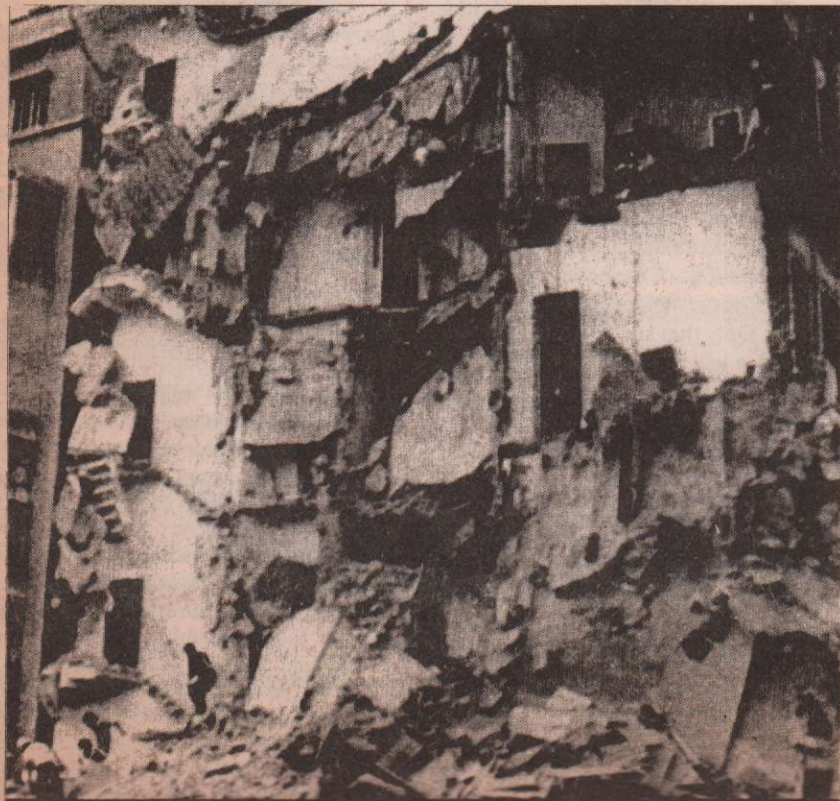


FIGHT RACISM!

FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

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'But the Israelis took no notice of the white flags. And to finish off the job, the Israeli jets came back for another bombing run when the people were burying those killed in the first strike'

IMPERIALISTS BACK GENOCIDE IN LEBANON

Imperialist reaction and counter-revolution, sheer barbarism and fascist genocide in the service of oppression and territorial expansion – such is the character of Israel's 6 June invasion of Lebanon. The invasion was planned and executed to forever destroy the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the expression of 4 million Palestinian people's democratic right to self-determination. It was effected with ruthless and genocidal intent: within the space of 7 days Israeli air, sea and land forces slaughtered nearly 20,000 Lebanese and Palestinians. The International Red Cross put the figure of refugees at 600,000. Whole towns, villages and refugee camps were razed to the ground. British and US imperialism attempted to cover up their responsibility by mouthing phrases of disapproval. But they did *nothing* to stop the slaughter. Indeed they have massively assisted Israel in the attainment of its objectives. The 80,000 Israeli troops, the 2,000 tanks, 300 jet-fighters, the ships and thousands of tons of bombs which devastated South Lebanon and have now reached and laid siege to Beirut, are paid for or supplied by US and British imperialism. Zionism and imperialism are at one in their wish to destroy the PLO – the main threat to imperialism in the Middle East.

Israel attacks

The Israeli invasion demonstrated to the full imperialism's capacity for terror and savagery. It pulled from its face that mask of 'democracy', 'civilisation' and 'humanity' which imperialism reserves for the auditoria of the United Nations and its own Parliaments.

The coastal town of Tyre was subjected to remorseless bombardment and destruction, leaving 1,200 dead. During the Israeli assault, 15,000 refugees were forced to remain on the beach for two days without food, water or shelter while the Israeli forces turned back UN relief convoys. Further to the north, the town of Sidon was put to

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SUPPORT THE HEALTH WORKERS

The health workers strike on 23 June saw a significant and heartening display of working class solidarity as thousands of miners, engineers and civil servants joined the three-quarter million health workers who took action that day. The militancy and determination of the health workers arises not only from appalling wages and conditions but is also due to the fact that oppressed workers – many black, Irish, immigrant workers a large percentage of whom are women – form a high proportion of their ranks.

The health workers are fighting poverty-line wages and vicious government cutbacks in health care and jobs. They are having to fight on many fronts. They face a government intent on breaking the unity achieved between nurses and other health workers. Hence the offer of 7½% to the nurses, an offer which the arch conservative leadership of the Royal College of Nursing clearly wants to accept. The health workers also face the TUC Health Services Committee which until recently refused to allow more than demoralising one-day strikes. Now under intense pressure from the angry and determined workers the committee has called a 3 day strike from 19-21 July.

The workers clearly reject the latest insulting offer of 6% for ancillary staff and 7½% for nurses. They have widespread support amongst the working class. Indeed that support coupled with the health workers determination has the potential to provide a serious challenge to the Tory Government. The power to turn that potential into reality unfortunately rests with trade union leaders who have repeatedly proved unwilling to fight the Tories. Whilst the Thatcher Government is the enemy without let nobody forget the fre-

quently lethal enemies within – the trade union leaders – who use their power to prevent a working class fight back.

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! gives full support to the health workers and urges all our readers to attend and support their picket lines and demonstrations.

NEWMAN'S RACISM

Sir Kenneth Newman will be head of the Metropolitan police in October. As FRFI has consistently warned, the appointment of this architect of torture in the Six Counties of Ireland heralds intensified repression particularly against black youth. Newman has already let slip his attitude to black people.

In an interview published in a US magazine Newman is quoted as saying:

'In the Jamaicans you have a people who are constitutionally disorderly ... It's simply in their make-up. They're constitutionally disposed to be anti-authority'.

Of course now that publicity about these racist remarks has reached Britain Newman is busily denying them. They damage his efforts to promote himself as being pro-Scarman and pro-community policing. The reality is of course that by community policing Newman means an extensive apparatus of police

spying. In his last post as head of Bramshill police college (where he was sent after international exposure of his torture methods in the Six Counties) Newman outlined his theories. He believes that thorough police intelligence work enables the police to know and concentrate on certain targets rather than use 'swamp' tactics. Thus he says:

'...the police should, especially in multi-racial inner city areas, reduce abrasive street encounters to the minimum and focus their efforts on the selective and accurate targeting of the people actually committing street robberies. This implies a bigger

investment in intelligence and skilled surveillance'.

He believes in police link-up with schools, social services, councils etc, to facilitate this spying. And of course, if this all fails the police have their riot squads and plastic bullets (which as ex-head of the paramilitary RUC Newman knows plenty about) to use to put down opposition.

In the Six Counties Newman's prime speciality was intelligence work. Having reorganised RUC intelligence he set up the conveyor belt whereby Republicans were beaten and tortured into signing confessions and then presented to Diplock Courts for lengthy sentences to be imposed. Newman's experience of police spying and brutality is now to be brought to the streets of London.

MW

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TRADE UNIONS IN RETREAT

The present government is engaged in all-out attack on basic trade union rights and working class living standards. In this war against the organised trade union movement it continues to inflict crippling defeats. In the face of this attack the organised trade union movement is retreating and has exposed its inability to defend trade union rights, living standards, working conditions and the provision of services vital to the working class.

On 28 June the first all-out national strike on the railways since 1955, and the first called by the major railway union, the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) since 1926, began. On 29 June, after just 48 hours, it ended in ruins. Yet the issues involved in the dispute could not be clearer.

The British Rail Board, acting directly on behalf of the government, is trying to impose longer hours of more intensive work on a smaller and lower paid workforce in a railway network cut to the bone. The wage increase offered of 5% amounts, after allowing for a 5 month freeze, to 3.8%, way below the rate of inflation. It is tied directly to what are called 'productivity' agreements - ie fewer trains staffed by fewer workers, working longer hours for less pay. This is, for example, what the infamous 'flexible rostering' is all about. 'Flexible rostering' simply destroys the eight hour day won in 1919 and replaces it by a system which ensures that each person works longer hours in each shift therefore fewer workers will be required. Nothing could be clearer yet ASLEF and NUR are proving incapable of fighting this attack.

In the run up to the strike, Sidney Weighell, leader of NUR, openly attacked ASLEF, saying:

'Let them [British Rail Board] withhold pay from train drivers but not from nine tenths of the workforce merely because one union reneges on agreements and tears them up annually.'

Because the British Rail Board said they would not pay even the 5% until 'flexible rostering' was accepted and because ASLEF refused to accept 'flexible rostering', Weighell said 'Go ahead, attack ASLEF but leave us alone!' ASLEF, for its part, then refused to support the NUR stoppage on 28 June and then, after the NUR was humiliated, called its own strike from 4

July! The sectionalism and narrow craft spirit deliberately cultivated by the trade union leadership is here displayed in all its obscenity. As a consequence the railway unions march, separately, to almost certain defeat. The British Rail Board are now so confident that they have withdrawn the 5% offer and, during the NUR strike, overturned the closed shop by stating they would not sack anyone who lost their trade union membership as a result of scabbing on the strike. Indeed it is now clear that the British Rail Board is out to destroy ASLEF altogether. Those on strike have been told they will be allowed to return to work only if they sign individual employment contracts accepting 'flexible rostering'.

The London Transport strike arose directly out of the Law Lords' ruling against the 'Fares Fair' policy. Again the issue could not be clearer. Londoners voted, using that bourgeois democracy which is the proud boast of every canting imperialist politician, for a low fares policy. A trio of superannuated ruling class judges overruled that vote. As a consequence fares more than doubled and London Transport declared service cuts on the Underground and buses. The GLC led by Ken Livingstone, architect of the low fares policy, retreated and refused to fight the ruling. The transport unions contented themselves with a one day strike. And that was the end of the 'fight'. Then when new rosters came in to institute service cuts there was a strike - ie when it directly affected the unions they moved... too late. Having refused to conduct a united political battle against the Law Lords' ruling they found themselves completely isolated. When the NUR strike collapsed, the London Transport Underground strike collapsed with it. Now London Transport has gone in for the kill threatening to send home anyone who refuses to work the new rosters and imposing a four week deadline. The fact is that defending the

'Fares Fair' policy would have required a political fight against the government and its courts. This the unions involved and the GLC refused to do.

The organised trade union movement has accepted four million unemployed without fighting. It has accepted the dismantling of the health service, closure of schools, rundown of public transport, reduction in social security benefits, reduction in unemployment benefits and the enactment of the 1980 Employment Act, shortly to be supplemented by the Tebbit Bill, without fighting back. All the elaborate machinery of compromise and arbitration upon which the trade union movement's traditional methods depend is being destroyed. And when battles do take place each is conducted in an isolated and sectional manner leading directly to defeat.

This inability of the trade union movement to defend the British working class arises from its dependence on British imperialism. The evolution, growth and 'success' of the British trade union movement has been closely linked with the strength of British imperialism. A share in the profits of superexploitation have been the foundation of the massive apparatus - luxurious premises, conference halls, full-time staff, newspapers, pension funds etc - that are the dominant characteristics of the British trade unions. They are not fighting organisations.

The fact that the trade union movement has allowed 13 years of imperialist terror in Ireland, racist terror against black people in Britain, the suppression of democratic rights and the bloody imperialist slaughter in the Malvinas/Falklands to go by without opposition only confirms their subservience to their paymasters - British imperialism. The ruling class is able to fully exploit this subservience when it comes to dealing with domestic issues such as wage claims and industrial disputes. Thatcher fresh from her imperialist triumph in the Malvinas/Falklands, a triumph only possible because of Labour Party and trade union backing has recently said: 'The Falklands Factor' has irrevocably changed British attitudes and that the leaders of ASLEF, the train drivers union, do not understand 'the new mood of the nation'.

of human rights *itself* breached the Geneva Convention in its treatment of Argentinian Prisoners of War. Several died as the British forced them to clear minefields and booby traps. Thousands were kept for days in the bitter cold after capture. One prisoner was summarily murdered when a British soldier shot him in the head.

Many of these facts now emerging were suppressed during the war, thanks to Ministry of Defence censorship and the willing compliance of most TV and newspaper editors. Indeed for many journalists this was not a subject for objective reporting but for a disgraceful boycott-like patriotic servility to imperialism.

From the most powerful military planners to the smallest suburban-dwelling bigot, this war has provided a major boost. It has also been a fine testing ground for British military equipment and technique. In the corridors of power this experience will be translated into the plans and hardware for further imperialist aggression.

But the British working class too must draw lessons from this war. The first

Mrs Thatcher is appealing for unity for her kind of Britain:

'...the nation that had built an empire and ruled a quarter of the world.'

The very empire, built on the blood of millions of oppressed peoples, that the Labour Party and trade union movement has defended throughout its history. Little wonder that in the industrial disputes of today, the trade union leaders are incapable of waging a serious struggle against the very British imperialist state that they themselves have helped build and defend. The monkeys cannot turn against the organ grinder for he is the source of their 'food'.

These developments show conclusively that a revolutionary trend cannot arise or be built first and foremost in the existing Labour Party and trade union movement. This does not rule out the development of massive working class struggles as rank and file trade unionists are forced out of desperate necessity to defend jobs, wages and living standards. Only that such workers and their struggles will inevitably be betrayed by the very same leaders who have consistently betrayed the Irish people, the black people and all peoples oppressed by British imperialism.

It should now be clear why we have consistently argued that a revolutionary trend can only be built on an anti-imperialist basis and first and foremost must arise from the most oppressed sections of the working class. Their understanding of imperialism and their opposition to the British state, their rejection of constitutionalism and the parliamentary sham are the fundamental requirements for the fighting organisation that will take on the British imperialist state and the Tory and Labour governments that defend it.

All revolutionaries have a duty to support all working class struggles to defend jobs and living standards. That is why we call on all our readers and supporters to aid and support the health workers and join their picket lines during the coming strike. Where we fundamentally differ from the middle class socialists is that we do not regard this elementary duty as a strategy for revolution. The primary task of revolutionaries in Britain today is to build fighting anti-imperialist organisations. Only when this is done will the possibility exist to destroy once and for all the influence of the reactionary Labour and trade union leaders.

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!

and major lesson being that its organisations - the Labour Party and the Trade Union leadership - are tied body and soul to British imperialism. Foot and his Labour Party were solidly behind Britain's imperialist war - just as they have always been behind its war against the Irish people. The Labour 'Lefts', lacking even the conviction that Britain should *not* possess the Malvinas/Falklands, were impotent and merely left to utter disagreement with imperialist tactics. The lesson is clear. The British Labour and trade union movement is riddled with nationalism, jingoism and loyalty to British imperialism. It is not a working class movement but on the contrary its leaders are the 'labour Lieutenants of the capitalist class'. They have shown themselves capable of the greatest crime - turning worker against worker, peddling loyalty to imperialism. And that loyalty is as much present in 'peace' time as in 'war'. No step forward in its own battles can be taken by the British working class until it rejects these leaders, rejects the imperialist Labour Party and makes common cause with all those fighting British imperialism throughout the world.

SOUTH AFRICA IN BRIEF

Released from Apartheid Prisons

In July the apartheid regime released a number of political prisoners. It made clear, however, that no former leaders of the liberation struggle - Nelson Mandela, Walter Govan Mbeki and many others - considered for remission. These apartheid claims do not have a prognosis. With apartheid intent further incarceration, the campaign to free all South African political prisoners must now be intensified.

Death Sentences Commuted but More Trials Begin

The South African fascist regime has been forced to commute death sentences passed on 3 ANC freedom fighters - Petrus Lubisi, Ncimbithi Mashaba and Naphtali Manana. This was no demonstration of apartheid clemency, but a result of a massive international campaign. However, a further 3 freedom fighters are still under a death sentence. Tsotsobe, Hohannes Shabane, Davide Moise were sentenced to 18 August 1981 for their part in a highly successful military operation against the apartheid regime, in the brilliant bombing of the high Sasol oil plants in June 1980. The trial has begun of another 3 fighters - Thelle Simon Mogoer, Jerry Semano Mosololi, 25; and Thavo Motoung, 27. All three face charges of high treason and possible death sentences in relation to military operations on apartheid police stations.

Amandla Kitson

SACTU Militants Murdered

The apartheid regime's terror campaign against leaders of the African liberation and working class movement has claimed 3 more victims. Two SACTU militants, Peter Jabu Nzima were murdered on 4 July in a car bomb explosion in Swaziland. Nzima was a founder member of the Allied Workers Union (AWU) and has recently been appointed ANC representative in Swaziland. Jabu Nzima was a member of the Textile and Allied Workers Union until she joined BAWU. She was forced to flee South Africa in 1976 after constant police harassment. The apartheid regime, with relentless determination pursued them to their deaths.

Then on 8 June, Joe Mavi, President of the over 15,000 strong Black Workers Union was killed in a car bomb explosion, passed off by the apartheid press as a car 'accident'. Joe Mavi was brought to a standstill in 1980 when he led the biggest workers' strike the city has known. He was murdered just before his annual general meeting scheduled for June. Joe Mavi's funeral was attended by 10,000 people.

Amandla Kitson

Striking miners murdered

8 black miners were killed and 100 injured when the racist South African police opened fire on thousands of striking miners on the Witwatersrand near Johannesburg. With pay of £100 a month, the strikers were demanding higher wages and protesting against the high accident rate. In their drive the workers back, the police used a helicopter, have released teargas on the strikers, and have several hundred. In an attempt to drive away their murders the apartheid and mine guards claimed to have killed one of the eight murdered in 'self defence' that one was stabbed to death and another shot by an 'unidentified person'. Hundreds have been sacked as 'scabs' whilst thousands more have been dismissed.

THE MALVINAS WAR

The war in the Malvinas/Falklands is now over, leaving some 2,000 dead and thousands maimed. Reactionary British imperialism is the victor and its victory has given strength and confidence to the Thatcher government and all the other reactionary forces in Britain.

British imperialist military superiority plus backing from US imperialism proved too much for the Argentinian forces led as they were by fascists with little stomach for a fight against their imperialist masters. It is now to be hoped that the Argentinian masses will move forward to remove the junta and install a popular government capable of and willing to oppose the real source of misery and oppression in Argentina - US and British imperialism.

The Malvinas/Falklands war revealed the depths of hypocrisy and barbarism of which British imperialism is capable. Presented by the bellicose press as 'hard fought' and 'valiant' combat, the reality of the conquest of the Malvinas/Falk-

lands was relentless shelling and cluster bombing. Goose Green was recaptured with 250 Argentinian dead compared to only 17 British dead. The enormous disparity in casualties resulted from British blood lust and the intensive use of cluster bombs which dismembered scores of Argentinian soldiers. Yet what a hue and cry was raised when Argentinian stocks of unused napalm were discovered. 'Barbaric!' shouted the British. But not barbaric at all, evidently, when the British used napalm against the Malayan people or the US used it on a massive scale against the people of Vietnam.

British imperialism, which throughout the war (never before it!), continually denounced Argentinian breaches

SOUTH AFRICA



REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNION

The last 3 years has seen the most militant strikes of black workers in South Africa's history together with the growth of independent trade unions. In response to this working class revolutionary upsurge the South African state has directed more and more repression against these unions, and most recently against the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU). The attack on Rowntrees strikers is a part of a wholesale assault on SAAWU, its leadership, and on the black workers movement as a whole. But it has not succeeded: on the contrary through its mass support and the determination of its members, SAAWU has grown from strength to strength since its formation 3 years ago.

