real allies of the Irish revolution are beginning to emerge in Britain.

David Reed
September 1982
To be concluded

CHE GUEVARA

Che Guevara, revolutionary communist, was born in Argentina in 1928, fought in Cuba, and died on active service in Bolivia in October 1967.

From the ghettos of Belfast to the shanty towns of South Africa; from the jungles of Central America to the Palestinian refugee camps, Che's name is synonymous with internationalism and the anti-imperialist armed struggle.

'Che brought the ideas of Marxism-Leninism to their freshest, purest, most revolutionary expression. No other man of our time has carried the spirit of proletarian internationalism to its highest possible level as Che did.'

Fidel Castro



INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

COLLAPSE POSTPONED

International bankers were all a-jitter when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) began its annual meeting in Toronto last month. With good reason too: there have been a number of small but significant bank failures this year and some large firms such as AEG (West Germany) and International Harvester (US) have had trouble paying off their debts. But above all else hovers the swelling bubble of third world debt, which grew to the staggering size of \$524,000m in 1981 and is expected to reach \$600 bn this year. That bubble threatens to burst, exploding the imperialist financial system with it. If Brazil, Mexico and South Korea all decided not to repay their loans, then the entire capital and resources of US imperialism's nine biggest banks would disappear. With the news that some 26 countries are now late on debt repayments, the bankers had good reason to be nervous.

stepping up exploitation of the masses within the country. This means cutting wages, increasing unemployment and slashing public expenditure for example. This is essential for the imperialist banks, for the only way they can maintain the payments is by stepping up oppression and exploitation.

At Toronto the bankers, sensing what lies ahead, were clamouring for the IMF to increase its quotas, providing enough money to bail out bad debtors in the near future. Although nothing has been decided, it seems likely that the new funds will be found. The bankers left Toronto feeling easier; confidence, as the imperialists say, has been restored.

Yet the only change is that the day of reckoning may have been put off a little longer. Since the bloodsucking banks depend on maintaining and increasing the exploitation of the oppressed, the same problems will recur. And sooner or later, one or more of the large debtors is going to go into default on its debts. Then the imperialist financial system will really begin to crack.

When that happens, the imperialists will do everything they can to recover the debts and seize assets of the countries concerned. Military actions like the South Atlantic war will be the means used to recover what imperialism stole from the oppressed in the first place — their land, oil, mines, plantations, and factories. The Toronto meeting gave the oppressed nothing. On the contrary, as long as the debt of oppressed nations mounts, it brings only greater exploitation and misery for the masses, and the threat of future imperialist wars. This is why the working class movement in Britain must demand the immediate liquidation of the debts of oppressed nations.

Stephen Palmer

AUSTRALIA

THE ABORIGINAL STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM

The Aborigines are the original inhabitants of Australia who have suffered at the hands of white Australians and of the international mining companies who evict them from their land in order to exploit the mineral resources.

On Monday 27 September, the Woomera Aborigines, from Queensland, gave a brilliant performance at the County Club Creole in London. During the event Shorty O'Neill, the Representative of the Aboriginal Land Councils, officially announced that he had been made the Aboriginal Ambassador in Europe. He reiterated that the major claims of the Aborigines had been ignored by the fascist Queensland and Australian governments and that his people would fight until they got their land back. The Ambassador also praised the courage of the Palestinian people and the fighting spirit of the Kitson picket outside South Africa House.

On Wednesday 29 September 13 people, led by Ambassador Shorty O'Neill, entered Queensland House in the Strand and occupied the foyer for nearly two hours. There was also a crowd of protestors outside who were chanting slogans such as 'Queensland House — Aboriginal Land, Queensland State — Aboriginal Land, Sunshine State — Police State, Boycott the Games — Land Rights Now.' Leaflets were distributed to passers-by and to people entering the building.

After a long discussion between the Ambassador, the protestors and the Agent General, who pretended to know nothing about the racist laws of his government, the police were called in. The protestors were told that they had to move. After their refusal to do so, the Agent General agreed to receive Shorty O'Neill in his office and to send a letter to the Premier of Queensland stating the Ambassador's demands which were (and these are his very words):

1. Queensland and Australia to recognise us as a separate nation.
2. Restore sovereignty to us over all the lands we live on and lay claim to.
3. (Recognise) our culture and the true history of the white settler state invasion of our lands and nation.
4. Full support for Aboriginal protests carried out during the Commonwealth Games which we have always intended to be non-violent.
5. Condemning the Australian government for sending Australian Army Personnel into the protest region to be used against the protestors.'

When the Ambassador came out, the protestors inside the building still refused to move. They were finally carried out by the police in the presence of the press and the Australian Broadcasting Commission who were filming the event — which was shown later in the news in Australia. No arrests were made.

The sit-in coincided with the opening of the Games and the demonstrations in Australia by the Aboriginal people, who have been banned from protesting and marching.

On 17 September the Queensland government passed the Commonwealth Games Act 1982 which is a piece of racist repressive legislation, designed to prevent any Aborigine protest taking place. This act is a clear example of the apartheid mentality of the Queensland government. The Act was drawn up by Hinze, the Queensland Commissioner of Police.

Under the Act, identity cards have been issued. The Commissioner has the power to appoint 'Authorised Persons' to operate the Act — who do not have to be members of the police. Wide powers of arrest for 'obstruction', 'hindrance' etc are included. The Act gives the state the power to control persons' movements. If a person is arrested,

'the Office in Charge of Police... may take or cause to be taken all such particulars as he may consider necessary for the identification of such person including his voice print, photograph, finger prints, palm prints, foot prints, toe prints and handwriting'.

The right to stop, search and detain 'on suspicion' are included. The powers included in the Act are not limited to people, but extend to 'things'. 'A thing whether animate or inanimate... may be seized and dealt with' according to the Criminal Code. Finally, it gives the state the widest powers to do whatever it wants:

'The Governor in Council may from time to time make regulations... that may be necessary or convenient for the administration of this Act'.

From these extracts, it is clear that any person who watches the Games or refuses to protest is collaborating with the apartheid regime of Queensland.

Cleo Woza

How have the imperialist bankers got themselves into this corner? The reason is the capitalist crisis which has driven profit rates down. In Britain the rate of profit has declined from 11% in 1966 to less than 3% in 1981. Able to get bigger profits overseas, the imperialists have sent vast quantities of capital abroad to exploit the oppressed peoples. Between 1978 and 1981, UK private assets overseas doubled from £148 bn to £297 bn. The payoff is colossal — profits on British imperialism's foreign investments rose by 21% in 1981 to a massive £8.5 bn — and this does not include the massive sums sent to Britain as 'royalties', 'financial services' and the like. British banks have elbowed their way into the front ranks of the bloodsuckers — their contribution was over £1 bn — nearly three times their 1980 level. The importance of the overseas profits can be grasped when it is realised that these profits amount to *one third* of all British profits last year.

This incredible parasitism cannot continue for ever. The massive lending by the banks assumes that the oppressed nations will pay all the debt back. Yet imperialism is an exploitative system dedicated to bloating itself by squeezing

the oppressed nations dry. By driving down commodity prices, pushing up the cost of imports, and bleeding these countries of profits, interests etc, imperialism makes it increasingly impossible for the oppressed nations to pay the loans back. More and more of the dollars and pounds earned by these countries have to be spent paying off the banks. In 1981 debt servicing took half the foreign earnings of oppressed nations, compared with less than a third in 1977. Sooner or later the foreign exchange reserves of the country begin to dwindle, a country cannot meet its repayments and there is a crisis, as with Mexico.

