

# FIGHT RACISM!

# FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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## BELFAST BRIXTON

# FORCES OF REVOLUTION

Every severe crisis of a social system brings forward something new. It pushes to the fore those forces which represent the future and shows ever more clearly the bankruptcy of those forces which desperately try to hold onto the past. The present crisis of British imperialism is no exception.

Bobby Sands was an irreconcilable enemy of British imperialism. By the age of 18 he had already joined the revolutionary forces of the IRA to drive Britain out of Ireland. The whole might of the British state could not break his revolutionary spirit. That is why he was slowly and barbarically tortured to death in a British concentration camp. Bobby Sands has become a symbol, a shining light to those fighting oppression throughout the world. Apologists for imperialism from every quarter, from the Pope to the European Human Rights Commission to the millionaire Irish Prime Minister Haughey tried to persuade him to give up his struggle and to betray his revolutionary cause. They failed. He knew they were hand-in-glove with British imperialism, only concerned to prevent the revolutionary anger that, with his death, would burst onto the streets of Ireland. The murder of Bobby Sands has shown once again that you cannot reason with imperialism. The massive peaceful protests during the hunger strikes, the widespread international support were of no avail. Peaceful protest will not move British imperialism. 'Democracy' in the Six-Counties is only evoked by British Governments when it strengthens British imperialist rule. Bobby Sands' election victory did not alter the British Government's position at all. The long struggle of the Irish people for freedom has demonstrated once again that imperialism only moves when it is confronted by revolutionary force. As Owen Carron, election agent of Bobby Sands said, at his funeral:

'We must take what they will not give... There is no way in which freedom can be obtained, and when obtained maintained, except by armed men'.

Bobby Sands, IRA freedom fighter has set the standard for revolutionaries. The revolutionary youth of Derry and Belfast are following his lead. *These are the forces of the future.*

Massive protests took place throughout the world on the death of Bobby Sands. 8,000 marched in Paris and in Toulouse a Dunlop warehouse was bombed. 5,000 marched in Milan and the British Chamber of Commerce was bombed. Thousands marched in Portugal with placards stating 'We are all members of the IRA'. In Oporto a British owned club was fire-bombed. A thousand people demonstrated in Greece. 300 people battled with police in Spain. In Switzerland a British car showroom was bombed. In the USA thousands have demonstrated in New York and San Francisco. In Iran the street next to the British Embassy in Tehran has been named after the revolutionary Bobby Sands.



But in Britain the source of this barbaric murder there has been nothing worthy of the name protest. The British Labour movement has again demonstrated its complete moral and political bankruptcy. It was entirely in character for the Labour Party to send Concannon to inform Bobby Sands a few days before his death that the Labour Party, which created the H-Blocks, supported and applauded his murder. For in 1916 this same imperialist Labour Party was directly party to the murder of the great revolutionary socialist James Connolly.

Another equally despicable creature Arthur Henderson MP not only was part of the Coalition Government that crushed the Easter Rising but he also led other Labour MPs in Parliament in their applause at the news of James Connolly's death. The Labour Party is, and always has been on the side of British imperialism in its attempts to crush the oppressed. Foot and Thatcher will always unite against the revolutionary struggle of a risen people fighting British imperialism.

And what of those so-called Labour lefts! Those gutless wretches have done nothing but sign a miserable Commons motion regretting Bobby Sands' death. They were even put to shame by an ordinary Labour MP Patrick Duffy who in spite of the Commons hounds baying for his blood expressed simple human outrage at Thatcher's barbaric act. Those Labour lefts only regretted the death of Bobby Sands because they were terrified at the revolutionary violence that would inevitably follow it. They have never supported political status for Irish political prisoners and they never will. They took every opportunity to condemn the revolutionary violence of the IRA when interviewed by the Press. Their difference with Thatcher only lies in the method they propose for defeating the Irish people's revolutionary struggle for freedom. They want it done without so much obvious brutal force. These Labour MPs belong to the forces of the past.