SAAWU formed

SAAWU was formed in April 1979 as one of a growing number of non racial trade unions. Just 7 months later the racist government brought out its Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act. The Act introduced registration in return for a number of conditions of state control including access to the union's books and membership lists by security forces. In line with the policy of the underground South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), SAAWU refused to register. The union released a joint statement with the African Food and Canning Workers Union (Neil Aggett's union) in April 1980 pointing out that registration would be meaningless until such racist



Cartoon from SAAWU newsletter 'The Worker', September 1981

laws as the Group Areas Act and Pass Laws were repealed. It was in East London, bordering on Ciskei bantustan, that SAAWU with the help of another AFCWU organiser, Oscar Mpetha (who has now been in detention for 22 months), developed its power base under the leadership of its President Thozamile Gqweta.

Revolutionary Trade Unionism

Within 5 months of its formation its East London membership is estimated to have grown from 5,000 to 15,000. In July 1980 nine members of the SAAWU workers' committee at National Converter Industries were sacked. 200 workers staged a sit-in in support of their leadership at which point the management called in the police. 128 workers were arrested and charged under the Riotous Assemblies Act. Although initially found guilty, they were acquitted on appeal in March 1981 with the help of defence lawyer Griffiths Mxenge. Mxenge was a member of the ANC—he was murdered in November 1981. In August 1980 250 workers at Raylite Batteries staged a sit-in demanding recognition of their union—SAAWU. The police raided the factory and baton charged the workers injuring 25. Thozamile Gqweta and Siza Njikelana (National Organiser) were both

arrested after returning from negotiations with management.

Despite such repression, murder, and detention, by October 1980 SAAWU's power had increased enormously. It was in this month that Wilson Rowntree (a sweet factory 100% owned by the British company Rowntree Mackintosh) sacked 1,100 workers for going on strike. The SAAWU workers committee forced the company to reinstate all the workers. It was not a concession which Rowntrees was to forget. The following month another British company, Chloride, was forced to recognise SAAWU when a ballot showed 95% support for it. These two victories were followed in 1981 by 9 companies giving some form of recognition to SAAWU.

SAAWU is not just fighting against the exploiters but against the very system of apartheid. In May 1981 Siza Njikelana spoke at a massive meeting to oppose the racist celebrations of 20 years of the 'Republic of South Africa' calling for a People's Republic. In the same month the 3rd Annual Congress of SAAWU demanded universal franchise as well as the abolition of the pass laws and the migrant labour system.

Apartheid attempts to break SAAWU

Racist South Africa could not tolerate these developments: the union through its mass strength was both wrecking the state's attempt to control the workers organisations through registration, and challenging the apartheid system itself. In September 1980 the government issued a memorandum to employers in East London on steps to smash SAAWU. It promised to support those employers who refused to recognise unregistered trade unions with even more vicious repression. In February 1981 the British imperialist company Wilson Rowntree took the lead by sacking 500 workers. In spite of the massive support which SAAWU has built for these workers, Rowntrees have refused to recognise the union or reinstate the sacked workers.

The struggle has developed into a test of the entire black workers' movement, with South Africa attempting to wipe out the union and its leadership. Since the commencement of the strike, Thozamile Gqweta and Siza Njikelana have been detained 6 times. 79 of the Rowntrees workers' committee of 80 have been detained at one time. Four SAAWU members have been in prison for 12 months for distributing leaflets supporting the Rowntree workers. Thozamile Gqweta's mother, uncle and SAAWU comrade Deliswa Roxiso have been murdered by racists. During one period of detention this year, Thozamile Gqweta and Sam Kikine (General Secretary) were so severely tortured that they

NEIL AGGETT'S INQUEST: APARTHEID LIES

Dr Neil Aggett, a white trade unionist and Transvaal Secretary of the African Food and Canning Workers Union, was murdered in an apartheid police station on 5 February after 3 months in detention. The regime's claim that he committed suicide is being shown as a monstrous lie as the inquest into Neil Aggett's death uncovers a catalogue of deprivation and torture, proving beyond doubt that he was murdered by his captors.

In a statement Neil Aggett made only 14 hours before his murder, he describes what he suffered for three months. He was held in solitary confinement and refused visits. He was repeatedly slapped, punched and kicked, and had his testicles squeezed. Only 5 days before his death he had been blindfolded with a wet towel, handcuffed and then given electric shocks. Just days from his murder he was forced to undergo 60 hours interrogation without rest or sleep. Well practiced in the systematic suppression of the truth, South African Minister of Law and Order, sought to stop Neil Aggett's statement being used at the inquest. When the attempt failed, the State resorted to monstrous and sadistic lies. For example, Johannesburg's security police chief Brigadier Hendrik Muller claimed that Neil Aggett may have requested extended sessions in order to finalise his interrogation.

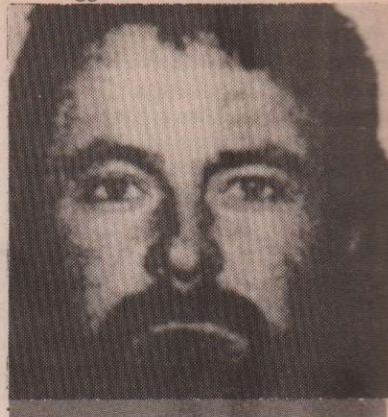
Despite the lies, the truth is emerging of horrible murder. Challenged by George Bizos, lawyer for the Aggett family, Johannesburg chief surgeon Dr Vernon Kemp would not categorically deny that Neil Aggett was murdered by strangulation with a wet towel squeezed around his neck. As the inquest continues, further evidence of torture and murder will no doubt be uncovered.

Neil Aggett was murdered because he

was a white revolutionary trade unionist who threw in his lot with the black workers of South Africa fighting against the racist, capitalist apartheid regime. His story whilst in detention is familiar to those acquainted with British 'police interrogation' techniques used in the Six Counties. In 1978, Brian Maguire a 27 year old Irish trade unionist and member of TASS was arrested, detained and murdered. The RUC claimed that he had committed suicide by hanging himself. Family and friends didn't believe this. *Republican News* said 'all the pointers indicate that the RUC Special Branch had, this time, gone so far with the "mock" strangulation of one of their victims that they killed him.'

British imperialism, which has taught the apartheid regime all its techniques of torture and murder and which is the main backer of the regime, is directly responsible for the murder of Neil Aggett. Communists and democrats in Britain are duty bound to condemn not only the apartheid regime, but also British imperialism which, whilst spouting democratic phrases, watches silently the torture and murder of revolutionary trade unionists and activists in South Africa. The inquest has now been adjourned for 3 months. We know why!

Neil Aggett - murdered



POWERFUL OFFENSIVE

On the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the African National Congress (ANC), 8 January 1982, the ANC declared this year as the year of Unity in Action and stated: 'Let this be the year of the most powerful offensive that our country has ever seen.'

In line with the ANC's declaration, the armed struggle in South Africa has recently been stepped up. In the two weeks leading up to 16 June the 6th anniversary of the Soweto uprising, there has been a bomb attack by ANC's army—Umkhonto we Sizwe—every day hundreds of miles apart, both by the borders and within the urban centres of South Africa. Even Lieutenant General Johan Coetzee (Chief of security police) describes the attacks as part of a new wave linked to the 16 June and 26 June anniversaries of the Soweto uprising of 1976 and the signing of the Freedom Charter in 1955.

● Extensive damage has been caused on vital fuel depots. A fuel depot owned by Total—a subsidiary of Compagnie

Francaise des Petroles of France was still blazing 12 hours after an attack!

● Several bombs exploded near Pampiersburg on the Richards Bay (Port) main railway line to the coal export terminal. 18 coal trains were stranded. Indeed the Richard's Bay rail line which links the port to the eastern Transvaal coalfields has been severed several times.

● The railway line in Soweto which transports black workers to slave for the decadent whites in Johannesburg was also severed.

● In answer to the recent recommendations of the President's Council for a new constitution dispensation the lift shaft there was bombed. Damage extended to lift foyers up to the sixth floor!

These attacks show the unity of Umkhonto we Sizwe with the people of South Africa—and are obviously carefully planned for there have been no reported injuries as a result of these attacks.

Victory is Certain!
Amandla Kitson



Griffiths Mxenge - murdered

had to be put under psychiatric care.

SAAWU organised massive protests at the sham independence of Ciskei and South Africa reacted brutally detaining on one day 205 trade unionists. But after each period of detention the leaders come out more determined: as Siza Njikelana said after his fourth period of detention 'detentions only harden us and make us more determined to strive for justice and democracy in this land... My detention has only made me more resolute about carrying on.'

It is for this reason that South Africa decided in May this year to imprison Thozamile Gqweta, Siza Njikelana and Sam Kikine for a long period—all three are charged under the Terrorism Act which has a *minimum* sentence of 5 years.

This is the type of repression upon which British imperialism relies: it is the repression which guarantees huge profits for its increasing investments in South Africa.

Boycott Rowntrees

Solidarity in Britain with the South African Rowntrees workers is therefore not only elementary solidarity with trade unionists in struggle. It is solidarity with a revolutionary union—SAAWU—and the entire South African working class. There is no doubt that if Rowntree workers in Britain took positive action in support of their fellow workers in South Africa this would tremendously assist SAAWU in repulsing the vicious repression directed against it and independent revolutionary trade unionism in South Africa.

FRFI urges all readers to send messages of solidarity and donations for the Rowntree workers to SACTU, 38 Graham Street, London N1 8JX, and to participate in and support all actions, boycotts, demonstrations and pickets in support of the Rowntree workers and SAAWU.

Chris Fraser

FIGHT RACISM IN BRIEF

● Racist Leyland

British Leyland is a major nationalised industry directly financed by the Government. Its record of systematic racism was publicly exposed four times in 1981.

In January BL was found guilty of racism for insisting that all applicants for manual work complete forms in English. In February BL was again found guilty of racism for moving a West Indian worker from one job to another after trying to force him to work alongside a National Front activist. In August the incident of the 'black memo' was exposed, when BL's head of security at Cowley ordered identity checks on all black workers. Finally in September the CRE reported on the case of George Jones who had applied for a job in the Castle Bromwich plant in 1977. He was refused because AUEW shop stewards John Garner and Terry McAnulty told management that the shop floor had voted 17-14 against working alongside a black man.

● Tulse Hill Victory

Tony Macey the 13 year old white youth arrested and assaulted by Brixton police in April (see FRFI 19) had the case against him dismissed on 9 June at Balham Juvenile Court. The only 'evidence' against Tony was a verbal confession obtained under duress when he was illegally detained and questioned without access to a parent or guardian. His mother was herself threatened by police to try to prevent her from taking action about this illegal detention. So flimsy was the police case that the court was forced to dismiss the case. Now Tony's mother is determined to go ahead with a complaint and prosecution against the police.

Ace Kelly

● Starving out the Khan Family

As FRFI readers know Shakat and Parveen Khan and their two children have been under threat of deportation for months now. Mr Khan still remains in hiding to escape the clutches of the Home Office racists. Since the Home Office were foiled in their attempt in February to deport Mrs Khan and the children, the authorities have sought by every means to force Mrs Khan out of Britain. First she was visited by the police every other day to spy on her and to 'convince' her that she and the two children should leave Britain. Then her Supplementary Benefit was cut off. Then her British-born children were refused child benefit.

These efforts to starve out the Khan family must be resisted. The Khan Family Defence Committee has provisionally organised a social on 17 July at the Birch Hall Community Centre, Rusholme, Manchester at 7.30pm. The proceeds will go to enable the Khans to stay and fight.

For more information ring 061 225 5111. Send donations to Khan Family Defence Committee c/o 593 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester 12.

Malik Sivam

● Racist Sums

It has been revealed that the British state's racist immigration controls will cost more than £30m to administer in 1982. An extensive bureaucracy now exists to administer these vile laws and to inflict suffering and terror on black people. And whilst the Government slashes the health service and other essential services no talk has been heard of cuts in this sector! There is always enough money for the British state's repressive and racist machine.

Meanwhile, the Government has said that the new racist health charges for 'non-British' people - meaning nationality checks on all black people seeking health care - will save the grand sum of £6m.

MC

BRADFORD 12 VICTORY!

Self Defence is No Offence!

The Bradford 12 have been acquitted of all the serious charges facing them. After a trial lasting 8 weeks in Leeds Crown Court, the jury found all of them not guilty of the charges of conspiracy and making an explosive substance with intent to endanger life and property. A great victory has been won for all oppressed people against British imperialism. The British state's attempts to criminalise those fighting to defend the black community have received a major setback. FRFI sends its full congratulations to the twelve on this magnificent victory.

In the course of the two month trial the 12 and their barristers had fought tooth and nail to bring out the real political issues. They succeeded in showing the extent of the racist onslaught against black people and the reasons for their undertaking self-defence. Tarlochan Gata-aura, the only one of the 12 to go into the witness box, described to the

jury the events of 11 July 1981, when news was received that coachloads of fascists were approaching Bradford. After the recent attacks in Southall, Coventry and Walthamstow, he believed that death could have resulted from a skinhead invasion. Petrol bombs were made, he said, to 'erect a shield of fire to deter attackers from coming into

In April 1981 the unemployment figure for white women was 8.7%, for black women 15.8%

RACISM IN EMPLOYMENT

Figures given in the June issue of Labour Research confirm the operation of systematic racism against black workers in employment. Black workers are concentrated in the worst jobs, with the worst conditions and are more likely to be thrown out of work.

33% of all employed men work in manufacturing industry whereas for black men the proportion is 47%. In certain industries the concentration of black workers is even higher. Thus in Yorkshire and Humberside 6% of all workers are employed in textiles - the proportion for black workers in this area is more than six times as high: 41%. These figures underline the fact that black workers are forced into unskilled and semi-skilled work. But the racism does not stop here. Figures for shift work show that black workers suffer the worst conditions in work.

In 1976 15% of all employed white men worked shifts. The figure for black men was twice as high: 31%. Working shifts is bad enough, working night shifts is worse. In 1976 9% of all employed white men worked night shifts. The figure for black men was, once again, twice as high: 19%. The statistics for permanent night shift workers revealed even sharper racist discrimination. In 1976 only 1% of all employed white men worked permanent nights. For male Pakistani workers the figure was eight times as high at 8%. The evidence is clear: Black workers are subjected to systematic racist discrimination in employment.

For black youth this racism starts when they look for work. The same article quotes a CRE survey which found that whilst 44% of white fifth formers seeking skilled apprenticeships get them, the equivalent figure for black fifth formers are 13% for Asians and 15% for West Indians. As the total number of apprenticeships falls this means that black youth have less and less chance of getting into skilled employment. Indeed unemployment is rising twice as fast for blacks as against

whites. In 1972 black people formed 2.4% of the registered unemployed. By February this year that figure had risen to 4.1%. Even this is an underestimate as many black youth do not register.

For black women the same story of systematic racist discrimination is confirmed by the statistics. In 1976 45% of employed white women worked in manual jobs, for West Indian women the figure was 55% and for Indian women a staggering 72%! In unskilled and semi-skilled manual work the racism is even more marked. 29% of employed white women worked in this category whilst for West Indian women the figure was 47% and for Indian women 58%. Unemployment rates are significantly higher for black women. In April 1981 the figure was 8.7% for white women whilst for black women it was nearly twice as high: 15.8%. Whilst all women are discriminated against in employment it is clear that black women suffer more as a result of racist discrimination. Yet in the recent past it has been black women who have led the most determined trade union struggles at Grunwicks and Chix.

Black workers and trade unions

Opportunists of all hues, desperate to prevent the rise of black organisation against the racist British state, unemployment and poverty, call on black workers to turn to the organised trade union movement as the way forward. After the risings last year this advice was endlessly repeated. The TUC itself in its 'anti-racist' charter - 'Black workers: A TUC charter for equality of opportunity' - calls for recruitment programmes to encourage black workers to join unions. Yet the fact is that black

black areas.' He attacked the police for their record of protecting fascists and covering up racist attacks.

Other defendants made statements in court describing their feelings and actions on 11 July. 'I had fear inside me thinking that my family or someone that I loved might be attacked or killed,' said Pravin Patel. Saeed Hussain spoke of how the fascist firebombing of an Asian family in Walthamstow had affected his family - 'It affected my mother so much that she got my brother to seal up the letter box'.

Tariq Mahmood Ali, who courageously conducted his own defence throughout the trial, told the jury, 'If I am confronted by a situation where hordes of murderous thugs are about to attack my people, and if the authorities have done nothing about it, then I would have no alternative but to use those means of defence that are appropriate to the attack... I am not a terrorist. I am a victim of terror.'

A succession of other defence witnesses from black communities all over the country buried the prosecution lie that there was no serious incidence of racist attacks. These included Anwar Ditta, who testified to the role that the 12 had played in her fight for justice. Other witnesses testified to the extent of racist attacks and police inaction about them.

The defence barristers also exposed the bogus police forensic 'experts' and showed conclusively that petrol bombs did not constitute an explosive substance.

Judge Beaumont, alarmed at the effectiveness of the defence case, ordered the defence barristers to stop making 'political speeches'. He then proceeded to deliver his own blatantly biased and distorted summing-up geared to directing the jury to find the defendants guilty. He said that on their verdicts would depend whether or not there was 'chaos and confusion' throughout the country.

The jury retired and, after almost 8 hours of deliberation, announced the

verdicts of not guilty to massive cheers and applause from the public gallery. The verdicts meant that the defence case that petrol bombs were made for self-defence against fascist attack was fully accepted by the jury. As Tarlochan Gata-aura commented, after the trial, 'We have just shown to the courts that black people have the right to defend themselves by any means necessary.'

The importance of having a representative working class jury is underlined by this trial. So too is the need to fight state attacks on the jury system and state attempts at jury rigging. It was only by a determined fight in this case that a significant number of black and Asian people were included in the jury. Having such a jury which knew and understood the issues involved and would not allow themselves to be misled by the police case was crucial to achieving victory. Future attempts at jury rigging and outright attacks on the jury system itself - already underway - will now be stepped up. The British state and police will be seriously worried that all their efforts to criminalise the anti-racist struggle and mount a political show trial have been defeated. Steps are already being taken to exclude further categories from jury service, this time to exclude those convicted of any imprisonable offence. The British ruling class will no doubt draw on their experience of oppressing the Irish people. There the British state simply abolished juries altogether and introduced Diplock Courts.

In the Bradford 12 case the state is now planning its next step. The Attorney General, Sir Michael Havers, has already called for a report on the trial - no doubt to ensure that a similar defeat does not take place again.

Meanwhile the 12 themselves are pursuing compensation claims for the weeks they spent in jail when first arrested.

Bill Hughes

NEWTON ROSE VICTORY

Newton Rose is at last safe! The Appeal Court has ruled that he will not have to undergo the ordeal of a retrial on the frame-up murder charges concocted by Hackney police. His conviction was quashed in March but so determined were the police and Director of Public Prosecutions to frame Newton that they had appealed for a retrial.

Newton was convicted for the murder of Tony Donnelly, a National Front sympathiser, despite the fact that witnesses

workers are already more organised than white workers!

In 1976 61% of all employed black men were in trade unions as against only 47% of white men. Since then rising unemployment and the increasingly open bankruptcy of the trade union movement has led to a collapse in union membership levels but unionisation amongst black workers remains higher than amongst whites. In 1981 48% of all employed black men were in trade unions compared with only 36% of whites.

The long and courageous battles fought by black workers for the right to join trade unions - such as Grunwicks, Garners and Chix - prove that black workers need no advice from the TUC or anyone else about joining trade unions. Whilst black workers have fought against racist employers and in defence of basic trade union rights, these statistics prove that the trade union movement itself has totally failed to prevent continued and systematic racism against the black section of the working class.

Terry Marlowe

had testified that Donnelly's attackers were white. The Judge in the case, Judge Edward Clarke gave the jury a 20 minute deadline to reach a verdict after they had spent 7 hours without being able to reach a verdict. This provided the legal grounds for the Appeal Court quashing the conviction thus avoiding the obvious point that Hackney police had framed Newton. As part of the frame up the police had threatened and intimidated three of Newton's friends into making incriminating statements against Newton. When they later withdrew these statements they were charged with perverting the course of justice and themselves imprisoned!

