

FIGHT RACISM!

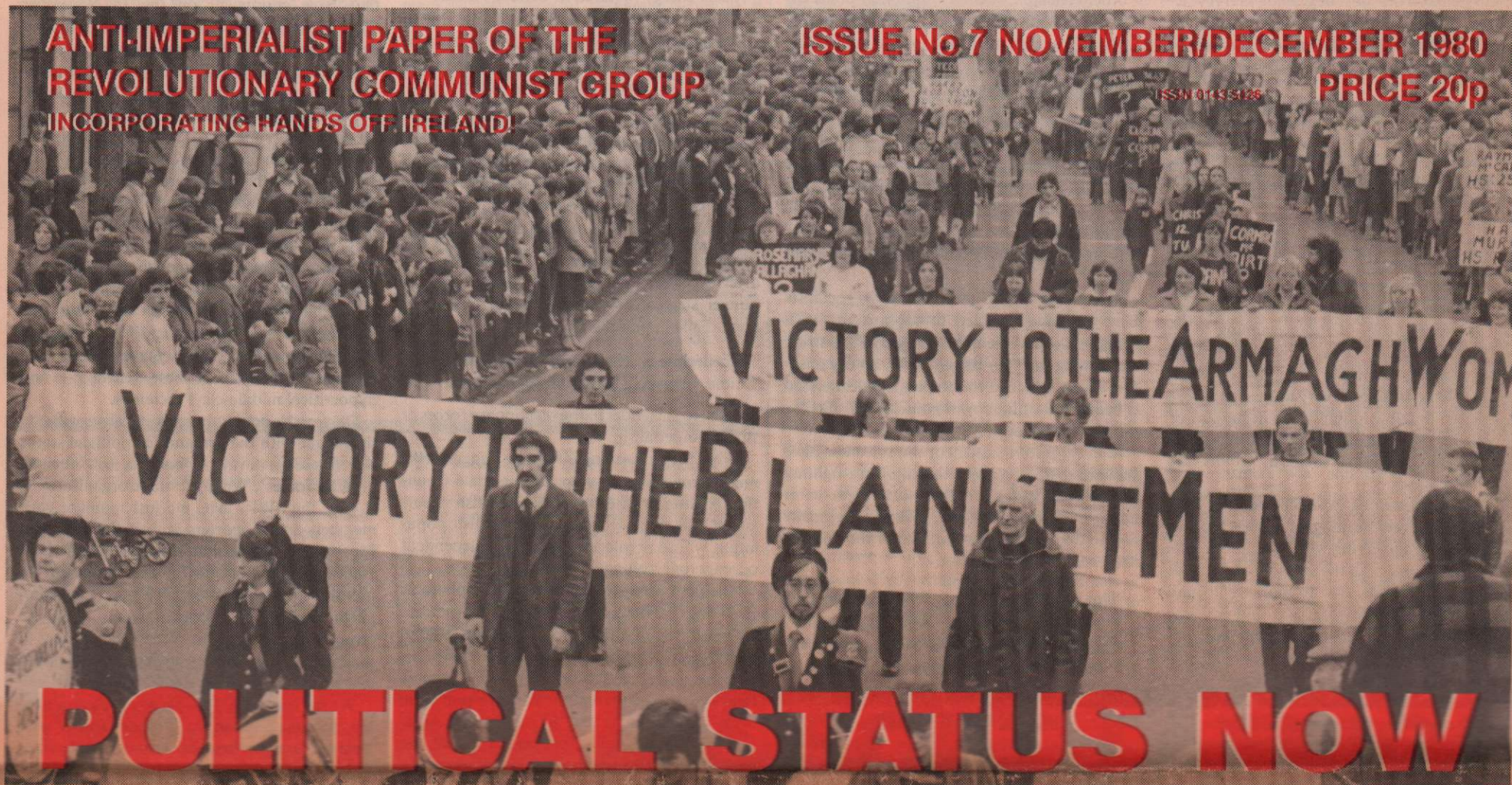
FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

ANTI-IMPERIALIST PAPER OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST GROUP
INCORPORATING HANDS OFF IRELAND!

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REPUBLICAN NEWS

POLITICAL STATUS NOW

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Seven Republican prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh have taken the ultimate step in their fight for political status. They are on hunger strike to the death to win their demand. There are now 500 prisoners on the blanket and the seven are their representatives. In their statement the Irish prisoners of war unambiguously declare:

'We, the Republican prisoners of war in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, demand as of right political recognition and that we be accorded the status of political prisoners.'

It is for political status, nothing more, nothing less that the prisoners have been fighting for four long years. It is to be recognised as captured combatants in the Irish people's liberation struggle that the prisoners are now on hunger strike. Against them is pitted the whole might of British imperialism, which in the past four years has discovered new lengths of brutality in its efforts to crush their struggle.

With the declaration of the hunger strike, the issue of Irish liberation has never been more clearly posed. Are you with the prisoners fighting for political status or are you with British imperialism in its cynical and disgusting attempts to depict the prisoners as 'criminals'? If today you do not stand with the prisoners then you stand with the racist and reactionary British state. For today the struggle of the H-Block men has become the central issue of the Irish people's war against British imperialism. Victory for the Blanketmen, winning political status, will be a body blow to British imperialism in Ireland and a great step forward for the Irish people.

British Communists do not hesitate to declare complete and uncompromising support for the hunger strikers. Their struggle demands the consistent mobilisation of revolutionary forces in Britain under the banner: **VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN! POLITICAL STATUS NOW!** Any British socialist who compromises, who fails to give wholehearted support to the struggle for political status is in reality not a socialist but a renegade and traitor.

The denial of political status to Irish prisoners of war plays a central part in British imperialism's strategy in Ireland. Since 1976, when the Labour Government withdrew special category status, British strategy has been to deny that a war is being waged in Ireland. It has proclaimed that the IRA has been beaten and that its mass support has dwindled, leaving what the British describe as a hard core of psychopaths, criminals and gangsters. This 'hard core', says British imperialism, can be dealt with by 'normal' police methods whilst the British army plays the role of 'background support'. A more grotesque lie could not be conceived. Yet this is the unspeakable deception with which the British state has tried to conceal its own reign of terror, torture and murder against the Irish people. A reign of terror against the whole Republican working class in the Six Counties. A reign of terror that has been necessary precisely because British imperialism in Ireland faces not an abnormally large number of criminals but a *risen people*, a people fighting to rid their country of imperialist domination.

Against the Irish people's struggle for self-

determination the British state has used every weapon in its well stocked armoury of repression: the beating, maiming and killing of Irish men, women and children; the use of undercover assassination squads such as those responsible for the deaths of Miriam Daly, Noel Lyttle and Ronnie Bunting, all well-known Republicans; torture and beatings in police cells to extract false confessions; juryless courts at which Loyalist judges pass 30 year sentences on young men and women. All this has failed to break the Irish people's struggle, has failed to weaken the mass support for the Provisional Republican Movement.

The desperate struggle in the H-Blocks is now the *central* issue of the Irish war. For the British state to be forced to concede political status would rip the mask from British imperialism once and for all. It would expose the truth that Britain, an imperialist state, is trying to crush a war of national liberation in Ireland. And the massive danger, for imperialism, is that this exposure would allow British workers to see the real nature of the Irish people's struggle and make common cause with it.

Both the Irish people and the British government know very well what is at stake. That is why the British state has tried every brutal means to crush the prisoners struggle. And that is why in the four years since the Labour Government withdrew special category status, the men in the H-Blocks and the women in Armagh have refused to accept the label of 'criminal' with which the British state has cynically tried to tag them.

The H-Block men have refused to wear the hated criminal uniform and so they have been held *naked* with only a blanket to cover them. They have been locked in their cells for 24 hours a day. The cells have been bare except for a foam mattress. In 1978 the brutal beatings which they suffered whenever they left their cells to 'slop out' left them no option but to refuse to wash or slop out. The result is that their cells are now awash with their own urine and excreta. The British authorities, dissatisfied with this level of torture, ensure that the cells are

freezing in the winter and boiling in the summer. Maggots and disease breed in the cells. The prisoners are denied medical treatment, which in the twisted mind of the British authorities is regarded as a privilege to be given only to those who come off the protest.

As a result, one of the prisoners of war in Armagh, Pauline McLaughlin, is so ill that she has wasted away to four and a half stone. In Armagh the women prisoners are even denied adequate sanitary protection, the warders throwing their sanitary towels on to the filthy *continued on page 2*

INSIDE INTERVIEW WITH IRA

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HANDS OFF IRELAND

VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN!

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floors of their cells. In the H-Blocks, the men are subjected to the most degrading and revolting body searches during which their thin and naked bodies are held down by six or seven warders while another probes their back passage.

Some of the prisoners have endured these conditions for four solid years. But none of this has broken their spirit. They have fought, endured and will fight on to win what is rightfully theirs—political status. With what heroism are these men and women upholding their part in the Irish people's struggle against British imperialism!

The Irish prisoners' willingness to lay down their lives for political status stands in stark contrast to the activities of those claiming to be socialists in Britain. Today when the duty of British socialists has never been clearer, when they should be straining every muscle to ensure the greatest possible mobilisation in support of the struggle for political status—all the major British petit bourgeois socialist groups are refusing to do so.

These organisations have decided, as they have done on every burning issue, that the alliance they are engineering with the Labour lefts is more important than the struggle of the Irish prisoners. They know that to mobilise around the demand for political status would not only bring them straight up against British imperialism but would also put paid to their amicable relations with the likes of Tony Benn.

That is why the SWP/IMG/CP etc refuse to mobilise on the demand for political status and instead pretend that the Irish prisoners are fighting for 'humane' treatment at the hands of British imperialism. Thus Jerry Fitzpatrick, writing in *Socialist Worker*, said

'The prisoners are simply asking for the right to wear their own clothes, to abstain from prison work, to free association, to organise their own education and recreation and to full remission on their sentences.'

This is quite simply a lie. A lie which has been repeated by Geoff Bell in *Socialist Challenge*. It is therefore necessary to put the record straight.

The Irish movement has formulated the five demands in order to allow liberals in Ireland

who do not support the revolutionary struggle of the IRA, to participate in the campaign for political status for the prisoners. This tactical decision was made clear in a statement made on behalf of Sinn Fein POW Department on April 27 which said:

'The emergence of such a campaign [ie based on the five demands—RCG] would remove any fence-sitting excuses from 'liberal' and other elements, and the 'non-party political' projection of the campaign would 'permit' hitherto uncommitted groups and individuals no excuse for withholding support' (*An Problacht/Republican News* 3 May 1980)

This is a tactical position adopted by the movement in Ireland—the oppressed nation. It has been deliberately used by the British petit bourgeois left in order to hide their own cowardly and treacherous refusal to fulfil the task of revolutionaries in Britain—the oppressor nation. That is to build a campaign for political status.

In fact the British petit bourgeois socialists have consistently failed to support the Irish struggle. Let us remember that Jerry Fitzpatrick is a leading member of the SWP, an organisation which attacked the Republican leadership as being 'full of their own political bullshit' for conducting the armed struggle.

In every public statement the prisoners have made it absolutely clear that they are fighting for political status. In the most recent letter smuggled out of H-Block, a letter specifically sent to *Socialist Challenge*, one of the hunger-strikers says:

'Our decision to hunger-strike was inevitable. We have long tried by all and every means, to gain our right to political status, which had been repressed in March 1976, but to no avail.' (emphasis added)

Despite all this the petit bourgeois socialists have all rejected the demand for 'Victory to the Blanketmen! Political Status now!' Instead they are making their mobilisation around the slogan 'Don't Let the Irish Prisoners Die!' A more dishonest use of this slogan cannot be conceived. The only basis for saving the lives of the prisoners is to ensure that their struggle for political status is victorious. Yet it is precisely this that the British petit bourgeois socialists refuse to call for.

Instead they have thrown their energies into the reactionary Charter 80 campaign. This campaign simply asks for support for the five demands. It makes clear that it is asking for this support:

'Irrespective of whether you support or not the prisoners actions, ideology or political affiliation.'

That this is no threat to British imperialism has been proved by the fact that even Tony Benn, Cabinet Minister in the Labour Government which withdrew political status, has found it possible to sign Charter 80, knowing full well that the only effort this demands of him is the physical energy required to write his name.

Charter 80, in fact, joins with the British Government in trying to depoliticise, in order to defuse, the Irish prisoners struggle. Thus on the hunger strike Charter 80 says that if the prisoners die:

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

And Chris Myant of the CPGB, one of the 'broader forces' supporting Charter 80, has, after two weeks of the hunger strike, with the hunger strikers now in total solitary confinement, called upon the IRA

'to declare a ceasefire here and now, for all time. (*Morning Star* 8.11.80)

That is, to surrender to the reactionary forces of British imperialism.

What they are saying is that the hunger strike might provoke a mass uprising in the 6 Counties. A bitter prospect indeed for British imperialism and those sections of the British population whose privileged existence is dependent on imperialist plunder.

The petit bourgeois socialists will reply to us by saying that the RCG has no grasp of 'tactics'. They will say that they are using Charter 80 to mobilise wider layers of the population, or 'broader forces' as they often put it. We know that this is not the case. We have put these organisations to the test. At the Hunger Strike Co-ordinating Committee, on which all the main British left organisations are represented, the RCG argued that the Labour MPs who had signed Charter 80 should be invited to attend the picket of Parliament on its opening day. This was rejected. Indeed Jerry Fitzpatrick argued that it should be rejected on the grounds that the RCG put the proposal only with a view to 'exposing' Tony Benn and the Labour lefts. Like a zoo-keeper protecting his prize exhibit, Jerry Fitzpatrick leapt to defend Benn etc against the possible embarrassment of being forced to back up his signature with action. In fact, of course the RCG did not put the proposal in order to expose Tony Benn, we believe

that reality does this perfectly adequately. The proposal was put because if Labour MPs took this step then it would be of real practical assistance to the campaign.

It is to safeguard their alliance with do-nothings like Tony Benn that the petit bourgeois socialists have sabotaged the campaign for political status. One example will prove this. At a meeting of the Troops Out Now contingent the RCG proposed a motion that the Troops Out Now contingent on the 15 November Campaign for Withdrawal from Ireland demonstration should become a 'Victory to the Blanketmen! Political Status Now!' contingent. This was agreed. This would have allowed a real alliance to take place, the socialists giving revolutionary support to the Irish prisoners and marching on the same demonstration with liberals and others giving support on a humanitarian basis. The very next week the SWP (in the ever-present form of Mr Jerry Fitzpatrick) and the IMG (Mr Geoff Bell) attended a meeting only for the purpose of getting this decision overturned. They succeeded. So a decision which would have meant the British left mobilising nationally around the demand for 'Victory to the Blanketmen! Political Status Now!' was rejected by the vote of these treacherous and hypocritical middle-class socialists.

Oh yes, the petit bourgeois socialists will say, they agree with the demand for political status but (there is always a but) 'it will alienate broader forces'. We say to these organisations, if you, the SWP, IMG etc just mobilise your members and supporters around the campaign for political status that should mean at least 10,000 people working for the campaign for political status. Around such a significant campaign fighting for political status could be grouped those 'broader forces' which may in the future, they certainly haven't yet, be mobilised on a humanitarian basis.

We say that 10,000 people who we know exist are more useful than the 'broader forces' who have yet to make their appearance on the scene. If those 'broader forces', including MPs, journalists and public figures come then all the better. They can start to raise their voices in powerful places—in Parliament, in the Press and on television. In the meantime let us build the campaign for political status which as socialists we are duty bound to do.

But the leadership of the petit bourgeois socialist organisations have rejected this course. Marx, over 100 years ago, dealing with the same types said:

'It is more important to make a concession to the Irish people than to Gladstone.'

We say to the members of these organisations: follow Marx. It is more important to make a concession to the Irish people than to the Labour Party and the Young Liberals. We say to the members of the British petit bourgeois socialist organisations, reject your organisations and stand with the Irish prisoners fighting for political status and Irish liberation. We urge you comrades, to join with us to campaign first and foremost for 'Victory to the Blanketmen! Political Status Now!'

History has shown that in the British working class movement it has been communists who have fought most consistently for Irish freedom. In fighting today for political status we are following in the great tradition of Marx, Engels and the First International which mobilised thousands of British workers to oppose British oppression of Ireland.

We are still at the earliest stages of building a communist movement in Britain. Yet we are sure that to build this movement, a movement capable of fulfilling the international tasks of the British working class, a movement capable of destroying British imperialism, we must place the question of Ireland, and today the question of the Irish prisoners, firmly at the centre of all our work.

Today communists in Britain must recognise that by fighting for the interests of the Irish people they are fighting for the interests of the British working class.

**Victory to the Blanketmen!
Political Status Now!**

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN! POLITICAL STATUS NOW PUBLIC MEETINGS

Liverpool

Friday 28 November
Stanley House
Upper Parliament Street
Liverpool 8
7.30pm

Manchester

Thursday 27 November
Moss Side People's Centre
St Mary's Street, Moss Side
7.30pm

Edinburgh

Wednesday 3 December
Edinburgh Trades Council
Picardy Place, off Leith Walk

Leeds

Friday 28 November
Leeds Trades Hall
Saville Mount, Leeds 7
7.30pm

Bradford

Wednesday 26 November
Room B, Queens Hall
12.45pm

Birmingham

Tuesday 2 December
The Crown Inn, Broad Street
7.30pm

Glasgow

Monday 24 November
East Room, McLellan Galleries
Sauchiehall Street
7.30pm

South London

Tuesday 2 December
The Club Room, Clapham Pool
141 Clapham Manor Street
(nearest tube Clapham North)
7.30pm

North London

Friday 28 November
Caxton House, St Johns Way
N19 (nearest tube Archway)

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION London

(called by Ad Hoc Hunger Strike
Committee)

Sunday 7 December
Details to be announced

FRFI GLASGOW OPEN AIR RALLY

Saturday 22 November
1.30pm
Exchange Square (Queen Street)
VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN!
POLITICAL STATUS NOW!

FRFI EDINBURGH OPEN AIR RALLY

Saturday 29 November
2.00pm, The Mound
VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN!
POLITICAL STATUS NOW!