The task of building a campaign in support of the hunger strikers *should* have been carried out by those claiming to be further to the left than the Labour Party. But they, the CP, SWP/IMG under the umbrella of the Troops Out Movement, and the WRP and other assorted middle-class socialists refused point blank to build a campaign for political status. If the Labour lefts are the backside of the imperialist Labour Party these middle class socialists search through their droppings to find nuggets of gold. Every committee where they dominated was subservient to their alliance with the Labour lefts. Every proposal put was judged by its acceptability to the Labour lefts. The Irish peoples' struggle, the

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## FORCES OF REVOLUTION

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agony of the hunger strikers was not even considered. The highpoint of their totally bankrupt campaign was the abject response of a vigil of only 300 people on the night of Bobby Sands' death. This while thousands marched in the Capitals of other countries.

These middle class socialists sank even lower. Where real militant working class campaigns were being built in support of political status they openly sabotaged them. In Scotland they even allied with Labour and Loyalist reactionaries in getting demonstrations in support of political status banned. They are the forces of the past.

That the Government was forced to ban all demonstrations in Strathclyde for three months was proof of the growing strength of the campaign for political status there. This campaign was led by an alliance of the Revolutionary Communist Group and young Republican workers, particularly those in the Flute bands. Alone of the British left organisations, the RCG has campaigned everywhere against collaboration with the Labour lefts and for unconditional support for Irish political prisoners. But we failed to dent the reactionary alliance of the British middle class socialists with the imperialist Labour Party. The revolutionary forces in Britain are as yet too weak. Faced with the unop-

posed Government bans on demonstrations and marches and the sabotage of the British left, only revolutionary communists and other committed supporters of the Irish people's struggle were prepared to risk isolation, attack and arrest. This work must go on and through it new revolutionary forces will emerge and new allies will be found.

These allies do not lie in the privileged and corrupt forces of the past – the official Labour movement, TUC and Labour Party, Labour lefts and their middle class socialist friends. The new forces lie within the most oppressed and poorest sections of the working class. It is no coincidence that as the revolutionary youth of Derry and Belfast fought pitched battles on the streets against British imperialist forces, so the black people of Brixton in alliance with a small number of whites drove the police out of their area.

British imperialism has nothing but oppression and poverty to offer them. They have no illusions in the institutions of British imperialist democracy. They, like the Irish have been forced to take the revolutionary and insurrectionist road. Only such forces are capable of the dedication and sacrifice which is necessary in the struggle against British imperialism here at home. Only such forces will risk the arrest, imprisonment and immense hardship which comes through participation in this fight. Only from such ranks will there be those who will follow the courageous lead set by Bobby Sands.

These are the real allies of the Irish people. From their ranks a new revolutionary anti-imperialist movement will be built. **These are the forces of revolution.**



Over 80 Irish workers, black workers, Sinn Fein supporters, Iranian revolutionaries and FRFI supporters attended a successful rally in support of the Irish hunger strikers organised by the Revolutionary Communist Group in the Conway Hall on 30 April. Speakers included John La Rose (Race Today Collective), Michael Holden (Sinn Fein), Liam O'Neill (IRSP), Alistair Logan (Solicitor) and Terry Marlowe (FRFI).

## Iranian solidarity

In the name of God and  
In the name of the Heroic people of  
Ireland and Iran

**Sinn Fein (political wing of the Irish  
Republican Army)  
Daring and militant Bobby Sands,  
member of the IRA and representative of  
the heroic people of Ireland!**

**Heroic and militant people of Ireland!**  
With revolutionary salutations, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran offers its most profound revolutionary congratulations to the heroic people of Ireland and the Irish Republican Army, as well as the heroic Bobby Sands, for the magnificent electoral victory of the captive revolutionary militant Bobby Sands. This deserving election shows the revolutionary growth of people who have risen up under the leadership of their revolutionary vanguards, and are fighting a firm and decisive battle against British Imperialism for their indisputable and ignored rights. This brilliant victory is witness to the rightfulness and the popular base of the IRA and is a punishing blow to the cunning old British Imperialism and dependent reactionaries who have always tried with their raving to misrepresent the heroic struggle of the Irish people and to call IRA terrorists.