This is where the protection racket run by the International Mafia of Finance — the IMF — comes into play. The IMF polices countries' balance of payments with the world market. Since the immediate crisis arises from a lack of foreign exchange, a loan from the IMF is crucial to starting the payments again. Although an IMF loan may be small by comparison with the overall debt burden of the country, it is essential if the country is to get access to imperialist finance. The IMF makes the loan conditional on 'sensible' economic policies —

IRAN

WORKING CLASS PAYS FOR KHOMEINI'S CRIMES

'Gods (Jerusalem) can only be freed after we have liberated Baghdad.' With that remark, Khomeini sent thousands of teenagers across the minefields around the Iraqi town of Basra.

Why does Khomeini insist on continuing this costly war, especially now that the Iraqis have withdrawn their troops from Iranian territory and the Israelis have been engaged in a campaign to obliterate the Palestinian Revolution? The answer must be sought in the internal situation of Iran.

It is now just over one year since Khomeini's regime started its ruthless campaign of mass imprisonment and execution to root out all opposition to his rule. Between June 1981 and April 1982, more than 20,000 individuals were executed. Last week, the People's Mojahedin Office in Paris revealed that in the face of escalating resistance to the regime, at least 35 people had been executed every day during the previous two months. All that leads one to the conclusion that had Khomeini succeeded in terrorising the masses into

submission and had he consequently stabilised his regime, there would have been no need for him to entangle his regime in a futile adventure on foreign soil.

The expansionist policies effected in the guise of 'exporting the revolution' by Khomeini has only one purpose and that is to protect his regime from the numerous socio-economic and political crises brought about by Khomeini's reactionary policies on the one hand and the escalating popular Resistance on the other. Despite the seemingly endless executions and the detention of over 50,000 political prisoners, the Mojahedin have grown rapidly in both popularity and strength. A year-long campaign of mass executions has failed to eradicate the Mojahedin or weaken their resolve to overthrow the reactionary regime. Khomeini's regime has openly admitted that it has lost more than 2,000 of its most important politico-military figures, the last of them being the reactionary mullah, Sad-ooghi, well-known for his chauvinist views on women as 'sub-human creatures', and his suppression of the people in Central Iran.

While Khomeini's last-ditch attempts to maintain power continue, with billions of pounds of Iran's resources being wasted in vain, the bankrupt economy takes its toll. As in all wars, the working class and toiling masses have to bear the brunt of shortages, a

three-figure inflation rate and spiralling prices on top of the repression.

In his May Day message, Khomeini told the Iranian workers: 'Do not be fooled into thinking that those who are not workers lead a happy life... The capitalists, the management, those who own all this and all that, those feudals and landlords, they have to lead a bitter life. They spend such harsh and unbearable times...'

Today, millions of Iranians continue to live on the breadline. With increasing internal opposition to the invasion of Iraq and the Mojahedin's new tactics of more widespread and extensive attacks on the suppressive forces, Khomeini has unleashed a new wave of executions and arrest.

The new wave of executions reflect the fright and instability of the regime. But there can be no doubt that a regime which since coming to power has lived on crisis, war, terror and repression, is digging its own grave and will be overwhelmed by these crises.

Without war, terror and repression, Khomeini does not have any chance to survive. Should he die or end the war, the collapse of his regime will follow imminently.

For the time being, he is sitting on a barrel of gunpowder, awaiting the zero hour.

Moslem Students Society Supporters of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran

HUNGERSTRIKE NORTH & SOUTH

The proud torch of prison protest heralded so admirably by the martyred POWs of the H-Blocks has transferred to the possession of seventeen political prisoners at Limerick gaol – and flamed once more into the intensity of a hunger strike. Mounting grievance at the 19th Century conditions that prevail in Limerick gaol as opposed to Portlaoise, the prisoners' previous place of incarceration, occasioned a decision of three of their number to begin a hunger strike on 1 September. A further three men joined in a week later.

The seventeen prisoners comprise a number of prisoners who had severed connections with the Republican movement and a small quota of INLA volunteers. They demanded the same conditions as they had when they were in Portlaoise gaol earlier this year. These were spelled out in a list of ten demands which included extending hours of association, increasing access to recreation and education and broadening the scope of education to include tuition in the Irish language. Other demands called for a cessation of harassment of prisoners and their relatives during visits and an end to the degrading anal searches.

The announcement of the prisoners' demands aroused a cry of fury from the body representing the rabidly reactionary prison warders. The Free State Minister for Justice, S Doherty, was cautioned not to concede to the prisoners' demands. He was later called on to resign by the same source as the Department and warders got

embroiled in a heated pay controversy surrounding the government's public sector pay embargo.

—After the expiry of a fortnight the hunger strike ended. Promises were delivered that changes in recreation and association would be implemented 'provided practical difficulties' such as the outstanding government/warder pay dispute is resolved. The Minister would also consider the prisoners' other demands.

Morrigan

Three remand prisoners in Crumlin Road Jail began a hunger strike on 13 September to protest against their 'internment' by detention.

The prisoners, Thomas Power (28) and Bobby Tohill (24) from Belfast along with Ian Tinney (42) Strabane, are being held on the evidence of INLA 'supergrass' Jackie Goodman. The men are now almost seven months on remand and have been refused bail even though there is no sign of their cases coming to trial yet. At present over 100 prisoners are being held on remand merely on the evidence (?) of 'supergrasses'. In Derry last month 31 men and women were charged with serious offences on the word of 'supergrass' Raymond Filmore.

The three hunger strikers, in a message smuggled out of jail pointed out that the system of 'supergrasses' had been 'completely discredited in Britain' yet such informers are used in the Six Counties to arrest and charge hundreds of people, and 'intern them for up to two years, before either having their charges quietly dropped or being brought to trial'.

Michael D

LIQUID COSH

The use of psychiatric drugs to control political and rebellious prisoners in English gaols

There is much talk and propaganda about the use of psychiatric drugs in other countries administered for the purpose of controlling non-conformist prisoners and political dissidents. In fact this is presently taking place on an extensive scale within the British penal system. On five separate occasions over the past five years I have documented evidence of this drug abuse and presented it to the Secretary of State. This abuse of psychiatric drugs concerns their being forcibly administered to mis-conforming prisoners. I have also presented evidence that on four separate occasions politically conscious non-conforming prisoners, within days of completing their sentence, were committed to mental institutions. I am coming under increasing pressure to accept tranquilliser drugs and I feel this could be the beginning of something which could have an extremely detrimental outcome for me.

The use of psychiatric drugs first sparked my attention in February 1977. At that time I was assaulted by prison staff in HM Prison Albany, which resulted in my suffering a dislocated shoulder, subsequently I was removed to Parkhurst prison hospital. Immediately on arriving at Parkhurst I was stripped of my clothes and forcibly administered an unknown drug. A short time later I developed a state of convulsions and passed into unconsciousness onto the cell floor. When I regained consciousness I found myself strapped to a prison bed – staff informed me that this was for my own safety. Later I slept for 72 hours, when the drug effect finally wore off.