Newton Rose's long fight for justice has achieved a victory. Campaigning by his family, friends and supporters brought this about. Newton Rose and his family have paid a heavy price for this frame up - Newton spent ten long months in prison for something he did not do. During the several pickets held on Hackney Police Station Newton's supporters chanted *Lock up Goodall*. (Inspector Goodall master-minded the frame up) *Throw away the Key!* But knowing the British state we expect no action to be taken against Goodall and Hackney police for their framing of an innocent man.

Maxine Williams

PHIL ROBINS: The struggle continues

The campaign to free Phil Robins, framed and now serving 18 months for the sole reason that he claimed compensation from the police after he was shot and very nearly killed with two CS gas shells, is now getting widespread support. A petition calling for his immediate release has obtained over 3000 local signatures, and over £150 collected to pay for campaign costs. A lively public meeting has been held, which was covered by local press and radio.

The campaign is now organising a series of street activities to build that support further. Every Saturday morning, from 11 to 1pm, the organising committee will be petitioning in Church Street in the centre of Liverpool. In the afternoon, a street meeting will take place on Granby Street, starting at 2.30 pm. In addition, there are to be lobbies of local councillors and local MPs to get commitments of support. The first MP to be lobbied and picketed will be Dick Crawshaw, MP for Toxteth. He was written to over a month ago, and has not bothered even to reply, let alone offer any support.

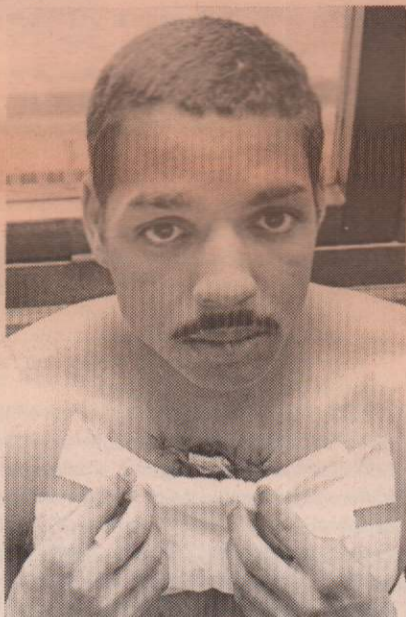
The start of the campaign coincided with the end of Kenneth Anderson's trial. He was shot moments before Phil by the same policeman, PC Frankland. Like Phil, Kenny was going to claim compensation from the police. After five weeks, the jury was out for a whole weekend, and still failed to return a verdict on any of the five 'rioting' charges that Kenny faced. Now a retrial may be sought by the Director of Public Prosecutions. For five weeks, no effort was spared to convict Kenneth. 30 prosecution witnesses had filed through the witness box. None of them had 'identified' Kenneth as a 'rioter' until his photograph appeared ten days after he was shot, in a newspaper report. All of them claimed in their statements that he had been wearing a navy-blue tee-shirt and camouflage army trousers. Yet it was some of these police witnesses such as Inspector Macdonald of the OSD - Liverpool's SPG - who had arranged for him to be taken to hospital. And the hospital record shows he was wearing a red polo-necked pullover and blue denim jeans - which were produced, covered in blood, in court.

But the CS shot wound in the groin was not the only injury Kenneth had. He also had no less than ten broken ribs. Witnesses testified that they had seen the wounded Kenny Anderson lying encircled by policemen who drew truncheons and one of whom dropped heavily on to Kenny with his knees. The reason the police gave for these broken ribs, backed by their pet doctor was - the need for heart massage to revive Kenny!

Both Kenneth and Phil were hit by shots directly fired at them. The police have all along denied that the CS gas cartridges were fired directly at crowds. The cartridges were clearly labelled and well known to be designed to fire at walls and are potentially lethal if fired into a crowd. FRFI has all along consistently challenged the Liverpool 8 police lies and frame-ups. Now in an important development the *New Statesman* has carefully researched the evidence and found that: the nature of Kenneth Anderson's and Phil Robins' injuries are consistent with cartridges hitting them directly; that Chief Constable Oxford's claim made to the Home Secretary and repeated by Whitelaw in Parliament that no shots were fired directly at people and that the injuries caused arose from ricochets, is not supported in any way by forensic evidence. On the contrary if shells had ricocheted off a

hard surface they would have fragmented and dispersed and could not have caused the compact wounds suffered. In Kenneth's case for example, the entry wound was two inches in diameter and the cartridge had then exploded gouging a hole four to five inches across. The wound contained 6 fragments - almost a whole cartridge. The *New Statesman* concludes:

'On present evidence, police officers fired cartridges directly at persons in a crowd. On the basis of the Chief Constable's report the Home Secretary misled the House of Commons and no further action has been taken within the Merseyside police force. If MPs and the local and national media allow nothing more to be said or done, it will quite simply be a disgrace.'



Quite. But we would add one further point. The Merseyside police have consistently attempted to cover up their dirty lies by framing, and imprisoning and thus preventing compensation claims being pursued by their victims. If MPs and other influential people now in possession of all the relevant evidence still do nothing it will be more than a disgrace - it will be a crime.

The Free Phil Robins campaign is determined to secure Phil's freedom. A victory for his campaign would completely undermine the attempt to frame Kenneth Anderson. It would be a major blow against the police frame-up system. FRFI urges you to support the campaign.

- Pass a motion of support for the campaign through your trade union or other organisation.
- Send to us for leaflets and petitions. Help us in our aim to get 10,000 signatures.
- Send us a donation - cheques payable to the Free Phil Robins Campaign.
- Support the activities of the campaign - every Saturday at 11am in Church Street and 2.30pm in the afternoon in Granby Street.

Send all donations and requests for information to Free Phil Robins Campaign PO Box 52, Liverpool L69 8AT

Robert Clough



May Day 2/Tooting 3

Support continues to grow for the May Day 2, arrested for chanting slogans on Ireland on a London May Day march, and the Tooting 3, arrested for making speeches on Ireland at a street meeting in Tooting Broadway on 15 May (see FRFI 20). So far 1500 people have signed the petition calling for the dropping of all charges against the five. Signatories include:

Ron Brown MP
Steve Bundred GLC
Lord Gifford
Doug Hoyle MP
Neil Kinnock MP
Ken Livingstone Leader GLC
Gerry MacLochlainn Irish POW
Bob Wright General Secretary AUEW

Signatures and money are being collected amongst Lucas workers in Bristol. A Sinn Fein member has collected 23 signatures and £6.25 from ACTT workers at the Kodak factory in Hemel Hempstead. A reader in Wolverhampton sent £30. A reader in Australia has sent \$20 (Australian) for the defence campaign.

On the streets the campaign has continued with two successful local marches in Tooting organised by South London Irish Solidarity Committee on 5 June and 19 June. The marches were supported by NLISC, FRFI, RCL, South London TOM and Workers Party. A public meeting, organised by North London Irish Solidarity Committee on 17 June attracted over 40 people. This campaigning will continue

NUJ Magazine branch
Reg Race MP
Revolutionary Communist League Britain
Dennis Skinner MP
Peter Tatchell Bermondsey Labour Party
Dafydd Elis Thomas MP
Dafydd Wigley MP

until the charges have either been dropped or defeated.

Police get in a tangle

As part of the defence campaign SLISC has been mounting pressure on local MP Tom Cox to intervene in defence of SLISC's right to hold street meetings. Cox wrote to the police. Their evasive replies aimed at fobbing him off have landed the Tooting police in a mess.

In a letter to Cox dated 12 May - three days before the Tooting arrests - Chief Superintendent R Swatman wrote:

'At this time meetings of the Committee [SLISC] have not been seen to cause policing problems and I am sure that what is nothing more than misunderstanding can be resolved.'

When the trial of the Tooting 3 takes place it will be interesting to hear the police explain how meetings which were causing no 'policing problems' could lead to three arrests. This is indeed 'misunderstanding'!

Magistrate thwarted

The Tooting 3 - Mark Sealey, Maxim Walker and Adrian Pyke - appeared at South West Magistrates Court on 11 June. What was supposed to be a preliminary hearing to set a date for the trial proper took a bizarre turn.

The Magistrate - Mrs Dawn Freeman - eager to get her hands on the Tooting 3 and dish out summary 'justice', suggested that the case be heard there and then despite the absence of any defence witnesses! This was thwarted by the defence solicitor. She exacted her revenge by rejecting, out of hand, an appeal for legal aid. The date set for the Tooting 3 case is 11 October at Wells Street Magistrates Court, London W1. The May Day 2 appears on the same court on 12/13 October.

Your support needed

The support so far has been encouraging but we need more - much more. 4 out of the 5 have already been refused legal aid so we need a lot of money to conduct our defence. We need your support for the pickets of Wells Street Court on 11/12/13 October 9.30am. We need your support to circulate the petition in support of the 5. Join the campaign now! Defend democratic rights! Defend the May Day 2/Tooting 3!

Information, petitions, leaflets from, and donations (cheques/POs payable to May Day 2/Tooting 3 Defence Campaign) to: May Day 2/Tooting 3 Defence Campaign, BM Box 4835, London, WC1N 3XX

Terry O'Halloran

POLICE ATTACK IN ST PAULS

On 31 January, back from church, Mrs Agatha Royal was enjoying the peace and quiet of a Sunday afternoon in her home in St Pauls Bristol, when a knock came at the door. A policeman asked to come in and then told her that two others were outside waiting to speak to her son David.

Mrs Royal continues the story:

Next thing I knew I heard a scuffling and David shouting. I went into the passage and saw David held by the scruff of his neck. I asked for their warrant and told them to get out. Barry [Detective Sergeant Barry] said 'I don't need a warrant. I can come in any time I want.' He hit David and I told him to leave him alone. 'Its nothing to f---g do with you' he said and he hit me in the stomach and cracked me over the eye. It was a walkytalky. I heard him say 'Black bastards. I've had enough of black people.'

David had been pushed to the ground near the stairs and he ran down to the basement kitchen. Barry pushed my head down and jumped over me. He rushed down after David. The passage was now so full of police you couldn't see nothing but uniforms.

My 13 year old daughter Patricia jumped out of a window shouting for help. Down in the basement were my other children Trevor (19) Devon (16) and Yvonne (17) and a friend called Paul. The police kicked off the kitchen door and dragged up the three boys.

I became hysterical: there was Trevor with his leg stuck in the gate and they were kicking him and wringing his neck. I shouted 'Murderers' at them.

Detective Sergeant Barry said we were all under arrest. 4 or 5 police had me held with my arms and legs stretched out wide. I had no shoes or tights. They didn't care who could see up my legs. They threw me like that into the van. I hit the edge and fell half out. My back was badly hurt on the edge of the van. Even now I can feel it. I've been going for physio ever since. Then Barry's foot comes in my stomach so hard that I wet myself. I've been back over and over to the doctor with the pains in my stomach since then. Barry hit Yvonne in the stomach too but didn't arrest her.

A crowd of neighbours had come running and some of them dragged Mrs Royal out of the van to safety. From all around people were rushing to help, outraged at the brutality of the police against these youngsters and their mother.

As a neighbour said 'Its the police that cause the riots. This sort of thing happens all the time. This town won't be

liveable in soon for black people.' They charged Mrs Royal when she took her children to court the next day. She found herself accused of assault on a policeman and actual bodily harm. Later they dropped the second charge so removing her right to a trial by jury - a common practice nowadays.

As for the youngsters, Devon, although only 16 was taken away in handcuffs. He, Trevor and Paul are up for assault and/or obstruction. David - the original object of the raid - was kept in for 2 days and told that if he 'co-operated' - ie acted as an informer - fingering his friends - the police would bring no charges. What they wanted to pin on him, or any other black youth for that matter, was a charge of attempted murder of PC Bennett (see FRFI 16). With no evidence and faced with his contempt for their offer of a deal, they finally charged him with possessing an offensive weapon. Their neighbour told FRFI 'They've been after David since he was 13. They know he won't take nothing from them. They can't frighten him so they're out to get him.' David was one of the St Pauls 13 in 1980 - all of whom were acquitted to the fury of the police.

Sheila Marston

STOP PRESS

At their trial, Mrs Royal and her son were found guilty and fined £350 and £300 respectively. The other two defendants were found guilty of obstruction. Mrs Royal defiant and determined to continue her fight said:

'I will not pay a penny, no way. I will go to prison first. They attacked me in my own home.'



● **'Greatest Unhung Villain'**

The police corruption inquiry Operation Countryman has frequently been derided in this column and for good reason, but, probably through no fault of its own, it has now produced some results. City of London Detective Chief Inspector Cuthbert is on trial at the Old Bailey for corruption. It is alleged (we are obliged to say) that he and Detective Sergeant J Goldbourn sold bail at £10,000 each to five men, all arrested after a robbery at the City branch of Williams & Glyn's bank. Also that they 'watered down' the evidence against the men, for the simple and sensible reason that police were involved in the robbery. But this is not even half the story. The following are extracts from a tape, played in court, of a conversation in 1978 between Cuthbert and Chief Superintendent Simmonds, who carried a concealed microphone.

Cuthbert began by complaining that the No. 3 officer in the City force, Commander Hugh Moore, was trying to make him the 'patsy' for Operation Countryman: 'They're putting me in as the bad man because I did the business' said Cuthbert, but Moore was the real villain and the man behind the bribes, and the robberies. 'Hughie did the Daily Express job, Governor, and I know what Hughie copped on the Daily Express job off Chadwick.' Questioned by Simmonds, Cuthbert said that two more junior officers, McKay and Goldbourn, had handled the money, totalling £20,000. One sergeant had received £300. 'That was his share out of the twenty grand and he got the hump with it, thought it was a liberty.'

Talking about corruption on the force Cuthbert said, 'It's happened in the Met. It's happened in the City. It has happened for years... You will never stop it.' After one bank robbery 'Ginger' Dixon, the head of Scotland Yard's robbery squad, and all his men had taken money in return for helping three of the men arrested. Corruption had been accepted practice, 'Don't pretend. I used to bung Roy Yorke and Jim Marshall and it used to go up the fucking top of the tree, used to go up to ACs (Assistant Commissioners).'

Cuthbert returned to the subject of Commander Moore. 'Hughie has run Bishopsgate and half the City Police for years and years... He's been the greatest unhung villain ever since... a greedy bastard.'

● **Wrong Bag**

'COPS BOOB IN SHOTGUN MIX-UP' was the headline that screamed across the *Lewisham Mercury* on June 17. This 'boob' was not all it seemed.

Harry MacKenny, son of London gangster 'Big H' MacKenny was standing outside his sister's home when a carload of Catford plain clothes police drew up. They shouted 'here's your stuff Harry' and threw him a sack. When he opened it, Harry found a shotgun, ammunition, and a cashbox with the lid forced open. Now hold on a minute, thought Harry, this doesn't happen in Z-Cars. And if the sack had had 'frame-up' stencilled on the side he couldn't have run any faster to Catford police station to hand in that shotgun.

An inquiry followed when Harry made a complaint, and the verdict was that the CID men involved had innocently handed him the wrong parcel which 'should have gone to someone else' (who, we wonder?).

NOTES and COMMENTS.

■ **Elections in Mauritius**

The overwhelming victory of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM) in the 12 June elections on the island of Mauritius has raised questions about the future of the US military base on Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean. The Mauritius islands, which have been dominated by the Portuguese, Dutch, French and finally the British, gained independence in 1968. Since then the island and its dependency of Rodrigues, have been governed by the island's pro-imperialist Labour Party, which was one of the supporters of the racist South African government in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

With inflation running at 50%, 70,000 of the island's 320,000 workforce unemployed and foreign debts of over £200 million, the MMM came to power promising to nationalise some of the island's sugar estates, which earn Mauritius 2/3 of its foreign currency. They also want to extend the welfare state and reduce unemployment. The immediate threat to US imperialism comes from the wish of the MMM to regain the island of Diego Garcia which was taken from Mauritius by the British in a deal which gave Mauritius independence in 1968.

Diego Garcia once had a population of 1400 who were forcibly deported to Mauritius by the British. The island was then leased to the US, who have built a military base which plays an important role as a supply base for the Rapid Deployment Force. The MMM, since its foundation in 1969, has always seen Diego Garcia as a part of Mauritius where the islanders have a right to live. One of the leaders of the MMM has stated that 'we consider Diego Garcia as our territory, which has been stolen from us. We will do everything to recover it.'

The US government has tried to cover up its role by pointing out that they only lease the island from Britain. The British government has no intention of granting the democratic wishes of the people of Mauritius or the 1400 Diego Garcia refugees. It has stated that it will talk to the new government but not on the issue of Diego Garcia. British communists fully support the demands of the MMM for the immediate withdrawal of US and British imperialism from Diego Garcia.

Allan James

■ **Nalگو backs Zionists**

At the recent conference of the public employees union, NALGO, a delegate asked why the NALGO leadership were supporting the racist Israeli trade union Histradut - a pillar of the Zionist state - which did nothing to defend the rights of the oppressed Palestinians in Israel. Palestinian workers are viciously exploited by the Zionists, and live in conditions similar to black migrant workers in South Africa. Edward Alderson replied for the Executive Committee that the leadership were going to show their solidarity with Histradut by sending a delegation to Israel (while its members are murdering Palestinians) and that Histradut was a 'version of the TUC'. All the NALGO propaganda about its fighting for equal rights for black people, is exposed as phony opportunist hogwash by this blatant support for Zionism.

Steven Palmer

■ **British nuclear plans**

Recently released government documents for 1946 contain plans for a nuclear and biological attack on the Soviet Union. A report by the British Chiefs of Staff Joint Technical Warfare Committee argued 'The tremendous destructive power of the atomic bomb and the devastating effects against live targets expected from bio-

logical weapons... lead us to infer that the most profitable objects of attack by the new weapons will normally be concentrations of population, centres of distribution and communication'.

The plans include a list of Soviet cities, each with a population of 100,000 which were to be subjected to atomic bombings from bases in Cyprus and India, then British colonies. Some 58 cities, accounting for more than three quarters of the urban population, were targeted for destruction.

These plans to attack the Soviet Union, which had lost 20 million people in the war against fascist Germany, were drawn up before the USSR had the atom bomb. So much for the so-called 'Soviet threat'.

It should be remembered that these plans were drawn up by the 1945 Labour Government. The last Labour government secretly spent £1bn modernising British nuclear weapons. Today the same Labour Party hypocritically pretends to support nuclear disarmament. But the facts of what Labour had done to support the imperialist nuclear arms build-up against the Soviet Union speak louder than a million windy resolutions passed by Labour Party conferences.

A Greene

■ **Police kill SAS man**

The North Yorkshire village of Malton was the scene of an intensive 1000-strong Police, Army and Airforce manhunt for Barry Prudom, one time member of the Territorial Army (SAS) Regiment. They have now shot him. Prudom, who was trained by the SAS, is alleged to have murdered a local engineer and wounded his wife. To escape police capture, he used all his SAS skills and shot dead 2 policemen and wounded another. The Chief Constable of North Yorkshire police force, Mr Kenneth Henshaw, warned 'the entire nation to be on guard' and advised everyone not to open their doors to strangers through fear of someone variously described as 'ruthless', 'madman', 'killer' etc. The police terrorised whole villages on orders of 'shoot to kill' in the search for someone trained to be a 'madman' - by the British government!

We have always pointed out that the SAS are nothing but trained killers. This truth is now clear. The state claims that Barry Prudom failed the SAS entry tests and was never an SAS member. If this man was a substandard SAS man what are the others like, one might well ask. The SAS are notorious for their murderous ability demonstrated in Ireland, the Iranian embassy siege and the Malvinas. And the police are using this case to demand that more of their number are trained in the use of arms!

Chris Fraser

■ **British Imperialism and Revolution in the Gambia - A Tribute to a Heroic People**

I find it fitting to commemorate in FRFI, the first anniversary of the glorious popular uprising which took place in the Gambia. It could not be otherwise, because FRFI is the only revolutionary paper in Britain which justifiably stands in total opposition to World Imperialism, which as Lenin aptly says 'converts a handful of very rich nations into eternal parasites on the body of mankind'. FRFI has therefore the great honour of serving as the gate through which the working class masses in imperialist countries and Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries are passing, in order to extend their international solidarity to oppressed and exploited peoples of the world.