NAMIBIA

Introduction

The interview below was given to **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** by **John Ya Otto – SWAPO Secretary for Labour – whilst on a visit to Britain to mobilise British working class support for the Namibian people's fight against South African occupation and oppression. As Comrade Otto points out this occupation and oppression of Namibia and her people is only possible because of British imperialism's direct military and economic support of the apartheid regime in South Africa.**

The results of this foreign imperialist occupation of Namibia are poverty and starvation for the oppressed workers and peasants. Black worker's wages are 1/25th of those of the whites, 50% of all children die before the age of five, workers live and work in the most appalling conditions and diseases such as tuberculosis

are rife. Every attempt to organise and fight against these conditions is met with brutal repression. 80% of Namibian people live under martial law, Rio Tinto Zinc (a British firm) has an agreement with the South African racist army to crush any labour or political organisation in the Rossing Mine. With British supplied weaponry and technology South African troops hunt down, imprison, torture and murder the freedom fighters of SWAPO.

This is the regime that British imperialism is actively engaged in supporting. Communists and the working class movement in Britain have a duty and interest to smash any British involvement in Namibia and Southern Africa as a whole.

In fighting in support of SWAPO and the Namibian people, communists and the working class movement should beware of the Labour Party and Labour Lefts, especially of that hypocrite imperialist Tony Benn. Benn has been prancing round the stages of Britain's speaking halls uttering his support for democracy and self-determination. But the working class movement should note that he himself when Minister signed the contract with Rio Tinto Zinc to supply British capitalists with uranium, in defiance of UN Decrees and of international law. In building support for SWAPO and the Namibian people, communists will not allow Benn and his ilk to cover up their racist imperialist role in Namibia.

FRFI: Could you explain briefly what the South West African People's Organisation is, and what its aims are.

JYO: SWAPO is a national liberation movement which organises and leads the broad mass of the Namibian working people in the struggle for national and social liberation. The people of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO will do their level best to end the illegal South African occupation of Namibia.

FRFI: Do you see your struggle as being against British imperialism as well, because of course British imperialism is one of the main bastions of the South African regime.

JYO: SWAPO fights not only South Africa but also international imperialism, British imperialism particularly in the form of the economic interests that she has in Namibia. Now British imperialism, by having heavy economic interests in Namibia gives all-out support, militarily, diplomatically, technically, to the apartheid regime in South Africa. So in actual fact the forces of SWAPO, and particularly the People's Liberation Army of Namibia, are fighting not only South Africans but also those who supply armoury and helicopters to South Africa: the British, French, Canadians, Americans etc.

FRFI: Can you say a little more about the People's Liberation Army and the significance of the armed struggle in Namibia?

JYO: The People's Liberation Army of Namibia is the armed wing of the South West African People's Organisation. I must say here that six years were devoted to a peaceful way of liberating Namibia. Until 1966 we felt that perhaps this was the only way in which we would gain independence for our country, but it has proved a failure, and it was only then, in 1966, that we made a decision to take up arms against South Africa. We are today also celebrating the 14th anniversary of the armed struggle by the People's Liberation Army of Namibia.

FRFI: Could you say something about the impact that the victory in Zimbabwe has had on the struggle in Namibia?

JYO: We have taken up arms against South Africa as the only effective means, of bringing South Africa down to its knees. As of late, three or four months ago, the liberation forces in Zimbabwe made it, through the Patriotic Front and gallantly and heroically gained their independence. This has been a source of inspiration to us and it has had a very big impact on our fighters. Surely victory in Zimbabwe is not only victory for the Zimbabwean people but also victory for the people of Namibia and South Africa. We have drawn much encouragement from their victories. We feel that our independence, the complete military defeat by the People's Liberation Army of Namibia of the South African forces that are deployed in the country (about 70,000 South African troops) will definitely come.

FRFI: Could you say something about Britain's economic interests in Namibia in order that our readers may see why British imperialism is prepared to give its support to South Africa.

JYO: Namibia is one of the richest countries in the world where you find all the strategic resources. Now Britain plays a very important role by exploiting these, and is heavily engaged through its company there, RTZ – Rio Tinto Zinc, which exploits the uranium. Now over the years there has been this wrangle to stop the contract

of RTZ in Namibia by Britain. The Labour Party, when it was campaigning for elections, promised that these contracts would immediately be stopped once the Labour Party came into power. But even though the Labour Party came into power these contracts continued. Now that we have a Tory government in power in Britain this mineral is still being drawn out very quickly. So this heavy engagement of Britain is perhaps one that makes Britain the leading partner in the illegal occupation of Namibia. Britain and other imperialist forces are the ones who are occupying Namibia illegally. We know that if Britain were to withdraw all its economic interests in and economic support for South Africa, then South Africa would have to withdraw immediately and end its illegal occupation of our country. This is why we feel that the only effective way is to take up arms against South Africa, and those who support South Africa, to end the colonisation of our country immediately.

FRFI: What do the Namibian people, led by SWAPO, want anti-imperialists and the working class movement in Britain to do in support of their struggle?

JYO: Well, we would very much like the working class movement in Britain to closely understand the sufferings of the Namibian people. There are quite enormous things that the working class in Britain can do to help in the acceleration of the independence of Namibia. We are asking them to impose sanctions against South Africa; we are also asking the working class to recognise and adopt Decree No. 1 of the United Nations that calls for an end to the exploitation of the minerals in Namibia, and for the workers particularly to refuse to unload the ships from Namibia carrying these mineral resources; ships that are bound for South Africa and Namibia carrying those arms and ammunition which are being used to fight against the liberation forces under the leadership of SWAPO. By embarking on such actions it will give us tremendous encouragement and will give a tremendous boost to our cadres, those who are fighting in the jungles of Namibia, to drive out the forces of imperialism from our country.

FRFI: As you have explained, SWAPO is waging a war against South Africa and against world imperialism, and in particular British imperialism. For the past ten years the Provisional Republican movement in Ireland has also been waging war against British imperialism for the freedom and unity of Ireland. Could you say something about SWAPO's attitude towards the Provisional Republican Movement in Ireland?

JYO: Well, SWAPO's position has been that of standing together with all those forces who are fighting against imperialism, wherever this imperialism comes from. It is because of that that we have also extended our solidarity with people fighting against imperialism, colonialism, fascism, the world over. We share our solidarity with the people of Ireland, those who are fighting against British imperialism, and we also share our solidarity with people in Latin America, in Asia as well as in the Middle East. We give full support to the people fighting against Zionism. This has been the policy of SWAPO with people that are fighting against world imperialism and naturally SWAPO stands together with the people of Ireland who are fighting against British imperialism.

ZIMBABWE



These Zimbabwean children can now expect free education up to secondary level

Since the liberation of Zimbabwe from the Smith/Muzorewa regime and the formation of the Zanu-PF government, the imperialist press in Britain has done its utmost to portray the country as if on the verge of collapse and ruin, disintegrating under the impact of 'political violence' and economic crisis.

The truth, as testified by an **FRFI** supporter who recently visited Zimbabwe is different. She writes:

The country and Zanu-PF do indeed face tremendous difficulties largely the result of imperialist oppression and more than a decade of war. Nevertheless, significant successes have been registered since liberation. During the war 75% of schools for black children were closed: Zanu-PF has reopened 95% of these and introduced free education up to secondary level. The government has rebuilt and reopened the health clinics and made health care free for all those who earn less than Z\$155 per month, which means 99% of the black population. Next month black people will vote for the first time ever in local government elections and this is expected to open the way for more drastic reforms and improvements in local services. Up to now local government has remained in the hands of the whites, who have continued in

some areas to harass local Zanu supporters. The government still faces the problem of 1 million refugees now flooding back into the country, but resettlement has begun. These appear to be small improvements, but for a country just freed from racist oppression they are significant steps forward.

Perhaps what is most impressive is the conviction of the people of Zimbabwe that the South African racist regime will have to be defeated before their freedom will be fully assured. The whole of Southern Africa is still dependent on South Africa economically and the imperialists are anxious that it should remain so. British imperialism in particular is attempting to sabotage any programme of land redistribution in Zimbabwe by denying the aid it promised at Lancaster House to buy out the white farmers who still own the best land. Likewise the other imperialist powers are now reneging on their promises to give aid to reconstruct the shattered economy. This is no surprise. Imperialism fought the liberation movement and tried to prevent the free elections which brought Zanu-PF to power. It is now attempting to destabilise Zimbabwe to ensure that the revolution does not spread to South Africa.

SOUTH AFRICA

The following letter written by a black worker to the South African Sunday Post is a clear and vigorous expression of the black masses' support for a complete and immediate break of all imperialist relations – political, military, economic, diplomatic, cultural and sporting – with the apartheid regime. It is a call for the complete and utter isolation of the apartheid regime.

Weaver, the People of South Africa Don't Want You Here!

Sir, Why is this black American Mike Weaver coming to South Africa? He should know by now that we, the people of South Africa, don't want him here because he says he is only interested in the money, and doesn't concern himself with the sufferings and indignities imposed on us. He says he is a fighter and must get paid. But we are also fighting, against apartheid, and we get no money for that. He says that he must fight to earn that money because otherwise his family will starve. But what I want to tell Mike Weaver is that if he is being paid that money by South Africans, he is causing our families to starve. We won't be able to afford the price of the seats at his fight in Sun City – it will only be the rich white men and maybe free tickets for that 'great leader' Lucas Mangope. The money that the white men spend is the profit they make from our work. Mr Weaver, I just want to tell you that. So when your family is living fat on the millions of dollars you have won, think of our families who are living on barely R60 a month.

(Signed) Angry, Kwa Thema
Sunday Post 28.9.80

This revolutionary statement, should be noted not only by Mike Weaver, but also by those spineless and imperialist English liberals who in one way or another try to justify sporting or other links with the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

It is a letter which should also be read carefully by British steelworkers who are today being thrown onto the dole queue and into poverty as a result of the international capitalist crisis.

ISCOR, the South African State owned steel corporation is directing a recruiting campaign at unemployed steelworkers in Britain. Through its London office and large advertisements in the Daily Telegraph, ISCOR is trying to recruit skilled workers to work in South African steel factories. Recruits are being promised 'positive long term prospects', 'low income tax', 'a standard of living as high as ever' and an 'outstanding lifestyle'.

ISCOR, with backing from British capitalists is now trying to exploit the unemployment of British steelworkers to further intensify the oppression and poverty of black working class in South Africa. ISCOR will not recruit and train black workers for jobs being advertised in Britain. Black workers are denied access to skilled jobs, they are denied the right to organise free and democratic trade unions and are paid starvation wages. Workers from Britain who choose to go and work in South Africa will be used as agents of oppression against the vast mass of the black working class. They will form part of a small all-white privileged strata whose 'high standard of living' and 'outstanding lifestyle' is based on the starvation wages of the blacks and on the ruthless repression of any black resistance.

Breaking all links, political, military, economic or sporting with South Africa is the aim of communists and anti-imperialists in Britain. Today this also means putting an end to ISCOR's activities in Britain. British imperialism not only fully supports the apartheid regime in South Africa, but by allowing ISCOR to engage in its recruiting drive in Britain is actively attempting to bribe sections of the British working class into opposing the freedom struggle of the black working class in South Africa. By doing so it hopes to divide and weaken the international working class. We demand the immediate closure of the ISCOR offices in Britain.

FIGHTBACK



GLASGOW 2

Since the last issue of FRFI, there has been growing support for the Glasgow 2 – Mike Duffield and Kirstin Crosbie, arrested under the PTA for selling *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*

Many sections of the labour movement have expressed concern about the case. A letter from Norwood Labour Party for example said:

'The GMC agreed... that it is very important that we support your stand against police harassment of socialist newspaper sellers.'

Trades Councils, like Stirling and Edinburgh have taken up the case and a steady stream of letters has been sent to the Scottish Office from Labour MPs, councillors and trade union bodies such as the NUJ Magazine branch. Ron Brown, Michael Meacher and Reg Race have agreed to raise the matter in the House of Commons.

Unfortunately not all Labour MPs have responded in this way. Stuart Holland MP for Vauxhall and a supposed left winger, refused to sign the public statement on the grounds that it was 'too extreme'!

Since these protests the police in Glasgow have been very careful in their dealings with FRFI sellers. But elsewhere in the country, in Manchester and in London, harassment continues. It is clear that a vigorous campaign like that mounted around the case of the Glasgow 2 can force the

police to retreat. Such a campaign – about the whole issue of police censorship of socialist and anti-imperialist views is greatly needed. The police are clearly determined to try and stop the selling of socialist and anti-imperialist newspapers on the streets of Britain.

Your support is still needed to help force the authorities to drop all the charges against Mike and Kirstin. You can assist the campaign by:

- Raising motions in your trade union and other organisations.
- Send letters of protest to the Procurator Fiscal in Glasgow, 298 Clyde Street
- Telegrams calling for all charges to be dropped should be sent to the Procurator Fiscal in the week before the trial on 18 December.
- Send us letters of support telling us what you can do to help.

● Send us money. We urgently need it. The campaign has cost us hundreds of pounds. Show your support for the fight to defend the rights of socialist paper sellers. All donations to Glasgow 2 Defence Campaign, 49 Railton Road, London SE24 OLN.

Further information, collection sheets, petitions, leaflets etc from: 49 Railton Road, London SE24 OLN.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF GLASGOW 2

We strongly condemn the arrest of the two *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* supporters Mike Duffield and Kirstin Crosbie who were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act whilst selling *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*, newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Group.

We further condemn their being denied bail and the fact that their first court hearing was held 'in camera' with both press and public excluded.

The fact that the charge against them under the PTA has now been dropped and a new charge of 'breach of the peace' substituted only serves to confirm that the arrest under the PTA was an attack on the democratic right to sell literature opposing British rule in Ireland.

We demand the dropping of all charges against Mike Duffield and Kirstin Crosbie.

signed by:

N Ahmed
(Editor Pakistan Commentary)
Tony Benn MP
Paddy Bolger (National Smash H Block Campaign)
Ron Brown MP
Ray Buckton (ASLEF)
Crosshill/Prospect Hill Branch
Queens Park CLP
Alex Farrell (Islington Councillor)
Paul Foot
David Hallsworth (Chairman, Tameside Trades Council)
Peter Hammond (Bristol City Councillor)
Eric Heffer MP
James Hemphill (Strathclyde Regional Councillor)
Ierland Komitee Nijmegen (Netherlands)
International Marxist Group
Iranian Students Society (Edinburgh)
Ted Knight (Lambeth Councillor)
Arthur Latham

Tom Litterick
Ken Livingstone (GLC Councillor)
David Marshall MP
John Maxton MP
Joan Maynard MP
Kevin McConnell (NEETU)
Michael Meacher MP
Nan Milton (John MacLean Society)
NUJ (Magazine Branch)
Reg Race MP
Jo Richardson MP
Scottish Council for Civil Liberties, Edinburgh
Dennis Skinner MP
SPTAC
John Tilley MP
Bob Wright (AUEW)
Rudy Narayan
Leveller Collective
Norwood Labour Party
Ernie Roberts MP

Persistent harassment of our sellers in Scotland has made us determined to submit formal complaints each time we are harassed. There are now eight separate complaints under investigation. Much has come to light during the interviews which are part of these investigations. Senior police officers have become extremely oily in their ingratiating behaviour. Much has been made of the 'bobby on the beat' not knowing the law, apologies have been made and assurances given. In their efforts to persuade us to drop complaints little 'confidences' have been given such as Inspector Linn's revelation that he had beaten people up. Senior police officers have referred to their men as 'rascals' and 'hotheads'.

Numerous overtly political remarks have been made during these interviews. They have remarked that FRFI was an 'unusual paper' and our work was described as 'operating in an area which attracts attention'. This presumably to explain why Mike and Kirstin were locked away for a week simply for selling this 'unusual paper'.

This public relations job by the police, no doubt worried by the extent and number of protests they have received about the case of the Glasgow 2, has now reached the level of farce. In Edinburgh Sergeant Ashworth appeared at one of our doors with his war medals proudly displayed on his chest asserting that he had fought the war for our 'right to free speech'.

HOLLOWAY 4

On 4 November four supporters of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* appeared in Highbury Corner Magistrates Court. As the trial opened FRFI supporters mounted a vigorous and militant picket demanding that all charges be dropped and an end to all racist police harassment. The trial resulted from the police breaking up a *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* street meeting on 21 June. The four stood charged with obstructing the highway, obstructing the police and illegally collecting money.

Inspector Gilbertson, responsible for the arrests, stated in court that he had waited four months before pressing charges in order to avoid publicity. It is clear that he needed the time to train his subordinates to give the same story in court. In both cases he failed.

In the dock all four police witnesses, whilst admitting that they had jointly prepared their reports, failed to give the same story. Inspector Gilbertson could be seen shaking his head in despair as his well-prepared story started to fall to pieces.

The political nature of the trial was demonstrated conclusively by one fact on which all the police agreed. One supporter allegedly res-

ponded to Gilbertson's threat of arrest by shouting 'I don't listen to fascist pigs like him, why don't you go and arrest a few shopkeepers!' What utter fabricated drivel. FRFI supporters are not the caricatures of middle-class radicals of the 60s which are clearly embedded in the minds of well-programmed police officers.

BRISTOL

Farce aside we have now been assured by Superintendent Cunningham that FRFI can be sold anywhere on the streets of Glasgow. In fact FRFI sellers at Parkhead have been left alone since the August and September events and protests. If the harassment has abated, and only time will tell, then we will have scored a major victory for all socialist newspaper sellers in Glasgow.

Bristol magistrates were forced to throw out one of the two Crown Court charges brought against two FRFI/HOI supporters at committal on 31.10.80. Remember PC Brain(less) – 'the most liberal policeman in Bristol'? He arrested the two with a third supporter back in January for selling *Hands Off Ireland!*. The initial charge of obstruction was imaginatively added to by this ambitious postgraduate so that by March there were no less than four charges including illegal collecting, theft and handling stolen property – 3 worthless collecting tins! Brainless' brainwave came unstuck in court however. The magistrates were a little confused by his inability to elaborate on the 'fact' that the said tins were either lost or stolen sometime between 1973 (yes '73!) and 1980, in an unknown place by persons unknown.

The magistrates had to drop the theft charge. Nobody has claimed the tins were stolen after all! However, the charge of handling stolen tins (the ones which haven't been stolen) goes to the Crown Court.