The People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran sees this victory as the vanguard of the eventual military and political victory of the

Irish people and the complete annihilation of Imperialism throughout the world and wishes a decisive victory for the revolutionary and heroic Irish people.

The People's Mojahedin of Iran congratulate this revolutionary son of the Irish people for this heroic resistance and his relentless struggle whether outside prison or during captivity and during the present hunger strike. The People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran declares his support for the demands of this captive militant which are the crystallisation of all the demands and hopes of the Irish people and asks all revolutionary and progressive forces throughout the world, especially groups, organisations, personalities, workers' unions, lawyers and other progressive and militant institutions in Britain to continue in their support, and to take necessary measures until all the demands of the valiant Bobby Sands are met, so that his heroic hunger strike ends fruitfully and victoriously with full safe-keeping of this heroic son of the Irish people.

**DEATH TO IMPERIALISM  
LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE OF THE  
OPRESSED PEOPLE  
REVOLUTION UNTIL VICTORY**

Peoples' Mojahedin Organization of Iran  
(PMOI)  
17 April 1981

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## RCG fights left sabotage

**At a time when it was more than ever both possible and absolutely necessary to build a campaign in support of political status the Labour Party and its middle class socialist allies – the SWP, IMG etc – have refused to do so.**

The imperialist Labour Party and the TUC have backed the British state to the hilt. The Labour lefts have occasionally whimpered that 'intransigence' will strengthen the forces they all hate and fear – the IRA. Yet for two months of Bobby Sands' agonising death the SWP, IMG etc argued for a campaign based on these 'broad forces' of the Labour left.

The result has been a campaign even smaller than during the last hunger strike. The only national event was a demonstration of less than 500 people. A demonstration in Staines mustered 50 people. And on the night of Bobby Sands' murder, the British middle class socialists in London could turn out only 300 people on a picket of Downing Street. Yet these events were organised by groups claiming a following of 10,000 people.

This failure was no accident. During the first hunger strike, the middle class socialists' strategy – appealing to Labour lefts and other dignitaries – totally failed. So this time they consciously decided not to expose their chosen allies any further by doing nothing. The RCG along with Republican flute bands and allies amongst Republican youth, Iranian comrades and Irish workers were campaigning for political status. So the middle class socialists resorted to sabotage.

In Glasgow they left the committee and refused to support demonstrations and rallies. In Bradford they voted against an RCG motion for a march to pass through black working class areas. In Manchester the SWP and IMG expelled the RCG from the local committee on the extraordinary grounds that we sold FRFI on the committee's street meetings. In North London when independent Irish workers joined the local committee and demanded some work, the IMG, SWP and TOM voted to dissolve it, and cancel a demonstration. In South London the IMG and SWP refused to join a committee the RCG formed, open to all prepared to work. At the London H-Block/Armagh Committee the SWP and IMG ensured that the April demonstration

was called on a Sunday rather than a Saturday when people on the streets might actually see them. They opposed holding it in Birmingham on the grounds of Birmingham's associations with the bombings. And the CPGB, who on the day after Bobby Sands' death said too little was done by the Labour movement to save his life, themselves did next to nothing.

Even after Bobby Sands' death, the IMG/SWP opposed an RCG motion for an immediate national demonstration on 23 May. Instead they will have it on 13 June when many more Hunger Strikers could be dead.

Irish political prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs and Long Lartin prisons staged roof-top protests in support of political status. These comrades face loss of remission and vicious beatings for their courageous protests. What a contrast to the middle-class 'lefties' who face no such repression yet refuse to fight for political status.

The RCG has waged a campaign which involved all our resources, all of our members and supporters. Public meetings and rallies have been held in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, Liverpool and North and South London. We have put the maximum energies into work in the working class and black areas. We have campaigned on the streets, on the housing estates, in the pubs. In the course of it we have suffered arrests and physical attacks in South London, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow.

If all organisations claiming to be socialist had done likewise the campaign in Britain could have placed great pressure on the British state. They chose not to do so and thus acted like criminals.