31 July 1981 will be forever remembered and highly honoured in the annals of history of the African revolutionary movement. On this historic occasion the gallant people

of the Gambia firmly resolved to tear off the mask of Westminster democratic sanctity behind which the tyrannical regime of the most loyal servant of British Imperialism, Sir President D Jawara, wields power by means of a venal corrupt administration. It was the first heroic attempt by the smallest African country (4000 sq miles surrounded on three sides by Senegal in West Africa, and population of over half a million) to cast off the yoke of neo-colonialism in order to create a just society. To this end the Gambian working class people overthrew Jawara and declared to the World their singular desire to establish their dictatorship of the proletariat under the great banner of Marxism-Leninism.

This popular uprising must be seen as a serious and necessary consequence of worsening conditions of social life in the Gambia. It was not triggered off by 'foreign interference' as alleged by bourgeois propaganda. To liberate themselves from British neo-colonialist overlordship and all the parasites who have been feeding at their expense, the people of the Gambia since colonial days have waged a protracted struggle that culminated, even though temporarily, in victorious revolution which released them from the claws of British imperialism and its domestic collaborators.

What has happened to that gigantic popular revolution? British imperialism swallowed it. Following the overthrow of the Jawara's venal government while he was in London to demonstrate his loyalty to British ruling classes at Prince Charles' wedding, Britain acting for the benefit of the Anglo-French imperialist bourgeoisie used the Senegalese army led by the notorious SAS to occupy the Gambia and restore British imperialism's foothold there. They propped up the old lackeys whom the Gambian masses had uprooted and thrown out, to keep them in maximum subjection, the greatest poverty and ignorance.

Hence the enforced confederation which gives the Gambia and Senegal the name Senegambia is nothing but a new era of joint enslavement in West Africa in which a desperate and despotic group of Anglo-French imperialist puppets have come together to put the rope of economic and political enslavement around the necks of our peoples in those countries. Worst for the Gambia the entire population is placed under the hegemonic authority of Senegal which has proclaimed itself the cultural 'workshop' of Africa, and the policeman of imperialist interests. This is how the people's revolution in the Gambia was put down by British imperialism and neo-colony of Senegal with unheard of cruelty.

Is this a permanent defeat then of the Gambian working people? The answer is unequivocally NO. The roar of the popular uprising and the thunder they proclaimed during their short lived revolution will never be choked. It has awakened them under the banner of Marxism Leninism which unites them in unbreakable union with the revolutionary people throughout the world for a thorough destruction of imperialism and all its forms of oppression and exploitation.

For a while Sir Jawara can cling to power with the aid of British imperialism and Senegal despite the fact that his so-called Peoples Progressive Party has no social base in the Gambia because the people have long discredited it. This much is an objective truth which is shaking Jawara and therefore justifies the best of our hope for the heroic and eventually triumphant struggle of the Gambian masses.

- Long Live the proletarian struggle in the Gambia!
- Victory to the struggle of the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world!
- Down with imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism!

L. Gore

■ **Oppressed lead peace movement in USA**

The largest ever demonstration in the history of the United States was seen on 12 June in New York City. Over 800,000 people marched for disarmament and for meeting human needs. Led by three banners with the slogans 'Freeze the arms race!', 'Abolish nuclear weapons!' and 'Fund human needs!' there was, as can be imagined, a motley assortment of individuals and groups.

The vast and ever-gathering crowd was addressed by a number of speakers including Johnstone Makatini of the African National Congress, South Africa, Rubin Zamora of the Democratic Revolutionary Front of El Salvador and Msgr Bruce Kent of Britain's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Most significant was the presence of contingents representing black and other oppressed people within and without the USA.

Like the British Nuclear Disarmament Movement, the American Peace Campaign has for decades been a largely white middle-class concern. In Britain we have just seen the disgraceful spectacle of 250,000 nuclear disarmers marching in London without a word said about the Imperialist British wars being fought in the Falklands-Malvinas and in the North of Ireland. Indeed, the organisers of the British CND decided that the rally should not concern itself with Britain's war of colonial re-possession being fought at that time for a British colony 8,000 miles away. Above all, no mention should be made about the brutal twelve year war being waged against self-determination for the Irish people.

A similar pattern of middle-class, 'whites only' support for Peace has at last been broken in the USA. This only came about after stiff resistance from the old leadership who have tried to keep the focus narrowed to nuclear weapons so as not to alienate moderate (white) Americans.

In the words of Bob Brown of the All African People's Revolutionary Party, 'Issues debated recently in the disarmament movement centre on white moderate centrists who are allies of the Democrats to keep the demonstration from becoming too militant, to make it tame, to keep it from condemning US foreign and domestic policy.'

However, the Third World and Progressive People's Coalition (TWPPC) of the 12 June disarmament rally was formed to press forward anti-imperialist demands; 'to educate and mobilise our people on the issues of nuclear disarmament, the military build-up, intervention in the third world countries, and the racist oppression of third world people in the US and to address these unheard concerns in the disarmament movement'.

The Rev Ben Chavis of the National Black Independent Political Party, links the disarmament with the anti-imperialist struggle in this way. 'It is in the interest of the national liberation struggles that the imperialist powers be stripped of their nuclear power... The peace movement has to be held accountable to third world people, because peace will not be meaningfully achieved without self-determination.'

In addition to international solidarity with those in struggle against American and British imperialism, the Third World and Progressive People's Coalition raised centrally the racist attack within the USA itself. They state, 'We are building not just for June 12 but for a broader movement to link the US military build-up with ending the oppression and exploitation of all peoples. We demand that human needs, especially in hardest hit Black, Latino, Asian and Native American communities be met, no military budgets.' Black unemployment in the USA is 20%, twice the national average. Black youth unemployment is 46%.

In Britain it is about time that the nuclear disarmament movement realised that the desire to live in peace and plenty will be condemned in the eyes of all the oppressed people in the world unless it is transformed into a real movement against racism and imperialist aggression. Freedom from war does not end with a white skin or on the borders of Europe. Until it is achieved for all can be won for no one.

■ Susan Davidson

THE FIGHT AGAINST 'CRIMINALISATION'

As part of its 'criminalisation' strategy the Labour government had ended Special Category status for Irish political prisoners. Those political prisoners convicted of offences after 1 March 1976 would no longer be placed in the compound-type prisons together with their comrades, but would serve their sentences in the cells of the H-Blocks. In the compounds political prisoners through their leaders direct a great deal of the day-to-day activities in the prison. They wear their own clothes, organise educational and recreational activities, receive extra visits etc and are segregated according to their political organisations. There are over 150 political prisoners in the compounds today. In the compounds the political character of the offences for which those inside have been detained is clearly acknowledged.

In the H-Blocks the prisoners had to wear prison clothes, do prison work, and their day-to-day activities were under the control of the prison authorities. Political prisoners who had been arrested under *special* emergency laws, tortured in *special* built interrogation centres, tried in *special* non-jury courts under *special* rules of evidence were no longer to be granted *Special* Category status for the duration of their prison sentences. In the H-Blocks the political status of the political prisoners was to be denied.

THE BLANKET PROTEST

After the publication of the Gardiner Report (see FRFI 18) the ending of Special Category status was discussed during the truce 'negotiations' between the IRA and British government representatives in 1975 and early 1976. The British government offered to increase remission from one-third to one-half as a 'concession' to make the ending of Special Category status more acceptable. The Provisional IRA representatives in rejecting this warned that any attempt to remove Special Category status would be resisted by all means possible including the shooting of prison officers.

The British government went ahead. In November 1975 it announced the ending of Special Category status from 1 March 1976. On 25 January 1976 remission for all prisoners was increased to one-half. The Republican Movement responded. A letter from a Republican Prisoner-of-War on remand at Crumlin Road Gaol said:

'Rees will find it easier to walk on water than he will break our morale by trying to convince people that the liberation struggle is not a political war. How does he propose to coerce us into wearing criminal overalls? He hasn't clarified that point yet. I can state now, and I am talking on behalf of every remand prisoner here, that the only way Rees will get prison garb on my back is to nail it on.'

A statement from the Belfast Brigade IRA, reported in *Republican News* 20 March 1976, announced that 'members of the British Prison Service' were now to be regarded as legitimate targets for IRA active service units. A policy statement from political prisoners in the compounds at Long Kesh followed a few days later. It announced that all negotiations within the prison on Special Category status were at an end and that Republican prisoners would not engage in any institutional schemes under the control of the prison administration. IRA volunteers were instructed not to wear any clothing provided by the prison service. They would only respond to the commands and directives of their superior officers, regardless of the consequences. In approving and supporting the policy statement of the Belfast Brigade IRA the prisoners made it clear:

'We are prepared to die for the right to retain political status. Those who try to take it away must be fully prepared to pay the same price'.



The Labour government's attempt to remove political legitimacy from the revolutionary national struggle to free Ireland from British rule had led to the systematic torture of 'suspects' in the Six Counties of Ireland from 1976-1979. The torture and brutalisation of political prisoners however did not end with the 'confessions' forced out of prisoners in the interrogation centres. It continued in the specially built cellular prisons – the H-Blocks.

In April 1976 two prison officers were shot dead.

The Belfast Brigade IRA statement had referred to prison officers as 'mercenaries'. There is little doubt that huge 'bounties' are paid to them to serve in the gaols and prison camps of occupied Ireland. *Republican News* reported at the time (1976) that some prison officers could earn over £200 in a normal week. By 1980 a prison officer, ordinary class, was earning £8,500 plus overtime, a senior officer £13,000, a prison Governor £16,000, plus substantial fringe benefits such as holidays, canteen service, pensions and life insurance benefits. Average pay is well over £10,000.

There are no qualifications for becoming a prison officer in the Six Counties unless basic literacy is seen as one. Training is minimal. After four to six weeks recruits come into contact with prisoners directly. A further period of training of about six weeks 'on the job' then takes place. Prison officers are mainly recruited from the existing 'security forces' and are ex-British Army, UDR and RUC. Those joining without any background in the 'security forces' are almost certainly from the loyalist population. The increase in recruitment of prison officers over the years closely reflects the policy of British imperialism to put larger and larger numbers from the nationalist minority behind prison bars. In 1969 the total number of prison officers in the Six Counties was 292, in 1974 it was 1,124, by 1978 it had risen to 2,339 and in 1980 it was 2,996, over ten times the 1969 total. 'Mercenaries' is indeed an apt label for the well paid thugs working in British gaols and prison camps in the service of British imperialism's war effort against the Irish people in the Six Counties of Ireland.

On 14 September 1976 18 year old Kieran Nugent became the first political prisoner to be denied Special Category status. He had been sentenced to three years imprisonment for hijacking a van and had pledged that the British would have to nail the uniform to his back if an attempt was made to criminalise him after he had been sentenced. In an interview given to *Hands Off Ireland* soon after his release in May 1979 he described how the blanket protest began:

'It all started when I went into the reception and the screw asked me "what size clothes do you

take?'. I refused to answer. I said "I'm not wearing your gear". He said "You can't do this here" – he was astonished. So he went to get the Principal Officer. I was manhandled a bit and then he put the prison clothes in a brown bag and said "Right, carry it". I refused to lift it so he had to carry it himself. They drove us up to H-Block. When we arrived in the H-Block there were about nine or ten screws there. This was in the main administration part of H-Block. They stood me against the wall and punched me about a bit, and then grabbed me and ran me about twenty or thirty yards into one of the cells and told me to put the uniform on. I said "No, I'm not putting that gear on". So they said "Right, take your own clothes off". I refused, so then they jumped on me and forcibly removed my clothes, and held me down and punched me about. One of them then threw a blanket at me – so in fact he started the protest.'

Immediately the screws tried to break him. During the day he was taken out of the cell with a bed and mattress in it and from 7.30am until 8pm at night he was placed in a completely empty cell. If he tried to sit on the floor in the empty cell two screws would come in and force him to stand up. The food he was given was very bad – tiny amounts, cold and often inedible. At first he was allowed to go outside for exercise with only the blanket on and walk around for about an hour in the mornings. He said he did this in spite of the cold, rainy weather because two screws had to go out with him and he knew they hated it. But after about six to eight weeks this was stopped when the screws told him 'we won't exercise you until you wear prison uniform'.

As more prisoners joined the blanket protest the prison authorities stepped up their harassment. An order came from them in November 1976 forbidding political prisoners on protest to wear a blanket outside their cells. It took the evasive form of a rule not allowing prisoners 'to remove bedding from their cells'. Young prisoners were particularly selected for humiliation by the prison authorities. Older prisoners had food brought to them and they washed in their cells. They did not go out to the toilet but used a pot in their cells. However young

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prisoners held in H-Block 2, in the 18 year old group, were compelled to go to the canteen naked to collect their food in front of non-protesting prisoners. They also had to go to the toilet and wash-house naked, being mocked, abused and often assaulted by perverted sadistic screws. All prisoners were severely beaten as brutal prison warders tried to force them to accept prison clothes and coerce them to conform to 'criminal' status. The beatings usually began in the H-Block administration area when the political prisoners refused to wear prison uniform. It continued in the cells. Failure to say 'Sir' to a prison officer was the excuse for particularly vicious beatings. Many injuries were also inflicted on prisoners during often repeated sadistic and degrading internal body searches carried out whilst prisoners were forcibly held naked, face downwards across a table.

At fortnightly intervals political prisoners 'on the blanket' were charged with 'refusing to cooperate...'. For this 'hearing' the prisoner was forcibly brought to his feet by several screws and made to stand up in front of the prison Governor. Refusal to address him as 'Sir' resulted in blows to the face and body. The prisoner was automatically sentenced to 14 days loss of remission and loss of all privileges. As further punishment their bedding was removed out of their cells during the day for three days. A day never passed in the H-Blocks without someone being sent to the punishment block – P-Block – on a very petty or false charge. P-Block consisted of 28 punishment cells where the men were put 'on the boards' with no bedding at all during the day. These cells were bare except for a wooden board (a bed), a concrete block to sit on and a concrete slab cemented in the wall to serve as a table. These 'concrete tombs' could not be seen out of, were heated by a small pipe and were totally sound-proofed. The prisoner was placed on a starvation diet of two rounds of dry bread and a mug of black tea for breakfast, 'lunch' of potatoes and watery soup and 'tea' the same as breakfast. The prisoners with only a blanket round them had to continually exercise to keep warm. Total silence was maintained and frequent beatings were handed out to the men by 3 or 4 screws invading the cell. The conditions and beatings were so bad that some men went on hunger and thirst strike in protest against them. Prisoners were kept in the punishment block anything from six to 30 days.

All this harassment and brutality did not break the blanket protest. In October 1976 another prison officer was shot dead and the women political prisoners in Armagh Prison began a no-work protest against the withdrawal of political status. All women prisoners in the Six Counties are allowed to wear their own clothes. By May 1977 there were nearly 80 political prisoners 'on the blanket' in the H-Blocks. At this time they were all moved from H-Blocks 1 and 2 to H-Block 5. There much less isolated from each other, they were able to reorganise and set up their own staff structure. Each wing had an officer-in-charge (O/C) and the men in that wing took their orders from him and did what he told them to do. There was a Battalion O/C – a Block O/C – who controlled the whole block. The resistance of the men was considerably strengthened. On 14 September 1977, one year after the protest began, a statement from the IRA pledged 'continual support' for the 197 comrades on protest – the vast majority 'on the blanket' in the H-Blocks, the eight shorter-term and remand prisoners 'on the blanket' in Crumlin Road Gaol and the 13 women on the no-work protest in Armagh Prison. By March 1978, 18 months after the protest started there were nearly 300 men 'on the blanket' and 24 women on protest in Armagh Prison. The British authorities were no longer issuing weekly figures of those prisoners 'refusing to obey prison rules'. To have done so would have

continued overleaf

posed the growing failure of the 'criminalisation' strategy.

In the first phase of the 'blanket' protest political prisoners in the H-Blocks had been subjected to barbaric and inhumane conditions for refusing to accept criminal status. The list of outrages imposed by the British government on the prisoners had led to the H-Blocks being rightly called 'Britain's concrete monument of shame'.

★ No clothes: Only a blanket to clutch around the body with bare feet on concrete floor. ★ No association or recreation: Either kept in solitary confinement or two-to-a-cell built for one; these men left their cells for only 45 minutes per week to go to the toilet. Many refused to go because of humiliating searches. ★ No exercise period: Those who did physical exercises in their cells were exhausted very quickly due to lack of proper food, lack of fresh air, lack of normal exercise. ★ No proper food: No food parcels allowed; all food was served cold and in small revolting portions. ★ No cigarettes, no newspapers, no books, no TV, no radio, no pens or writing material, no games: Only religious magazines were allowed, plus the secular ones. Religious magazines were stopped after men had been forced to use the pages for sanitary purposes. Prisoners were only allowed three sheets of toilet paper a day and this ration was often reduced by sadistic screws. ★ No proper medical treatment: Every man suffered a variety of muscular aches, persistent colds, skin rashes and dandruff, and also eyesight complaints due to the bright neon lights continuously glaring on the white cell walls. ★ No doctor visits: To see a doctor you had to wear prison uniform. ★ No visits: To have a visit a political prisoner had to wear prison uniform. He was subjected to degrading and brutal body searches both before and after visits. These conditions led to many prisoners refusing to take visits. ★ No protection: Political prisoners were regularly beaten with batons and boots by 'prison officers'. ★ No bedding for three days: Every fortnight their bedding was removed from their cells during the day for three days and the men were sentenced to three days loss of remission. ★ Punishment Block: Long spells in punishment cells on trivial and false charges. Prisoners were totally isolated in silence in punishment cells on starvation diets. They were regularly assaulted by screws while in punishment cells.

In March 1978 the men in the H-Blocks were forced to escalate their protest. Prisoners, at this time, were being sent to punishment blocks to undergo the savage conditions and brutal beatings for the most trivial thing. Harassment by the warders was intensifying. Once a week political prisoners were allowed a shower for five minutes. When they went out of their cells to walk the few feet to and from the showers they were put up against the wall and searched. During this process they were kicked and assaulted. Getting permission to go down a corridor to the toilet became a 'privilege' which was regularly withdrawn as a form of punishment and harassment. As a direct result of this increased harassment the prisoners refused to leave their cells. The warders then brought stinking plastic bowls with about half an inch of water in them for washing. The prisoners refused to use them. They now refused to brush and mop out their cells.

Stopping out of faeces and urine in the cells was not done by the prisoners but by the warders. The routine was that a trolley came round with the food for the prisoners' meals, followed by another for their slops. The food was given to the prisoners and then the slops were poured into a large plastic bin. However now the screws started returning the prisoners' pots half full, often kicking them over the floors. In many cases they refused to allow the men to slop out for a period of days. The cells were soon in a disgusting state with faeces and urine all over the floor, mattresses and blankets. The prisoners then decided to throw the slops out of the windows in an attempt to save their mattresses and blankets from being soaked. But the screws 'dressed up like spacemen with bloody big gloves' started throwing it all back through the windows again. The prisoners were left with no alternative but to put it on the walls. It was either that or on the floor, their beds and blankets. This was the origin of the so-called 'dirt strike'. Far from being 'self-inflicted' as the British propaganda machine claimed, it was forced on the political prisoners by perverted, sadistic screws who had the full backing of the British government. It was aimed at breaking the prisoners' protest, and forcing them to accept criminal status. It totally failed.

The conditions in the H-Blocks rapidly deteriorated. Maggots infested the cells and prisoners would wake up with them in their hair, nose and ears. Skin and eye infections, dysentery and diarrhoea became widespread among the political prisoners. To add to this torture the sadistic screws would turn the heat fully on in the middle of summer and turn it down and sometimes completely off in the bitter cold of winter. Cardinal O'Fiaich visited the H-Blocks in July 1978 and issued a statement on the atrocious conditions he found there.