LUTON

MANCHESTER

On October 1st and 2nd, the latest *Hands Off Ireland* Defence Campaign trials took place in Luton. Four supporters appeared in Luton Magistrates Court charged with insulting or threatening behaviour and obstruction of the police.

The trial again demonstrated what British imperialist 'justice' is. The first day's hearings saw a succession of police witnesses give a most bungled and contradictory version of their story. It was clear that justice would require the dropping of all charges. The magistrates therefore retired 'to consider their verdict' or to be precise to consider what they could get away with given the total absence of police evidence. They returned to announce all four not guilty of the breach of the peace charge but guilty of obstructing the police!

The four were fined a total of £480 including costs. Donations should be sent to FRFI/HOI Defence Campaign, 49 Railton Road, London SE24 OLN.

A sixteen year old RCG supporter was shopping in the Moss Side Precinct when he was accosted by a security guard. Immediately he found himself being arrested by two policemen and dragged off to Moss Side police station. He was subjected to physical and verbal abuse. This abuse followed the police discovery of copies of FRFI in the comrade's bag. 'Oh you're one of these shits are you?' said impartial-upholder-of-the-law-decency-and-civilisation-as-we-know-it PC 2921. 'This is the rag that supported the niggers when they went on the rampage in Bristol, isn't it?' he added. As the comrade was Irish, he was also informed by PC 7642 that if his father was 'a typical Paddy' he would be out of work.

FIGHT RACISM

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE 1980

The 1980 Labour Party Conference was depicted as a gathering of momentous significance for the working class. The imperialist press reviled it – 'taken over by extremists!' – and tried to frighten its supporters by suggesting that the Labour Party had become a bastion of revolutionary communism. The petit bourgeois socialists hailed the Conference 'a dramatic event' and represented the Labour Left's and Tony Benn's victories as a great step forward for the working class and socialism.

The truth was dismally different. The Conference was an assembly primarily of the corrupt labour aristocracy and opportunist leaders of the working class. In their sordid struggles, it was not the needs of socialism and the working class, but the next elections and their careers which dominated their thoughts. And the 'victories' gained by Tony Benn and the Labour Left were very far from being victories for the working class and socialism.

The abyss separating the Conference from socialism is easily measured. A burning issue for the working class – that of racism and racist oppression was not even discussed. Only four motions on the subject were submitted – none got through the Agenda Arrangements Committee. In 1979 the Conference did discuss, but rejected, a motion committing the Labour Party to campaign against all immigration controls. A year later and a year stronger Tony Benn and his left wing allies, supposedly so

socialist, made no effort to ensure that a future Labour Government would end all immigration controls. They didn't even bother!

This was one face of the Conference – complete indifference to intensifying racist oppression of black people and the black working class. A refusal to discuss the defence of the most oppressed section of the British working class.

This distance between the Labour Party and socialism was measured yet again when the Conference 'debated' the Irish question. The imperialist ruling class, through the agency of the Labour Party, has for 11 years succeeded in retaining the loyalty of British workers in its savage and reactionary war against the democratic and revolutionary forces fighting for Irish self-determination. The Conference only confirmed that the Labour Party will remain an imperialist instrument for the oppression of the Irish.

The 'debate' opened with a large part of the 'representatives' of the working class leaving the hall. An eclectic motion, which did however call for British economic and military withdrawal from Ireland and for Political Status for Irish prisoners of war was then discussed. The supporters denounced the role of the last Labour Government and appealed for a return to Labour policy of 1920. (It should be noted that they forgot or did not know that in the '20s Labour support for Irish self-determination was qualified to exclude anything prejudicial to 'Britain's security' and that in 1921 Labour did not oppose the Partition of Ireland – the Labour Party has always been imperialist.) These speeches were like badly flawed pearls cast before the swine. When Brynmore John against the motion stated that granting political status would confer respectability on 'sectarian killers' there was no massive protest and outrage against this vile imperialist slander. Neither was there any when Alex Kitson, speaking against said Ireland was not 'a classical colonial situation in which the ruling power could just withdraw'. Indeed these two speeches summed up the mood of the Conference and the imperialist core of the Labour Party – the Labour Party will continue its imperialist work in Ireland. Not surprisingly the motion was overwhelmingly defeated. Throughout the 'debate' the Labour Left, especially its new messiah Tony Benn kept their mouths firmly shut.

Despite the disgraceful and reactionary performance by Benn and Co, the petit bourgeois socialists couldn't restrain their praise. Paul Foot of the SWP declared:

'There can hardly have been a socialist in Britain who did not feel warmth and solidarity for Tony Benn.'

Whilst Geoff Bell of the IMG wrote:

'The Conference was so dramatic, important

and exhilarating... dwarfs any gathering (of) the British Labour Movement for many years.'

This of a Labour Left and Conference which turned its back on the oppressed and fighters for democracy! Neither Bell nor Foot mentioned that Benn's famous one-month timetable of 'radical legislation' included nothing on racism and Ireland. Yet they promised Labour their votes:

'we will all do that (vote Labour) and that is easy.'

The SWP and IMG have opted for an alliance with the labour aristocracy. They are desperately seeking to salvage a section of the petit bourgeoisie which they represent from the effects of the capitalist crisis – at the expense of the oppressed and mass of the working class. How otherwise could they praise such a reactionary Conference.

Communists do not dismiss the few honest socialists in the Labour Party who really wish to support the Irish, who really wish to fight racism and build a socialist movement. We only say that this can be done **not with** the Labour Party **but against** it. This much was proven by the Conference. And today, as the subject of the next General Election, the next Labour leader and the prospects for the Labour Left become a frequent topic of discussion, communists declare that they will only vote for those Labour candidates who stand for the immediate ending of all immigration controls, the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and Political Status for Irish prisoners of war. For these are the issues on which real socialists can prove their honesty and dedication to the working class movement in Britain, in Ireland and internationally.

Eddie Abrahams

EL SALVADOR

The South African Ambassador was held captive and later executed in solidarity with the struggle against apartheid



El Salvador is a small Central American country with a population of 4 million. For decades it has been exploited and plundered by US imperialism in alliance with the local puppet ruling class. The people of El Salvador suffer terrible poverty: only 16% of the population has full time employment with wages as low as £6 per week, 75% of children under 5 suffer malnutrition, 61% of the people have no sanitary facilities, in rural districts only 14% of people have electricity. In San Salvador the capital city, over 50% of the workers live in mud or tin shacks, 60% of the land is owned by 14 families growing tobacco and coffee for export whilst peasants starve.

Against this barbaric oppression and exploitation the people of El Salvador have been waging heroic war. Under the revolutionary leadership of the National Liberation Front – Farabundo Marti, they have, since January 1980, been engaged in open mass armed struggle to overthrow the US-backed military regime, to establish a revolutionary people's government

and set about building socialism. The regime's response has been ruthless and savage – peasant villages are napalmed, armed squads every day round up and murder dozens of revolutionary peasants, the funeral procession for the murdered democratic Bishop Monsignor Romero was fired on and 200 killed, in the cities paramilitary squads assassinate trade union

leaders, workers and revolutionaries. Counter-revolutionary violence has this year alone resulted in the deaths of 7,000 workers and peasants. But the people are winning. Already the revolutionaries have taken over the Province of Morazan and established a Provisional Government.

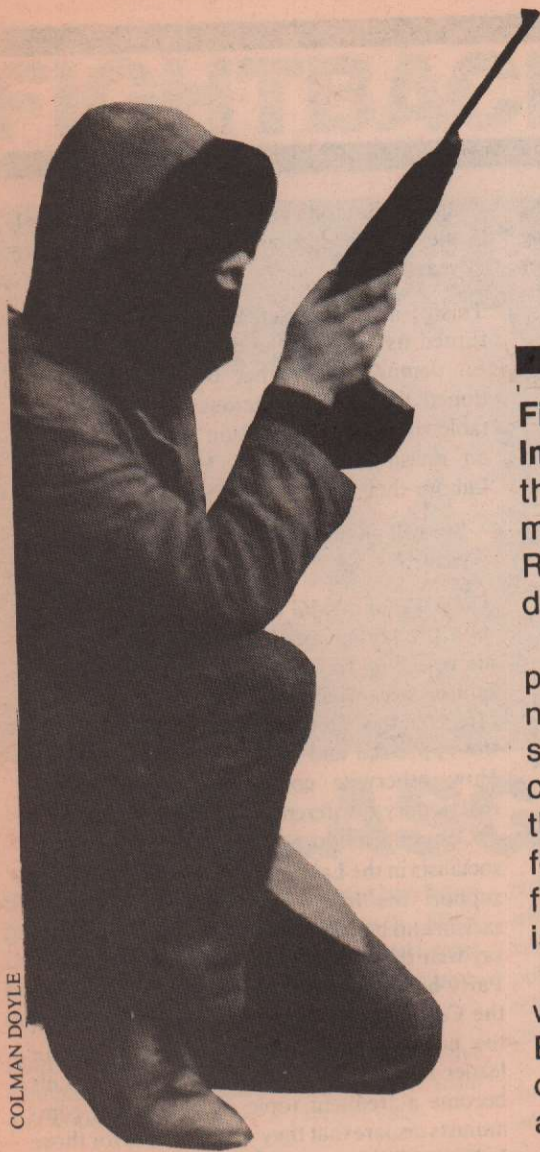
Amidst this raging civil war, El Salvador revolutionaries have demonstrated internationalism of the highest order. Last year they kidnapped the South African Ambassador to El Salvador, Archibald Gardner Dunn and this year executed him in solidarity with the struggles of the people of South Africa. As a representative of the People's Liberation Forces, now part of the NLF-FM, said,

'Kidnapping as a political objective also allows us at a given moment to express our

solidarity with the struggles of other peoples and at the same time to denounce some specific imperialist manoeuvre. That was the case with South African Ambassador Archibald Gardner Dunn. We Salvadorans feel deep love and enthusiasm for the struggle of the peoples of South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Palestine against racism and apartheid, against colonialism, neocolonialism and Zionism and for national independence and peace...'

VICTORY TO NLF-FM
VICTORY TO THE PEOPLE OF
EL SALVADOR

INTERVIEW WITH PROVISIONAL



COLMAN DOYLE

Editorial Note: The following interview was given to *FRFI* by members of the IRA in the border area. The interview took place in October of this year.

FRFI: There has been quite a lot of publicity recently about the increasing co-operation between the British and Free State forces along the border. Could you say something about this and how it has affected you?

IRA: Since Mr Haughey came to power Republican people in border areas have suffered increasing harassment. A lot of people thought that when Mr Haughey came to power he would be more sympathetic to the Republican struggle but in fact harassment has doubled and trebled if you take account of the number of houses raided and so on. There have been people who within six or seven hours of being arrested have come out of the police station and have had to go straight into hospital. In a sense we are more opposed to Mr Haughey than we are to Humphrey Atkins and Stormont.

FRFI: How do you mean?

IRA: Fianna Fail was formed back in 1926 by Mr De Valera and down through the years they have played the Republican card. Mr Lynch did not have a policy on the British occupation of the six counties—he just bluffed people. Mr Haughey has also bluffed people and to be quite honest he has bluffed Republicans too. That is why we have a lot of venom towards Charles Haughey. Our priority is to defeat British rule in Ireland, but the British occupation of the six counties is a straightforward colonial situation whereas when you see the co-operation that exists between the British and Free State governments along the border, and when you see an Irishman who doesn't give a damn about the Irish people and just bluffs people...

FRFI: Do you think people will eventually see his true colours?

IRA: We're denied access to the media so it's difficult for us to express our opinion. We can only go out on to the streets and tell people the truth through *Republican News*—this is the only way open to us. But with unemployment going up and up people will begin to see through Haughey. We have always been committed to a socialist republic, so Fianna Fail see us as a threat to their type of system—in fact as a revolutionary organisation we are completely opposed to it and we are increasingly conscious of this. We have no support among professional people, apart from a few individuals—the IRA is a working class movement. Sinn Fein has also developed and evolved as a result of the present struggle so that now the Republican Movement poses a great threat to the establishment on both

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! is proud to publish the following interview with members of the IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY in the border areas of the Six Counties.

It is our policy to open the pages of our newspaper to national liberation movements so that the British working class may hear the views of those who have steadfastly fought for democracy and freedom against British imperialism.

In its reactionary and brutal war against the Irish people, British imperialism has never ceased its lying, hypocritical and reactionary propaganda campaign against the Irish Republican Army—the IRA. The working class in this country is constantly told that the men and women volunteer soldiers

of the IRA are nothing but murderers and criminals. With Irish prisoners of war on Hunger Strike in the H-Blocks for Political Status this reactionary propaganda campaign will be intensified. **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** will exert every effort to expose and destroy this imperialist slander campaign.

The interview below shows, in their own words, the IRA Volunteers as working class militants dedicated to the fight for democracy and socialism in Ireland. It shows them as uncompromising enemies of British imperialism and of the capitalist system in Ireland as a whole. It shows the IRA Volunteers as a politically conscious vanguard of the Irish revolution for democracy and

socialism. Their views on the Labour lefts such as Benn, the concern they express for the future struggles of the British working class and their solidarity with the South West African Peoples Organisation of Namibia and the African National Congress (South Africa) demonstrates an internationalism which the British working class can only be proud to associate with.

The interview demonstrates, categorically and unquestionably, that the men in the H-Blocks on Hunger Strike for Political Status are captives from a national liberation army, are prisoners of war and therefore deserve and must have the full and unconditional support of the British working class.

sides of the border. Sinn Fein has increasingly got involved in social and economic struggles, such as unemployment, housing, and the trade unions—more members of the Republican Movement than ever are now in trade unions. Last year at Bodinstown Gerry Adams said that the Republican Movement must get more and more involved in these issues. The working class is absolutely sick of the established parties and they are now moving more to our way of thinking.

FRFI: So what you're saying is that you see the struggle in the same way as James Connolly did, when he said that 'if you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain'?

IRA: Yes, exactly. We're not risking our necks to have Charles Haughey sweeping into power victorious in a united Ireland—we are not going to exchange one master for another.

FRFI: It has sometimes been suggested that the military struggle of the IRA is a diversion from the political struggle for socialism in Ireland. How do you see the relationship between the two?

IRA: Over the last few years the Republican Movement has undergone a radical change to a more socialist stance compared to what it was in 1971 or 1972. At that time Volunteers were military-minded only. Now every Volunteer undergoes political training so that he understands the issues involved in the struggle and he is politically motivated. For us the short-term objective is to get the Brits out since it is they who control our economy throughout the 32 Counties, irrespective of the break from sterling in the twenty-six counties—they have complete control. So the immediate objective is to get the Brits out first of all, then work for radical social change. The other way round—working for social and economic change before getting the Brits out—will not work. You would be banging your head against a brick wall trying to achieve a socialist society before getting rid of the completely anti-socialist six counties state. Our aim is a socialist republic in the full meaning of the word 'socialist'. British politicians see a united Ireland as a threat, they see that a true socialist republic would be a threat, so Britain is

determined to hang on in the North. It is a similar situation to Cuba—the United States probably regrets that it didn't get more involved in Cuba in the period before Castro came to power. There must be some economic benefit resulting from the occupation of the six counties, but the main reason for Britain hanging on is the fear of a socialist republic.



REPUBLICAN NEWS

FRFI: Does the aim of a socialist republic create any problems for you in rural areas like the border areas?

IRA: I would be telling a lie if I said that there was absolute harmony on this question. At the last Sinn Fein Ard Fheis a new economic policy document was passed, with some amendments, and there was a great debate about it—but this is healthy, and any talk of a split in the Republican Movement is just rubbish. The Republican Movement has always been left-wing—the Easter Proclamation was socialist and Connolly, of course, was a socialist—it's just that recently this has been brought more to the fore. This campaign is not going to peter out—this is the final campaign—and so every element in the Republican Movement is being brought more to the fore. It's obviously easier to win people over to socialism in built-up areas like West Belfast, and it takes a long time to persuade the small farmer that in the long run

socialism will benefit him too: there is a very strong tradition of independence and self-reliance among the small farmers. Also, the rural population is deeply religious and it is strongly influenced by the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church has been a major stumbling-block to revolutionary movements down through the years. For example in the 1950's

Michael O'Riordan, who was General Secretary of the Communist Party, stood for election. The priests sent a letter round to the local people saying that they would be committing a mortal sin if they voted for him, and he only got about 200 votes. The Catholic Church has always been opposed to revolutionary groups and has always stood behind the status quo. So it's a slow process of gradually attracting the people in the rural areas towards socialism—it's not easy, but they are gradually coming round to our way of thinking.

FRFI: We have heard quite a lot about how the IRA has now been re-organised. Could you tell us something about this?

IRA: There is a vast difference between the Volunteers of today and those of the early 70's. In the early 70's at the time of the split in the Republican Movement and with the loyalist onslaught on the nationalist areas it was a mat-

IRA

ter of getting every man into the IRA to defend their own areas. At the present time we turn away recruits. We put recruits through recruitment courses involving counter-interrogation techniques and so on. After four or five weeks we can see whether they are suitable – if they are not suitable they are rejected. So the numbers of Volunteers are now lower but they are much more effective. The Volunteers today are much more determined than before. They are much more committed because they are politically motivated. In the early days people automatically joined the IRA and they would have just looked at you if you'd asked them why they'd joined – now Volunteers can tell you exactly why they joined. The IRA is now prepared for a long-term struggle.

FRFI: It's been suggested that because of this re-organisation the IRA is now more distant from the people. What is your view on this?

IRA: There are lower numbers in the IRA than before, not because of lack of applicants but because we are much tighter on security. Certain members of the Republican Movement are now selected to be known to people – but not Volunteers in active service units. So Volunteers are isolated from the people but the Movement itself is not isolated. At the last Easter commemoration in Newry, for example, we had the biggest parade that we have ever had there.

FRFI: How would you assess the military situation at the moment?

IRA: Over the years both sides have got more sophisticated. The Brits now rely much more on undercover work, so the enemy is much more difficult for us to identify. Also, the RUC are now encouraging vandalism in nationalist areas to try to get us to divert resources. People come to us for help rather than to the RUC because they hate the RUC, but if we don't help them people will be forced to go to the RUC, so this is also a problem for us. But we are still able to carry out successful operations. We don't believe in fact that there are that many Brits around now – they are being replaced by the RUC and the UDR under the Ulsterisation policy.