Some weeks later I was transferred to

normal wing location in HMP Parkhurst. In September 1977 I had reason to petition the Home Secretary complaining of the general abuse of major tranquillisers used in an attempt at inmate control. In July 1979 I again had occasion to complain at the use of the major tranquilliser 'DEPOXAL'. This was administered intravenously against the prisoner's will and under threats by a Dr Cooper – who was later to suffer a mental breakdown himself, and today remains the Senior Medical Officer of this establishment.

In January 1982 I had occasion to complain about medical malpractice and the abuse of psychiatric drugs at HMP Gartree. Also I complained of the punitive use of the Mental Health Act to

solve the problem of politically conscious non-conforming prisoners who were due for release – in the space of thirteen months six prisoners due for release were committed to Rampton mental hospital.

In April 1982 I again petitioned the Home Secretary concerning the continued abuse of psychiatric drugs at Gartree and their administration under threats of force. This concerned the use of the addictive drug 'TUINAL' and the major tranquilliser 'PARALDEHYDE'. These drugs were forcibly administered to a non-English speaking French subject, by the notorious Peter Smith – Senior Medical Officer for Gartree.

On the 18 May I was accosted by Dr Smith in a prison corridor. He abused me calling me a treacherous evil little man, and stated that if I wanted continued medical treatment then I had better refrain from complaining about drug abuse. On complaining to the Governor of Gartree about the incident, I was informed that it would be in my interest to forget it. I disregarded this advice and submitted the contents in a petition to the Home Secretary, also Lord Avebury had full particulars.

On 11 June I was placed in the prison van and transferred hundreds of miles from my family to HM Prison Parkhurst.

It is interesting to note that the *Guardian* of 24 August and *The Times* of 25 August gave extensive coverage to my attempts to highlight this continued use of psychiatric drugs; and I thank Lord Avebury for his endeavours in this area of humanitarian concern. However I was referred to as prisoner 'X' and not a convicted IRA prisoner. I would trust that you put the record straight.

Eddie Byrne
HMP Parkhurst IOW

continued from page 1

GENOCIDE IN WEST BEIRUT

Yet the forces that did the killing are armed, equipped and trained by the Israelis with funds provided by imperialism. Following the assassination of Phalange leader Bashir Gemayel, Israeli forces invaded West Beirut on 15 September and disarmed the left wing Lebanese militias – the last defence of West Beirut's population. Members of the Israeli General Staff then met with Phalange commanders to plan the fascist entry to Sabra and Chatila. Israeli planes then ferried Haddad's troops to Beirut. There they were assembled by Israeli commandos and led along with Phalange units into the camps.

The entire operation was jointly organised by Zionism and the Lebanese fascists. And its aim was to strike terror into Lebanon's 500,000 Palestinian population, to disperse them and prevent them from reorganising and rearming to continue the resistance following the PLO's forced evacuation from Beirut.

US AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM – THE REAL CRIMINALS

The real criminals in this latest episode of Zionist/fascist barbarism are US and British imperialism. The carnage at Sabra and Chatila was the culmination of Israel's 6 June invasion of Lebanon and its 11 week siege of West Beirut. The invasion and the death and terror it led to was fully backed by US and British imperialism which did nothing to stop the Zionist war machine. Quite the contrary, US and British imperialism have built up the Israeli armed forces to be the fourth most powerful in the world and airforce the third. 90% of

Israeli's aircraft, 85% of its artillery and 50% of its tanks are US supplied. So are the planes and flares which were used in Sabra and Chatila. Throughout the entire brutal war against the PLO, US and British imperialism continued to trade with Israel, to maintain diplomatic and political relations and continued to supply it with arms. That is why Israel had the military, political and financial means to reach Beirut and organise the Sabra and Chatila murders.

Imperialist perfidy and hypocrisy

knows no bounds. When Reagan and Thatcher condemned the massacres they were engaging in vicious deceit. Hyenas regretting the death of their own victims would be easier to believe! They did nothing to stop the slaughter of 20,000 Palestinians and Lebanese who died horrible deaths as a result of US and British supplied phosphorous and cluster bombs before the PLO evacuated West Beirut! Immediately after the PLO forces departed from Beirut, the US, French and Italian troops, in direct breach of negotiated agreements with

the PLO, conveniently left the city. They have now returned pretending to be guardians and defenders of the Palestinian and Lebanese people. The Palestinian and Lebanese masses know however what role the US imperialists played in Vietnam and what role they are today playing in El Salvador – organising and supervising the most savage genocide against workers and peasants in defence of imperialist financial, political and military interests. This same danger now threatens the Lebanese and Palestinian masses.

ZIONISM IN PALESTINE AND OCCUPIED LEBANON

Whilst world attention has been focused on the slaughter in Beirut, the Israeli state has relentlessly tightened its grip in occupied South Lebanon, on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In South Lebanon, the Israeli government has taken control of food, water and medical supplies to Lebanese towns and villages thus tying them firmly to the Zionist state. Palestinian camps have been bulldozed, forcing the population to scatter, and whole towns and villages have been passed over to the control of the pro-Zionist, puppet forces of Major Haddad. Thousands of able bodied teenagers and men have been systematically rounded up, tortured and transported to prison camps, some deep in Israeli desert. Barns and halls have been converted into interrogation centres where summary executions are meted out to Arabs, Africans and Asians suspected of supporting the PLO. By these means Israel is hoping to scatter the Palestinian communities, extinguish all resistance to Israeli occupation and move to annexing Lebanese territory.

Meanwhile in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip the youth of the 1.3m Palestinians living there have been gunned down by the score as they demonstrated against the Beirut slaughter. Families of those taken prisoner have had their homes razed to the ground in collective punishment. A continual stream of arrests and deportations have been used against elected Palestinian

officials while the quisling Village Leagues are plied with Zionist money bequeathed by imperialism.

In the midst of all this the US government put forward its proposals for talks about Palestinian 'autonomy' with Jordan. These proposals are no more than a cover for imperialist support for Zionist expansionism. They are make-up on the face of the monster. The Zion-

ist reply to them was the announcement that 10 new settlements are to be constructed on the West Bank. These settlements, strategically placed armed camps manned by Zionist fanatics, are the military bases for permanent Israeli control over the West Bank. Already Zionists control 75% of West Bank's land mass. Begin has declared Zionist intentions clearly:

'Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) will be for the Jewish people for generations upon generations.'

In response the imperialists did nothing and are doing nothing. All their bluff and bluster, all their plans and proposals for 'peace' and 'Palestinian rights' are nothing more than hypocritical devices giving time to the Zionists to move ahead with their plans for territorial expansion and their attempts to destroy the Palestinian people and their struggle for self-determination. Communists say 'no to imperialist plans for Palestine!'

Trevor Rayne

While atrocity has followed atrocity the US government has continually reaffirmed its 'iron-clad' support of its 'strategic ally' Israel, and British imperialism has quietly followed suit. Sequence after sequence of diversionary ploys has been staged by US Special Envoys, Secretaries of State and their ilk to present Zionism and imperialism as parties of peace. But the only peace they want is the peace of the graveyard of Palestinian hopes and lives.