'Having spent the whole of Sunday in the prison I was shocked by the inhuman conditions prevailing in the H-Blocks 3, 4 and 5, where over 300 prisoners are incarcerated. One would hardly allow an animal to remain in such conditions, let alone a human being. The nearest to it I have seen was the spectacle of hundreds of homeless people living in the sewer pipes in the slums of Calcutta. The stench and filth in some of the cells, with the remains of rotten food and human excreta scattered round the walls, was almost unbearable. In two of them I was unable to speak for fear of vomiting...

The fact that a man refuses to wear prison uniform or to do prison work should not entail the loss of physical exercise, association with his fellow prisoners or contact with the outside world. These are basic human needs for physical and mental health, not privileges to be granted or withheld as rewards or punishments. To deprive anyone of them over a long period - irrespective of what led to the deprivation in the first place - is surely a grave injustice and cannot be justified in any circumstances.'

The 'inhuman conditions' existing in the H-Blocks, conditions which could not be justified 'in any circumstances', were being inflicted on the political prisoners by a British Labour government. Yet even after the publicity generated by Cardinal O'Fiaich's statement the brutality in the H-Blocks not only continued but reached new extremes. The men were subjected to painful drenchings with high-powered water hoses being turned upon them in their cells. They suffered near-suffocation from forcible baths of boiling hot or freezing cold water. And the 'blanket men's' haggard bodies were further cut and bruised when they were forcibly dragged from their cells, scrubbed with deck scrubbers, and had their faces forcibly shaved and their hair forcibly cropped. This torture of political prisoners was to go on for more than four years. There appeared to be no limit to the depths of depravity and barbarity to which the British Labour government was prepared to sink in their treatment of naked defenceless prisoners in order to achieve British imperialism's political objective of 'criminalising' Irish Republicanism.

However they would not break the protest. Cardinal O'Fiaich in his statement noted with surprise the high morale of the prisoners.

'In isolation and perpetual boredom they maintain their sanity by studying Irish. It was an indication of the triumph of the human spirit over adverse material surroundings to notice Irish words, phrases and songs being shouted from cell to cell and then written in each cell wall with the remnants of toothpaste tubes.'

The prisoners not only ran Gaelic classes but organised concerts, quizzes, political discussions on republicanism and socialism - all this carried out by shouting through quarter-inch gaps between the walls and their cell doors. News of IRA successes, or street protests passed round the prison also helped to keep up their morale. By early 1979 the first political prisoners were being released from the H-Blocks having served their sentences and having remained unbroken by the regime, more than ever sure of the justice and ultimate victory of their cause.

THE 'PEACE PEOPLE'

The attempt to isolate the IRA and undermine its support in the nationalist minority was a primary concern of the British government. Just before Mason arrived in the Six Counties a tragic event occurred which he and his propagandists believed they could exploit to drive support away from the IRA. They were aided and abetted in this task by the British media which uncritically reproduced the lies put out by the British government and army propaganda machine.

On 10 August 1976 in Andersonstown, West Belfast, the British army fired on a car driven by IRA

volunteer Danny Lennon. Danny Lennon died instantly. The car went out of control and ploughed into a crowd of civilians killing three children and injuring their mother Mrs Maguire. As Danny Lennon's companion climbed from the car he was hit three times by shots fired by British soldiers - despite the fact he was directly in front of the injured Maguire family. The army, instead of immediately calling an ambulance, hauled Danny Lennon's body from the car and having searched it seized a dismantled Armalite rifle from the back seat. The ambulance only arrived after 25 minutes.

The army claimed that shots had been fired from the car and they themselves had fired only in response to this. However it was the *Irish Times* (14 August 1976) which revealed that the Armalite in the car was dismantled and therefore no shots could have been fired from the car. Lennon was deliberately shot dead and the Army was responsible for his death and that of the Maguire children. Nonetheless this was the incident which gave rise to the formation of the so-called 'Peace People' and led to a number of quite large marches for 'peace' throughout the Six Counties.

This was not the spontaneous movement many made it out to be. Many of its supporters were involved with the middle-class Andersonstown-based Women Together movement which existed before the tragic deaths of the Maguire children. It also immediately received organised support from the Official IRA, the SDLP and the Catholic clergy - all concerned to drive support away from the Provisional IRA. The media turned the leaders of the movement - Mairead Corrigan, an aunt of the Maguire children, Betty Williams and a Belfast journalist, Ciaran McKeown - into well known figures. They were interviewed seventeen times on Northern Ireland BBC in the first three months of the 'Peace People's' existence. However all this propaganda was in vain. While the 'Peace People' were able for a short period to exploit a deeply felt yearning for peace in the Six Counties, the day-to-day realities of British terror directed at the nationalist minority very quickly led to the collapse of this so-called 'peace movement'.

The decline in fact began only four days after the Maguire children died. At 11.45am on 14 August 1976 12 year-old Majella O'Hare was killed by a paratrooper's bullet while on her way to confession in South Armagh. It was a straightforward murder. At 12.15pm the Army issued a press statement saying that gunmen had opened fire on an army patrol and a 12-year-old girl had been hit; the army patrol had not returned fire. Betty Williams immediately denounced the IRA using the Army account of the shooting to call for support for 'peace marches'. However, the fact that there were too many witnesses to the murder, including Majella's father, destroyed the Army's attempt to create a new 'victim' for the 'Peace People' to exploit. At 2pm the Army issued its second statement saying that a gunman had opened fire on the army patrol and it was 'believed' that it may have returned fire. At 3.30pm the Army issued a third statement admitting it had fired. Finally a soldier was charged with manslaughter (acquitted 2 May 1977). No one had in fact fired on the army patrol.

The 'Peace People' failed to attend the 2,000 strong protest march that followed Majella's death. Catholic anger increased when Majella's death received very little press coverage compared with the deaths of the Maguire children. And the coverage there was repeated the lies put out by army press officers.

On 4 October 13-year-old Brian Stewart was shot in the face by a plastic bullet in the Turf Lodge area of Belfast. He died on 10 October. Press coverage was again minimal and was influenced by army press statements. The army tried to make out that Brian had been 'a leading stone-thrower' in a riot - in fact there was no rioting in the area at the time. Brian Stewart's mother Kathleen was bitterly angry at the army lies. She was bitter, too, that the 'Peace People' had not sent the customary mass card after his death. Kathleen Stewart had attended some of the early 'peace marches'. She never did again. When Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams arrived unannounced at a meeting in Turf Lodge called to protest at Brian's death, they were attacked by women enraged at their 'low profile' on British army violence.

Sinn Fein finally challenged the 'Peace People' by calling a 'Peace with Justice' march, to coincide with one planned by the 'Peace People' for 23 October 1976 in the Falls Road area of Belfast. Ciaran McKeown for the 'Peace People' boasted 'we will have 30,000 marching on our side, we will outnumber the Provisionals at least 10 to 1'. He



Turf Lodge women's blanket vigil for the H-Block men

was to regret these words. While a massive crowd of 10,000 from the Republican areas of Belfast marched behind the Sinn Fein 'Peace with Justice' banner, the 'Peace People' could muster only 5-6,000 from many parts of the country. The myth of the 'Peace People' had been very easily exploded.

The 'Peace People' claimed that their aim was to unite the community on a non-sectarian basis. But a Catholic-Protestant mass movement for peace is impossible as long as it accepts British imperialism's presence in the Six Counties of Ireland. The nationalist section of the working class cannot and will not support a movement which supports the role of the British army and the RUC in the Six Counties. The Loyalists will not support a movement which does not support the British army and the RUC. Their loyalist supporters were horrified after Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams attempted to win back lost ground with the nationalist minority by attending the Turf Lodge meeting to protest at Brian Stewart's murder by the British army; and by their subsequent statement that army activities in areas like Turf Lodge were provocative and drove people into sympathy with the IRA. They were forced to appease their loyalist supporters by insisting they did support the 'security forces' merely deploring their 'occasional' breaches of law. A movement for peace can only be built on an anti-imperialist basis. Anything short of this, as the 'Peace People' demonstrated in practice, means ending up on the side of British imperialism.

After this the 'Peace People' rapidly lost support in the Six Counties. Their popularity rose only overseas. They were kept alive by the media interest alone. In Britain in November 1976 they were allowed to hold a rally in Trafalgar Square - the first time a demonstration on Northern Ireland had been allowed there for four years. They were supporting British imperialism's interests after all. They collected vast sums of money, estimated at over £250,000 in 2 years, from multinational firms and other imperialist institutions in Europe. In 1977 they met the Queen on her yacht during the Jubilee visit to the Six Counties. In the same year Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize of £80,000. However by the end of 1979 the 'Peace People' had little money left and their leadership had fallen out. Ciaran McKeown was quoted as saying 'The Nobel prize damaged our credibility... And the fact that Betty and Mairead kept the money made it even worse'. The 'Peace People' achieved nothing in the Six Counties. Their leaders had momentarily achieved international 'fame' and two of them, a little fortune.

THE LOYALIST STRIKE MAY 1977

In January 1977 Mason had sanctioned an agreement whereby the prime responsibility for security had shifted over to the RUC. Over the next few months Mason became increasingly confident that the 'security forces' were winning. Provisional IRA activity was low in this period. The 'conveyor belt' process, the reorganisation of RUC intelligence gathering procedures, and the torturing of suspects to force 'confessions' and gain intelligence had damaged the operational capacity of the IRA. As a result at the time of the Loyalist Strike the IRA were about to embark on a major reorganisation to establish the present 'cell' structure - a structure much less vulnerable to RUC/British army intelligence.

A loyalist coalition, the United Unionist Action Council (UUAC), led by Ian Paisley and backed by the main loyalist paramilitary organisations, however, was not at all satisfied with the activity of the 'security forces'. Mason's



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from a command post on board, and made sure that journalists knew of it by telephoning them individually' (*Sunday Times*).

Security was massive. There were hundreds of dawn raids, as repression was stepped up in nationalist areas in the week before the visit. 33,000 'security forces' were mobilised as West Belfast was combed and a submarine and two destroyers protected the royal yacht in Belfast Lough. All this so the Queen could visit a few acres of Irish soil. She could not enter Belfast but remained at Hillsborough Castle 12 miles away, and she visited Coleraine University in Co Derry.

On the first day of the visit 20,000 people took part in a Relatives Action Committee (RAC)/Sinn Fein anti-Jubilee march from the nationalist areas into Belfast city centre. The city centre was ringed with barbed wire and armoured cars and the world's press witnessed the British army and the paramilitary RUC attack the demonstrators with plastic bullets, batons, rifle butts and later live bullets. The attack on the march was resisted, led by the militant youth. It was the biggest march seen in Republican Belfast for three or four years. Despite the massive security operation a bomb exploded at Coleraine University shortly after the Queen had left. During the visit two soldiers were killed, three were seriously wounded and many others injured. The IRA had made its point. That the British media chose to ignore all this and proclaim a 'Royal Ulster Triumph' was beside the point.

The political effects of Mason's insult to the nationalist minority were soon demonstrated. Late 1977 Mason unfolded a scheme for a new devolved assembly. Power was to be wielded by committees with the majority party having a majority on each committee and a majority of the committees' chairmanships. Power-sharing was no longer being seriously considered. However once or twice a year, no doubt as a concession to the SDLP, the assembly would have to approve the work of the committees by a margin which indicated 'a good measure of minority support'. The scheme got nowhere. After Mason's performance during the Queen's visit not even the SDLP dared touch this plan for a gradual return to Stormont and loyalist rule.

SAS ASSASSINATION SQUADS

On 13 September 1977, one year after his appointment as Secretary of State, Mason announced that 'the myth of British withdrawal is dead for ever'. He also said that the 'administrative devolution which has been widely discussed recently... is also a dead letter'. Although Mason was forced a little later in the year to try (and fail) with another 'political' initiative (see above) after pressure resulting from the Lynch/Callaghan talks on 28 September it was clear that British imperialism could only prop up the loyalist statelet by repression and terror. The Labour government had sanctioned torture and murder in Castlereagh and degradation and torture in the H-Blocks. It now gave the Special Air Services regiment (SAS) the go ahead to carry out the summary execution of suspected Republicans. Ten people were to be executed in this way between December 1977 and November 1978.

The SAS have been deployed in the Six Counties almost certainly since the entry of British troops in August 1969. Their presence was admitted on two occasions after incidents involving them. The first was on 22 June 1972 when Captain James McGregor and Sergeant Clive Williams fired on three taxi drivers in Andersonstown. They were charged and appeared in court in February 1973. Both were acquitted. The other occasion was in a Lisburn Court House. Following a drunken brawl at a hotel two soldiers were charged with assault. Their regiment was given as the SAS.

Many murders have taken place in Ireland in which SAS killers have been involved. In 1972 Pat McVeigh and Daniel Rooney in different incidents were murdered by a plainclothes Army patrol, almost certainly from the SAS, shooting at them from a passing car. Many unexplained bombings were the work of British Army undercover squads, most probably the SAS (see FRFI 15).

On 12 January 1976 Harold Wilson announced that the SAS was to be deployed in South Armagh (see FRFI 18). The aim was to placate the Loyalists as well as to strike fear into the nationalist population in the area. On 12 March 1976 at 2am Sean McKenna was kidnapped by SAS men from a cottage in the 26 Counties just over the border. He was asked 'which way do you want to come - dead or alive?'. He was taken at gunpoint to the Six

Counties and arrested. After being tortured into signing a confession he was charged. 14 months later he was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment on 'attempted murder' charges. Convicted of IRA membership up to the day of arrest he was denied political status. Soon after, on 15 April 1976, Peter Cleary an IRA volunteer was murdered by the SAS. He was dragged from his home stripped and brutally beaten by the armed SAS men. A witness said he was later dragged away apparently unconscious by two SAS men. He was taken into a field and moments later three shots were heard. Peter Cleary was shot dead with three bullet wounds in his chest. The Army said he tried to escape and in the ensuing struggle was shot dead. At present a judgement is still awaited from a court case held on 23/24 March 1982. Mrs Cleary took the Ministry of Defence to court over the murder of her son.

The main period of the SAS 'shoot-to-kill' operations began in December 1977. The date is significant. It is less than one month after Major General Tim Creasey arrived to take over as Commanding Officer of British troops in the Six Counties. While in Oman in 1972-5 as Commander of the Sultan of Oman's army, Creasey had a large contingent of SAS men in his army. As Minister of Defence in the 1974 Labour government Mason spent some time in Oman overseeing SAS and other counter-insurgency operations. The two had now linked up again with murderous results.

Colm McNutt from the Creggan, aged 18, an IRSP member was shot dead by SAS men in plain clothes in a car park in William Street on 12 December. Paul Duffy, 20, an IRA volunteer was shot dead on 26 February 1978 after the SAS had staked out the area around an isolated hayshed which contained an IRA bomb cache. Paul Duffy was unarmed and raised his hands above his head when challenged. He was shot at close range. Denis Heaney, an IRA volunteer, was shot dead on 10 June 1978 by an SAS unit at the bottom of Harvey Street on the edge of the Bogside. Denis had recently been arrested and tortured. On his release on 19 May he said in a statement published in the *Derry Journal* that a British Army Officer had told him this was not the end of it, and that 'we will pick our time' and shoot him. Three Ardoyne IRA volunteers Jim Mulvenna, Dennis Brown and Jackie Mealey were ambushed and killed while on the way to plant a bomb at a GPO depot in North Belfast on 21 June. They had surrendered on being challenged. The SAS fired over 200 rounds. Mealey had 63 bullet wounds. Also shot were two passers-by, one fatally - he was a local Protestant Billy Hanna on his way home.

Sixteen-year-old schoolboy John Boyle was killed on 11 July. He had discovered an arms cache in Dunloy graveyard, and his father had reported it to the RUC. The SAS staked out the graveyard. John Boyle, out of curiosity, returned to the graveyard to look at the bag containing the arms and was shot dead from behind. This piece of bungling was a major set-back for the SAS stake-out policy, whose continued use depended on it wiping out IRA men, not civilians, without too much fuss. There was a trial and a lot of embarrassing publicity. Two SAS men were acquitted of the murder of John Boyle in July 1979.

On 30 September, James Taylor, a civilian, was the next victim. He, his cousin and a friend had spent the day shooting wild fowl at Lough Neagh near Ballygoney. When they returned to their car they found the tyres let down. They went to a house nearby to get a pump and on returning noticed two cars following them. James Taylor asked the occupants of one of the cars if they had let the tyres down. He was met with a hail of bullets and died instantly. The soldiers were never charged on the grounds they believed they were in a 'terrorist situation'.

The final assassination victim of 1978 was 50 year-old Patrick Duffy, an auxiliary IRA volunteer from Derry. He was shot dead, as he entered a derelict house in the Bogside, by soldiers lying in wait in the house for someone to collect arms from a cupboard inside. There were 18 bullet wounds in his body.

FIGHTBACK... ON THE STREETS

Repression breeds resistance. Torture in Castlereagh, degradation in the H-Blocks, repression and murder on the streets only served to strengthen the determination of the nationalist minority to free Ireland from British rule. The heroic fight of the prisoners against 'criminalisation' gave heart and courage to thousands of nationalist people who now began to organise. The fight against 'criminal-

isation' took to the streets.

The resistance on the streets began with the formation of the Relatives Action Committees (RACs) in Easter 1976 shortly after the withdrawal of Special Category status. The strongest base of the RACs from the beginning was West Belfast, particularly Turf Lodge. It took some time before the RACs really spread outside Belfast. Over the next three years it was the RACs, at first composed overwhelmingly of working class women, which carried out the day-to-day campaigning on the prisoners' struggle. They staged pickets of courts, embassies, government buildings, and British army forts in West Belfast. They occupied newspaper offices, they blocked roads and they held rallies, street meetings and marches. They took the case to the ordinary working class people on the streets.

The RACs played a central role in building the 'Peace with Justice' marches that were very important in destroying the influence of the British backed 'Peace People'. In September 1976 the 'Peace People' called a march in Derry. Sinn Fein at first decided that the best way to deal with the march was to ignore it. But at a public meeting organised by Creggan RAC the week before the march the women insisted that a 'Peace with Justice' contingent be organised to confront the 'Peace People'. The women won and the contingent was a great success. *An Phoblacht* reported at the time:

'Originally the plan was to ignore the Williams/Corrigan debut in Derry, as such theatrical, highly political puppetry deserves. But at a rally in Creggan on Wednesday night... a groundswell of public feeling demanded a change of plan. Creggan people were angry that the peace-at-any-price people monopolise the TV screens, while people undergoing a summer of savage battering and abuse aren't allowed television time to highlight and protest'. (13 September 1976)

It was the women of Turf Lodge (RAC) who chased Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams out of a protest meeting to discuss the murder of Brian Stewart (see above) and who justified it politically on the grounds that the 'Peace People' were British agents. Lily Fitzsimons, a leading RAC campaigner, wrote at the time:

'Certain people will say they should have been allowed freedom of speech. Well we are sick and disgusted listening to their freedom of pro-British speeches seven days a week, on TV and radio. Which by the way is not open to our point of view or freedom of speech...

... true they the "Peace Women" or British agents as I class them were driven out of Turf Lodge and their car wrecked. We the Irish mothers of Irish children do not want or need them. A small price they paid in comparison to the heartache and suffering we, the Irish people of the Six Counties, have suffered these past seven years at the hands, baton and rifles of Mason's British thugs'. (*Republican News* 16 October 1976)

It was the RAC women who led the fightback against the 'Peace People' combining two slogans: Political Status! Peace with Justice!

At the time when there were only 14 political prisoners on the blanket in November 1976 it was the women of Turf Lodge who carried out their own 'blanket protest' for five days in Turf Lodge to highlight the plight of the prisoners. A 2,000 strong torchlight procession took place in cold, wet conditions in solidarity with the women's courageous stand. It was this work and determination of ordinary working class women, relatives of the prisoners, which laid the basis for the massive protest marches in 1978 and 1979.