FRFI: But how do you think this should be interpreted – as an admission of defeat by the British Army or as an indication that the British government feels that it can safely leave repression more and more to the local forces?

IRA: There is no doubt that the British Army has been a failure. They can't put out any mobile patrols in the border areas. In Crossmaglen, for example, the Brits just send patrols round the village square next to the fort all day – they aren't go beyond that. Last Monday they tried to send a mobile patrol out from Crossmaglen to another village and the patrol had gone just 100 yards before it was blown up. We have intercepted letters from British soldiers in South Armagh and South Down which show how demoralised they are. Narrow Water had a demoralising effect on them and this has lasted right up to the present day – they are very nervous and they often open fire without any reason. There were in fact over 35 Brits killed at Narrow Water – there was a big cover-up. What happens is that the British authorities go to the relatives of the dead soldier and explain that if they admit that he was killed by the IRA it will only help the IRA and so help to kill more soldiers. So they get permission from the relatives to cover up the fact that the dead soldier was killed by the IRA. Of course if the dead soldier was an orphan it's even easier to do a cover-up.

FRFI: Does this sort of cover-up go on regularly?

IRA: Yes, especially in the border areas. It's much more difficult to cover up attacks in built-up areas whereas in rural areas many attacks are not seen by anyone. For example, there was one

occasion where two soldiers were killed by snipers on Carlingford Lough. We phoned in responsibility but there was no mention on the news. A few weeks later it was announced that two soldiers had drowned in an accident on Carlingford Lough. On another occasion a soldier was killed in a booby-trap in Fermanagh: it was later announced that he had been killed in an accident. It's not so easy to cover up attacks on the RUC or the UDR because they are local people, whereas nobody knows the British soldiers. In fact there has been this sort of cover-up right from the start of the war – from the first explosion right up to the present day.

FRFI: Has the increased harassment by the Free State forces along the border recently affected your operations at all?

IRA: There are occasions where it might affect us, for example when they set up increased road blocks and raids on houses, but they can't keep it up – it costs a lot of money. It's a bit of a hindrance for a short time, but it doesn't seriously affect us in the long run.



COLMAN DOYLE

FRFI: What about the arms dumps which have been captured recently?

IRA: Those dumps mostly belonged to the INLA – with whom we have some co-operation at leadership level but not at local level – or in one case to the Official IRA. Some of the dumps were just material that we had abandoned. We are not losing guns – the last gun that we lost was nine months ago.

FRFI: Why do you think that the discovery of these dumps was so publicised in the media?

IRA: To try to discourage people from holding weapons for us, and to try to suggest to people that there are informers within the IRA.

FRFI: Are many Volunteers captured by the British?

IRA: In the last eighteen months we have lost one man who was killed and one man who was captured. The Brits can't capture Volunteers, so they lift young hoods off the street – people who have been in trouble with the law in some way – and force them to sign confessions of being involved in IRA activity. The idea is that when it's published that a well-known young 'hood' is a member of the IRA this will downgrade the IRA in the eyes of the local people.



COLMAN DOYLE

FRFI: What do you think of the present situation in the H-Blocks and how do you think the situation will develop?

IRA: The H-Blocks are the major issue at the moment and every branch of the Republican Movement must now put everything into this issue. I can't see any solution to the H-Blocks except a hunger strike, although we don't want a hunger strike. The prisoners have now reached the stage where nothing has been won and the only thing left is a hunger strike. If they do go on hunger strike they will stay on it until death. The issue of political status will make or break the Republican Movement: the tradition of the Republican Movement is that every action that you do for the Movement is a political action, so if the prisoners do wear the prison uniform all the previous struggles of the Movement will have been in vain. If there is a hunger strike there is no doubt that the nationalist people will come on to the streets and there will be mass protests. Michael Alison said recently that the reason why political status was given in 1972 was that there was a mass outbreak of lawlessness, but if people die in the H-Blocks what happened in 1972 will seem like nothing. There has been a suggestion from the Churches that the H-Block issue could be resolved if we lay down our weapons. This suggestion in fact comes from the British government and it amounts to asking us to surrender. We have no intention of laying down our arms.

FRFI: Many politicians in Britain, especially in the Labour Party – such as Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Jock Stallard – sign human rights petitions yet do nothing in practice about the H-Blocks. What do you think should be done in Britain in relation to the H-Block issue?

IRA: It is very difficult in Britain, although possibly more could be done through the trade unions. The H-Block situation is distorted in the British media so we must get the truth about the H-Blocks across to the people in Britain. There are many protests about torture in Chile and other countries yet Ireland, where there is the worst treatment of political prisoners in Europe, is ignored. Last week Benn said that

there should be a united Ireland yet he refused to answer questions about the H-Blocks. He is just a professional politician trying to gain power in his party – he is linked to the establishment. Neil Blaney is a similar politician in Ireland – he is now calling for a united Ireland yet he signed internment orders in the 1950's. Some people say that if Benn gets to power there will be a great change in the North of Ireland, but the same was said about Haughey – establishment politicians are all the same.

FRFI: What are your views on other liberation struggles that are going on at the moment, for example in South Africa?

IRA: We totally support the ANC and SWAPO. If we can help such struggles in any way we will certainly do so. Volunteers are educated about other liberation struggles and we have regular Command meetings with Volunteers where we have political discussions, including discussions about other liberation struggles. We have provided encouragement to others through our own struggle because we have shown what can be achieved through determination – the downfall of Stormont and the splintering of the Unionist Party – and indeed the Basques, for example, have told us that they look to us for leadership. The people in Zimbabwe fought a war for seven years and they have achieved their objective through military means, and our attitude is – they have done it so we can do it. It is time people in Britain also got off their knees, because the Labour Party won't help them. As Lenin said, you have to make the revolution not wait for it to happen. There could have been a revolution in Britain in the 1930s if there had been the right leadership: at the present time, with unemployment increasing and with the militancy among black people, the struggle could really develop in Britain if there was the right leadership. Above all, the people in Britain should avoid the situation that we were caught in in 1969. The only thing that saved the nationalist ghettos at that time was the loyalists' illusion that all nationalist areas were heavily armed, whereas in fact this was untrue. We were not organised or armed at that time and we don't want to see people in Britain caught in a similar situation.

THE COMMUNIST TRADITION ON IRELAND

PART ONE

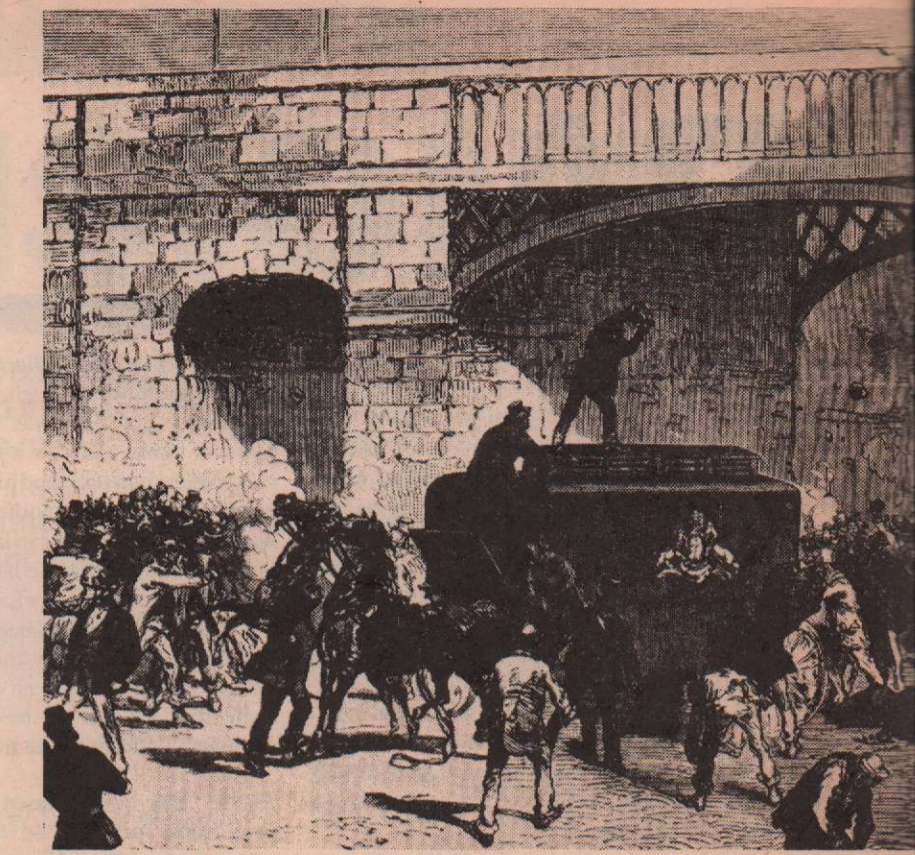
MARX AND ENGELS ON IRELAND

The article below is the first of a series of three. Today with the hunger strike in the H-Blocks, the need to understand and act upon the revolutionary significance of the Irish war is more urgent than ever.

The communist tradition on Ireland holds a wealth of theoretical, political and tactical lessons for us today. For communists the question of Irish self-determination stands at the heart of the British revolution. This is as true today as it was when Marx first stated it over a hundred years ago. Now as then Irish liberation is the pre-condition for the British revolution. Communists, as these articles will show, have always stood for the fullest freedom for the Irish people and have waged a determined struggle against those opportunists in the working class movement who have repeatedly betrayed that struggle. This series of articles is therefore of immense importance for communists and revolutionaries in Britain.

The policy of Marx and Engels on the Irish question serves as a splendid example of the attitude the proletariat of the oppressor nation should adopt towards national movements, an example which has lost none of its immense practical importance... (Lenin)

Over 100 years ago Marx and Engels laid the foundation for a consistent communist standpoint on Ireland. Through their work on Ireland in the First International they were able to develop a proletarian policy towards national liberation movements not only for the British working class but for the international working class movement as a whole. That policy, as we shall see, has lost none of its practical importance for the struggle to build a communist movement today.



The rescue of the Fenian leaders

The Early Position

Over a period of 20 years there was to be a fundamental shift in Marx and Engels position on the national question. Their deep study of the relation between Britain and Ireland was decisive in the change of standpoint.

At first Marx and Engels thought that Ireland would be liberated not by the national movement of the oppressed nation but by the working class movement of the oppressor nation. While British democracy, Engels argued in 1848, would advance much more rapidly as its ranks were filled by 'two million brave and ardent Irish', Irish liberation would come about as a result of the victory of the Chartist movement. The Chartists—the first broad mass revolutionary movement in England based on the working class—had called for the repeal of the Act of Union of Britain and Ireland in their second Petition to Parliament in 1842 (signed by 3½ million people). And in numerous petitions they had protested against the draconian Irish Coercion Bill 1847 imposed by the English Parliament. In an address printed in the first issue of *The Northern Star* for 1848, Feargus O'Connor the Chartist leader called upon the Irish people to fight alongside the English working class and the Chartists to win the six points of The Peoples' Charter. Engels' comments on this address and on the record of the Chartist movement express the earlier standpoint.

'There can be no doubt that henceforth the mass of the Irish people will unite ever more closely with the English Chartists and will act with them according to a common plan. As a result the victory of the English democrats, and hence the liberation of Ireland, will be hastened by many years...'

The early position of Marx and Engels not only applied to the actual conditions then existing between Britain and Ireland but also represented their general view of the development of capitalism and its worldwide expansion.

For Marx and Engels the modern working class, itself the product of capitalist development, was the really revolutionary class. It had no interests in the existing property relations—capitalism. The hostility between nations and the exploitation of some nations by others was also the product of the existing property relations. For this reason only the victory of the working class over the bourgeoisie could lead to the liberation of oppressed nations.

The greater the development of capitalism, the more heightened is the class struggle and therefore the political consciousness of the working class. The class struggle in England, the most developed capitalist country, was therefore the key to the liberation of oppressed peoples. This was given substance by the revolutionary character of the Chartist movement. Marx and Engels made these points

clear in speeches in November 1847

'Of all countries, England is the the contradiction between the pro the bourgeoisie is most highly deve victory of the English proletarian English bourgeoisie is, therefore for the victory of all the oppressed oppressors. Hence Poland must b not in Poland but in England Chartists must not simply exp wishes for the liberation of natio your own internal enemies and y be able to pride yourselves c defeated the entire old society.'

Further, and following on from the p so far, the worldwide expansion industrial capital was seen to play a role in developing the productive fo oppressed nations. While attacking t methods of English colonial rule, Engels, nevertheless, saw in the des obsolete non-capitalist societies and a production a progressive developm expressed this view in 1853 in relatio

'England, it is true, in causin revolution in Hindostan, was act by the vilest interests, and was st manner of enforcing them. But the question. The question is, can mar its destiny without a fundamental in the social state of Asia? If not may have been the crimes of Engla the unconscious tool of history i about that revolution.'

This was essentially the early pos emancipation of the oppressed peo be brought about through the working class in the oppressor natio of the oppressed peoples themselves secondary one.

The further development of capi the working class movement in Engl on Marx and Engels a very significan view. And it was through an anal relation between Britain and Ireland and Engels developed the new stand

The Revolutionary Position on Ireland

On December 1869 in a letter to En how he would raise the Irish issue in t Council of the First International, M

'The way I shall put forward the r Tuesday is this: that quite apar phrases about "international "humane" justice for Ireland — taken for granted in the Int Council—it is in the direct and interest of the English working clas of their present connection wit ... For a long time I believed that possible to overthrow the Irish English working-class ascendancy



The Land Question and the Fenian Movement

1846-49 saw the ravages of the famine in Ireland. The Irish 'famine' strikingly demonstrated how the colonising power creates poverty in the country it oppresses. The potato, which was the staple diet for the Irish peasantry was struck with blight. Ireland was short only of potatoes and otherwise full of food in the form of oats, wheat, butter, eggs, sheep and pigs, all of which continued to be exported to England on a considerable scale. The people starved and died in their hundreds of thousands. About a million people died from malnutrition and disease. Another million were forced to emigrate. Large districts of Ireland were depopulated and the abandoned land was turned into pasture by the English and Irish landlords. As a direct result of the 'famine' the population of Ireland was almost halved in 20 years, from over 8 million to less than 5 million. A popular saying of the time made the essential point 'God sent the blight, the English sent the famine'.

The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 led to a fall in the price of corn—a major Irish crop—and this meant that many Irish peasants could not pay their rent. They were evicted off the land—a process which increased depopulation. Finally the passing of the Encumbered Estates Act (1849) swept away debt-ridden estates which had to be sold off to pay creditors. Land concentration and the replacing of tillage by pasturage were the dominant features of this period. And in the absence of any compensating industrial development this meant that the Irish peasant masses were faced with a life-and-death struggle to survive having been robbed of their land. This was what Marx was referring to in December 1867 when he said

'What even those Englishmen who side with the Irish, who concede them the right to secession, do not see, is that the regime since 1846 though less barbarian in form, is in effect destructive, leaving no alternative but Ireland's voluntary emancipation by England or life-and-death struggle'.

The Irish question, said Marx, is therefore not simply a nationality question but a question of land and existence—a social question as well.



Karl Marx

'Ruin or revolution is the watchword'. The Fenian movement founded in the late 1850s combined the armed struggle against colonial oppression with the struggle against the eviction of Irish tenants from the land. It was this that gave it its revolutionary character. Marx summed up his position in a letter to Engels on 30 November 1867.

'What the English do not yet know is that since 1846 the economic content and therefore also the political aim of English domination in Ireland have entered into an entirely new phase, and that, precisely because of this, Fenianism is characterised by

a socialistic tendency (in a negative sense, directed against the appropriation of the soil) and by being a lower orders movement.'

The national liberation movement in Ireland by the mid-1860s had assumed revolutionary forms. This, however, only deals with the situation in Ireland. We now must turn to examine the effect of English colonial rule on the class struggle in England.

The Irish National Revolutionary and the English Working Class

The English ruling class was divided into two main sections—the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. The major political issues of the day involved conflicts between these two sections of the ruling class. The working class had in fact used these conflicts in order to forward its own interests, such as in the struggle for the 10 Hour Bill.

With this background in mind we can begin to see the significance of the other central points Marx and Engels made about English colonial rule in Ireland. First not only was Ireland a bastion of power for the English landed aristocracy but it was also a point of unity between both sections of the ruling class.

The exploitation of Ireland was 'one of the main sources of the English aristocracy's material welfare: it is its greatest moral strength'. And the domination of England over Ireland was 'the great means by which the English aristocracy maintains its domination in England itself'.

The English bourgeoisie also benefited from English domination over Ireland. It had a common interest with the aristocracy in turning Ireland into mere pasture land which provided the English market with food and wool at the 'cheapest possible prices'.

But secondly it also had an even more important interest. The concentration of land and the eviction of the Irish peasantry off the land meant that Ireland steadily supplied England with its surplus population and 'this forces down wages and lowers the moral and material condition of the English working class'. Irish immigrants were forced to live in conditions of unimaginable degradation and squalor.

And most important of all! The forced emigration of impoverished Irishmen to England divided the proletariat into two-hostile camps. In January 1870 Marx wrote

'...in all the big industrial centres in England there is a profound antagonism between the Irish proletariat and the English proletariat. The average English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers wages and the standard of life. He feels national and religious antipathies for him. He regards him somewhat like the poor whites of the Southern States of Northern America regard their black slaves. This antagonism among the proletarians of England is artificially nourished and supported by the bourgeoisie, it knows that this scission is the true secret of maintaining its power.'

The English worker sees himself as a member of the ruling nation in relation to the Irish. In doing so he turns himself 'into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, and thus strengthening their domination over himself'. The antagonism between the English and the Irish worker is 'the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organisation'. These words ring true today. The English working class by identifying with ruling class policy on Ireland strengthens the domination of the ruling class over itself.

The Irish peasant driven off the land formed an oppressed layer of the working class in England. It was looked down upon by sections of the English working class. The working class movement was therefore divided by national antagonism, while the ruling class were united around their common interests in the plunder of Ireland.