The carnage at Sabra and Chatila has been repeated in all but detail throughout the lives of the Palestinian people since the British and US imperialists founded the state of Israel on Palestinian soil: at Deir Yassin in 1948, at Quibya 1953, at Kaffa Kassan in 1956 and at Tel al Zataar and Karantina Lebanon in 1976. The massacres are regular and systematic and they conform entirely with the interests and logic of imperialism and Zionism in the Middle East – the total and absolute subjugation, terrorisation and dispersal of the Palestinian people and their organisations. But neither terror, barbarism nor death can halt the Palestinian peoples' struggle against Zionism and imperialism. The armed struggle of the Palestinian people will continue and the masses in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, in 'Israel' itself, in Lebanon and throughout the Middle East will avenge the deaths of their comrades, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and children. And communists and revolutionaries in Britain are duty bound to extend their hand in solidarity with the people of Palestine and Lebanon. For until the working class and oppressed people in this heartland of imperialism join the oppressed in Palestine, imperialism will continue to plan, organise and perpetuate genocide and massacres.

Trevor Rayne, Roy Spring

RCG-FRFI MONTHLY Round-up

● North London Meeting

On Friday 3 September over 110 people came to an NLISC showing of the 'Patriot Game'. After watching the film and listening to the NLISC speaker Keith Bennet, over 30 people came forward to give their names and addresses and join in the work of the Committee. Over £140 was raised. The internationalist nature of the audience was shown when, after Amandla Kitson had spoken about the non-stop picket of South Africa House, a large contingent from the meeting went down to support the picket.

● Manchester FRFI

On Saturday 18 September Manchester FRFI held a street event at Longsight market in support of the Free David Kitson picket in London. The youth passing by were especially attracted to the ANC 'Youth in struggle' poster depicting an armed revolutionary fighter reading an ANC pamphlet. Many signatures were collected on the Free David Kitson petition and a donation of over £5 was sent down to London.

On the following Saturday – the 25th – Manchester FRFI supported a demonstration organised by the local Asian community in Rochdale against the massacre in Lebanon. This was one of the many protests organised by Asians all over the country on that day. The march more than doubled in size when Asian youth joined in on route. The march was very militant with loud chanting of 'Victory to the PLO'. At the rally at the end, the FRFI speaker mentioned the fact that it was the Asian community

that organised the marches, while the Labour and trade union movement as usual did nothing and that behind the massacre – behind the Zionists – lie US and British imperialism.

While the Asian people were marching against the Zionist and imperialist massacre in Lebanon, a demonstration took place in Moss Side against a recent brutal attack on black youth by the police of Moss Side.

● Picket on SAS film

On 20 September a preview of the SAS film 'Who Dares Wins' was held. This was attended by about 60 sailors from HMS Fearless.

Tyneside Action Committee on Ireland picketed the cinema with placards, 'SAS criminals murder civilians in Northern Ireland' and 'SAS terrorists get out of Northern Ireland'. Lewis Collins was given an angry welcome when he arrived.

A person standing next to us, who although he had no connection with us, had his plastic bag searched by the police, who insisted that he might disrupt the proceedings! All they found was a bundle of SWP papers.

BC

● South London street meeting in support of the non-stop picket at South Africa House

On Saturday 3 August South London FRFI held a street meeting in Brixton to publicise and build support for the non-stop picket of the South African Embassy. Amandla Kitson and other picketers left the picket and came down to speak at

the meeting and collect names on the petition.

Amandla gave a rousing speech and was well received by passers by who stopped to listen. A member of the ANC also joined the meeting and led the chanting and singing of 'Mandela says fight for freedom', a great song written by fighters in Umkhonto we Sizwe as a tribute to Nelson Mandela. This went down very well with the people of Brixton as well.

The whole event was very successful and very enjoyable for all involved, although it was marred by one event – an RCP/WAR (Revolutionary Communist Party Workers Against Racism) rally was beginning on a nearby site and Amandla Kitson decided to go and ask to speak at the meeting to publicise the picket. She asked one of the organisers – Judy Harrison – but was told several times to 'f--- off'. Amandla argued that her father is a communist and if the RCP call themselves communist they should let her speak; to this another RCP'er retorted 'He's a stalinist' and she was again told to 'f--- off'. It is hard to believe that an organisation calling itself communist at an event supposedly organised to build an anti-racist movement would prevent the daughter of a man who has given his life in the fight against apartheid from speaking. No anti-racist movement will be built on this basis. The RCP have sunk to the depths of sectarianism.

CO

● NLISC Fights Back for Democratic Rights

The NLISC meeting outside Wood Green Library on 10 July was going well for over an hour when a squad of police arrived. The CND, the El Salvador Solidarity, the Bradford 12 Support Group and the Labour Party have all previously been harassed on this site. This Saturday the police searched through our bags without permission, confiscated literature and badges off our stall and then broke up the street meeting under threat of arrests for obstruction. The only obstruction was caused by a van load of police. The site is a wide paved expanse owned by the Haringey Council. It was occupied shortly after by 35 people holding a temperance meeting. This group was not moved on.

The police refused to issue a receipt for the property they took without consent and their Chief Superintendent Mulligan has not even replied to a letter from Reg Race MP, requesting its return. This is police political censorship on Ireland.

On 4 September NLISC was back and held a very successful meeting where over 200 Wood Green shoppers signed the petition for immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland. The petition has also been signed by Haringey councillors Angela Greatley, Ernie Large, Bernie Grant, Jeremy Corbyn and Toby Grant. NLISC had publicly stated its intention to return and observers from the

BUILDING AN IRISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

ONE DAY NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The main work of the North London Irish Solidarity Campaign over the next two months is to build support for the one day national conference on Saturday 20 November, called to discuss the question of how an Irish solidarity movement can be built in this country which will support the Irish people in their struggle against British imperialism.

The initial response to the conference has been very good. Apart from the original sponsors we have received many more. These include Gerry MacLochlainn and Eddie Byrne, Irish POWs in British prisons. South London Troops Out Movement, Bradford Irish Solidarity Committee and Tyneside Action Committee on Ireland are among the groups working on Ireland who have agreed to sponsor the conference and send delegates.

Individuals sponsoring the conference include Dafydd Elis Thomas MP, Michael Holden Sinn Fein member, Rhona Toland, aunt of murdered Stephen McConomy, Councillor Charlie Rossi and Helen O'Brien (sister of an Irish POW). Helen O'Brien will also be speaking at the conference.

To build support for the con-

ference the North London Irish Solidarity Committee is holding a public meeting and film on Irish POWs. The meeting will take place at Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road WC1, at 7.30 Wednesday 3 November.

In building for this conference NLISC intends to draw together people from all over the country who work on the Irish question. As this paper goes to print, NLISC is pleased to announce that 52 people have so far become delegates to the conference.

NLISC has still a great deal of work to do to ensure the success of the conference. We therefore appeal to all FRFI readers to help build for the conference. This can be done by becoming a delegate to the conference, contact others who have worked on Ireland and get them to become delegates, put an advert in your local free press, place posters in bookshops and colleges, announce the conference at all public meetings, trade union meetings etc. NLISC will supply leaflets and posters on request.

Alan James

NLISC Box BM 4835, London WC1N 3XX

GLC's Police Committee Support Unit and the Haringey Independent Police Committee (HIPC) were present. This time, due to our organisation in defence of the democratic right to hold street meetings, the police stayed away. This was undoubtedly the reason that, as Martha Osamor of the HIPC wrote in the Wood Green 'Weekly Herald', the meeting 'continued uninterrupted for approximately 1½ hours, during which time no obstruction or any other kind of disturbance appeared to take place.'