By the end of 1978 there were RACs all over the Six Counties with 12 in Belfast alone. No longer were they mainly confined to relatives of prisoners but involved the thousands who supported the prisoners' struggle for political status. There began a massive upsurge in the Republican Movement as the 1975/6 truce and negotiations were pushed well into the background. The heroic and courageous stand of the political prisoners, the lead in support of their struggle given by the RACs, was to bring many thousands on the streets. 35,000 attended the funeral of the revolutionary Republican Mairead Drumm who had been murdered in her hospital bed at the end of October 1976 by British-backed loyalist thugs (see FRFI 19). There were 15,000 on the 1978 Bloody Sunday Commemoration march in Derry during which IRA volunteers displayed

continued overleaf

THE FIGHT AGAINST 'CRIMINALISATION'

the newly acquired M60 machine gun to massive enthusiasm from the crowds. During 1978 mobilisations of over 10,000 regularly took place. And 1978 ended with massive tenth anniversary marches. 15-20,000 marched from Coalisland to Dungannon on 27 August. In October 12,000 marched to Derry under the slogan '1968 Civil Rights. 1978 National Rights'. The hard day-to-day work of the RACs had enabled these massive protest marches to be built. As *Republican News* made clear at the time in reporting on the huge turnout for the Coalisland-Dungannon march:

'The huge turn out on the day pays tribute to the consistent agitational work carried out by RAC committees and Republicans over the last two years ...

Every drop of publicity has been hard won. It has been wrung out of the mass media by protest after protest by 'blanket clad' women occupying buildings, blocking roads, and carrying out token hunger-strikes, and by foot sloggng the streets in cities, towns and villages from one end of Ireland to the other, handing out leaflets detailing the horrific conditions Republican prisoners are held in ...' (2 September 1978)

The same article then went on to make the important political point that the movement on the streets is complimentary to the armed struggle to free Ireland from British rule.

'Hand in hand with the armed struggle today's street resistance movement is organised around clear anti-imperialist demands'.

The struggle for political status is part of the struggle to drive British imperialism out of Ireland. From the very beginning the Relatives Action Committees stressed the intimate connection between the issue of political status and the war of national liberation. At a conference in Ballymurphy concerned to discuss 'Political Status - the way forward', the RAC speaker's concluding remarks were: 'The legitimacy of their claim to political status is based on their participation in a War of National Liberation'.

The statement from the central Relatives Action Committee in *Republican News* in December 1977 made the same crucial point:

'We have always maintained a firm line that our campaign is to establish that a War of National Liberation is being waged in Ireland ... while in the past we have publicised the inhuman conditions of the POWs ... we have not allowed ourselves to be sidetracked into seeing the prisoners as a civil rights issue, rather than a political issue. The political prisoners fighting to defend their status know only too well that they are being subjected to degrading and inhuman treatment by the British government, because the Government wants the Political prisoners to accept Criminal Status. It would be a mockery of the ideals of the Republican Socialist POWs if we did not recognise the Political motivation of these POWs.'

What of those then who opposed the torture and degradation of the prisoners on a 'humanitarian' or 'civil rights' basis but who did not support the IRA's armed struggle for national liberation? Were they to be drawn into the campaign and if so on what basis? After the so-called 'dirt strike' began in the H-Blocks, an event took place at an emergency meeting called by Turf Lodge RAC in April 1978 which was a pointer to future problems. Father Faul made a divisive intervention from the platform which many regarded as an insult to the 'blanket men'. He used the RAC platform to make a call for a Republican ceasefire.

'He claimed that "while violence goes on men will not get better conditions" and only a ceasefire will bring improvements.

Further he suggested that those "connected with violence" (meaning the Republican Movement) should not be seen to be involved in the protests outside. For it would discredit the protests if "murderers or their brothers" (!!!) were seen to be the protestors'. (*Republican News* 15 April 1978)

Before this event occurred a number of conferences had taken place which had led to the involvement of 'wider' forces in the prisoner campaign. The Coalisland Conference held on 22 January 1978 included left-wing groups such as Peoples Democracy, representatives from trade unions,

and influential campaigners such as Bernadette McAliskey (via Tyrone RAC). 1,000 people attended this conference. A proposal from the Belfast Central RAC was passed unanimously. It called for a committee to be set up to 'establish activity on a 32 County basis'. Each organisation, Central RAC, Coalisland RAC, and others who supported and participated in protests, pickets, demonstrations etc would have representation on this committee. And each organisation would retain the right to its autonomy and the right to campaign on its own demands. It should be noted that among these 'wider' forces were those opposed to the armed struggle of the IRA to drive British imperialism out of Ireland. However this conference and an anti-repression delegate Conference held three weeks later called for 'the immediate granting of political status to Republican Socialist Prisoners pending a general amnesty to all prisoners convicted as a result of the Irish war of National Liberation'. In commenting on the Coalisland Conference *Republican News* wrote

'The clock cannot simply be turned back [to the Civil Rights marches] ... much as Peoples Democracy and Bernadette McAliskey might wish it to be ...

... organised protests on "limited" demands against torture and in defence of status need not become the diversion from the liberation struggle that some Republicans might fear.

... a fightback against "criminalisation" is certainly necessary. But the humanitarian approach of Father Faul and the polite parliamentary-type protests of Frank Maguire ... are not enough to win our aims in the short term let alone the long term.

Instead any public campaign against torture and for political status needs to be pointed firmly in the direction of "Brits Out" and needs to recognise the necessary methods for this aim. For status and torture in reality cannot be iso-



IRA volunteers appear amongst demonstrators at H-Block protest march

lated from the Brit presence, a presence which cannot be removed without armed struggle.

But this does not mean that all united fronts or joint platforms must be on the basis of everyone openly supporting the IRA's armed struggle, or that the call for "Brits Out" should swamp out specific campaigns against criminalisation. What it does mean is that the sharp end of the campaign should be directed against criminalisation whilst the rudder is steering for "Brits Out". (4 February 1978)

Running such 'united fronts' was not going to be that easy. The real problems lay ahead. What was to be at issue was the political basis of those united fronts. For the moment however support for the armed struggle and the fight for political status were intimately connected.

FIGHTBACK ... THE MILITARY CAMPAIGN

From the beginning of the prison campaign the IRA had made it clear that it would use armed force in the fight for political status. The IRA had announced that once political status was removed then prison officers would become legitimate targets. Between 8 April 1976 and 18 January 1980, 18 prison officers and others closely connected with the prison service were killed. In December 1976 the IRA mounted over 120 operations 'in a co-ordinated strike to highlight conditions for those denied political status' - there were at that time 14 men in the H-Blocks and two women in Armagh Prison. Railway lines and roads were blocked at crucial points in the Six Counties, a hotel was destroyed and a bus depot attacked in Belfast. Army and RUC bases came under attack and a soldier was killed, another was injured, and 2 RUC men were injured in different parts of the Six Counties. The bombing campaign again spread to

England. At the end of January 1977 the West End of London was hit by a spate of bombings - 11 explosions in the space of four hours.

At the end of 1977 Roy Mason was boasting of his own successes. The IRA he said were 'reeling'.

'It would have been a brave, or perhaps a rash, man who would have forecast a year ago that 1977 would see a very marked fall in the level of violence, the number of deaths, the number of bombings and the number of shootings'.

There is little doubt that IRA activity was significantly reduced over 1977 due to the reorganisation that was taking place to establish the present highly efficient cell structure. There was also a shortage of explosives. But this should not be exaggerated. While the number of explosions and shootings were down 50%, the year's losses to the 'security forces' had been similar to the previous year: 15 British army compared to 14 a year earlier, 28 UDR/RUC to 38 a year earlier. Civilian deaths had however plummeted from 245 to 69. One major factor in explaining this fall in civilian casualties was the very large reduction in sectarian killings due to British army/RUC curbs on the activities of loyalist paramilitary organisations. This was in line with the attitude the British government took to the loyalist strike. British terror and repression had reached new heights so that the activities of the unofficial loyalist 'security forces' was considered both unfruitful and unnecessary (see FRFI 19).

There were however some notable successes in 1977. The IRA captured SAS Captain Robert Nairac in May. He was interrogated and then executed. During the Queen's Jubilee visit in August they breached the massive security ring at Coleraine University setting off a bomb using a long delay timing device. On the 2 November the IRA began a series of firebomb and bombing attacks - 93 operations in all - on commercial business property across the Six Counties. These operations

butors of *Republican News* were harassed, raided and arrested. In March 1978 leading Sinn Fein member Gerry Adams was arrested and charged with IRA membership. In April 330 RUC men backed up by the British army raided *Republican News* offices and over 20 houses seizing *Republican News* and arresting 15 Belfast Sinn Fein leaders. The printer of *Republican News*, SDLP member Gary Kennedy, was also arrested. *Republican News* continued to print and eventually the courts had to release those arrested, including Gerry Adams, after international publicity and concern, and on the grounds that Sinn Fein was a recognised legal political party.

1978 began well for the IRA with the capture and execution of a British army intelligence officer, Paul Harman, who was engaged in SAS activities in West Belfast. He was captured carrying the photos of 73 prominent Republicans together with their names and addresses. This information would obviously be lethal in the hands of British army and loyalist assassination squads. Assassination attempts on some of those on Harman's list did in fact take place later.

In February 1978 the bombing of the La Mon restaurant went tragically wrong due to a bungled warning and 12 people died. The IRA immediately put out a statement admitting responsibility which stated:

'We accept condemnation and criticism from only two sources: from the relatives and friends of those who were accidentally killed, and from our supporters, who have rightly and severely criticised us ...

It has been the disastrous presence of British interference in Ireland and that continuing armed presence in the Six Counties which is the root cause of unrest in our country. All killings and tragedies stem from British interference and their denial of Irish sovereignty ...'

Until November 1978 IRA activity remained low. Then the full force of the successful reorganisation hit the Six Counties. Mid-November saw a massive IRA bomb blitz across the Six Counties. The total estimated damage was £10 million. The next week another wave of bombings took place. On 26 November Albert Miles Deputy Governor of Long Kesh was executed by the IRA. The IRA put out a statement which said 'This man was fully aware of the beatings and torture of the men "on the blanket" ... we justly executed Miles for his responsibility over H-Block'. At the beginning of December a third major bombing blitz took place hitting 16 towns in one hour. In December the IRA claimed the bombing of British army barracks in West Germany which had occurred in August.

1979 began with bombing and sniper attacks in many areas of the Six Counties. Four British soldiers were killed, one soldier and 6 RUC men were injured. In January 1979 bombs went off in England blowing up a gasometer in Greenwich and blowing a hole in a fuel storage tank at Canvey Island. It was Mason who was now 'reeling'.

Mason however arrogantly continued to claim the IRA were isolated. In a Panorama programme on 12 February, Mason claimed that only a couple of hundred people would be prepared to support the 'blanket men' on the street. Six days later, On Sunday 18 February 1979 10,000 people marched in defiance of Mason's claim. The lead banner on this march called by Sinn Fein proclaimed 'Smash Mason's Lie'. Mason received another blow the same month. Three assistant governors from the H-Blocks resigned and informed the IRA of their resignation in order to be taken off the death list.

The 'criminalisation' policy was now in tatters. The IRA was on the offensive. Reports of torture in Castlereagh and other police interrogation centres, of the torture and degradation in the H-Blocks resounded around the world. The Labour government which had agreed to give extra parliamentary seats to Loyalists to keep the Labour Party in power was finally turfed out of office on 26 March 1979. Gerry Fitt and Frank Maguire could not support the Labour Party on a vote of confidence because of its record of torture in the Six Counties of Ireland.

Mason left the Six Counties with his reputation destroyed. One of the most reactionary imperialist governments had been forced out of office. After the election the Tory Party would carry on where the Labour government left off. Within two years the prison struggle was to come to a head.

David Reed
June 1982

to be continued

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flames. For 3 whole days the Israeli air force drenched the town with shells, cluster and phosphorus bombs. Two out of every three buildings were destroyed and beneath the rubble lay the 3,000 dead and mangled bodies of men, women and children. Of Sidon's original 300,000 inhabitants only 60,000 remain. Another town, Damour, was totally destroyed. A *Sunday Times* journalist said 'the place has simply ceased to exist.' Beirut, the Lebanese capital, was subjected to 24 hour shift bombing with massive casualties. A Beirut hospital announced that 30%-50% of those injured were dying as a result of injuries sustained from cluster and phosphorus bombs. Nothing was spared - schools, hospitals, homes, factories, warehouses and 20,000 civilians. A Lebanese mother from Damour exclaimed 'The Israelis are not just killing my friends, they are killing my country.'

As the Israeli forces advanced northwards to Beirut, they bombed and shelled scores of towns, villages and refugee camps. A British engineer described the experience of one village near Sidon. The villagers raised white flags to indicate neutrality:

'There were no Palestinians anywhere in the area. But the Israelis took no notice of the white flags. And to finish off the job, the Israeli jets came back for another bombing run when the people were burying those killed in the first strike.'

And as hundreds of thousands of refugees fled the assault, their convoys were bombed and strafed by Israeli planes. Amidst this blood and fire, amidst the broken and burnt bodies, amidst the terror of weeping children and dying people, fascist Prime Minister Begin, friend and ally of Reagan and Thatcher declared: 'Wonderful! Now I can sleep at night.'

Thousands of homeless Lebanese and Palestinians are being denied adequate relief and medical care as the Israeli Army Command arrests and expels all foreign nurses and doctors and refuses entry to UN relief organisations. The Zionists have repeatedly turned back urgent Red Cross aid shipments seeking direct entry into Lebanon. Meanwhile, to destroy evidence of the scale of civilian massacre, hundreds of bodies are being burned in mass graves.

The fate of those remaining alive in occupied Lebanon cannot be predicted. Thousands and thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese are being rounded up and herded into newly built concentration camps or sent to Israel. Under the fascist heel of Zionist occupation death can come swiftly. Two Norwegian doctors expelled to Oslo testified to the savage beating to death of 10 captured Palestinian freedom fighters.

In a move emulating British imperialism in Ireland and in direct contravention of the Geneva Convention, the Israeli Army Command has refused to recognise captured PLO fighters as Prisoners of War. The Army Command announced:

'They are terrorists. We do not refer to them as prisoners of war.'

Many will be killed and thousands of others will be tortured and held indefinitely until such time that Zionism judges its genocidal and reactionary plans fulfilled.

Imperialist war aims and plans

This latest attempt by Zionism to annihilate the PLO was planned jointly with US imperialism and their Lebanese fascist allies of the Christian Phalange. In January Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon met Phalange leader Bashir Gemayel to discuss coordination in the event of an invasion. In May

IMPERIALISTS BACK GENOCIDE

Sharon visited Washington to meet the then US Secretary of State Alexander Haig to put the finishing touches to the invasion plan. For months the Israeli army had been stationed and ready on Lebanese borders and when the assault came it involved 3% of Israel's population (the equivalent of 1½ million British troops).

The pretext for the invasion was the shooting of Israeli Ambassador to London Mr Argov and Palestinian shelling of villages in north Israel. The real reason, however, lay in the growing and powerful mass movement of Palestinians on the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Throughout March, April



Lebanon: 20,000 murdered by Zionists

and May there were mass demonstrations, strikes and fierce street fighting against Israeli annexation plans. And the masses saw in the PLO, based in Lebanon, their leaders and vanguard. With the solid unity of fighting masses in territory occupied by Israel and the armed PLO, not only would annexation be impossible, but the Israeli state and the entire structure of Zionism and imperialism would face a formidable challenge. In order to crush this challenge once and for all, it was first necessary to destroy the PLO in Lebanon. Then the permanent annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip could follow. Menachem Milson, Zionist administrator of the West Bank put it clearly:

'We are fighting the PLO to make peace with the Palestinians.'

This 'peace' will be the peace of oppression without resistance. Since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Zionism has speeded up the annexation process by dismissing the elected councils of Nablus and Dura and has suppressed protests against its genocide with gunfire.

Zionist plans extend beyond the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to a long term occupation and eventual annexation of a portion of Lebanese territory. Begin declared 'We do not want one centimetre of Lebanese territory'. But as he was speaking, specialist 'civilian administrators' were being drafted in to Lebanon from the West Bank. Primarily intelligence experts co-ordinating civil, police and military operations, their previous tasks had been 'mopping up' and suppressing resistance to Zionist rule on the West Bank in preparation for annexation. It is a further indication of Zionism aims that the Israelis have opened banks in Tyre and Sidon.

The third component of Zionist strategy is the formation of a pro-imperial-

ist, pro-Zionist regime in Lebanon. Their allies are the Christian Phalangists, whose forces are trained and financed by Israel - in May, Begin boasted that he had given them \$100m worth of armaments. They were formed in 1936 and modelled upon the fascist paramilitary after their leaders returned from visiting Italy and Germany.

Imperialism backs Israel

The crushing of the PLO, a pro-Zionist Lebanon, and the expansion of the Israeli state would immeasurably strengthen the hand of imperialism in the Middle East - a region strategically vital

for its oil, naval and trading routes and military position. Zionism is the bastion of counter-revolution in the region and an ally of counter-revolution throughout the world. Zionism waged war on the progressive Arab and Palestinian people in 1948, 1956, and 1967. In 1956 it allied with British and French imperialism in a war to prevent Egypt nationalising the Suez Canal. In 1967 it occupied Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian territory. Throughout its existence it has maintained close ties and assisted every fascist regime in the world - apartheid in South Africa, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and elsewhere. Zionism exists to defend imperialism and it is rewarded with millions of dollars assistance and yet more Arab territory.

It is no surprise, therefore, that throughout Israel's wholesale massacre and carnage in Lebanon, the imperialist powers - in particular US and British imperialism - gave the Zionist forces every possible assistance. While professing verbal opposition to the invasion, US imperialism vetoed a UN proposal in the first week of the invasion for an immediate ceasefire and a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon. This veto was supported by the British representative at the UN. Once Israeli forces had consolidated their positions in Lebanon US 'opposition' to the invasion became open approval as a US State Department official declared that Israeli withdrawal was 'no longer adequate to the needs of the situation'.

British imperialism, which created the fascist Zionist state, played its own dirty and hypocritical role. Margaret Thatcher who fought hard for EEC sanctions against Argentina during the Malvinas war and who praised their effectiveness, decided that sanctions against imperialism's Zionist and bloody ally were 'ineffective'. In an empty gesture, the British government

barred Israeli arms dealers attending the Ministry of Defence arms exhibition. Not because of the Israeli genocide in the Lebanon, but because of rumours that Israel sold arms to Argentina during the Malvinas War!

The EEC, supposedly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, not only refused to impose sanctions against Israel, but declared its support for Zionist war aims and demanded the immediate withdrawal of the PLO from the Lebanon. Neither in Britain nor in any other imperialist nation did the pro-imperialist Labour Movements make more than an empty and hypocritical gesture of protest. European capitals remained silent, there were no marches, no strikes, no pickets or demonstrations organised by these people. In Israel itself there have been signs of opposition to the Zionist aggression. On Sunday 4 July, 100,000 people marched to demand Israeli withdrawal and a negotiated settlement with the Palestinian people.

The resistance continues

At this momentous and historical turning point, the Palestinian people have fought virtually alone. Deserted by their Arab allies, outnumbered and out-gunned by Zionism and its allies, they have nevertheless created epics of revolutionary resistance in the fight for self-determination.

It is in Beirut that the determination, courage and heroism of the Palestinian people is really demonstrated. Despite weeks of savage bombardment, which during the weekend of 25, 26 and 27 June caused 4,000 civilian casualties, 6,000 PLO fighters have held off 8 Israeli divisions for over 3 weeks. The Zionists and imperialists are passing off Israeli failure to capture West Beirut as a decision to avoid civilian casualties. This is a disgusting lie. Israel has no regard whatsoever for human life. Israel showed no mercy to the over 20,000 civilians already murdered by its air, sea and land forces. It showed no mercy when its planes bombed an Armenian old peoples' home. It showed no more mercy when it used cluster bombs against the civilian populations of Tyre,

Sidon, Beirut and elsewhere. No! Israeli forces have not yet entered West Beirut because they fear the huge losses they would suffer at the hands of the 6,000 PLO guerillas and they fear failure: failure which would cost them very dear.