This led to Marx's third major point. A working class revolution in England required as preliminary condition the overthrow of the English landed aristocracy. And that, said Marx, remained impossible because the aristocracy's position in England was invulnerable as long as 'it maintains its strongly entrenched outposts in Ireland'. However the landed

aristocracy was most vulnerable in Ireland. The very process which had increased its wealth in Ireland has created a revolutionary opposition to its rule. The Irish peasant was forced to fight for national independence in order to regain the source of its existence—the land. The Fenian movement was therefore a central threat to the landed aristocracy and hence to a section of the English ruling class. That is why Marx said 'the lever must be applied in Ireland'. Unless the working class in England supported the Fenian movement by calling for the separation of Britain from Ireland, the working class would 'never accomplish anything'. A conclusion that has lost none of its force today.

Marx made the further point that 'Landlordism in Ireland is maintained solely by the English army'. It alone prevents an agrarian revolution taking place. And that Ireland was the only pretext for the English government retaining a big standing army which, if need be, could be used against the English workers after having done its military training in Ireland. Again a point worth noting for our understanding of the Irish question today.

To sum up the argument so far, Marx and Engels support, through their work in the First International, for the Irish liberation movement was not only to oppose the brutality of English rule on the grounds of 'sympathy' or 'international justice'. As Marx wrote to Kugelmann on 29 November 1869.

'... Both my utterance on this Irish amnesty question and my further proposal to the General Council to discuss the attitude of the English working class to Ireland and to pass resolutions on it have of course other objects besides that of speaking out loudly and decidedly for the oppressed Irish against their oppressors.'

Those 'other objects' were precisely to separate the policy of the working class with regard to Ireland most definitely from the policy of the ruling class. Only by making 'common cause with the Irish' and taking the initiative in dissolving the Act of Union could the working class lay down the basis for its own emancipation. This was inevitably to put Marx into conflict with those opportunist leaders of the English labour movement who wanted to follow Gladstone and the leaders of the liberal bourgeoisie. The Irish question then as today posed the very practical question of the struggle against opportunism in the labour movement. As Engels was to remark much later on being asked about the attitude of the English workers to the Irish movement

'The masses are for the Irish. The organisations and the labour aristocracy in general, follow Gladstone and the liberal bourgeois and do not go any further than these.'

Unless the working class were broken from their opportunist leaders who were hand in glove with the ruling class on Ireland, the English working class 'would never accomplish anything'.

The First International and Ireland

Marx and Engels not only regarded the Irish question as critical for the class struggle in England but also internationally. England the dominant world power at that time was the 'most important country for the workers' revolution' being the 'only country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain degree of maturity'. To hasten the social revolution in England said Marx, in a letter to Meyer and Vogt on 9 April 1870, 'is the most important object of the International'. The sole means of doing this is to make Ireland independent. Marx explained in a letter to the Lafargues on 5 March 1870

'To accelerate the social development in Europe, you must push on the catastrophe of official England. To do so, you must attack her in Ireland. That's her weakest point. Ireland lost, the British "Empire" is gone, and the class war in England, till now somnolent and chronic will assume acute forms...'

Therefore the task of the International was everywhere to put the 'conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground and everywhere to side openly with the Irish'.

continued overleaf

MARX AND ENGELS ON IRELAND

continued from page 9

The International took up the Irish question on many occasions. It played a leading role in defending the Irish liberation struggle and fighting for the rights of Fenian prisoners.

In 1865 the Fenians made plans for an armed uprising but due to the activities of informers this did not take place, and some of the leaders of the movement were arrested. The Fenian newspapers were suppressed and Habeas Corpus suspended. The General Council of the International supported a campaign started in England in defence of Fenian prisoners. Then as now the British government treated the Irish political prisoners in the most barbaric fashion. Of note was the Pentonville separate system where the prisoners were kept in solitary confinement and not allowed any association. Any breach of discipline was met by flogging and a regime of bread and water in a dark cell for 28 days. Many prisoners were driven insane by this system. The H-Blocks, the control units, the beatings of Irish political prisoners today show how little has changed.

The General Council made sure that wide publicity was given in the press to the barbaric treatment of Irish prisoners, and it supported appeals to collect funds for families of Irish prisoners.

In February-March 1867, the armed uprising, for which the Fenians had long prepared, suffered defeat. Many leaders were arrested and put on trial. On 18 September 1867, in Manchester, an armed attack on a police van was organised to release two Fenian leaders. Their escape was a success but during the clash a police officer was killed. Large numbers of Irishmen were soon arbitrarily rounded up. Five were put on trial for their lives accused of killing the policeman. In this patently rigged trial they were all found guilty and sentenced to death. A wave of protest in England and Ireland took place. Marx and his supporters won the International to a call for the commutation of the death sentence.

In the discussion which took place at that time in the General Council of the International, Dupont, a supporter of Marx defended the Fenian movement. He attacked those 'English would-be liberators' who argued that 'Fenianism is not altogether wrong' but asked why they did not employ 'the legal means of meetings and demonstrations by the aid of which we have gained our Reform Bill?'. Dupont gave an answer that still serves for those English 'would-be liberators' of the Irish people today.

'What is the use of talking of legal means to a people reduced to the lowest state of misery from century to century by English oppression... Having destroyed all—life and liberty—be not surprised that nothing should be found but hatred for the oppressor... Is it well for the English to talk of legality and justice to those who on the slightest suspicion of Fenianism are arrested and incarcerated and subjected to physical and mental torture?... The English working men who blame the Fenians commit more than a fault, for the cause of both peoples is the same; they have the same enemy to defeat—the territorial aristocracy and the capitalists'.

A bitter debate took place in the Reform League—a movement for Suffrage reform which had six members of the General Council on its standing committee—over a letter in which its President, Beales, while approving the objects of the Fenians had condemned their tactics. He was attacked on the Council of the League and most strongly by members who sat on the General Council of the International—Lucraft, Odger and Weston, the former being prominent British trade union leaders. The Irish they maintained had every right to use force since force was used to deny them their freedom.

A widespread attack in the Press on the Reform League, and Lucraft and Odger in particular, for encouraging Fenian assassins followed. This pleased Marx greatly. As he

wrote to Engels on 2 November 1867

'You will have seen what a row "our people" kicked up in the Reform League, I have sought in every way to provoke this manifestation of the English workers in support of Fenianism'

After this the bourgeois radical leaders in the Reform League put pressure on Odger and Lucraft to withdraw their statement. At the next meeting of the League's Council Lucraft and Odger went back on their position saying that they had been misunderstood. This highlighted the problems which would later need to be confronted.

Nevertheless there was great support among the working class for the Fenians, which caused Engels to remark in a letter to Kugelmann on 8 November 1867

'... The London proletarians declare every day more and more openly for the Fenians, and hence—an-unheard-of and splendid thing here—for, first, a violent, and secondly an anti-English movement'

In spite of the widespread campaign, three of the Fenian prisoners were brutally executed. Engels' comments on this also apply today

'The Southerners (in the American Civil War) had at least the decency to treat John Brown as a rebel, whereas here everything is being done to transform a political attempt into a common crime'.

Just as is being done in the H-Blocks today.

The next major campaign on the issue of Irish prisoners occurred towards the end of 1869. The International helped to organise a mass demonstration in London, estimated at nearly 100,000 people, in support of the demand for amnesty for Irish political prisoners. A discussion took place in the International in November 1869 in the period when Marx put forward the revolutionary position on Ireland.

At these sessions of the General Council Marx in supporting the Irish struggle, drove a wedge between the labour movement and Gladstone. In calling for an amnesty for Irish political prisoners, Marx attacked the hypocrisy of Gladstone who before the election 'had justified the Fenian insurrection and said that every other nation would have revolted under similar circumstances' and after being elected had done nothing. Further when faced with a popular amnesty movement and a petition of 200,000 signatures calling for an amnesty he again did nothing. He tried to excuse himself on the grounds that 'the prisoners have not abandoned their designs which were cut short by imprisonment'. Gladstone, Marx said, 'wants them to renounce their principles, to degrade them morally'. Exactly what the British government is trying to do today.

Marx also told the General Council how Dr M'Donnell's letters objecting to the treatment of untried prisoners in Mountjoy led to his dismissal and the promotion of the official who had suppressed his letters. Little has changed when we remember the attempt of the British authorities to smear Robert Irwin the Police Surgeon because of his revelations about

torture of Irish prisoners in the period leading to the Bennett Report.

To Gladstone's argument that the 'Fenians were tried according to lawful custom and found guilty by a jury of their own countrymen' Marx replied

'If a poacher is tried by a jury of country squires he is tried by his countrymen. It is notorious that the Irish juries are made up of purveyors to the castle whose bread depends on their verdict. Oppression is always a lawful custom'

Judges in Ireland, he told the General Council, cannot be independent as their promotion depends on how they serve the government. Today the British have done away with even the pretence of justice. They leave the decision of guilt and sentencing to Loyalist judges.

Marx ended his contribution by proposing a resolution which accused Gladstone of 'deliberately insulting the Irish nation', attacked the conduct of the government and supported the amnesty movement.

The discussion of Marx's contribution is important. The attack on Gladstone was clearly too much for some of the English members of the General Council. Odger objected to demands made on the government for the 'unconditional release' of the prisoners. While being himself, of course, for their release he argued 'it is impolitic to proceed in that way, it prejudices the case'. He then went on to defend Gladstone. Marx in answer to Odger reminded him that the resolution was one of support for the Irish and a review of the conduct of the government, and that 'it is more important to make a concession to the Irish people than to Gladstone'. A point which strikes home against those British left groups who are making all the concessions to the Labour Party and the Young Liberals in the struggle to defend Irish political prisoners today.

Mottershead regretted that Englishmen applauded the statement of Marx. Ireland he said, could not be independent. It would undermine the security of Britain. 'If we relinquish our hold, it would only be asking the French to walk in'. He then went on to defend Gladstone. The issue of the security of Britain was to be critical to the Labour Party position in 1920-1.

Three English trade unions left the International because of its principled position on the Fenians. While this certainly shows the political bankruptcy of these unions, the debates also show the important effect which Marx's revolutionary stand in support of the Irish had in exposing the opportunist leaders of the British labour movement.

Nationalism and Internationalism

There is still one more important dispute which took place in the International on the Irish question. This time it was Engels who put forward the internationalist standpoint. At the Council Meeting of 14 May 1872, John Hales, an English trade unionist and secretary to the General Council, opposed the formation of Irish nationalist branches of the International in England. He argued that such branches went

against the 'fundamental principle of the Association' which was 'to destroy all semblance of nationalist doctrine'. Further the formation of Irish branches in England 'could only keep alive that national antagonism which... existed between the people of the two countries'.

Engels' reply to Hales is of great importance. His essential argument was that in the case of the Irish, true internationalism must necessarily be based upon a distinct national organisation which had as its first and most pressing duty the national independence of Ireland. He argued that it was an insult to Irish working men to ask them to submit to a British Federal Council.

'If members of a conquering nation called upon the nation they had conquered and continued to hold down to forget their specific nationality and position, to "sink national differences" and so forth, that was not Internationalism, it was nothing but preaching to them submission to the yoke, and attempting to justify and to perpetuate the dominion of the conqueror under the cloak of Internationalism. It was sanctioning the belief, all too common among the English working men, that they were superior beings compared to the Irish...'

He argued that if the motion were adopted 'after the dominion of the English aristocracy over Ireland, after the dominion of the middle class over Ireland, (the Irish) must now look forth to the advent of the dominion of the English working class over Ireland'. Engels was fully aware that the antagonism between the Irish and English working class in England had been 'the most powerful means by which class rule was upheld in England'. Now, he said, for the first time when there were possibilities of English and Irish workers acting together in their joint interests, the International was being asked to dictate to the Irish. They were being told that they must not carry on the movement in their own way but submit to be ruled by an English Council.

The Hales motion was put and lost with only one voting in favour. Engels' intervention had prevented the International undermining its own cause among Irish workers.

Engels' intervention was to be clearly vindicated in November 1872. The Irish members of the International in London decided to organise a massive demonstration in Hyde Park to demand a general amnesty for Irish prisoners. They contacted all London's democratic organisations and set up a committee which included MacDonnell (an Irishman), Murray (an Englishman) and Lessner (a German)—all members of the last General Council of the International. There was a new regulation in force which gave the government the right to control public meetings in London's parks. Two days written notice had to be given of such meetings, indicating the names of the speakers. The Irish, said Engels in his report of the event, 'who represent the most revolutionary element of the population' were not prepared to submit to this regulation seeing it as an attack on one of the people's rights. The committee unanimously agreed to this stand.

The massive demonstration took place as arranged, some 35,000 being there and hearing 'forceful' speeches demanding a general amnesty and a repeal of the Coercion Laws. This was the first time an Irish demonstration had been held in Hyde Park. It was also the first time the English and Irish sections of the population had united in friendship. As Engels said 'this gratifying fact is due principally to the influence of the last General Council of the International, which has always directed all its efforts to unite the workers of both peoples on a basis of complete equality'. He ended his report of the demonstration by saying that the Irish through their energetic efforts had saved the right of the people of London to hold meetings in parks 'when and how they please'.

The British left today, who under the cover of Hales' chauvinist conception of internationalism, feel it their duty to criticise and withdraw their support from the Irish liberation movement, must be made to understand that they only destroy any possibility of united action between the Irish and British working class against the common enemy—the British ruling class.

David Reed November 1980



Greensboro

One-third of all textile workers in the United States work in the state of North Carolina, which has the lowest percentage of workers belonging to unions and where the lowest hourly industrial wage rate prevails. Moreover, ten per cent of the country's estimated 10,500 Ku Klux Klan members live in the state of North Carolina.

The city of Greensboro, with a population of 165,000, is the second largest city in North Carolina and a center of the textile industry. It has always been known as a 'company town' of the Cone Mills corporation. It has tried to maintain a moderately progressive and racially untroubled public image since the first lunch-counter sit-ins of the civil rights movement began there in 1960, but that image was blown away on 3 November, 1979, in a Greensboro housing project when five anti-Klan demonstrators were murdered with the cooperation of the Greensboro police department.

Ambush!

Half an hour before an anti-Klan rally organized by the Communist Workers Party USA was to begin, eight cars and a van loaded with forty armed Klansmen and Nazis, led by an FBI informant, drove into the site of the rally, where they opened fire on the crowd of about one hundred killing five leading members of the Communist Workers Party (CWP).

Other than the rally organizers, only the Greensboro Police Department knew the actual site of the anti-Klan rally. Though publicly announced to start at another location, the permit to demonstrate was filed with the Greensboro Police for Morningside Houses, a project in the black community. Although it is legal in North Carolina to bear arms openly, a special ordinance was issued by the Greensboro police denying the CWP the right to carry open or concealed weapons on 3 November. No police officers were on the scene at the start of the demonstration that Saturday morning, the demonstrators were unarmed and unprotected when the caravan of Klansmen arrived, although that day the police had called out extra men on duty, including the tactical squad trained to deal with riots. It can only be assumed that the Greensboro Police Department leaked the actual location of the rally to the Klan, who were then allowed to ambush the demonstration while the police looked the other way. Not only was this police complicity in setting up the ambush immediately obvious, but also obvious was the fact that the five CWP anti-Klan demonstrators killed were all struck in the head and upper-body, hallmarks of deliberate assassination by expert marksmen. Only after the killers left the area did the Greensboro police arrive and proceed to arrest the surviving CWP members for 'inciting to riot'.

All five victims were well-known labor organizers in local mills and CWP leaders. Using the KKK and Nazis as a cover, a team of professional assassins had moved in on the demonstration and with the non-interference of the police guaranteed, with military precision opened fire on the crowd. The ambush was obviously pre-planned and conducted as a military operation. Eight vehicles drove up the street past the gathering demonstrators. A shot was fired in the air from the first car. As the crowd began to run for cover, or in some cases advanced in protection of the demonstration armed only with placards and sticks, the Klansmen began firing, striking pre-selected targets with professional accuracy.

Only two vehicles containing twelve self-identified Klansmen and Nazis, were apprehended by police. At least six other vehicles and more than 30 men who participated in the ambush caravan were never caught or identified. Another two Klansmen, and later a third, were arrested on charges of murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

As the story hit front page in newspapers all over the US, the White House dispatched 24 federal agents in order to investigate, not the KKK and Nazis, but the CWP, around which a net of surveillance and harassment was cast. Carter authorised the Justice Department to set up a special unit to investigate KKK activities around the country, but it was no secret in Greensboro that the 'Invisible Empire, South Carolina Realm' of the Ku Klux Klan had been conducting a recruiting drive and pre-assassination planning meetings to counter the anti-



Marchers protesting at the murder of CWP members

GREENSBORO TRIALS

The trials in Greensboro, North Carolina, USA, stemming from the assassination of five leading members of the Communist Workers Party in November 1979, are turning out to be the most important political case of the Eighties. In the Greensboro events, beginning with the killings and continuing through the trials that are still in process, are expressed all the vital elements of the crisis of US imperialism and the necessity of a revolutionary solution.

Klan organising of the local communists.

The media began portraying the Greensboro ambush as a confrontation between leftists and the Klan as the main theme of the official cover-up in order to hide the complicity of federal agents and local police in setting up the CWP. The FBI is well-documented for its under-cover role inside the KKK, in which its agents-provocateurs have set up civil rights workers and black activists for murder.

Communist Workers Party Five

JIM WALLER, Central Committee Member of the Communist Workers Party, and National President of the Trade Union Educational League, was shot in the back and died at the scene. Waller, of Greensboro, had led a strike at Cone Granite Plant and was elected president of the textile workers union local but was fired despite protest of fellow workers when management and the union bureaucrats combined to oust him from the plant.

CESAR CAUCE, also of Greensboro, was a regular contributor to the CWP newspaper, Workers Viewpoint, and had organized hospital workers at Duke Hospital. Cesar was struck dead with a 357. magnum bullet in the heart.

MICHAEL NATHAN, of Greensboro, died within 48 hours of buck-shot to the head.

WILLIAM SAMPSON, of Greensboro, a worker and union shop steward in the White Oak Cone Mills plant, died of a buck-shot wound to the heart.

SANDRA SMITH, the only black killed, died of a gunshot wound to the head. She had worked in the Cone Mill Revolution plant for five years in Greensboro and was a union leader and organizer of black and poor people for many years.

