

EDITORIAL**FREE THESE PATRIOTS NOW !**

Several Irishmen remain political prisoners in jails up and down Britain. These men do not all subscribe to socialist patriotism. Nevertheless, they are patriots who recognise that the root cause of the exploitation, oppression and degradation of the people of Ireland lies in the fact that Ireland remains a colony of British rule. More than this, they are men who have combined their love of liberation and their hatred of imperialist domination with direct action of one type or another.

Socialist revolutionaries must not merely support all demands for an end of the incarceration of these men, they must lead the campaign for their immediate and unconditional release.

MEN OF NO CRIME

As the Irish National Liberation Solidarity Front (INLSF) has consistently pointed out, these men have committed no real crime. This must be clearly understood. According to the statute book of the British imperialist ruling class, these men are criminals, even though some of them have not yet even been tried! But in fact it is just this ruling class that is the real criminal. For centuries this class of industrialists, financiers, commerce bosses and absentee landowners has lived comfortably from plundering the working people of Ireland. The muscle of their robber clutches has always been and remains the British aggressor army, supported by the

Stormont and Dublin lackey regimes. It is this class with its terror machine of murder, C.S. killer gas, looting, snatch squads, water cannon, rubber bullets, truncheons, armoured cars, curfews, police brutality, courts, prisons, the threat of internment without trial, unemployment, slums, and poverty that is the real criminal, not the men who now lie in small concrete cells, in some instances for twenty-three out of twenty four hours, with the light switched on all night and all day.

These men of no crime face a new year with a blank agenda. The only hope they have, apart from the courage their beliefs give them, is that a mighty campaign be launched to secure their immediate and unconditional release. They have every right to expect those on the outside to organize such a campaign. Every man, woman and child must stand up and be counted. Their fight is our fight and all those who do nothing side with the jailer. And that is all that is to it. In particular there is a binding responsibility on all workers in this country to mobilize in solidarity with the Irish political prisoners. The workers of Britain and Ireland are exploited by the same ruling class, which through its ownership of the basic means of production in both countries sucks profits from the labour power of both. Moreover, if the new Industrial Relations Bill becomes law, then many a British

worker will join the Irish political prisoners inside when they commit the "crime" of going on strike in defence of their living conditions and hard-won democratic and trade union rights.

SPARK TO LIGHT A PRAIRIE FIRE

There are those with weak knees who argue pathetically that "there's nothing we can do". This is not so. Recently six Basques had their lives saved by the pressure of working class action across the world coupled with agitation within Spain. And remember, one of the prisoners in Britain, Frank Keane, already stands in the shadow of the Dublin hangman. A massive campaign, with the lead coming from British workers in the country where these Irish patriots are incarcerated, could be the spark to light a prairie fire of protest here, in Ireland and throughout the world. It can be done. It must be done. In order that this campaign can immediately get off the ground right at the beginning of the year the INSLF is having printed several thousand stickers (details of which appear in this issue) taking up the demand for the freeing of these men. These must be employed in every city and town across Britain. This first step will create a climate of sympathy, the basis on which a widespread, militant campaign can be constructed. This first step must then be followed by the organisation of

demonstrations, pickets and public meetings. These plans the INLSF already has in hand. A carefully planned campaign aimed at mobilising the British working class into an escalating torrent of agitation is clearly what is required. This must be the year of freedom for the Irish political prisoners.

IRELAND - BRITISH IMPERIALISM'S OLDEST POLITICAL PRISONER

No British prison should hold a single Irish patriotic revolutionary. No prison in Ireland, north or south, operated by the stooge Dublin and Stormont cliques, has the right to hold a single Irish patriotic revolutionary. It is the real criminals, the bosses, the industrialists, the bankers, together with their leading political henchmen, such as Heath and Wilson, Lynch and Chichester-Clarke, who should—and one day will—be imprisoned for their crimes against the workers of Ireland and Britain. It should be constantly born in mind that until Britain's oldest political prisoner—Ireland—is liberated, there will be no end to the acts of violence being committed against the people of Ireland. And liberation from the rule of British imperialism means the acceptance in theory and the application in practice of the truth that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.