NLISC has applied to the Community Affairs committee of Haringey Council to designate the site a 'free speech' area for all working class and democratic causes. The Labour councillors have to act to stop the police censorship, otherwise their own constituents will be denied expressing solidarity with the Irish people as they themselves have done. NLISC's next street meeting at Wood Green is at 2.00pm on Saturday 23 October. Police thuggery will not stop the Irish solidarity movement growing in the working class.

2.00pm Saturday 23 October
Wood Green Library, High Road, N22

**DEFEND FREE SPEECH!
SMASH POLICE CENSORSHIP
ON IRELAND!**

● Bradford Irish Solidarity Committee

BISC has continued to be harassed by the police when it goes on the streets in support of the Irish people. When a very successful street meeting was being held in Bradford City Centre, BISC supporters were approached by police who said they had orders to break the meeting up. On being shown a letter from Bradford Council granting permission for the meeting, the officers soon lost their youthful eagerness to harass the meeting and slunk away. They returned however only minutes later and said that they would arrest anyone who chanted 'Hands off Ireland!', which they said was 'inflammatory'.

In response to these very serious attacks on democratic rights which the police have mounted in Bradford, BISC has mounted a

vigorous campaign to defend free speech on Ireland. The campaign has attracted very wide support in Bradford. Dennis Skinner MP has signed a statement condemning the harassment as an attack on democratic rights, as have local councillors and Leeds TOM. Bradford Moor Labour Party has also written to BISC expressing support. The local press have also given very prominent coverage to the campaign.

On 17 September, BISC also held a well-attended public meeting against police harassment. Councillor Malcolm Walters spoke from the platform and stated his total opposition to any form of police harassment, whether of BISC, black people or trade unionists. One of the eight Halifax health workers, arrested by the police on a strike picket line, also spoke at the meeting as did a representative of the Precinct 6 Defence Campaign in Leeds. The speaker from BISC called on everyone to fight against police harassment; saying that this fight could only be effective if we stood up now and defended the democratic rights of the Irish people.

JOIN BISC NOW! Write for details to BISC, c/o LAP, 59 Cookridge St., Leeds LS 2.

Bill Hughes

● Police Attack Demo

On September 28th the Asian people of Manchester demonstrated against the massacre in Lebanon. Nearing the end of the march by 200 stormy demonstrators, a Zionist started screaming abuse at the demonstrators. This was too much for some of the Asian youth who ran after the Zionist to teach him a lesson. This resulted in the police arresting the Asian youth and letting the Zionist go. The people on the march responded by insisting that the youth be released. This resulted in more arrests – a total of 7 Asian youths, of whom at least two have been charged. The more militant section of the march started chanting 'Fascists off the streets' and refused to move from the centre of a busy road until the youth were released. It was only the appeal for calm by the Islamic leaders that saved the police from the full wrath of the youth.

MS

EVENTS

9 - 15 OCTOBER

■ SOUTH LONDON

Street Meeting
Defend SLISC Street Meetings!
No Police Harassment! Drop the Charges Now!
Tom Cox MP Attending!
Saturday 9 October 1982
1.45pm-3.45pm Tooting Broadway Tube London SW17
Called by South London Irish Solidarity Committee

■ LEEDS

Picket
Support the Precinct 6!
Monday 11 October
Tuesday 12 October
Leed's Magistrates Court 10.30am
Called by Precinct 6 Defence Campaign

■ NORTH LONDON

North London Polytechnic FRFI Society
First Public Meeting
Wednesday 13 October 12.30pm
North London Polytechnic,
Holloway Road Building
(nearest tube Holloway Road).

■ LEEDS

Public Forum
Inside/Outside – One Struggle (The Fightback in the Prisons)
Thursday 14 October 7.30pm
Venue to be announced (Check with FRFI sellers or FRFI c/o LAP, Box 10, 59 Cookridge St, Leeds 2)

16-22 OCTOBER

■ LONDON

Picket of Bank of Iran to protest about Khomeini's massacre in Kurdistan
Saturday 16 October 11am-1pm
High Street Kensington, London SW8

■ LIVERPOOL

Public Forum
South Africa: Victory to the ANC!
Smash Apartheid Now!
Thursday 21 October
Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street 7.30pm
Admission 20p
Called by Liverpool FRFI

23-29 OCTOBER

■ NORTH LONDON

Street Meeting
Defend Free Speech!
Smash Police Censorship on Ireland!
Saturday 23 October
Wood Green Library, High Road
Wood Green London, N22, 2pm-4pm
Called by North London Irish Solidarity Committee

■ SOUTH LONDON

Street Meetings
Support the Kitson Picket – Free David Kitson and all South African Political Prisoners
Saturday 23 October 1.45pm-3.45pm
Outside Prince of Wales Pub, Brixton
Called by S London FRFI

■ SOUTH LONDON

Public Forum
Free All South African Political Prisoners!
Tuesday 26 October
Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, 7.30pm
Called by S London FRFI

■ GLASGOW

Public Meeting
'Down with Zionism! Victory to the Palestinian People!'
Thursday 28 October 7.30pm
Woodside Hall, Room 3, off Maryhill Road, Georges' Cross, Glasgow
Speaker from General Union of Palestinian Students

30 OCT - 5 NOV

■ MANCHESTER

Public Forum
Imperialism backs Zionist Terrorism!
Friday 29 October
Lass O'Gowrie Public House, Charles Street (next to BBC Oxford Road)
7.30pm
Called by Manchester FRFI

■ SOUTH LONDON

Street Meeting
Support the Kitson Picket – Free David Kitson and all South African Political Prisoners
Saturday 30 October
Outside Prince of Wales Pub, Brixton,
1.45pm-3.45pm
Called by South London FRFI

■ EDINBURGH

Public Forum
'Victory to the African National Congress! Freedom in South Africa!'
Tuesday 4th November 7.30pm
Trades Council, Picardy Place,
Edinburgh

WINTER FUND DRIVE

**FRFI NEEDS £500 PER ISSUE
SUBSIDISE THE PAPER WHICH
STANDS UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS!**

With the last issue of FRFI we only received £171:
From London FRFI £71, Edinburgh FRFI £31, Manchester FRFI £27,
Bradford FRFI £11, Liverpool FRFI £8, Glasgow FRFI £3, Bristol
FRFI £2 and from individual supporters £18

Unless we raise £500 each issue of FRFI we will be forced to put up the price of the paper. Many FRFI readers could then no longer afford to buy it. If you agree with what FRFI stands for and want its message spread, help us keep its price at 20p. The movement which fights for the rights of the oppressed must be built. Don't delay this – act now by subsidising FRFI! Send us your donations or hand it to your FRFI seller. Organise fund raising events – socials, jumble sales, collections.

From now on we will publish all contributions to the FRFI fund in this column. If you want your name or that of your organisation mentioned alongside the donation please say so.

Make your donation payable to 'Larkin Publications' and return to:
FRFI BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

I/we want to donate £ _____ to the FRFI Fund.

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Letters

DISCUSSION

SEAMUS COSTELLO & REPUBLICANISM

The two following letters are a response to FRFI's review of the pamphlet 'Seamus Costello - Irish Republican Socialist' (FRFI 21) and a letter attacking our review (FRFI 22). The pamphlet can be obtained from Ms E Doyle, 39 Dollymount Park, Dollymount, Dublin 3, Ireland. Cost £2.25 includes p&p. The FRFI's referred to can be obtained from Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX.

recent publication.