The RCG will continue the work. And we invite anybody who has the interests of the Irish and British workers at heart to join us in this work of building a real campaign for

**Victory to the Hunger Strikers!  
Political Status Now!**

## International support

**In contrast to criminal British middle class socialism, international anti-imperialist and progressive forces responded to the murder of Bobby Sands with massive protest actions, demonstrations and military operations against British institutions.**

In France two demonstrations of 3000 and 8000 were organised in Paris, whilst in Toulouse a Dunlop warehouse was bombed. In Italy protests were organised in Rome, and Milan where 5000 youths gathered to denounce the murder of Bobby Sands. In Milan the British Chamber of Commerce was bombed by the Red Brigades. In Portugal a militant demonstration of thousands of people led by placards saying 'We are all members of the IRA!' marched on the British Embassy in Lisbon, while in Oporto a British owned club was firebombed. In Greece, the British Embassy was besieged by 1000 demonstrators chanting slogans in support of the hunger strikers. In Spain 300 youths fought the Spanish police in the town of Pamplona during a demonstration against British imperialism. In Switzerland a showroom displaying British cars was bombed in the capital Zurich. In the USA there have been demonstrations of thousands of people in New York, Los Angeles and other cities, while the dockers union boycotted British ships for 24 hours.

Statements and messages of support for Bobby Sands and condemnations of British imperialism flooded in from all corners of the world – from the Socialist Countries, from India, from Iran, Mozambique and other countries. In Mozambique, the semi-official

daily *Noticias* said Bobby Sands died because the British Government refused to accept:

'The simple and indisputable fact that he was a political fighter. Sands and the IRA were fighting for a united and independent Ireland.'

**Radio Moscow broadcast:**

'London would like to drown in blood the movement against repression and discrimination and for human rights and liberty.'

In Iran, a street adjacent to the British Embassy has been renamed Khyaban-e-Bobby Sands 'to honour the heroic death of the IRA freedom fighter.'

These demonstrations of international solidarity after the murder of Bobby Sands followed a growing international campaign in support of the hunger strikers battle against British imperialism.

**Correction**

In our report 'Rally against Imperialism' in FRFI9, we incorrectly stated that a message of solidarity was delivered to the meeting by the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran. In fact the message was from the Moslem Students Society UK (Sympathisers of the Peoples Mojahedin Organisation of Iran).



# Imperialism against democracy

The revolutionary battles of the oppressed masses of the world against US and British imperialism intensify with each passing day. In Iran, in Nicaragua and Central America, in Palestine, in Ireland and Southern Africa the anti-imperialist movements of the oppressed are threatening to destroy the foundations of imperialism – reactionary and barbaric regimes defending the bloodsucking imperialist banks and multinationals.

Against this challenge to reactionary imperialism, Britain and the USA are uniting in yet a further stage of counter-revolutionary military preparations.

- The Reagan Administration plans to increase its overseas military spending by \$900,000 to \$4.6b. Of this \$212m will go to fascist regimes in Central America, Turkey, Morocco, Somalia, Kenya, Egypt and Sudan – all pro-imperialist and anti-democratic regimes will also receive additional military assistance.
- In Latin America, the US is re-establishing military ties with some of the most brutal regimes on the continent. A 3 year ban on arms sales to Argentina will be lifted and Chile and Brazil are being invited to recommence joint military exercises and planning.
- In the Middle East, with the collapse of the Shah regime in Iran, Saudi Arabia is being groomed as the imperialist policeman of the area and is being reinforced with a massive infusion of military aid including long range fuel tanks, missiles and radar control aircraft. In addition, the US Rapid Deployment Force is being strengthened with new bases planned in Kenya, Somalia and Oman.
- In Africa, US and British imperialism is conspiring to oust SWAPO from its legitimate position of leader of the people of Namibia, whilst at the same time proposing to provide military and financial assistance to the pro-imperialist UNITA in an effort to overthrow the revolutionary regime in Angola.

The British Government is centrally involved in these plans. It is engaged in a massive exercise of arms sales to reactionary regimes such as Chile, and most recently to Saudi Arabia, whilst the British Atlantic Committee is proposing the formation of a 3,000 strong British staffed 'fire brigade'. This force like the RDF will be used in 'trouble spots' particularly in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. And in Oman, British imperialism is attempting to maintain its rule by the same methods of murder, torture and barbarism it uses in Ireland. These measures are all being pushed through under a barrage of anti-Soviet and anti-Cuban propaganda. The hypocrisy of which was exposed by President Nyerere of Tanzania when he stated that African liberation movements in their fight for freedom turn to the USSR and Cuba because:

'... only Communist countries provide us arms.'

