

POLICE STATE IN WALES

By a "Class Struggle" Correspondent

At the end of October the South Wales Police arrested and detained over twenty Welsh republicans and sympathisers in the Cardiff and Pontypridd areas. Although the pretext for this action was the discovery of an incendiary bomb at the army recruitment office in Pontypridd, it was very clear that the aim of the police was to harass republicans and gather more information for their political files.

The discovery of the incendiary bomb on Monday morning, 26 October came at a critical time for the police - the royal visit to Wales by Carlo and Di was to start the following day. Losing no time, they detained a disabled nurse, the Valleys secretary of the Welsh Socialist Republicans, Anne Powell and her husband, Malcolm, a man who is so chronically ill that he has not worked for six years. After being questioned for over four hours the police impounded their car and held it for over 5 days.

In Cardiff the Secretary of the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement, Robert Griffiths was detained for questioning. The police took all his clothes and left the house with bagfuls of pamphlets and political papers. He was kept in solitary confinement for over 15 hours and a further 10 hours under questioning without being

given any food. When he was finally offered food, he refused in order to hurry the police to release him. Eventually, just before a demonstration was about to be held by the Republican Movement and the Welsh Campaign for Civil and Political Liberties (WCCPL) outside the City Police station, he was released. Even to this day, three weeks after the raids most of his clothing has still not been returned by the police and he has to borrow clothing from friends. As he commented, "The police held me in custody against my will for over 25 hours ... They did not have, nor do they have, a shred of evidence to connect me with the Pontypridd incident; The only thing they have against me are my political beliefs."

Before being released, Griffiths was charged under the Theft Act in connection with a Wales Gas street lamp which had been left in his house by a workman. His solicitor, Mr. Jonathan Evans was denied access to him until the time of his release.

Another well known Republican John Jenkins was arrested on his way to lectures at the university where he is doing a social work diploma. After a long interrogation he was let out after being charged with alleged burglary, although he doesn't even know where the alleged offence occurred.

He was allowed out of the police station on a very wet night at 10 p.m. without any shoes on - the police confiscated the pair he was wearing and a further pair sent to him at the station.

In another incident a Republican was taken to the police station with his wife and brother and sister in law who were visiting him for the day. After over 1½ hours questioning, his wife was told that he would be sent down for at least 5 years!

In all cases, the police questions were almost solely on political beliefs! "What is your attitude to the Royal Family?", "What is your attitude to Ireland?" and attempts to obtain names and addresses of other Republicans. According to Dr. Phil Thomas of the WCCPL, the pattern of police questioning points towards them trying to build up a conspiracy charge, such as those currently being used against Asian youth, the Bradford 12, and used against Irish patriots, against leading members of the Republican Movement.

As in Operation Fire, last year's massive swoop by the police, allegedly in search of second home arsonists, those taken in were questioned not about the bomb incident but their politics. Such questioning combined with the sticking plaster, jam pots, matches, empty petrol cans and fireworks in which the police showed great interest during the recent house searches are the basis for such a frame-up.