However, I feel that as your review has pointed to these omissions, and has been raised in your letters page, that I can beg space to make a few personal observations. Firstly, the questions are posed incorrectly ie they ask, why did Seamus do this or not do that. I find this strange as Seamus was not an island, but worked with others of like mind in a democratic-centralist fashion in the hope of combatting the ideological cancer of a pluralist-reformism which dogged the movement particularly after the Provisional split of 1970. The revisionists came out of the woodwork, and the demand for 'the democratisation of Stormont' threw the cat among the pigeons so to speak. None of this period can be understood unless seen as an historical process which began as far back as the end of the 1956-62 Resistance Campaign. From that date onwards the ideological re-thinks became influenced by former members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, who were highly educated, and to a large extent intellectually intimidated traditional working-class republicanism. I personally was of the opinion that within the republican forces we had three distinct ideological trends, and arrived at such an opinion in the mid-'sixties after various discussions with the new CPGB & Co 'imports'. Firstly we had those who wished to abandon abstentionism and shed the physical force tradition in favour of a supposedly parliamentary road to socialism. Today this trend is the Workers' Party. Secondly, those who wished to develop social agitation, plant firm roots among the working-people, saw abstentionism as a tactic rather than a principle, and who wished to keep the army intact so as to resume the

offensive at the most appropriate opportunity. Today this trend represents itself in the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP). Lastly we had those who were instinctively suspicious of 'new departures', social agitation etc., upheld abstentionism seeing it as an essential principle, and were firmly rooted in the physical force tradition. Today this trend is represented by the Provisional Republican Movement.

The Provisionals and Irish National Liberation Army, have one thing in common, and that is that they both conform to the Marxist stages theory which holds that the democratic revolution has to be completed before the socialist revolution would be possible and that these two revolutions could be separated by long periods. In Marxist doctrine, the democratic revolution involves, among other things, the achievement of national independence and unity.

The revisionists, the Workers' Party and the Communist Party of Ireland and the CPGB have opposed the abolition of the Stormont statelet, calling instead for the reform of the unreformable, or in their language 'democratisation'. They have all distorted Marxism by adding their own stage which effectively aided British imperialism and has prolonged the current war. This new stage placed emphasis on uniting first the Unionist and Nationalist working-class, before the fight for national independence and unity could begin. Surely comrades may know now why Seamus Costello remained on after 1970 and the '72 'Truce', as it was essential to win as many of the rank and file as possible away from this revisionism, which has since proved itself as the counter-revolution which took many lives, including that of Seamus Costello on 5 October five years ago.

Name and address supplied

A Chara,

I would like to make a few comments on a letter written in FRFI 22, from J. Malone of Dundee.

I read the article he writes about. The question as to why Costello spent four years in the reactionary Officials is surely a very fair question, hardly a 'slanderous attack' on him or the IRSP, as J. Malone would have it. He says the IRSP are a revolutionary socialist party. I'm sure they are, however there are many weak points in their policies.

While wishing to overthrow the capitalist Dail (parliament) in Dublin they will however if elected take their seats in this capitalist Dail. How can the IRSP overthrow the capitalist system here by taking part in it? At least the Provisionals recognise this point.

I would also like to ask the IRSP, if they ever come to power and try to introduce their policy of nationalisation do they think for one minute that the capitalists in industry, transport and finance will cheerfully hand over their wealth to their socialist government.

And lastly if they ever gain power will they allow the capitalist political parties here, 'Fine Gael', 'Fianna Fail' etc, to continue to exist or will they abolish them? Surely there is no place for them in a socialist state.

Obviously the workers have to be made class-conscious, but in the end socialism in Ireland, I believe, will only come by force of arms and for a period will only be held by force of arms.

The IRSP must be careful in the future, for by taking part in a parliamentary 'democracy' they could very easily end up defending something they started out to overthrow.

Yours fraternally
WR,
Dundalk

William Whitelaw the instigator of the 'short-sharp treatment', is responsible for the callous deaths of many young people in custody, including those of Ian Shingleton 17 a diabetic and David Caldwell 16, a chronic asthmatic. Both were denied medical care.

The brutality of the capitalist system which denies young people even basic human rights is effectively feeding them onto a conveyor belt system of cynical despair.

Blanche Ashley

(This letter was sent to GIFAC who asked FRFI to publish it)

MESSAGE TO THE IRISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENTS IN BRITAIN:

To all who gather in my sons' name I want you to know that it is a great source of consolation and pride that you should choose to remember and commemorate the first anniversary of the deaths in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh. It softens the bitterness in my heart to know that there are some people in England and Scotland who know enough of Irish history to make them understand why my dear son Patsy and his comrades had to die on Hunger-Strike. Patsy's suffering and death and my suffering with him has given me a free mind and an open eye which helps me to bear an aching heart. I realise that the mass of the British working class

are as oppressed as the people of Ireland though in a different scenario.

Repression in Britain itself is now-a-days more secretive, subtle and sophisticated (they haven't even used plastic bullet yet). But the politically unaware masses are so brainwashed that they are blind to the real causes of their misery. It is bad enough to be a slave but to be in love with your slave-master is the final degradation. That thought came to me as I recently watched the adulation poured on Prince Charles with his income of millions every year. The sight of jobless and dispossessed cheering and flag-waving, not knowing where their next day's dinner was coming from, was to me a very depressing sight. It bought to mind that chapter in Irish history when in 1848 Queen Victoria came to visit Ireland, after she and her overlords had contrived and engineered the genocide of the Irish people, letting two million die in the guise of what is called the 'potato Famine'. When the boney, wretched beings who were the survivors lined the roads as her coach passed by, waving and bowing to her. Yes, we still have those kind of poor slaves in Ireland too. But my son and his comrades refused to be a slave and the powers-that-be in England don't let his kind of people live.

I loathe to mention the name of Maggie Thatcher and I'll say no more, for my thoughts of her are unspeakable. As for the Hierarchy of the churches they are very much a part of this charade that poses as democracy. I am mindful at this moment of Cardinal Hume who accused my son and his comrades of committing suicide, but he told the lams that were led to the slaughter in the Falklands, that it was 'a just war'. In my mind their deaths were morally closer to suicide. The only 'Just War' is where people fight to drive a foreigner oppressor off their own native soil. My son was part of this 'Just War' and for that I make no apology. I hope Patsy's memory will go on being a source of inspiration to those who are striving to create a better kind of society in this world and to those who are fighting for the freedom of Ireland.

Yours in Solidarity,
Peggy O'Hara
Derry.

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.

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Please note our address is:
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SEND US YOUR LETTERS
We welcome letters from readers. Please keep them as short as you can

MANCHESTER

Demonstration
Defend the Khan family and Manjit and Palbinder Kaur!
Assemble Saturday 30 October, 1.30pm, corner of Moss Lane East and Prince's Road, Moss Side, Manchester
Called by Khan and Kaur Family Defence Campaign, c/o 593 Stockport Road, Manchester 12.

NORTH LONDON

North London Irish Solidarity Committee
Public Meeting and Film Show
The Question of Irish POWs
Wednesday 3 November 7.30pm
Holborn Central Library
Theobalds Road, WC1.

BRADFORD

Public Forum
Victory to the PLO!
Friday 5 November 7.30pm
Central Library
Bradford FRFI

COMING SOON

SOUTH LONDON

Street Meeting
Support the Kitson Picket - Free David Kitson and All South African Political Prisoners
Saturday 6 November
Outside Prince of Wales Pub, Brixton, 1.45pm-3.45pm
Called by S London FRFI

SUPPORT COMMITTEES

BRADFORD

Irish Solidarity Committee. For details contact BISC c/o Box BISC, LAP, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 7

GLASGOW

Irish Freedom Action Committee meets weekly. For details write to GIFAC c/o Box 15, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.