So for the moment, the Israeli forces and the imperialist nations are desperately seeking to force the PLO out of Lebanon by diplomatic means. They are using all their resources and energies to avoid a confrontation with the PLO. Beirut, for the PLO have declared they will make Beirut into 'the Stalingrad of the Zionists' and 'fight from street to street, from house to house and from room to room' to defend the Palestinian people against Zionist terror and aggression.

Elsewhere, PLO guerilla forces have now dispersed into the mountains and forests and will return to conduct classical guerilla warfare against the Zionist aggressors.

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!

As we go to the printers, the latest battles in the Israeli-Palestinian war are still being fought. There is a vile and bloody conspiracy by Zionism and imperialism to annihilate the PLO and the Palestinian question and to bury the dead beneath the dead bodies of tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese men, women and children. Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! stand wholeheartedly with the people of Palestine, the PLO and the people of Lebanon in their life and death struggle for democracy and self-determination. FRFI condemns and accuses Zionism and imperialism as racists, mass murderers and criminals. In particular FRFI condemns and denounces British imperialism which from the beginnings of the Zionist movement, to the massacres in the Lebanon today, has been and is responsible for all that the Palestinian people suffer at the hands of Israel. British imperialism is the murderer and savage state that gave birth to and nourished, supported and now sustains the equally savage and murderous Zionist state. Communists and democrats in Britain wish death upon Zionism and its parent British imperialism!

**Defend the PLO!
Zionist Hands Off Lebanon!
Death to Zionism!
Death to British imperialism!**

Trevor Rayne, Roy Spring

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CENTRAL AMERICA IN BRIEF

● Guatemala

The Guatemalan junta, headed by Rios Montt, is seeking to improve its image abroad by declaring its readiness to enter negotiations with Guatemala's National Revolutionary Union and promising an amnesty for revolutionaries who surrender themselves by 30 June. The junta's 'compromising' and 'moderate' language contrasts sharply however with its domestic action. The Association of Democratic Journalists based in Nicaragua revealed that 4,000 people have been murdered since Rios Montt came to power in March. The junta, in an attempt to cover up its systematic massacre of the country's Indian population, is using death squads dressed as guerrillas and uttering revolutionary slogans as they gun down and massacre whole villages. The Indian peasantry however has not been deceived by such manoeuvres and are flocking to the support of the URNG, their sole defence against the US backed sadistic junta intent on genocide to safeguard imperialist economic and geopolitical interests.

● NATO manoeuvres

In a little disguised exercise for an eventual invasion of revolutionary Cuba, NATO forces held Ocean Venture 82 during May. The venture involved 40,000 troops attacking the mythical island of 'Brown' an ally of the Soviet Union somewhere in the Caribbean. The commander of the US forces, Rear Admiral R P McKenzie, more or less gave the game away saying 'you won't get me to say that the island is Cuba.' The sequence of the attack on 'Brown' corresponded closely to the British imperialists' taking of the Malvinas. There is no doubt that the invasion of 'Brown', and the lessons the imperialists learnt from the British occupation of the Malvinas will be used to advance imperialist plans for the destruction of revolutionary Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada. Cuban President Castro gave his people's answer to the imperialist schemes: 'Our party, people and leaders will never sell out and will never surrender.' He damned capitalism as 'rotten and disgusting' and vowed that the 'capitalist inferno' would never return to Cuba.

Trevor Rayne



EL SALVADOR

On 8 June, US President Reagan addressed a gathering of British Lords and MPs in the House of Parliament. He spoke of the 'democratic revolution... gathering new strength' and proposed a campaign to 'foster the infrastructure of democracy'. El Salvador was cited as an example of US 'fostered' democracy as Reagan said:

'On election day (Sunday 28 March) the people of El Salvador, an unprecedented 1.4m of them, braved ambush and gunfire to vote for freedom.'

That such a statement passed without any protest or outrage testifies to the rotten and reactionary nature of the British imperialist Parliament and its assorted representatives. The fact that since 28 March US 'fostered' democracy in El Salvador has been working its gruesome and bloody way is well known. Since 28 March over 3,600 peasant families have been evicted from land which provides their only livelihood and evictions are continuing at greater speed. The new 'democratic' National Assembly sustained by US arms, dollars and a vicious US trained army represents the tyranny of El Salvador's landlords, capitalists and their imperialist masters. On 18 May, this 'democracy' suspended the Land to the Tiller Programme which was in fact never more than window-dressing to appease US Congressional opinion and a ploy to kill

any peasant daring to submit claims under the programme's provisions. Since it was announced in 1980 only 106 peasant families have gained title to land out of a possible 200,000. 25,000 tenant farmers have been evicted and over 200 officials involved in the land reform programme have been murdered including the head of the Salvadoran Institute of Agrarian Transformation. The ghastly reality of this reform is expressed by a Salvadoran:

'Many have been killed and dirt is stuffed in their mouths as a symbol. Filling out an application is sometimes like painting a red cross of death across your chest.'

Under the new 'democracy' in El Salvador, the rule of the landlords is given legal stamp and peasant opponents of the regime murdered and the masses left

to suffer in poverty and starvation.

Meanwhile in the urban working class areas, the killings, maimings and mutilations of working class opponents of the new 'democracy' continue:

'People are being pulled from their houses, their workplaces, abducted, disappear, murdered and mutilated. It is utterly horrifying.'

Neither Reagan nor his audience of British Lords and MPs mentioned or protested against the recent killing of 4 Christian Democrat mayors and 7 peasant scrutineers of the 28 March elections. To have done so would have meant revealing the contents of the Central American University of El Salvador report on these elections: that probably only half of the claimed 1.4m actually voted, that it was physically impossible for 1.4m people to vote in the time available, that 1.5m more ballot papers than required were printed, that the US Ambassador Deane Hinton was party to an agreement amongst the participants (all fascist, as the revolutionaries boycotted the elections) not to publicly discuss fraud! Such are the 'freedoms' for those who voted in an election where voting was compulsory and not voting



Demonstrators behind barbed wire in Berlin

Emperor Tours Europe

Operation Charm - as the White House dubbed Reagan's European tour - was in a shambles by its end. Unable to move anywhere in Europe without meeting a demonstration, his carefully timed appearances for US breakfast TV were pushed aside by news of the imperialist conflicts in the South Atlantic and the Middle East.

The Grand Tour began with a conference of fellow imperialists at the Palace of Versailles. All the imperialists' problems were to be solved at Versailles, the media said. Yet when the thieves got around a table, they could not agree on anything important: the 30m unemployed are to stay jobless; a trade war still looms; financial conflicts were glossed over; they couldn't agree how to attack the socialist countries, and all the imperialist cant about peace was exposed when puppet Israel invaded

Lebanon.

This debacle over, on to Rome for five hours, where 300,000 protested against nuclear weapons. A quick chin-wag with the Pope, when Reagan nearly fell asleep, then off to Britain where two armoured cars, 6 helicopters, a plane-load of 150 US bodyguards, and a team of food-tasters had been sent to protect Reagan.

A tourist's dream: met by the Queen, a Royal banquet in a real castle, and an early morning ride with the Royal

Family in front of the cameras. Then to Parliament where Emperor Reagan, from the homeland of the Ku Klux Klan, armoured of Israel and El Salvador, buddy of South Africa, announced 'a crusade of freedom'. What a comfort for those protesters arrested when they used Mr Reagan's freedom to protest against his visit!

The resources of the US empire, including 1/2m troops garrisoned in 2,500 bases in 110 countries, were to be devoted to a mission to preserve peace. There was no crisis in the imperialist countries, he said. But under socialism, people could not enjoy 'freedom' and 'dignity' - the freedom and dignity of unemployment, poverty, racism and police oppression, no doubt.

The imperialist rigged elections in El Salvador, where people elected a fascist under threat of army execution, were held up as a model of democracy!

Finally, Reagan, architect of nuclear escalation, bragged how he would 'leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history'. Labour and Tory MPs leapt to their feet to applaud this 'pilgrimage for peace'.

Next stop Bonn, where he unveiled a phony arms reduction plan in the hope of subverting the West German peace movement. The next day, during the NATO summit, 350,000 people showed what they thought of Reagan's antics

when they protested against US plans to base medium-range nuclear missiles in Federal Germany.

In his final and most provocative stunt, Reagan visited the imperialist sector of Berlin. Before a 'spontaneous' crowd of 10,000 hand-picked stooges, Reagan denounced the barbed-wire which separates people from freedom... just as imperialist police were stretching yards and yards of barbed wire around anti-Reagan demonstrators, hosing them down with water-cannon, clubbing them and arresting them. The youth of Berlin answered Reagan's anti-socialist waffle with stones and petrol bombs. It was a fitting close to the tour.

Before Reagan came, we thought he was a vicious reactionary. Now we know it. We have seen his stinking imperialist hypocrisy, his support for fascism in El Salvador, Zionism in Israel, and for British imperialism's adventures in the South Atlantic. His desperate attempts to undermine the peace movement have failed, and his visit, rightly regarded as a provocation, brought the largest demonstrations seen in Europe against the US inspired nuclear arms race. Good Riddance, Ronald Reagan.

Steven Palmer

could mean death at the hands of fascist killer squads.

All these facts were readily available to the gathered Labour, Liberal and other MPs. They did not protest or disrupt Reagan's speech because they themselves are the representatives of a bourgeois imperialist democracy in Britain which is as bloodstained and repressive as US imperialist democracy. British MPs and their beloved British Parliament sanction murder and repression in Ireland against the Republican Movement and sit silently as British imperialism supports and sustains the apartheid regime in South Africa, the fascist Israeli genocide in Lebanon and mounting repression in this country.

The revolutionary masses of El Salvador do not however rely on imperialist democracies and their 'Labour' Parties to free themselves from the clutches of poverty, hunger and repression imposed on them by the United States and its puppet ruling class. They rely on the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front which is conducting armed struggle to destroy imperialism in El Salvador. At this very moment the FMLN is successfully fighting off a concerted offensive by the El Salvador army against FMLN strongholds in the provinces of Chalatenango and Morazan. In Chalatenango, the government army massacred over 600 civilians in its May offensive and on its own admission shot and murdered unarmed guerrilla fighters. Such vicious behaviour by the proteges of US imperialism contrast with that of the FMLN. Despite their slender resources, the FMLN have opened prisoner of war camps for captured junta soldiers in Morazan, where currently the most fierce fighting for 2 1/2 years is taking place. The guerrillas who control the strategically important town of Perequin have announced the killing of 76 government soldiers, the capture of 31 others along with supplies of arms, ammunition and uniforms. The brilliant successes of the FMLN against US trained and equipped government soldiers was highlighted when the FMLN shot down a helicopter and captured El Salvador Undersecretary of Defence and killed Colonel Castillo, the fourth-ranking person in El Salvador's high command.

In other parts of the country, the FMLN has stepped up military operations against economic targets - roads, bridges, railways, electricity lines, buses, trucks and crops. Despite tremendous difficulties, the revolutionaries are successfully holding their own and inflicting severe damage on the junta forces. Recently published figures show that in 1981 801 government soldiers were killed in the war, while in the first quarter of 1982 the toll was already 467 and in April 202, and government casualties continue to mount.

Imperialist hopes for a rapid victory against the El Salvador revolution have disappeared. According to an American journalist:

'In significant parts of the provinces of Morazan, Usulután, Cabanas, San Vicente and Chalatenango a revolutionary society functions...'

While in the major towns, the FMLN have announced a new campaign to revive and strengthen the mass political movement and organisation which has suffered so terribly from the junta's systematic killing and murdering of working class and community leaders and cadres.

In the struggles of the oppressed and working class in Britain, their real allies are to be sought amongst the masses of the El Salvadoran workers and peasants, and their vanguard the FMLN, not in the representatives of British 'democracy' and the Labour Party who sat silent as Reagan praised the butchers of El Salvador.

Eddie Abrahams



● Cost of Collaboration

The direct cost to the Irish worker of the Free State government's collaboration with the forces of British imperialism is mounting. IR£350m were stopped out of the workers pay packets last year to finance security spending. An additional IR£150m will be taken this year. This is a sum totalling over four times the projected deficit for the year and about half the tax intake from PAYE workers.

The economy of the 26 Counties however cannot sustain such gargantuan increases in security spending. It has, as a result, sought respite in the coffers of international financiers, which in turn drive the capitalists to further attack the working class. It is the working class in the final analysis who must pay the costs of collaboration, the cost of imperialist domination. Financially this will involve the capitalists trying to lower workers living standards further and reduce state spending on social services. Politically it involves the consolidation of bourgeois forces and those of the labour aristocracy. Militarily it means that 2000 out of a total Free State army of 15,000 are constantly stationed at the border. Instead of operating 6000 patrols as in 1980, they operate 10,537. The number of military parties supplied for checkpoint duty doubled from 1980 to 1981 and is now 14,145.

The Free State government thus combines its direct attack on the working class and on the Republican Movement, meanwhile building up its armed apparatus to try and defeat both. Currently puppet Free State collaboration has resulted in the remand imprisonment for over 4 months of Republican Gerald Tuite, escaped from Brixton Prison in 1980 and now the Free State's choice for a show trial which began on 29 June.

Morrigan

● Workers Party respectability

James Flynn a high ranking member of the supposedly defunct paramilitary wing of the Workers Party ('official IRA') was executed by the INLA in retaliation for Flynn's murder of revolutionary working class leader and IRSP chief Seamus Costello in 1977.

The execution of this prime revisionist assassin represents a blow to the respectable party image being cultivated by the WP. At a time when the party has been subjected to particular scrutiny regarding its clandestine paramilitary or criminal connections, the 'new image' people are particularly sensitive to certain kinds of publicity. Typically a hurried sequence of denials was issued by loyal WP hacks following suggestions that Flynn might have links with the WP. These denials however struck hollow against the backdrop of a funeral service attended by prominent WP figures, with an oration by the chairperson of Clann na h-Eireann, WP fellow travellers in England.

Seeking to suppress the truth about the careerist and criminal orientation of the WP leadership some party supporters have sought to intimidate pressmen from writing articles exposing the organisation's leadership. Nevertheless one such article was published in the magazine *Magill* and proved a great embarrassment for the party. Its revelations have been borne out by INLA statements, one of which warns the reformist and opportunist leaders of the WP not to engage in any further murderous assaults on the IRSP.

Morrigan

LOYALIST TERROR PROTECTS LOYALIST PRIVILEGES

As reported in FRFI 20 recent studies carried out by the Fair Employment Agency in the Six Counties have confirmed that patterns of discrimination in employment have remained unchanged despite all the pretended 'concern' of the British government to reduce such discrimination. In particular, such bastions of loyalist privilege as the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast, with its relatively highly-paid skilled jobs, have remained virtually closed to Catholics. The fate that awaits any Catholic who dares to enter such loyalist territory was shown last month when a young Catholic man from the New Lodge Road narrowly escaped death at the hands of loyalist gunmen while he was working in the shipyard.

Dermot Brophy had started work in the shipyard as a painter just six weeks earlier, having previously been unemployed for three years - indeed it was only the fact that he was desperate for work that led him to accept the job in the shipyard, knowing as he did the risk involved. From the very beginning the loyalist workers at the yard made it clear

that he and the few other Catholics who worked at the yard were not wanted. Then on 23 June, as Dermot and his workmates were having their tea-break in a hut, two loyalist gunmen burst in. They singled Dermot out and were about to shoot him when a friend of Dermot's stood in their way. One of the gunmen then tried to shoot Dermot but

the gun jammed and, after a struggle, both gunmen were forced out of the hut and ran off.

The attack has forced Dermot to leave his job at the shipyard and it is likely that the few other Catholics there will do likewise. Loyalists have therefore once again shown their determination to maintain their privileges by the use of terror against any threat (real or imagined) to such privileges from Catholics, a determination encouraged by the British government which continues to pour money into firms such as Harland and Wolff in order to safeguard loyalist jobs while doing nothing in practice (despite all its protestations of 'concern') to reduce the blatant discrimination which exists in such firms.

Irish Correspondent

but to the death of Jim Reilly and Gerry was sentenced to 6 years for conspiracy.

Following the arrests of the Cardiff 5 there have been a number of other arrests at the request of the Cardiff police. On 22 June 3 people were arrested in London: Brian Rhys was held for 50 hours before being taken to Cardiff and also charged under the Explosive Substances Act, whilst Dave Marzella, a member of the Troops Out Movement, was held for 36 hours and released without charge but on police bail. 6 of those charged are being denied bail.

We condemn this attack on the WSRM and TOM: these arrests are an attack on the democratic rights of all political activists and we support their defence campaign. We demand the dropping of the charges.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to Welsh Political Prisoners' Defence Committee, 175 Macintosh Place, Roath, Cardiff.

Chris Fraser

POLICE ATTACK ON WELSH REPUBLICANS

In early May David Burns, Nic Hodges, Jennie Smith, Adrian Stone and Gareth Westcott were arrested in South Wales and charged under the Explosive Substances Act 1883 and thus face possible 20 year sentences. 2 of the 5 are members of the Youth Movement of Plaid Cymru (the Welsh Nationalist Party) and all are members or supporters of the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement (WSRM). Many others were arrested in Wales only to be released without charge and many harassed - one woman was forced to make tea for 12 policemen when they raided her home at 7am! The arrests and charges relate to a number of bomb attacks which have taken place over the last 2 years on government buildings and other political targets. The police evidence is minimal and all 5 have denied responsibility for the bombings as have their organisations.

This latest attack on the WSRM follows 'Operation Fire' in March 1980 when the police arrested 52 people in Wales, including Gerry MacLochlainn of Sinn Fein, the pretext of which was the burn-

ing of 2nd homes in Wales. Gerry was subsequently co-charged with Jim Reilly of Sinn Fein with political charges totally unrelated to the Welsh arson campaign. Their long detention contri-

REVIEW

Seamus Costello 1939-1977, published by the Seamus Costello Memorial Committee

Seamus Costello was an exceptional man. His interest in Republicanism began when he heard of Cathal Goulding's arrest in 1953. At the age of 15, he applied to join the Republican movement and was told to 'come back next year'. He did; at the age of 17 he was commanding an IRA active service unit in South Derry. Arrested at Glencree, Co Wicklow in 1957, he served 6 months in Mountjoy gaol; on his release he was immediately interned for two years in the Curragh.

When he left the Curragh he continued his work for the Republican movement. In his local Wicklow he was active in the Bray Trades Council, the County Council, tenants associations, and farmers' organisations. He delivered the 1966 Bodenstown oration which announced the 'left turn' of the Republican movement. When the Republican movement split in 1969-70, Costello remained with the Officials. Following the 1972 ceasefire, he became the focus for opposition to the leadership's opportunism. In December 1974, Costello and his allies established the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) which received its baptism in a hail of

fire from the guns of the Officials. It survived this attack, only to be the object of repression by the 26 County government which framed IRSP members, after torture, on charges of robbing a mail train. Costello was finally murdered by opportunists on 5 October 1977.

This pamphlet is a selection of tributes from friends and comrades, and a number of Costello's speeches and writings. The authors obviously think highly of him. Yet many awkward questions are skated round. Why did Costello spend four years in the Officials after their opportunism became clear? Why did it become necessary to establish a new political party, instead of allying



with the Provisional IRA? How could Costello justify opposing the demand for free abortion on demand, as he did at the founding Ard-Fheis? The pamphlet includes an obvious attack on the Provisionals, made by Costello in September 1976 (p67). Is this still true? Did it represent Costello's last word on the Provisionals?

While the pamphlet is interesting and informative, its failure to face the more obscure or awkward political events in Costello's political career diminish rather than enhance this tribute to a great Irish revolutionary.