Leading CWP organizer Nelson Johnson was attacked commando-style with a knife and severely cut. He was arrested at the scene and charged with 'inciting to riot'. Rand Manzella, a union organizer and CWP supporter was arrested for picking up Sampson's small revolver. He was arrested for 'being armed to the terror of the people'. Another anti-Klan demonstrator, Willena Cannon, a Greensboro activist, was also arrested for 'interference with an officer' when she protested the arrest of Nelson Johnson. These arrests were made in order to intimidate any potential witnesses from testifying in the upcoming trial that was

supposed to officially cover-up the conspiracy to brutally murder leading members of the CWP.

KKK/Nazi Hit-Men

All of the dozen men, none of whom are from Greensboro, who were arrested fleeing the scene of the ambush, and the three later arrested, claimed connection with Nazi and Klan groups. Hard-core fascist elements who were arrested included: Ronald Wayne Wood, who is the Regional Commander of the National Socialist Party; Rayford Maynard Caudle, a self-identified member of the same Nazi group's paramilitary arm, the 'Storm Troopers'; Jack Wilson Fowler, head of the North Carolina Nazi party organization.

The court-appointed prosecutor, District Attorney Schlosser, agreed to the lowering of bail to a mere \$4000 for five counts of first degree murder. In addition, the state is paying all Klan legal expenses and the cost of private investigation and attorney fees. Every step of the way during the course of the trial's proceedings the prosecuting attorney has worked with the Klan defense in attempting to turn the trial of the Klan killers into a frame-up of the Communist Workers Party.

CWP 5 Funeral March

In preparation for the funeral of the CWP Five, on 11 November, the city of Greensboro was turned into a police state. A state of emergency was declared and the police chief of Greensboro threatened with arrest any armed participants in the march. A thousand military and police armed personnel were called in to encircle the marchers, while military helicopters hovered over the heads of the five-hundred who defied this intimidation and accompanied the red-draped coffins of the five communists along the 2½ mile route to the cemetery.

The CWP announced its intention to come armed and prepared to defend the funeral march against any attacks. Thirty-four marchers were arrested and weapons confiscated, but the CWP defended its right to bury their comrades with a military honor guard of 10 rifles and shotguns, carried unloaded by order of the police.

A state of emergency was again declared on February 2 1980, when 7,000 came to Greensboro to march with the CWP under the banner 'Unite to Stop Klan/Nazi Terror!'

Police state measures did not succeed in disrupting the coalition march, but reformists inside the Feb 2 coalition fell in line with the police by openly calling for an unarmed demonstration and went so far as to expel the CWP from the executive committee organizing the march, thus helping to facilitate the cover-up of the murders by trying to turn the protest of the Klan killings against the CWP. Nevertheless, the CWP took a leading part in the demonstration, their contingent being the largest in the march.

Kangaroo Court

On December 14, 1979, the original conspiracy charges against the Klan defendants were dropped thanks to the prosecutor. When Signe Waller, widow of Jim Waller, independently filed a motion for a special private prosecutor to be brought in, this was refused. The prosecutor has refused to carry the investigation of the murders of the CWP 5 beyond those already arrested. More than 500 potential jurors were screened before an all-white jury of twelve with professed anti-communist views were selected for the trial. DA Schlosser has maintained complete control over the prosecution of the case.

Schlosser saw to it that all charges against Rayford Caudle, whose car loaded with weapons owned by him brought most of the guns to Greensboro on 3 November, were dropped completely and he was released. At this point, only six Klan defendants stand charged with first degree murder, having confessed their involvement.

Klan leader Virgil Griffin has bragged that he took part in the caravan to Greensboro on the day of the assassinations. He has never been arrested, nor has Edward Dawson, identified as an FBI informer, who is known to have passed a copy of the police permit for the rally onto the Klan killers. Nor has another known police informer, George Dorsett, who was part of the ambush caravan, ever been arrested.

In April the Klan defense sought to block the tape recorded confession of the youngest Klan defendant, Jerry Paul Smith, age 16, in which he detailed pre-assassination planning meetings. The portions of the tape which contained this vital evidence were mysteriously erased according to FBI and local detectives.

On 2 May, 1980 there were further frame-up arrests on charges of 'inciting to riot' related to 3 November, when in addition to Johnson, Manzella and Cannon, three other CWP supporters, Lacie Russell and Dori and Allen Blitz became the 'Greensboro 6'.

In order to expose and flush out the government's instigating hand in the Greensboro ambush, the CWP, on 23 June in New York City, occupied the offices of the North Atlantic Regional Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms of the US Treasury Department, demanding that all files and evidence of their agency's complicity be released.

In July the Nazi party in North Carolina leaked to the newspapers that Bernard Butkovich, a Federal agent of the AT&F Bureau infiltrated their Nazi group before 3 November and further revealed that the federal agent sat in on planning sessions for the assassination and instructed them in the use of weapons and offered to hide out the killers after the ambush. Butkovich in fact was present at the final planning meetings and was originally going to be called in as a witness for the prosecution but was dropped when Schlosser saw the government was clearly going to be implicated.

In another deal worked out between the judge, Klan defense and prosecution, analysis of the audio and visual tapes was made the responsibility of the FBI, whose lab technicians were to cooperate with Klan defense in presenting all technical evidence supplied by the tapes and ballistic tests, which has been served up in such a manner as to prove the CWP and Klan 'equally guilty'. The FBI gave evidence that Paul Bermanzohn was shot by another CWP member, Tom Clark, and that his wound was the result of buck-shot, when in fact, according to Bermanzohn's neurosurgeon, his brain was penetrated by a long thin fragment much larger than any shotgun pellet. Bermanzohn was in fact shot by Jack Fowler, the only man with an automatic weapon.

Despite the fact that the videotapes unquestionably incriminate the Klansmen, all the FBI's

IN BRIEF

A group of British banks have discovered a new channel for directing overseas investment. In what seems likely to be a profitable venture they have extended a loan of over £10 million to two American entrepreneurs who, with heartfelt concern have decided to buy a certain property in Nevada which will enable 70 people to keep their jobs and will prevent industry in the area from 'degenerating'. And the property in question? It is the Mustang Ranch Brothel in Reno. The involvement of British banks in this venture caused a few raised eyebrows in the City, but then we all know that the morals of British bankers are hidden far down in their deepest and most inaccessible vaults.

Not only are the banks doing marvellous deeds abroad, but right here at home one bank has provided £25,000 for a football competition for the under 18s. How generous, you might think. But behind this exercise in community relations lurks as usual the collaboration of the forces of the state. The competition is being organised by the Metropolitan Police with the aim of persuading young people 'who's relationship with the police is less than harmonious' that the police do not spend ALL their time arresting, detaining, beating people up, raiding houses, concocting false evidence, harassing youth on the streets and murdering people in police cells. But it seems that one of our friendly bobbies forgot the rules of the game, he formally 'cautioned' an entire team!

Others in the Metropolitan Police have found more profitable pastimes. Four City of London officers investigating a break in at Austin Reed's decided to help themselves to the contents of the shop. Two senior officers repeatedly demanded that the junior officers present help themselves to clothes (all part of the trainin' lad), but miraculously it seems that the mythical 'honest policeman' we hear so much about was actually at the scene! He told his commanding officer about the theft and the unfortunate miscreants were nicked and promptly sent down. One of the officers claimed that clothes found in his possession were planted in order to implicate him and so shut his mouth. It seems that the police are as happy to frame each other as any ordinary 'member of the public'.

The Merseyside Police have been involved in a more pernicious plot. Four officers invented evidence against 19 year old Peter Jeonney which resulted in him being sentenced to 3 years in prison for 'assaulting a police officer'. But in this case the police had lied so incompetently that the Appeal judge was forced to quash the sentence, remarking that 'Happily, such incidents are rare indeed.' Quite true. It is indeed rare for a judge to reverse a decision made on police evidence, but as to the rarity of police frame-ups, FRFI readers know differently.

In the light of the above and the many other cases of police lies etc we have to report, the following information will come as no surprise. Recent proposals to set up an independent body to investigate complaints against the police were rejected by senior police officers. Chief Supt Keyte, secretary of the Police Supts Association insisted that they would continue to carry out investigation on themselves - as maggots investigate a rotting corpse.

And now from the police to another bastion of decaying British Imperialism - the Home Office. For reasons known only to itself the Home Office has finally admitted something that black people and revolutionary communists have known for decades - that immigration controls are racist. Peter Scott, QC for the Home Office, made the following speech in High Court:

'The immigration service is concerned with discriminating against people on racial grounds...it is quite inconceivable that Parliament could have intended to subject the immigration service to scrutiny by a body set up to promote equality. The whole of immigration control is based on discrimination, and indeed racial discrimination, as defined by the Race Relations Act, 1976'

Why is it then that the CPGB, ANL and Trade Unions etc persist in pretending that immigration controls in an imperialist nation need not be racist? Why is it in their interest to hide the

fact that this state is racist through and through? They tell us that though immigration controls 'need to be swept aside' they must be 'replaced with laws which scrupulously avoid racism' (*Morning Star* 14.8.80). British imperialism will 'scrupulously avoid racism' when British imperialism is smashed.

Stories of brutality in British prisons are hitting the newspapers with ever increasing regularity. The following underline the ever worsening conditions prisoners are forced to endure by this racist imperialist state.

A prisoner in Peterhead prison was kicked and beaten by prison screws after appearing before the governor. After regaining consciousness the prisoner discovered his body was covered with bruises and polish marks from the screw's boots. Two months later prisoners involved in a roof top protest at the same prison to highlight this kind of treatment were 'smoked' down by screws and then handcuffed, beaten, put into solitary and lost remission. One of the prisoners in the protest had spent 2½ years in solitary including a period of 6 months in which he had been allowed to speak to not one human being. Because of this brutal treatment by screws the only answer for the prisoners was to flee the gaol, which they did after a family visit.

It appears that even this kind of treatment is nevertheless exceeded by that in closed so-called 'mental hospitals' to which prisoners who dare to fight back are sent. After spending *nine years* in Rampton Mental Hospital for burglary, an inmate became so desperate to escape the brutality of the staff that he staged a roof top protest in order to be sent to prison! If the brutality of prison screws is a viable alternative to the brutality of the Rampton staff then without doubt the place is a living hell and the finest refinement of torture that British imperialism has yet achieved.

A case of mistaken identity?

Mrs Rosaleen Morrison, Sherrif and Ex-Procurator Fiscal, called into an Edinburgh Police station one Sunday to report a reckless driver. It is reported that this public minded lady ran from the station in tears and has hardly stopped crying since.

The reason! Four large policemen - including an inspector - took her into a back room and knocked her down to the floor for making a nuisance of herself on their quiet Sunday afternoon.

Of course Mrs Morrison had not made it clear to these unlucky bobbies exactly who she was and has only herself to blame that she was treated as an ordinary member of the public.

Mrs Morrison says 'I have always been 100% behind the police' and that she has heard the same stories in court but never believed them until now.

Edinburgh police are investigating her complaint and a report has gone to the Procurator Fiscal who can make the decision to prosecute.

Meanwhile, presumably, fellow victims of police violence who appear in front of Sherrif Morrison on the usual trumped up charges can expect tears of sympathy while she sentences them to a suitable period of convalescence in one of H M Prisons.

THE MURDER OF LEROY GORDON

On 22 August, Leroy Gordon a 20 year old black youth was murdered in Birmingham's Bull Ring Shopping Centre by an 'unknown' assailant. Gordon had snatched a handbag and was chased and caught by a man who suffocated him by sitting on his stomach. Was this man brought to court? No. He murdered a black man who broke the law and this is no crime to the racist British state. The Birmingham police who knew the identity of the man refused to name him or issue a description, and refused to submit a report to the Department of Public Prosecutions.

The murder of Leroy Gordon brings Lynch Law to the streets of Birmingham. The racist police have made quite clear that a black person caught while committing a crime is fair game to any racist, policeman or civilian, to kill with impunity. Birmingham Alabama and Birmingham England have met.

ST PAULS 16 RESISTANCE

The resistance of the St Paul's 16 has totally exposed the racist 'Justice' of British imperialism. Defendant Frank Rapier rightly says:

'This case is a farce. None of the defendants are guilty. This case is political.'

The committal proceedings at Bristol Magistrates Court have taken over 5 weeks to grind through the state's evidence. Each of the 16 is charged with riotous assembly. Several have additional charges against them. With just two exceptions all the evidence is based on police statements. More than anything else this evidence shows the value of community policing to the British racist state.

The police have at least 1600 pages of 'action files' on people in St Paul's. The files are, on the admission of prosecutor Vere-Hodges, 'chock full of hearsay, rumour and previous knowledge of the area'. After patrolling the black and working class areas the police would return to Trinity Road Police Station and write into the files all the information that they obtained. Community policing means community surveillance, spying on the community.

For four years PC Maggs was 'community officer' for St Werburgh's, next to St Paul's. In the courtroom Maggs claimed to have spoken to James Walsh twice weekly over the years - a lie. Maggs further claimed to have seen James Walsh outside the Black and White Cafe on 2nd April - another lie! 'Soft' community policing is preparation for 'hard' riot control. They are complementary aspects of the same police repression.

The lengthy committal proceedings have done nothing to hide the naked repression of which the courts are a part. Through their courageous stand the St Paul's 16 have torn away any pretence that justice is administered in the court rooms of British imperialism. On 23rd October matters were brought right out into the open.

A defence solicitor was reviewing the contradictions and convenient memory lapses of Detective Constable Ballard. One of the 16, Frank Rapier, gave voice to what everyone in the court room knew. Ballard had perjured himself, he was a lying bastard. For stating this the magistrates ordered Frank Rapier out of the court room. Frank Rapier demanded that his solicitor be fetched and said,

'I am going down, but not like a lamb.'

The police pushed and hit Frank as he went to leave. A woman ran to him from the public gallery and she was slammed up against the wall by the police. The court room erupted against this police brutality. The magistrates scurried off for cover as more police piled in. Frank Rapier was evicted to the cells, but not before he made this statement:

'We are demanding justice - not begging. I have been brought here against my will. You have been crucifying us for years. For years you have been brutalising us in St Paul's. Here are the scars where your dogs have attacked me.'

Later Frank Rapier came up from the cells and his solicitor asked for bail. From the dock Frank Rapier told the magistrates,

'This case is a farce. None of the defendants are guilty. This case is political.'

The spineless magistrates could not reply to this proud challenge! Their only answer was to call for more police.

By the afternoon session of 23rd October the picket on the court had grown to a hundred strong. A coach full of brothers and sisters from the Mangrove in London had come to show their solidarity. The Labour Party and the petit bourgeois socialists of the CP, IMG and SWP were noted - for their absence. The picket's placards declared:

APRIL 2ND POLICE HARASSMENT - WHY MUST OUR COMMUNITY PAY? NO CASE TO ANSWER MANGROVE SUPPORTS ST PAUL'S 16 FREE THE ST PAUL'S 16 BABYLON WILL FALL!

The police packed into the court in the afternoon. Plain clothes heavies made an entrance. The police started pushing and shoving and spitting on the large number of people who wanted to get inside the court room. Faced with the prospect of so many brothers and sisters come to see for themselves the administration of British imperialist justice the magistrates adjourned the day's proceedings!

As the St Paul's 16 and their supporters left the building they were followed by over fifty police on to the street outside. The youths were gathering with their placards to march to the shopping centre. A policeman drove his motor bike the wrong way up a one way street and straight at the group of youths. Fighting started and the police waded in. A brother of one of the St Paul's 16 was repeatedly struck in his stomach by police truncheons. Six people were arrested and charged under the public order act or for assault.

Meanwhile another of the St Paul's 16 had her flat raided by the police while she was at court. The police went through the flat with a search warrant 'looking for stolen goods'. Yet another example of the continual police harassment which is part of daily life for the St Paul's 16.

The deliberate use of police repression inside and outside the court has completely failed to bow down the St Paul's 16. Their continued resistance has not allowed the British state to disguise the fact that it is preparing for a major political trial. Their committal proceedings have shown how it is utterly reactionary to call for more community police.

The 16 in the dock stand not only for St Paul's, they stand for all the oppressed and suffering workers. The only way that the oppressed will get any justice is when the racist British state is overthrown once and for all. The St Paul's 16 have set an example of complete resistance to police brutality. By the time of the St Paul's trial every one must be out on the street to demand in one almighty voice:

FREE THE ST PAUL'S 16
Andrew Goddard

Further information and donations:
United Defence Committee,
c/o Albert Villas,
Grosvenor Road,
St Paul's Bristol.

STOP PRESS

12 of the St Pauls 16 were committed to trial at Crown Court. The 4 who had no case to answer still face charges of 'Breach of the Peace', 'Threatening Behaviour' and possession of an offensive weapon. Speaking for Colin Coke, a defence lawyer said:

'The thousands of pounds that have been spent to bring this prosecution would be better spent in rectifying the inhuman conditions and social injustices that exist in St Pauls.'

Frank Rapier told the magistrates:

'This case is a farce, and you all know it. We 16 are being used as scapegoats for the system's nasty tricks.'

It is possible that the racist state will try another nasty trick and hear the trial in Winchester Crown Court - 80 miles from Bristol.

GREENSBORO

continued from page 11

'expert testimony' lays the blame for what they are seeking to portray as a 'shoot-out' on the CWP. Defense has been relying on the FBI-prepared audio analysis of the tapes to prove the Klansmen fired in self-defense and this will serve as 'evidence' in the Greensboro 6 trial.

On 30 September, Nazi RW Wood began turning state's evidence against his co-defendants, Nazi Fowler and Klansman David Wayne Matthews, claiming that he heard Fowler say 'I got my few' and Matthews, 'I got three of them' upon firing on the anti-Klan demonstrators.

In October another squirming-on-the-hook Klansman testified that Dawson, already exposed in court in August as a police informer, was the man who led the caravan of almost 40 to the site of the Greensboro ambush. Despite all of this, the court has failed to conclusively pin single murder on any of the KKK/Nazi defendants. Klansman Smith, whose 357. magnum positively killed Cesar Cauce, is the only defendant claiming 'temporary insanity' instead of self-defense. Klan defense is trying to frame organizer Tom Clarke as the killer of Jim Waller, Federal Agent Butkovich will be testifying on behalf of the Klan that no violence was planned.