LEEDS

Precinct 6 Defence Committee meets every Wednesday in Leeds Trades Club at 7.30pm. All Welcome.

NORTH LONDON

Irish Solidarity Committee meets Fridays October 1st, 15th, 29th at Camden Labour Club, Carol Street, London NW1. 7.30pm. Petitioning for Troops Out Now and Self-Determination for the Irish People - every Sunday - meet at Camden Tube, 2pm. For details write to NLISC, c/o BM 4835, London WC1N 3XX.

SOUTH LONDON

Irish Solidarity Committee meetings Thursday 21 October and 4 November Room 29, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, 7.30pm. For details write to SLISC, c/o BM 4835, London WC1N 3XX.

TYNESIDE

Action Committee on Ireland meets weekly. For details write to AS King c/o Porters Lodge, Newcastle University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

FRFI SUPPORTER GROUPS

■ SOUTH LONDON meets on Tuesday 12 October, Room 29, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton 7.30pm

■ NORTH LONDON meets on Tuesday 19th October, Camden Labour Club, Carol Street, NW1

■ EDINBURGH Meets fortnightly. Details from FRFI sellers or from Box 40, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

■ DUNDEE meets fortnightly. Details from FRFI sellers or from Box 40, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

■ LEEDS meets on Tuesdays 19th October and 2nd November at Leeds Trades Council Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 7. 7.30pm

■ MANCHESTER Details from local FRFI sellers

■ DRADFORD Details from local FRFI sellers

■ LIVERPOOL Details from local FRFI sellers

■ BRISTOL Details from local FRFI sellers

■ BIRMINGHAM Details from local FRFI sellers

■ GLASGOW Details from local FRFI sellers

This letter has been slightly shortened

Dear Comrades

As a regular reader of FRFI, I was pleased to see that your excellent paper gave a review on the recently published pamphlet, *Seamus Costello - Irish Republican Socialist*.

For fifteen years prior to Seamus' murder I was a close friend and comrade of his, and his total involvement in every aspect of the struggles of the working class led me to have a very deep respect for him in a personal and political sense. I know that hundreds of political activists throughout Ireland held him in similar regard. His untimely death was a great blow to the Irish revolutionary movement.

Firstly, let me say that I felt the questions raised in your review, relating to the omissions in the pamphlet were raised in a comradely way, and were certainly legitimate ones to be posed in any genuine assessment of Seamus' life and work. However, as it was merely intended to be a memorial pamphlet, these and other issues were not raised. This is not to be taken as any form of excuse, for as you may not be aware, work is progressing on a biography of Seamus' life, which will no doubt cover all the omissions of the

recent publication.

However, I feel that as your review has pointed to these omissions, and has been raised in your letters page, that I can beg space to make a few personal observations. Firstly, the questions are posed incorrectly ie they ask, why did Seamus do this or not do that. I find this strange as Seamus was not an island, but worked with others of like mind in a democratic-centralist fashion in the hope of combatting the ideological cancer of a pluralist-reformism which dogged the movement particularly after the Provisional split of 1970. The revisionists came out of the woodwork, and the demand for 'the democratisation of Stormont' threw the cat among the pigeons so to speak. None of this period can be understood unless seen as an historical process which began as far back as the end of the 1956-62 Resistance Campaign. From that date onwards the ideological re-thinks became influenced by former members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, who were highly educated, and to a large extent intellectually intimidated traditional working-class republicanism. I personally was of the opinion that within the republican forces we had three distinct ideological trends, and arrived at such an opinion in the mid-'sixties after various discussions with the new CPGB & Co 'imports'. Firstly we had those who wished to abandon abstentionism and shed the physical force tradition in favour of a supposedly parliamentary road to socialism. Today this trend is the Workers' Party. Secondly, those who wished to develop social agitation, plant firm roots among the working-people, saw abstentionism as a tactic rather than a principle, and who wished to keep the army intact so as to resume the

PRISON CONDITIONS

Dear FRFI,

I am writing to you as a follow up to your recent articles on Scottish prisons and in particular the Cages.

I am a relative of one of the men who was kept in the Cages from early May until 10 August. During that time I wrote to several newspapers. I corresponded with our local MP and SCCL about the degrading the humiliating conditions and torturous treatment meted out to the prisoners.

I also wrote a letter of complaint to Chief Constable Grampian police about assaults on prisoners by warders at Peterhead in early May, before they were transferred. Of which I received a letter back saying a report was being sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

As a result of trying to expose the treatment and put an end to it there was a phone call made about me by the prison social worker on behalf of the Governor to our local Social Work department, where I along with others work voluntarily giving advice and assistance to the local community ie DHSS problems, housing, welfare etc. We have an office on their premises, we have only recently started and I was elected Secretary, which I wrote and told my brother about. The phone call

said I was starting a revolutionary group on their premises.

This was meant to do me harm, it was a defamation of my character which I have taken to a solicitor, who has written to the Governor. Also through SCCL and the MP it is going to the parliamentary commissioner as 1) abuse of confidentiality of a prisoner's correspondence 2) an improper and unjustifiable intervention in my private life.

The reason as to why this was done is obvious. Because I had gone against the system that puts people in places like the Cages and tries hard to make them suffer.

SB
Glasgow

Dear FRFI,

I am writing to tell you of another case of harassment and censorship of prisoners in British gaols. Prisoner Thomas Bryan, who is in Walton Prison, Liverpool, requested a subscription to FRFI to be sent to him every month and to this you promptly sent him the current issue. When it arrived a warder brought the paper and showed it to him but said it would have to go into his personal property as the governor said he couldn't have it. Thomas then went to see the

governor to ask why. And the reply was that it was too subversive. This is the second time he has been refused good reading material. A few weeks earlier he was refused a copy of Peter Wardlaw's 'Prison Lines' that was sent to him by his wife. So it seems as well as being locked up for 23 hours a day he is being denied the right to choose a newspaper of his choice. And as he says, he doesn't want to read the lies and distortions of the readily available gutter press that are owned by the millionaires of Fleet Street.

He has asked me to thank you and says keep up the good work. Venceremos
AMD
Manchester.

Dear FRFI

The prison population has risen to 45,000. This country detains more young people than the rest of Europe. In a radio interview on 8 September John Wheeler, Conservative MP blames last year's riots on the growing availability of goods for young people to steal. We need he says 'a developed programme of crime prevention'. The community must support the community police.

HANDS OFF IRELAND

The British government continues to justify the use of the killer anti-civilian plastic bullet and protect its British army/RUC who maim and murder with this weapon.

PLASTIC BULLETS

KILL & MAIM

On Monday 6 September Lord Gowrie, Prior's deputy, defended the use of these bullets with that combination of hypocrisy and callous indifference which is the hallmark of the British ruling class. First he informed us that plastic bullets are 'loathsome weapons', their use is 'very bitter' and 'innocent people can suffer'. To be precise, 14 have been murdered—seven of them children under the age of 15. Despite this fact Gowrie went on to point out that 'lead bullets are worse than plastic ones'. Presumably, therefore, the parents of Stephen McConomy (killed by a plastic bullet) are better off than the parents of Majella O'Hare (killed by lead bullets). Lord Gowrie stated:

'If I were able to ban the use of baton rounds it would only be a matter of time before bullets would have to be used...'