SP
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● Loyalists launch sectarian bombing campaign

Loyalist sectarians operating under the name of the Loyalist Prisoners Action Group have launched a bombing campaign against Catholic civilians. On Friday 25 June they bombed a Catholic secondary school called Our Lady of Mercy. Then on Monday 28 June the Catholic Church of the Resurrection, off Antrim Road, was bombed destroying the boiler house and leaving a large hole in the outside wall. Both bombings were claimed by the Loyalist Prisoners Action Group and were allegedly in support of Loyalist assassin John James Somerville. Somerville was convicted in November 1981 for the murder of members of the Miami Showband and has been on hunger strike for one month demanding political status.

The methods used by Somerville's supporters are indicative of the sectarian character of Loyalism. The Republican movement's fight for political status consisted of a mass political campaign and a military offensive against prison officers and others directly associated with the 'criminalisation policy'. Loyalist sectarians responded to this campaign by a series of assassinations of H-Block activists. Now when a Loyalist prisoner is on hunger strike for political status, Loyalist paramilitaries attack not prison officers or similar targets but Catholic civilians, schools and churches. The Loyalists may fall out with their British masters, but their real target is always the oppressed Nationalist population of the Six Counties.

● The assassination of Peter Cleary

Peter Cleary, an IRA Volunteer, was murdered on 15 April 1976 by a member of the notorious Special Air Service (SAS). Peter's mother, Mrs Molly Cleary took the Ministry of Defence to court over the murder of her son. The hearing was held on 23/24 March of this year. Yet three months later, the judge has still not issued a verdict on the case! This is not surprising. The murder of Peter Cleary was part of a systematic policy of assassination of Republicans ordered by the then Labour Government (see The Communist Tradition on Ireland Part XIV in this issue). Any judgement of Peter Cleary's case would only contribute to exposing the whole brutal conspiracy which employed SAS assassins against the Irish people.

● Bodenstown Commemoration

Owen Carron, giving the main oration at the annual Wolfe Tone commemoration at Bodenstown on 20 June, reiterated the determination of the Republican Movement to continue its struggle against British imperialism until final victory.

'Our message to you is that the armed struggle of the Irish people is a legitimate and just war of self-defence and it will continue as long as the British aggressive presence remains in Ireland. The struggle in the North-east has been thrust upon us and we shall resist to the death should it take another 25 years, because we have no other choice and there is no other option open to us. The choice is stark: resist and fight on, or be trampled down into an even darker age than we endured under the original Stormont junta. The Republican Movement, therefore, wishes to affirm that the armed struggle will continue because it is central to the success of the whole campaign of resistance to British rule in Ireland. The military struggle of the Irish Republican Army is the only guarantee of success and it will demonstrate that there will be no compromise over our declared demands'.

Letters

First class paper

Dear FRFI,
I enclose a cheque to renew my subscription to your paper. I think it is a first class paper and I agree with most of the views expressed in it. I am glad there is at least one British left wing paper that tells the truth about Ireland and supports the Republican freedom fighters. Victory to the IRA
Yours faithfully
ML
Yorkshire

Dear comrades
I wish to renew my subscription to Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! I think it is a great paper and would not do without it.

I shall also send money to your fighting fund when I have it available. Continue with your great work!
Yours fraternally
AK
Kent

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SEND US YOUR LETTERS
We welcome letters from readers. Please keep them as short as you can

Principled movement needed on Ireland

Comrades,
Twelve Black youth have smashed a police frame-up against the emerging black defence movement in Britain. This is a great victory for all progressive forces here and against the whole torrent of repression engulfing Britain today.

In Yorkshire, again, the council has voted to ban plastic bullets which the police wanted to introduce to murder those that they were unable to frame. A senior police officer arrogantly declares that the talk of killing innocent people is nonsense. 'There are no innocent people in a riot' he explains. 'You are guilty or you are not there.' It is now open season on blacks and unemployed youths who dare to oppose this state.

The persecution of the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee and victims of the police rampage through Toxteth, the continuing campaign of arrest and harassment of those who seek to speak out on this and the nature of Britain's war against the Irish people are parts of a drive by the Thatcher/Kitson/Newman Junta to suppress all opposition to their rule.

The thin veneer of sham democracy which was possible in a colonial Britain which super-exploited millions around the world in a brutal and hated empire is now just too expensive. Irish Republicans who warned of this for years have been arrested, gaoled and exiled under the notorious PTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act). The arrest of your comrades on May Day and in Tooting a fortnight later are part and parcel of this drive towards a

police state.

I unreservedly applaud the admirable work of your comrades and appeal that all socialists, republicans and anti-imperialists support your campaign to defeat these charges. Had such work been done years ago then I am sure that the PTA could have been effectively opposed, plastic bullets and CS gas would not have been exported from Belfast to Brixton and the police would now face a better informed and prepared working class than it actually does.

It is essential that all anti-imperialists meet this challenge now, late though it is. It is a disgrace, therefore, that Clydeside TOM should enlist the support of the police in their disagreement with the Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee. There is precious little encouragement needed by the police to threaten and bully those speaking out on Ireland. Far from providing such encouragement anti-imperialists ought to be resisting. Whatever their differences Clydeside TOM are not justified in this action and would be better employed following GIFAC's example by agreeing to differ on strategy while supporting each other's marches and demonstrations.

I condemn the police attack on your organisation and the disgraceful assistance they have received from Clydeside TOM. I appeal to all genuine anti-imperialists to support your campaign to build a principled movement in Britain in support of the Irish liberation struggle.
Gerry MacLochlainn
Irish Republican POW
Maidstone

Rift after rift

I enjoyed reading your recent publication and was very pleased with your coverage of Ireland (Communist Tradition on Ireland Part 13 Institutionalised Torture 1976-1979). It really was a brilliant piece of writing, although it horrifies the reader as you read the catalogue of horrors incurred by Irish POWs and civilians at the hands of the Brits.

I have but one point I wish to make, regarding Irish solidarity groups. There is it appears to

me a war going on between the Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee and the local Clydeside Troops Out Movement. So much so that TOM asked and got police assistance to remove GIFAC members from a recent demonstration of theirs. With friends like these who needs enemies? Both sides claim to be on the same side as the oppressed people of mother Ireland's illegally occupied 6 counties. This kind of behaviour can only bring rift after rift and so help break up all Irish

solidarity groups and in the end help nobody.

I appeal for unity and co-operation between all sympathetic groups connected with the Irish liberation struggle.
Yours hopefully
MS
London

Good work

Dear FRFI,
I am writing to compliment you on your paper of which I have just read for the first time. It is uplifting to read a paper which reports the republican struggle and the fight for freedom by oppressed people all over the world.

I found your Sean Mac Stiofain column compelling reading. Keep up the good work.
MD
Manchester

Stop Press

Another FRFI supporter has been arrested. At the Roundwood Park Irish Festival in London on 4 July two policemen marched up to an FRFI seller outside the Park and demanded that he leave the area saying 'We don't want you here causing trouble'. They then gave him 5 seconds to leave, followed him along the street abusing him and then arrested him. At the police station policemen abused him saying 'We will exterminate scum like you'. He has been charged with obstruction and FRFI will be mounting a major campaign about this latest act of political censorship by the police.

DISCUSSION

Contempt for Marxist analysis?

Dear Comrades,
I am replying to BS from Manchester's letter entitled 'Workers Party is Wrong'.

Yes, it is important this discussion is taken up by communists seriously working to build the revolutionary party. It is encouraging it can be taken up in the pages of FRFI, in front of the working class. This discussion can only move forwards if it's conducted honestly.

The Workers Party did not and never has stated that the national liberation struggles against imperialism are not linked to the class struggle in Britain. My letter stated very clearly the opposite. I wrote, 'these struggles cannot be separated from the international class struggle which includes the British working class'. I also did not write that the steel workers and train drivers had won decisive victories against British imperialism. I said they won: 'decisive victories in the struggles to bring down this government'.

The Workers Party is not flying in the face of reality, it has never denied that millions of jobs are being lost. What is also reality is that the steel workers won 18% not 2%, British Rail have been forced to back down on workshop closures, and train drivers have not accepted longer hours. The Coal Board can't shut down productive pits, and London Transport cannot cut the

services they wish to. All of which the ruling class have to do because of the nature of capitalism which was brilliantly analysed by Marx. Capitalism cannot improve living standards or create new jobs any more. It has to drive down the working class to poverty level, put millions more on the dole, and get them slaughtered in an international imperialist war. To do this they have to completely demoralize and defeat the working class. The Tories have so far backed down from, been fought to a stalemate, or lost every major confrontation with the working class.

The socialist revolution occurred in Russia, whilst the working class were being slaughtered in an imperialist war, one which was entered into with enthusiasm at first by the working class, no doubt FRFI would have written off the Russian working class as totally useless. It was on a Marxist analysis of ALL the class forces that Lenin built the bolshevik party, it is upon this analysis that the Workers Party is being built, and it is this analysis which FRFI doesn't feel is important enough to mention.

Because of FRFI's contempt for Marxist analysis and revolutionary theory, it writes off the British industrial working class, and aids the bourgeoisie who are desperately trying to divide, confuse and spread defeatism in the working class.

SRH
Workers Party Member
London

'I was being carried with my head near the ground and my legs up in the air, all the while being hit with stick and boots. I could see a trail of blood I was leaving on the ground. My last memory... was seeing a shiny boot bounce into my face and strike me. I lost consciousness. I came to lying on a stone floor. As my vision cleared I could see that I was inside a cage, the likes of which I had never seen before.'

...It was an ordinary cell with a large cage front which cut the cell to half its normal size. I was locked in the cage.

...We were given one book a week and the food was thrown under the bars, just like an animal in a cage.'

*Jimmy Boyle.
'A Sense of Freedom'*

The infamous 'cages' of Inverness Prison in Scotland are still being used to brutalise and break prisoners who organise and protest against conditions in Scotland's prisons, which have been described as the worst in Europe. Four prisoners were sent to the segregation unit cages in May after organising a peaceful protest against conditions in Peterhead Prison, Aberdeen. Jimmy Boyle was beaten unconscious after taking part in such a protest in 1972 and was thrown into the cages, half-dead, tied in a strait-jacket and covered in blood.

The Scottish Council of Civil Liberties has submitted an application to the European Commission on Human Rights on behalf of Michael McCallum, doing a six year sentence, the

SCOTTISH PRISONS CLOSE THE CAGES



past two years of which have been spent mainly in solitary confinement in the Peterhead punishment block and in the Inverness cages.

We know that prisoners in Scottish gaols are suffering in these isolated Victorian fortresses. A relative of a prisoner now in Inverness has accused the regime of using sensory deprivation techniques, denying hygiene facilities and proper ventilation and exercise. No amount of lies by the governor of Inverness will stop the lid being taken off one day soon. He has described the accusations as an 'hallucination' and the prisoners' complaints as 'the product of a fertile revolutionary Marxist mind' in an attempt to stem protest.

Many prisoners are denied their rights - including the right

to get good reading material. FRFI has been denied to prisoners who have had it sent in. We are trying to make sure that every prisoner who wants to read FRFI is able to receive it.

PROTESTS should be sent to the Governor, Inverness Prison, Inverness, Scotland.
DONATIONS to help us get FRFI to all the prisoners inside should be sent to: Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

Any relatives or friends of prisoners in Scottish gaols who want to help 'take the lid off' Scottish Prisons please contact FRFI, Box 40, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.

Paul Whittaker

Prison Poems Prison Lines by Peter Wardlaw 30p

Available from Larkin Publications BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX add 30 p p&p

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HANDS OFF IRELAND

IRELAND THE WAR CONTINUES

As the British government pursued its imperialist adventure in the South Atlantic to its bloody conclusion the IRA during the same period served a reminder that Irish resistance to British rule continues as relentlessly as ever. Once again it has been the front-line forces of the RUC and UDR that have borne the brunt of IRA attacks in recent weeks.

On 11 June an RUC detective was killed and two other RUC men injured (one seriously) by a booby-trap bomb in Derry. A few days later, on 15 June, a UDR soldier was shot dead by the IRA in Strabane – the latest of many successful IRA attacks in the North-West this year. Three days later the IRA ambushed and shot dead an RUC inspector in Newry. On the following day a captain in the UDR was critically injured in a booby-trap bomb explosion in Armagh city.

During the same period the IRA also continued its commercial bombing campaign, with successful attacks on commercial targets in Belfast, Derry, Newry and South Armagh. The most spectacular operation of the last few weeks, however, was a mortar-bomb attack on Woodburn RUC/British Army barracks in West Belfast. The attack took place on 18 June and involved over 20 IRA volunteers. Ten mortar-bombs were fired of which nine hit the barracks, causing extensive damage to the buildings and mass panic among the occupants.

On the following day, as he gloomily surveyed the wrecked barracks, the Chief Constable of the RUC, Jack Hermon, expressed the growing demoralisation of the 'security forces' in general and the RUC in particular in the

face of such continuing IRA successes. Gone was the talk of just a few weeks ago of the IRA 'reeling' from the activities of informers. Instead, Hermon made a pathetic plea to 'the community as a whole – North and South' to help the 'security forces'. 'Unless this total community and country comes to its senses and helps the forces of law and order, they have a sad future', he said. He went on, referring to the IRA: 'There is nothing democratic about their methods, or those areas they attract their aid from in terms of weapons, explosives and training'.

In the face of continuing popular resistance, therefore, British propaganda, like the propaganda of the US government in Central America, is returning once more to a well-worn theme – that popular resistance to imperialism is nothing more than a 'Russian plot'. What such claims signify, of course, is simply the frustration and desperation of the British state at the continued strength and resilience of Irish resistance to British rule. The British state may have re-conquered the Malvinas but the last few weeks have shown all too clearly that its war in Ireland is as far as ever from being won.

Irish Correspondent

BRITISH TERROR HOUSES RAIDED

The frustration of the British state at its continuing inability to defeat the IRA has led to a stepping-up of repression in nationalist areas of the past few weeks. Punitive raids have been launched on homes in nationalist areas, especially in Belfast and Derry, with families being subjected to threats and abuse by the RUC and British Army while their homes are torn apart under the pretext of 'searches'.

The Twinbrook estate in Belfast has come in for particularly vindictive treatment. On 15 June a large force of RUC men and British soldiers arrived in the estate and proceeded to ransack the homes of the McDonnell and O'Connell families. When Mrs McDonnell protested to an RUC man he told her: 'You're new here, we have to do it to all new residents' – thereby emphasising that the real purpose of such raids is not to search for weapons but to intimidate the residents.

A week later four more houses in the estate were raided. One house in particular, the home of the McCarthy family, was very severely damaged – Housing Executive employees later described the damage as among the worst they had ever seen in the last twelve years. Using pickaxes, sledgehammers and iron bars the raiding party smashed holes in the walls, tore apart a staircase and ripped up floorboards. Toys belonging to the children were also destroyed and clothes and other items were strewn across the

floor. While the 'search' was progressing an RUC man told Mr and Mrs McCarthy that instead of taking them to Castlereagh interrogation centre for seven days they were going to make sure that they spent that time clearing up their home.

Just two days before this raid the Chief Constable of the RUC had attacked the 'undemocratic' methods of the IRA and appealed to people to help 'the forces of law and order'. The McCarthy family – like numerous similar families in the past – now know all too well just how empty such rhetoric is, having experienced at first hand the 'democratic' methods of 'the forces of law and order'.

Irish Correspondent



Mrs Emma Groves

Mrs Groves had to have both eyes removed after being struck directly in the face. This blinded victim of British army terror continues to fight. The raid on 25 May followed her return from a very successful tour of the USA in which British army/RUC plastic bullet terror was exposed. It was that which prompted the British army/RUC revenge on Mrs Groves' home. Not content with blinding Emma Groves, British imperialism continues to harass her. However, the continued struggle of thousands of nationalists like Mrs Groves shows that imperialist terror will not succeed in suppressing the Irish people's struggle.

James Martin

BLINDED WOMAN HARASSED

On Tuesday 25 May at 6.30am British soldiers and RUC officers burst into the Andersonstown Road home of Mrs Emma Groves. They searched every room and then left. Mrs Emma Groves was raided because she is part of the campaign against plastic bullets. She herself is a victim of this vicious anti-civilian weapon.

On 4 November 1971 at 9am the British army placed the whole of Tullymore Gardens in Andersonstown under house arrest – one of their repeated curfews. Mrs Groves, as a protest, got her daughter to play an Irish rebel song on the record-player. For this 'offence' a British soldier took aim and fired a rubber bullet through her open window

– a range of about *eight yards*. Army regulations state that the bullets should not be fired at less than twenty metres. Rubber bullets were not supposed to be fired directly at a person. However, as the case of Emma Groves and countless others proves, these 'regulations' are solely for the consumption of the press and other gullible elements.

SANDINISTA, IRA WE ARE THE SAME PEOPLE

The following are extracts from an exclusive interview printed in *An Phoblacht/Republican News* with Nicaraguan freedom fighter Orlando Jose Tardencillas Martinez. Tardencillas is a very determined and very courageous international revolutionary. He went to El Salvador to fight alongside the FMLN where he was captured and for 15 months tortured by junta soldiers. The El Salvador junta passed Tardencillas to the CIA and the US State Department. On 12 March this year, the US State Department organised a press conference in order to prove alleged Cuban and Nicaraguan involvement in El Salvador's revolution. Tardencillas was to be their main witness.

His speech was rehearsed with US officials 20 minutes before the press conference. But when he spoke, he astounded and dumbfounded his captors. He spoke of the torture he experienced and the threats of death. He went on:

'A US embassy official in El Salvador told me what I would have to say here, but they made a mistake with me because I won't lie against my people.'

He then told the conference that he had joined the FMLN on his own, and categorically denied that he was ordered to do so by the Nicaraguan government or that he had ever been to Cuba or Ethiopia for

training. He concluded his courageous stand by declaring:

'Now, since I've just said something different from what they wanted I know what to expect. I'm well aware of what's going on and what awaits me. I know whose hands I'm in. I am a revolutionary and one of the risks involved in being a revolutionary is death. I am willing to accept it.'

However, due to the international outcry and US embarrassment, Tardencillas was released and returned to a hero's welcome in Nicaragua on 15 March. In his exclusive interview with *An Phoblacht/Republican News* he said the following:

'But I am not a hero,' Tardencillas protested to a representative for AP/RN in Managua, Nicaragua, in the only interview he has granted a foreign journalist since his return.

'A Sandinista only becomes a hero when he sacrifices his life in the struggle.'

But, it was pointed out, his press conference clearly had demonstrated his willingness to make that ultimate sacrifice.

'I tried to die fighting,' Tardencillas conceded, 'because I was told I had only two ways to go. Like the North American (CIA man) told me, 'Death, or death' – but a slave's death, or death with dignity.'

'At least I revealed the imperialist lie. I wanted to try to die with dignity, as a revolutionary internationalist, with my head held high.'

'At the same time,' Tardencillas added, 'I wanted to make the imperialists pay a really high price for underestimating the consciousness of a revolutionary. I wanted them to see very clearly that a revolutionary doesn't break, doesn't sell out, doesn't give up.'

Tardencillas told AP/RN he had been inspired by the heroic *huelgas de hambre* (hunger-strikes) of Bobby Sands and the 9 other republican prisoners of war who had died in Long Kesh,

thus proving in their own agonising way that 'a revolutionary doesn't break, doesn't sell out, doesn't give up.'

Asked about his feelings of solidarity with the Republican Movement, Tardencilla asked that this personal message be relayed to the IRA:

'I don't just want to show the solidarity that I feel, the intimate affection for my Irish brothers. I don't just want to demonstrate the identification that I personally sense for the Irish struggle. But I also want to point out that our liberating roads have objective roots – that is, the anti-imperialist struggle and the struggle by both our peoples against capitalist domination and exploitation.'

'I want not only to express my sympathy and my complete adherence and militant solidarity with this cause, but also to express my willingness and readiness to fight, if necessary, with the Irish Republican Army.'

'I also want to say to my Irish brothers that their struggle is our struggle, their goal is our goal, that each victory by these companeros is a victory for us, and that each of our victories is a victory for them.'

'We are the same people, we are in the same struggle, we are the same revolutionary army, we are of the same cause, we are the same in being revolutionaries!'