In order to allow the Klan time to disentangle their own pack of lies the trial adjourned temporarily on 2 October, after 16 weeks in process, and upon resumption on 14 October, the prosecution still refused to indict the two federal agents, Butkovich and Dawson, who have been implicated by the defense's own testimony.

CWP 5 Means Fight Back!

The CWP has kept the Greensboro events before the attention of millions as CWP members and supporters confronted all the bourgeois presidential candidates, as well as the Democratic Party Convention in NYC in August, with militant agitation and struggle. This is one of the main reasons why the KKK itself became one of the issues of the 1980 elections, with Carter and Reagan both accusing each other of Klan sympathies, while in fact known Klansmen are running on both Democratic and Republican party tickets.

The main strategy being followed by the government in relation to the Greensboro trials is to allow several minor Nazi and KKK members to 'take the rap', to cover-up the fact that the highest imperialist circles are giving the orders, as in the case of the Greensboro assassinations, and also in relation to the larger nationwide right-wing activity, including an unparalleled wave of racist terror bombings and killings.

On 16 September, in Los Angeles, four black anti-Klan activists were attacked and beaten by Klansmen, and two of them framed on serious charges, when they came to a meeting to speak against KKK Democratic Party Congressional candidate Tom Metzger. Four days later the offices of the CPUSA in Los Angeles were bombed, with no injuries, and on 23 September, again, an attempt was made to bomb the Los Angeles offices of the SWP, with a large meeting narrowly escaping. A wave of snipings against blacks has broken out in at least six states, including Ohio, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma and Wisconsin, with the latest being the 20 August killing of two blacks in Salt Lake City, Utah, shot by a sniper or snipers while they jogged through a public park. The police cynically declared they are hunting for a 'lone maniac', deliberately covering up for the coordinated nature of these attacks, as well as open Klan and Nazi declarations of 'race war'. Even more hideous than these snipings is the series of killings of blacks in the Buffalo, New York area. The latest of the seven killed so far, include two black men whose hearts had been cut out of their bodies. This mutilation killing is known as a 'tradition of the Ku Klux Klan, and blacks in the Buffalo area have become more and more rebellious in the face of what even moderate black leaders declare is a 'nation-wide conspiracy' to kill blacks.

American Correspondent

The next issue of FRFI will contain an interview with the widow of one of the Greensboro victims.

TEMPORARY PROVISIONS?

The new Imprisonment – Temporary Provisions Act has the most dangerous implications for prisoners and for the working class as a whole.

The new legislation allows any building to be used as a prison, by decision of the Home Secretary. It allows for the Army to be used to staff prisons. It allows for the suspension of habeus corpus, which means that a remand prisoner no longer has to appear weekly before a magistrate.

Nobody should be fooled by the fact that the new legislation is entitled 'Temporary Provisions'. The PTA was also entitled 'Temporary Provisions' and now, six years and thousands of arrests later, it is still entitled 'Temporary Provisions'.

Whether or not this legislation ends with the current prison officers' dispute, the British government will have achieved its end – to use soldiers in prisons, to use 'camps' as prisons, to suspend habeus corpus and, most importantly, to make people in Britain accustomed to such measures. They will also have managed to test the response to such measures. There has been

SAVAGE SENTENCES

On 5 April 1980, referring to the St Pauls uprising, the Sun newspaper said,

'These are things that we have regarded with horror when they happen in Ulster. We never dreamed that in the England of 1980 we could have 'no-go' areas like those of Londonderry. It must never, never happen again.'

In this way the Sun spelt out the fear of the British ruling class that the fightback of the oppressed nationalist people in Ireland would be an example for the oppressed in its 'own' country. That black people in Britain would rise up against their oppression and force the racist British police off the streets.

The fear with which the imperialists view this prospect and the ferocity with which they will try to put down resistance was demonstrated yet again in the courts this October when four black youths were tried for the crime of defending themselves against racists.

The four were arrested in April this year by the SPG in Lewisham. They were travelling in a car and each was holding a petrol bomb made of a milk bottle with a newspaper wick. They had heard that their local club was to be attacked by racists and were prepared to defend it – a heinous crime in the eyes of the racist state!

Six months later, appearing at Inner London Crown Court, one of the youths revealed that he had got the idea to use petrol bombs from Belfast – again the example of the Irish war of liberation raises its head to terrify the imperialists! The horrified judge reflected that the youths 'were in possession of weapons to bring guerilla war to the streets of Lewisham.'

We have said before in FRFI that the prisons will be increasingly used to incarcerate political prisoners, and this judge clearly knew his duty. Summing up he said 'The courts must take action to prevent conduct of this nature and it is my duty to impose severe sentences to deter others.' Imperialism demands brutal repression of all resistance to its rule, and for 'conspiracy to cause actual bodily harm', for daring to possess a petrol bomb, he savagely sentenced each to rot in a hell-hole British gaol for six years no less.

Without doubt the severity of this sentence stems from the political nature of the 'crime'. Yet this outrage is only a sequel to those already meted out in the courts to the people of Southall and St Pauls. As the sentences were read out the four made a failed bid to escape, and as they struggled in the courtroom their relatives shouted at the racist judge that they hoped he rot in hell, and he surely will! For in the spirit of Belfast, and in the spirit of St Pauls and of Soweto the oppressed are fighting back against the racist British state.

virtually no protest and, indeed, Labour MPs supported it.

This testing of the waters is proving very useful for the British ruling class. For while the pretext for these measures is the current prison officers' dispute over meal allowances, the actual causes are quite different.

British prisons are so harsh and brutal that more and more prisoners are protesting and fighting back. The response of the British government has been to turn increasingly openly to repressive measures in the prisons. The Labour Government brought the MUFTI squad into being. It was the MUFTI squad, a squad of prison officers in riot gear, who bludgeoned and beat the Wormwood Scrubs prison protesters in August 1979, injuring 53 prisoners. Yet despite the MUFTI squad, despite the use of long stretches of solitary, despite the massive use of 'zombifying' drugs – the prisoners continue to fight back. The ruling class therefore wishes to prepare for the day when it will have to use British troops against protesting prisoners.

But the ruling class is also prepared for another and even more threatening development: for the day when workers in Britain undertake widespread struggles against the system which is driving larger sections into poverty. Prisons will then, as they have been in Ireland, come more and more to be used against those who have taken up the struggle against British imperialism. Already we are seeing revolutionary fightbacks such as those led by black people in St Pauls and Southall. From such struggles political prisoners are entering jails here in Britain.

The ruling class wants to be prepared for dealing with both the increasing number of political prisoners and the massive protests which are bound to break out inside the prisons. Hence all the talk in the British press about the need to 'empty' the prisons of those who 'should not be there' so that the prisons may be reserved for those who have 'seriously' threatened the ruling class – either with large crimes against property or with political crimes.

The past 15 years have seen the development of an openly repressive regime, in fact a murderous regime in the prisons. The latest 'Temporary Provisions' show that repression reaching greater proportions.

LIVERPOOL FIGHTS ON

The campaign to defend the Wilkie brothers (see FRFI6) organised by Liverpool Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! has scored significant successes. On 18 September, a 50 strong picket was held outside the Dale Street Magistrates Court when the brothers appeared for a committal hearing. This was adjourned till 2 October, when an even larger picket, 80 strong, was held giving noisy and enthusiastic support for the brothers, and for the fight against police racism. Already the police are jittery. They have threatened one youth that they will 'do' all those who supported the pickets; to another, that they would have ignored some drugs they had found on him on a street search, had it not been for a leaflet on the case they had also found on him

But the police are getting the worst of it in more ways than one. Recently, they left a meat wagon unguarded for a few minutes in the Falkner Estate; by the time they returned, all its windows had been smashed. A few days later, their routine evening invasion of the same estate was met with a hail of stones. It is quite evident that the police are beginning to lose control in Liverpool 8, as active resistance develops. The campaign to defend the Wilkie brothers is part of this resistance, and as such has received widespread support from the community.

PRISONERS ATTACKED IN WORMWOOD SCRUBS

Following the roof-top protest on 9 August, Irish POWs John McCluskey and Paul Norney were savagely attacked by screws in Wormwood Scrubs prison. Two unidentified English prisoners were also attacked.

One of the most striking features of the roof-top protest in August was the display of solidarity between the Irish POWs and the other prisoners. Alongside their banner calling for Victory to the IRA, John McCluskey and Paul Norney also held up banners condemning screw brutality in C Wing. At the same time prisoners in C Wing held out makeshift banners calling for an end to screw brutality and victory to the Irish struggle. Everyone knew that this protest would be quickly followed by acts of revenge – ranging from the petty to the brutal – on the part of the screws. And it was.

John McCluskey, Paul Norney and two unknown English prisoners were put in segregation units. Paul Norney was put in a strip cell for the mentally disturbed. All four were put on closed visits restricted to fifteen minutes. Their supposed hour's exercise was reduced to 30 minutes or, some days, nothing at all. None of them had appeared before any board or tribunal so none of these punishments had any official basis. In protest against this arbitrary harassment the men broke up their cells. The screws then turned to straightforward brutality.

In a statement from the prison, John McCluskey describes what took place after the screws got him out of his cell:

'I heard a screw shout "Get him down". Then they all seemed to jump on me. They were kicking me and hitting me with their fists... I was dragged down to the special cell, at the end of the segregation unit, which was about fifteen yards away from where my cell was.

They were kicking and punching me all the way down in the special cell, they ripped the clothes off me with such force that the clothes were torn. They were beating me all the time.'

About twenty screws, armed with staves, took part in the attack. Although John informed the prison doctor, he received no treatment. The screws offered him two blankets smeared with vomit to cover himself with. All four prisoners were viciously beaten.

Alastair Logan, acting for John McCluskey, has said that legal action will be taken against the Home Office and any prison officers that can be identified. The prison authorities, concerned to ensure that justice is done, have charged John McCluskey with attempted assault!

Terry Marlowe

LETTERS

FRFI welcomes your letters. They should be sent to the Editor, 49 Raiton Road London SE24 0LN. We may, on occasions, cut letters for reasons of space.

Communists and Ireland

A Chara,
I have read with interest a number of your publications and basically agree with your concern in fighting imperialism. As a member of the Communist Party of Ireland I am engaged in the same struggle against imperialism. I do however suggest that your support of Sinn Fein is incorrect.

Sinn Fein express the interests not of the Irish people but of the most oppressed section of the Northern Ireland colony. In every capitalist society there are a large section of the community caught in the cycle of deprivation. The people who are caught in this cycle of deprivation need not be Catholic. Indeed in the neo-colony of the Irish Republic approximately one million people are caught in this poverty trap, even though their ruling class shares the same faith.

These oppressed persons' interests are not served by Sinn Fein. When it comes to the crunch you will find Sinn Fein have no solution to Ireland's social and economic problems. The Sinn Fein (Beal Feirste) may express their concern for socio-economic issues, but Sinn Fein nationally is merely the political adjunct of the IRA fighting for a united Ireland.

The struggle for a united Ireland is not the equivalent to a struggle for a socialist Ireland. The struggle for a socialist Ireland requires a fierce proletarian struggle, in alliance with all progressives, against reformism and imperialism. Reformism is the political expression of the labour aristocracy which constitutes a minority of the proletariat. As everyone here knows the religion of the majority of this labour aristocracy is Catholic not Protestant.

Some misinformed persons talk glibly about Ireland and how the Protestants oppress the Catholics. This is an utter distortion. Catholics are oppressed all the more in Northern Ireland if they are poor because imperialism has an interest in accentuating the divisions in the working class. In the 26 counties capitalism has divided the poorest workers from the labour aristocracy. The Labour Party doesn't give a damn about the one million in poverty anymore than does Sinn Fein.

Imperialism has divided Ireland but that does not mean we should struggle for socialism within the arenas determined by our oppressors. Only an anti-imperialist campaign simultaneously in all-Ireland against both carnivals of reaction can free us. The majority of the proletariat in all Ireland have been stirred into action by anti-working class policies, it is on this we in the CPI are trying to build.

The Sinn Fein policy paves the way to another 1921 and no doubt eventually to the bankruptcy of the anti-imperialist movement. The interests of one small section of the Irish workers and farmers must not be mistaken for the interests of all Irish workers and farmers. To make such a mistake is to create another obstacle to our liberation.

Briefly, I agree fully with you that the British left has failed to comprehend the significance of Ireland in the anti-capitalist struggle in Britain. The UTOM and CPGB have, in my personal opinion and some of my comrades, totally distorted the Irish question and the question of British imperialism. Personally I have nothing but contempt for the chauvinistic attitude of the CPGB with regard to Ireland. The British left generally appear to suffer from an infantile disorder and share the illusions of bourgeois democracy with imperialism.

Keep up your good work against imperialism as that is the best way you can advance the cause of socialism world wide.

Yours sincerely

SI

PS I am a member of West Belfast Branch, Communist Party of Ireland. All the above reflects my own opinions and are not to be regarded as the official views of the CPI.

Reply to SI

SI's letter raises important issues about which communists in Britain must have clear and unambiguous views.

The first and most important is SI's remark that the RCG's 'support for Sinn Fein is incorrect'. We utterly reject this. As communists in Britain, we have a duty to give our unconditional support to every democratic anti-imperialist movement directed against the imperialist British state. As communists in the oppressor British state, we give our full support to Sinn Fein and the Republican movement which is fighting for the democratic right of the Irish people to self-determination. We stand in the revolutionary communist traditions of Marx, Engels and Lenin, summarised in the declaration of the Communist International:

'the British socialist who fails to support by all possible means the uprisings in Ireland ... against the London plutocracy deserves, if not to be shot, then to be branded with infamy.'

This is the only standpoint of communist internationalism. It is the only way the British working class can express its unity with the oppressed Irish masses fighting for democracy against British imperialism. It is the only basis for the real anti-imperialist unity of the international working class.

SI not only fails to understand the internationalist duties of the British working class, but in addition makes the serious error of separating the struggle for a united Ireland from the struggle for socialism in Ireland. He says:

'The struggle for a united Ireland is not equivalent to a struggle for a socialist Ireland.'

But the fact is that the anti-

imperialist struggle for a united Ireland being waged by Sinn Fein and the Republican Movement is not separate from, but an integral part, an essential part of the class struggle for socialism. What better proof of this than the fact that the most oppressed sections of the Irish working class – the nationalist working class of the 6 counties – stand fully behind the Republican Movement in the full knowledge that their class interests can only be met by the destruction of British rule in Ireland. This was Connolly's view expressed in his famous statement 'The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour and the cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland.'



Indeed in its early days the CPI shared this very same position. In 1921 it condemned the Partition Treaty in the following words:

'This Treaty proposes the most shameful betrayal of Ireland's fight for national independence....'

Those who have accepted this compromise have become afraid of a Republic.... They fear that an Irish Republic would be transformed into a Workers Republic....'

Work for A Republic! Hold your guns and fight for a Republic!

Today it is the Provisional Republican Movement that is fighting for the Republic whilst the CPI pleads with imperialism to rule more humanely and opposes the Provisional Republican Movement! The CPI of 1921 lived up to its words and fought in the Civil War on the side of the Anti-Treaty IRA.

SI 'accuses' Sinn Fein of representing 'only' the interests of the 'most oppressed sections of the Northern Ireland Colony'. But who do communists represent if not the most oppressed sections, those who have, in Marx's and Engels' words nothing to lose but their chains. In stating this truth, SI condemns the CPI for what does the CPI represent, if it does not represent the most oppressed sections of the working class. The fact that Sinn Fein represents this most oppressed section is but further evidence of its revolutionary nature.

We fully agree with the comrades views on the CPGB and UTOM. Indeed we have been for many years engaged in a battle against these opportunists. We do however suggest that SI turn his attention to the CPI's actual views to determine exactly how they differ from those of the CPGB.

The task of communists is to

bring about the socialist revolution. In Ireland this can only be done through the struggle against British imperialism. Communists therefore cannot stand apart from the Republican Movement, but like the CPI of 1921 must be united with it, must be a part of it if they are honest in their struggle against imperialism and for socialism.

The IMG and Poland

Dear Comrades,

I would like to make some observations about the Editorial on Poland in FRFI6. In it you accuse the 'petit-bourgeois' IMG of aiding 'the reactionary imperialist Cold War drive' by giving the struggles of the Polish workers 'a totally anti-socialist content'. This allegation I consider slanderous nonsense. Socialist Challenge... made it clear that the 'support' of the capitalist press for the strikers was pure hypocrisy, that the basic nature of the Polish regime was not being challenged, that the strikers were not 'anti-socialist' – as the 'Communist' authorities and bourgeois media suggested – that the real anti-socialists within Poland are the cardinals, CP leaders and government officials, and that the events in Poland were some of the best arguments for socialism for a long time....

Socialist Challenge has undoubtedly neglected the grip of British imperialism over the Polish economy and it was largely the attacks by imperialism on the young Soviet Republic that led to its degeneration and the phenomenon of Stalinism. It may also be true that Socialist Challenge spends too much time criticising Russian 'totalitarianism' rather than exposing British imperialism. But is it true that 'the Polish working masses are struggling to solve problems which would not exist if imperialism did not'? The Polish workers made the following demands: the right to form free, independent trade unions, the release of 25 leading dissidents, pay increases, economic reforms, decentralisation of management, liberalisation of the censorship laws.... Imperialism is only one cause of the economic and social problems facing Poland. An equally strong one is the fact that the economy is bureaucratically rather than democratically planned. The Polish masses want a greater say in the drawing up of the national economic plan. It is not only, or even primarily, imperialism but the monopoly of power held by the Polish bureaucrats that stands between the demands of the Polish masses and the realisation of these demands....

Your position would appear to be similar to that of the CPGB, that Poland is basically a healthy workers state, and that the problems that exist are simply the result of 'parasitic imperialism'. You state quite categorically 'we support the aspirations and struggles of the Polish working masses'. It is quite obvious that the Polish rulers do not. Genuine support for the Polish workers surely involves making this clear.