And what killed IRA volunteer Eamonn Bradley? Lead bullets. What killed 14 marchers on Bloody Sunday? Lead bullets. Life under British rule in the Six Counties means plastic bullets and lead bullets.



REPUBLICAN NEWS

It also means that British imperialism's paid and trained murderers will be protected by British 'law' and British 'justice'. Three weeks before the interview with Gowrie, on 15 August, Mrs McConomy, mother of murdered 11-year-old Stephen McConomy, was informed that no action would be taken against the murderer of her child. This despite the evidence of no less than 16 eye-witnesses who saw Stephen McConomy fired at, from the back of a British army vehicle at a range of a few yards. Stephen McConomy took three days to die. Nonetheless the DPP decided that no prosecution should take place. After all, the soldier who 'bravely' murdered 11-year-old Stephen McConomy was only doing his job—which is to terrorise, murder and maim the nationalist population of the Six Counties in a doomed effort to break their resistance to British imperialist rule.

The very same day, 15 August, it was

business as usual when 18-year-old Conor Campbell was shot in the head with a plastic bullet in Derry and sustained serious head injuries.

The Labour Party conference has now voted to ban the use of plastic bullets. In this the Labour Party is only trailing along behind the European Parliament and others who have already called for the banning of this vicious anti-civilian weapon. Let those supporters of the Labour Party who will cite this belated decision as evidence of the Labour Party's 'progressive' character remember the parents of Stephen Geddis and Brian Stewart. Stephen Geddis, 10 years old and murdered on 30 August 1975, and Brian Stewart, 13 years old and murdered on 10 October 1976, were both killed by plastic bullets fired under the last Labour government.

Terry Marlowe

INLA BOMBS NATO BASE

A secret NATO radar installation complex near Schull in Co. Cork was bombed and rendered largely inoperative in an efficient operation carried out by the INLA on 20 September. The operation was a two stroke coup, assisting in enhancing the military prestige of the INLA after the reverse of the Divis tragedy and highlighting the importance of Ireland in the designs of NATO military strategists.

Shortly before midnight on Sunday 19 September, a four to five man INLA unit arrived near the Mount Gabriel radar station in Co. Cork. There they waited until the arrival of the local station employee, preparing to mount their ambush. As soon as the station employee and his driver arrived on the scene they were forced to lie on the ground, then tied up while the explosives were being laid. After a three hour period of detention, the men were released and the explosives detonated. Substantial damage was caused though some of the explosives failed to detonate.

In a supplied statement the INLA said the installation was 'one of the sitings of highly technical microwavelengths to Britain' and was part of a plan drawn up by an American multinational with close links to the US Defence and Intelligence establishments. It was built at enormous expense partly funded by the Irish Department of Transport and partly by the British Civil Aviation Authority which is run by the British Military High Command.

Highly embarrassed the Free State Government issued fervent denials, denials which ran in the face of what even British establishment sources admit as true—viz the radar installation was partly financed by the British Ministry of Defence (G S Cooper, Air Correspondent, *The Daily Telegraph*, May 1980). Moreover journalists of a Dublin magazine *In Dublin* conducted their own researched investigation and published a report with findings totally consistent with INLA intelligence.

Government embarrassment intensified later in the week when the Free State Army's former Chief of Staff Lt Gen Carl O'Sullivan called for the formal alignment of the 26 Counties with a West European military pact. The Fianna Fail government responded by protesting the 26 Counties traditional official policy of neutrality. However, the crescendo of voices calling for complete integration into the aggressive imperialist war bloc of NATO grows more audible. Garret Fitzgerald, the leader of the main bourgeois opposition party Fine Gael has in

BRITISH JUSTICE

James McDowell a 71 year old war veteran who admitted storing an arsenal of weapons was given a suspended sentence in Belfast Crown Court. McDowell was accused of possessing four revolvers, an automatic pistol and 1,220 rounds of ammunition in suspicious circumstances in February 1981. It is believed that the weapons belonged to a loyalist paramilitary group. 'You were keeping an absolute arsenal of very good quality weapons and ammunition capable of bringing death to many people' the judge told McDowell in passing the suspended sentence.

This 'sentence' is in sharp contrast to those meted out to Republicans over the years. Indeed one has only but to refer to the case of the late Bobby Sands POW and Joe McDonnell POW who along with two other Republicans were each jailed for 14 years for possession of one revolver.

Michael D

the past expressed support for the concept of Free State participation in West European 'defence'. But the de facto situation remains that neo-colonial Southern Ireland can never be independent of the imperialist octopus embrace. **Morrigan**

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ONE DAY NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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'ULSTER ASSEMBLY' ELECTION

COVER FOR IMPERIALISM

On 20 October the elections for the 'Ulster Assembly' will take place. This 'assembly' is offered to the world by James Prior, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, as 'rolling devolution' designed to bring the 'warring factions' in the Six Counties together and so on and so forth. These elections and their doomed product, the assembly, have only one purpose: to give a democratic cover to British imperialist rule in the Six Counties. Any claim of 'democracy' for this assembly is, of course, a grotesque lie. The assembly, like the 'power-sharing' assembly before it and Stormont before that and the Six County statelet itself, is a direct denial of the Irish people's right to self-determination. The purpose of the assembly is to strengthen British imperialist rule in Ireland. Once it is in existence the assembly will be touted by British imperialists as the 'democratic' alternative to violence and will serve as an excuse for whatever new repression and barbarity the British ruling class unleashes against the Irish people. It is a fraud on an enormous scale. As such it will be undoubtedly rejected by the nationalist people who know British imperialism for what it is: murderous, brutal, bloody exploitation and oppression.

It is no surprise that the ultra-reactionary fascist loyalist parties of Ian Paisley (Democratic Unionist Party) and James Molyneux (Official Unionist Party) are out to get whatever they can from this fraud. Paisley is putting up 35 candidates and Molyneux 42. For them the contest will be to see who emerges as the mouthpiece of Loyalism: the DUP or the OUP. The DUP, noted for its more frank language, calls for 'a Falklands-style offensive' against the IRA in its election manifesto. Molyneux, for the OUP contents himself with vaguer threats that if the British governments ignores the wishes of the assembly (ie Loyalism) 'The Government need not then look to us, the politicians, to dampen down the people'. By 'people' Molyneux means the armed fascist gangs of the loyalist paramilitaries.

This latest British plan is so thoroughly bogus that the middle class nationalists of the SDLP—once called the Stoop Down Low Party by the Republican movement—finds itself

obliged to stand on an abstentionist platform. Its 28 candidates are pledged not to participate in the assembly. But the SDLP, true to its traditions, has left its options open. It might participate if it is offered a suitable carrot in the form of an 'Irish dimension'. That is to say some vague rigmarole that will allow the SDLP to cover its treachery. Sinn Fein are also fielding 12 candidates on an abstentionist platform in order, according to *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, to counter the SDLP's claim to represent the nationalist people. The cowardly Gerry Fitt, hated by the nationalist population has decided not to contest the election fearing he would be defeated again.

Whatever happens the war of national liberation will continue. Whatever clothes it wears British imperialist repression remains British imperialist repression and the Irish people will fight it until it is destroyed.

Terry Marlowe