It may be argued that attacking the Soviet Union will

not help to destroy British imperialism. But the IMG does not blanketly denounce the Soviet Union. It supports the gains of the October Revolution; in Socialist Challenge (18/9/80) it was stated that the Soviet Union is not equally responsible for the threat of war and remains a workers state despite the fact it is ruled by a conservative, privileged and geriatric bureaucracy. What the IMG criticises is the unnecessarily repressive and bureaucratic rule of the governing 'Communist' elite. The fundamental task of the British working class is certainly to destroy British imperialism. But why should this exclude any criticism of the nature of the Eastern bloc regimes?...

Was the intervention in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 'socialist' or 'anti-socialist'? Despite what they said publicly the imperialist powers supported the intervention in Czechoslovakia. They supported it because if a third, socialist, alternative had arisen between Stalinism and capitalism, the society of both the Soviet bureaucracy and the Western bourgeoisie would have been undermined. At Yalta in 1945 the Soviet bureaucracy and US ruling class divided the world into two spheres of influence. While I do not deny that the imperialist powers would rather see the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and that Soviet foreign policy has generally been progressive, I think it is evident that the Soviet bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie do have certain interests in common, interests which do not coincide with the historical interests of the working class. The real 'anti-socialists' are not those who expose the soviet bureaucracy but those who white-wash it.

I look forward to receiving your reply. Those criticisms apart, FRFI is indispensable to the fight against British imperialism. Keep up the good work.

DP

Reply to DP

Comrade DP's letter, in substance a defence of the IMG's reactionary standpoint on the socialist countries, opens by dismissing as 'slanderous nonsense' our view that the IMG aided the 'reactionary imperialist Cold War drive' by giving the Polish workers struggle a 'totally anti-socialist content'. This is no slanderous nonsense. The IMG 'advised' Polish workers to establish a regime which grants anti-communists – 'those with bourgeois or petty bourgeois ideologies or programmes' – freedom of political organisation. Is this not trying to give an anti-socialist content to the Polish workers struggles. Is this not just what the imperialists today would love – the ability of anti-communists in Poland (some of the self-avowed ones being in KOR, a body prominent in the recent workers struggle) to freely organise against the working class and socialism. The IMG in telling British workers that Poland needs what in effect would be a bourgeois regime, is indeed abetting the imperialists. It is telling British workers that such a regime would be preferable to the one that now exists. And if this is the case why should British workers make

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any effort to defend the Polish state against imperialist attack?

Yet British communists have only one task in relation to Poland and the other Socialist countries – that is to defend them against attacks by imperialism. This the IMG does not do. The IMG, DP says, has 'neglected the grip of British imperialism over the Polish economy'. But the only way British communists can actually defend Polish socialism is precisely by pointing out this 'grip' and building a movement to smash it. Instead the IMG utters empty phrases to cover up its refusal to defend the Polish state. It talks of 'bureaucratic planning', 'repression', the 'monopoly of power by Polish bureaucrats' etc in order to cover up British imperialism's attempts to overturn socialism in Poland. To say as comrade DP does that 'imperialism is only one cause of the ... problems facing Poland' 'bureaucratic planning being an equally strong one' is quite meaningless or reactionary. For imperialism and its economic stranglehold is the only cause of Poland's problems which is in any way relevant to the British working class. To say otherwise, to point to any other 'cause'

'equally strong' is to invite the working class to respond by 'a plague on both your houses', ie to remain neutral and therefore to side with imperialism against Poland.

The same can be said of DP's defence of the IMG's thoroughly disgusting attitude to the USSR. Imperialism is engaged in a massive campaign against the USSR. The IMG refuses to oppose this campaign, it refuses to defend the USSR. Instead, in DP's words it 'spends too much time criticising Russian "totalitarianism" rather than exposing British imperialism'. How is such reactionary rubbish going to build a movement in defence of the USSR? In this context for the IMG to declare that it defends the gains of the October Revolution is nothing but hypocrisy. The IMG does nothing of the sort. It attacks the Soviet Union at every possible opportunity. To say as the IMG does that the Soviet Union is not equally responsible for the threat of war is to say that it is in some way responsible. Is this not utterly disgraceful? Ever since October 1917 the USSR has never been free of imperialist aggression, of imperialist attempts to undermine it and destroy it. Constantly it has had to divert huge amounts of resources to defend itself against imperialist attack whilst

at the very same time ensuring the survival of the world working class movement and the victory of national liberation movements. Yet the petit bourgeois IMG now says it is in some way responsible for the threat of war!

It can be seen that comrade DP raises the question of 'criticism of the nature of the Eastern bloc regimes' in a thoroughly abstract manner, in a Trotskyist not Marxist manner. His references to Yalta 1945, to Hungary 1956, to Czechoslovakia 1968, his references to 'bureaucratic planning' etc in no way help to deal with the question of how the British working class can defend the socialist countries. The question for British communists is how to mobilise workers in Britain to smash British imperialism's Cold War drive against the USSR and the other socialist countries. Today this can only be done by building a movement to smash British imperialism. British workers cannot do so whilst they are being fed with illiterate and ignorant 'criticism' about so called 'totalitarianism' and 'dictatorship' in the socialist countries. These, which are the speciality of the petit bourgeois socialists and the imperialists only help intensify the already existing anti-Sovietism within the British working class.

Freedom!

Dear Editor,
I am writing to tell you about my sister, of whom I am very proud. Her name is Susan and she is just 19.

Just over a year ago, she started writing to an internee at Long Kesh. She met him for the first time in July. He has been in the Kesh for 5 years. He is just 22 years old. He has given up his youth for love of his country, and my family and I are very proud of him also.

Two weeks ago, Susan left home to live in Belfast. She gave up her family and friends and her nursing career to be as near to her friend as she could.

At present, Susan is living with her friend's mother, and we are all praying for the day when he and his companions are free.

Today we heard of the hunger strike in H Block, and feel so helpless knowing there is nothing we can do. It upset me to think of the suffering those men are going through. It also upset me to read 'On The Blanket'.

I have written a short poem to express my feelings and my love for Ireland, and to show that I think of all those in prisons, fighting for freedom. I wish I could do more, but for now I will hope and pray. I only hope God hears me!

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and my poem.
GOD BLESS YOU
Love from CD.

I Wish ...

If I could have three wishes
I know what they would be
I'd wish for Freedom and I'd wish
For Peace and Unity

That Ireland could be free again
From England's cruel hold
That Ireland could again become
A country true and bold

That peace would be
remembered

And fighting would be dead
With tears of joy and laughter
And no more blood to shed

That mothers would again
become

United with their sons
With no more locks and no more
bars

And no more loaded guns
I pray that God will hear my
prayer

And these wishes grant for me
And we'll hear the cry of Freedom
And Peace and Unity!

**VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN
BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO
HUNGER FOR JUSTICE
IRELAND LIVE ON!**

FUND DRIVE

SUPPORT OUR PAPER! ONE YEAR OLD – CIRCULATION DOUBLED TO 10,000

One year ago this November we launched **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!**. We recognised that it had a critical task: to become the voice of the growing anti-imperialist movement in Britain. As a communist paper it is totally committed to the struggles of the working class and oppressed masses against British imperialism. This issue is devoted to the courageous struggle of the Blanketmen on hunger strike for political status. With this issue we are once again increasing our print – to 10,000. In just 12 months we have doubled our circulation! This shows the potential for anti-imperialist work today.

With the growing support for the paper we can soon go monthly. We need your commitment to ensure this is possible. In September/October we needed £1000. We raised only £711. This money is urgently needed.

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Workers educate Glasgow SWP

Glasgow has a great tradition of working class education in revolutionary politics stretching back to the days of John MacLean. Glasgow Celtic fans, it seems, are carrying on this tradition.

Apparently the fans have been giving SWP members intensive on-the-spot lessons in revolutionary politics outside Celtic football ground. The fans, according to reports, have used time-honoured proletarian means to

drive home forcefully some basic points about support for the national liberation struggle in Ireland. These lessons, it seems, have left some SWP members a little shaken (though not stirred).

The fans conducting these lessons have described themselves as RCG members. We are heartened to see that anti-imperialist workers in Glasgow identify themselves with the RCG, but must point out that the fans in question are not members of the RCG. Although they have clearly understood the importance of fighting opportunism.

FRFI SUPPORTER GROUPS

Liverpool

Every fortnight on Friday at Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool 8, at 7.30pm
Next meeting 21 November

Manchester

Every fortnight on Thursday at Moss Side People's Centre, St Marys Street, (opposite Moss Side Shopping Precinct), at 8pm
Next meeting 20 November

Leeds

Every fortnight on Thursday at Leeds Trades Hall, Saville Mount, Leeds 7 at 7.30pm. Next meeting 27 November

Birmingham

Every fortnight on Monday at Mount Pleasant Centre, Balsall Heath Rd, at 7.30pm. Next meeting 17 November

Glasgow

Every fortnight on Thursday at Allan Glens Secondary School, Cathedral Street, at 7.30pm
Next meeting 27 November

Edinburgh

Every fortnight on Thursday at 1st of May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row at 7.30pm. Next meeting 20 November

North London

Every fortnight on a Tuesday at Caxton House, St Johns Way, N19 (nearest tube Archway) at 7.30pm. Next meeting 2nd December

South London

Every fortnight on Tuesday at 8pm. For details of venues ring 01 737 3922, or ask your local FRFI seller. Supporters sell the paper regularly at Oval tube, 5-6pm on Fridays, and at Brixton market 11-12am on Saturday. Next meeting 25 November

ANWAR DITTA

The racist Home Office has now officially 'closed' the case of Anwar Ditta. She has been denied leave to further appeal against their refusal to admit her children. But Anwar's fight against the racist British state goes on. For further details contact the ADDC 127 Crawford Street, Rochdale.

BECOME A FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! SUPPORTER

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

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JACK WODDIS MEMORIAL AWARD

The Jack Woddiss Memorial Award for National Chauvinist Hypocrisy is in this issue awarded to **Chris Myant** of the Communist Party. This snivelling wretch has, in the **Morning Star** of 8 November 1980, called upon the IRA to lay down their arms and surrender to British imperialism. He has done this just at the moment when the British government is trying to murder Irish POWs on hunger strike in the H-Blocks. He has done this as British undercover assassination squads are murdering Republican supporters. This social-imperialist has the impudence to call himself a 'communist'. In reality he is a vile traitor to the communist cause.

HANDS OFF IRELAND



REPUBLICAN NEWS MASS SUPPORT FOR BLANKETMEN

The beginning of the hunger strike in the H-Blocks has evoked a wave of anger and defiance from the nationalist working class against the British government on a scale which has not been seen since the aftermath of Bloody Sunday in 1972. On the day before the hunger strike was due to begin thousands of people poured onto the Falls Road in a massive demonstration of support for the prisoners, and this has been followed by numerous local marches, torchlight processions and other forms of local protests, including even protests staged by children in several schools in Belfast.

The march of over 30,000 in Belfast was the largest seen in the city in the last ten years. At the rally which followed the march speakers from Sinn Fein, the IRSP and the National H-Blocks Committee expressed the anger and defiance of the marchers.

The basis of the massive support which has been shown for the prisoners on hunger strike can be clearly seen from the personal backgrounds of the men on hunger strike themselves: their experience of torture, brutality and 'legalised repression' are typical of the experi-

ences of thousands of others from the nationalist community at the hands of the British state over the past ten years. Sean McKenna and his father, for example, were among those arrested in the first internment swoop on 9 August, 1971. Sean was aged 17 at that time and was interned until 1975. His father was among those subjected to the notorious hooding and 'white noise' torture methods of the British Army, and his father's premature death in 1975 at the age of 42 is attributed to the torture which he suffered in 1971. Raymond McCartney's cousin

Pauline McLaughlin, Irish Prisoner of War, has been condemned to death by the British imperialist state. Pauline was imprisoned in Armagh gaol in 1976, and immediately joined the protest conducted by 30 women Republican prisoners for political status. She then weighed 9½ stone. In 1978 a nervous stomach complaint worsened and it became impossible for Pauline to keep down any food, yet no attempt was made by prison doctors to diagnose or treat this illness. By March 1980 her weight was only 6 stone, and in July she collapsed in her cell and was taken to Musgrave Park Military Hospital and then to Belfast City Hospital's cardiac unit because a heart attack seemed likely. The only treatment she received before she was returned, in a confused state, to Armagh gaol, was 8 intravenous drips. On October 7 the inevitable heart attack came, and she was admitted to Musgrave Park.

Her hair is grey and most of her teeth have fallen out. Blood tests can no longer be taken because the needle hits the bone.

On 8 October Pauline weighed 5 stone, on 28 October she weighed 4½ stone and was given one week to live. Without any doubt unless she is released and given proper medical treatment Pauline McLaughlin will die. And yet, on 29 October, Pauline was returned by the British authorities to Armagh gaol where she will be left to die.

OBITUARY



JIM REILLY

People who knew Jim Reilly will remember him as a fighter for Irish liberation who carried on working and organising up to his death.

He was born in the New Lodge area of Belfast in 1927. He saw, and grew up in, the results of British rule: poverty, unemployment and sectarianism. At the age of 14 he joined the Republican movement.

1942 Jim was arrested for the first time, brutally beaten and interned in Crumlin Road prison where he took part in the prison riot of that year. 1943 he went on hunger-strike, was released, re-arrested and released again. He was now sixteen years old. His health was never to recover from these early years.

In the mid-forties Jim Reilly was forced to emigrate to Britain to find work. He settled in Luton where he found work at the Vauxhall car factory. By the late sixties, Jim Reilly was an established working class activist in Luton. He founded the Luton branch of Provisional Sinn Fein in 1971. From then till the day he died he campaigned tirelessly to bring the truth of the Irish struggle home to British workers. The cycle of arrests and harassment which he had known in his youth now began again:

was one of those murdered by British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday. Leo Green's eldest brother was assassinated by the SAS or loyalists. Tommy McKearney was interrogated for seven days at Castlereagh where he was badly beaten. His case is in fact one of those described by Peter Taylor in his recent book about RUC tortures: 'When Dr Irwin (the police doctor) saw him at Townhall Street a week later, he was pale, nervous and exhausted. He had a black eye that looked fairly recent and bruises whose colour suggested they were five to six days old. His forehead was swollen and many of the muscles at the back of his neck, forearm and abdomen were swollen and tender. His fingers were trembling.' (*Beating the Terrorists?*, p.217). Despite Dr Irwin's evidence that McKearney had been beaten the judge ruled that an alleged statement by him was admissible and then convicted him.

The men on hunger strike – like the rest of the prisoners in the H-Blocks – are in the H-Blocks because of the same brutality and repression which has been directed against the entire nationalist working class over the past ten years. The struggle in the H-Blocks is a struggle not just between the British state and the prisoners but between the British state and the entire nationalist working class: as both sides fully realise, a defeat for the prisoners would be a defeat for the entire nationalist community, while a victory for the prisoners would be a major battle won in the long war to end British rule in Ireland.

Irish Correspondent

PRAVDA SUPPORTS BLANKETMEN

Recently Pravda, official organ of the Soviet CP, carried a report headlined 'The Protest of the Freedom Fighters'. This said

Seven prisoners... in Long Kesh have begun a hunger strike. The prisoners – fighters for the freedom of Northern Ireland demand that the authorities stop treating them as criminals and render them their due right as political prisoners.

This shows that the Soviet Communist Party leadership is several steps to the left of its Trotskyist critics and its sister party in Britain, the CPGB. Which only goes to show that the petit bourgeois socialists' anti-Sovietism and their attacks on the Republican movement serve the same purpose – to defend imperialism.

- 1974: held in Castlereagh for seven days
- 1974: arrested in Leicester
- 1975: arrested under the PTA in Luton and held for five days
- 1977: arrested under the PTA in Luton
- 1980: arrested under the PTA in Luton. Held six weeks in prison and released on bail.

In the end the British ruling class was reduced to a bogus conspiracy charge in the last, but successful, effort to silence him. Long years of ill-health did not prevent Jim from playing the fullest part in the fight for Irish freedom. But it did mean that six weeks in prison in his fifty-fourth year was as good as a sentence of death.

Jim Reilly was typical of the Irishmen and women who have given their lives to fighting British imperialism. A dedicated Republican and a convinced socialist, Jim Reilly has left an example of courage and dedication which will always be cherished in the anti-imperialist and working class movement.

The RCG extends its sympathy and solidarity to Jim Reilly's friends, relatives and comrades.

TM

SMUGGLED COMMUNICATION FROM THE PRO OF THE BLANKETMEN IN LONG KESH

We, the Republican Prisoners of War in H-Block, Long Kesh demand as of right political recognition and that we be accorded the status of political prisoners. We claim this right as captured combatants in the continuing struggle for National liberation and self determination. We refute most strongly the tag of criminal with which the British have attempted to label us and our struggle, and we point to the divisive partitionist institutions of the Six Counties as the sole criminal aspect of the present struggle.

All of us were arrested under repressive laws, interrogated and often tortured in RUC barracks and processed through special non-jury courts where we were sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment. After this men were put in the H-Blocks and were expected to bow the knee before the British administration and wear their criminal uniform. Attempts to criminalise us were designed to depoliticise the Irish national struggle.

We don't have to recite again the widespread, almost total forms of punishment, degradation and deprivation we have been subjected to. All have failed to break our resistance.

For the past four years we have endured their brutality in deplorable conditions – we have been stripped naked and robbed of our individuality, yet we refuse to be broken. Further repression only serves to strengthen our resolve and that of our female comrades enduring the same hardships in Armagh Jail.

During this period many individuals, religious figures, political organisations and sections of the media have condemned the way in which we have been treated. Yet despite appeals for a resolution of the H-Block protest the British government has remained intransigent and displayed vindictive arrogance in dealing with the problem. They refused to treat this issue in a realistic manner which is just another reflection of their attitude to the entire Irish question.

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

We call on the Irish people to lend us their support for our just demands and we are confident that this support will be very much in evidence for the coming days.

We call on all solidarity and support groups to intensify their efforts and we also look forward with full confidence to the support of our exiled countrymen in America and Australia and throughout the world.

We declare that political status is ours of right and we declare that from Monday, 27th October, 1980 a Hunger Strike by a number of men representing H-Blocks 3, 4 and 5 will commence.

Our widely recognised resistance has carried us through four years of immense suffering and it shall carry us through to the bitter climax of death if necessary.

Signed:
P.R.O.
H-Block Blanketmen
Long Kesh Camp.
October 10, 1980.