And these arms are today absolutely indispensable to the freedom fighters of the world faced with these latest imperialist military preparations.

The world today is dividing ever more fiercely between the forces of revolution and the forces of reaction. The one fighting for democracy, for a decent life and human dignity for the oppressed, the other fighting to defend its raw materials, its oil, its gold and the profits of its banks and multinationals. In the battles of today, and those which are still to come there are two and only two sides – the side of the oppressed or the side of imperialism. Communists stand unequivocally with the oppressed in whatever corner of the world and support every step and every move to smash imperialism.



## CENTRAL AMERICA El Salvador: the people fight on

The revolutionary war of El Salvadorean workers and peasants led by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) to crush US imperialism and its puppet military regime continues unabated.

Imperialist hopes that with the massive \$25m US military aid, the regime would succeed in delivering a rapid and devastating blow to the revolution in El Salvador have been shattered by the bombs, bullets, courage and heroism of the FMLN. Throughout the months of March and April fierce battles raged in the country's provinces, the fiercest being those in Morazan now under virtual FMLN control. Strengthened by the recent supply of new helicopters, armaments and military transport, the regime made a desperate bid to destroy FMLN strongholds before the onset of the rainy season beginning in May. In each and every battle the regime's forces were compelled to retreat. And now with the rainy season making roads impassable for army transport, the regime's already shaky control of El Salvador will be further weakened.

In response to this failure to defeat the armed organisations of the oppressed masses, the military junta has further escalated its barbaric repression of the people. The barbarism of imperialism has now reached genocidal proportions. On 27 March 1,500 refugees from Morazan sought safety from the junta's forces by hiding in mountain caves. Some of these were sealed off by the army suffocating those inside, others were saturated with teargas and as the refugees – mainly women, children and older men – staggered out they were shot down. Such massacres are now common place in El Salvador. The army surrounds a group of unarmed and helpless refugees – the women are raped and their throats slit, older children are shot dead, babies strangled in front of their parents and sadistic soldiers tie grenades to little children and explode them. In the words of a bourgeois journalist working for the imperialist *Sunday Times*, these acts of savagery are:

'... not the excesses of a few brutal and disobedient soldiers, but a coordinated military campaign by the Salvadorean military assisted by the Honduran army ...'

And the El Salvador junta base their campaign of genocide on the military handbooks of the USA.

Imperialist politicians, these utterly loathsome and bestial creatures of imperialism, who never tire of proclaiming their warped support for democracy and justice when referring to the USSR and Cuba are the very same creatures who are providing the military and political support for this escalating barbarism. The ruling class of US and British imperialism has only one concern – the defence of its capitalist property and the accumulation of more wealth. The agony of a raped and mutilated mother, the cry of a terrorised and dying child, the pain and suffering of millions of oppressed workers and peasants – to all these the imperialist ruling

class is utterly indifferent. Witnessing all this a senior Washington official declared:

'... we'll be pumping in military supplies and money to keep the economy afloat and the private sector encouraged.'

So long as the capitalist economy remains 'afloat', so long as the private sector remains 'encouraged' imperialism will raise neither cry nor whisper at the regime's brutality. President Duarte, head of the military junta is fully aware of this:

'I don't remember the exact figures for the foreign debt, but we could borrow 10, 20, 30 times more than we have already borrowed. Provided exports keep growing.'

Such is the reality of the war in El Salvador. And the FMLN fully understands this reality – that imperialism in defence of its property and profit will tolerate and indeed encourage every form of barbarism against workers and peasants to break their revolutionary resistance. The FMLN is therefore responding by hitting imperialism where it hurts most. Coffee is El Salvador's main export – the FMLN is waging a campaign of economic war destroying coffee crops, warehouses, freight trains and railway lines. In addition during the months of March and April it burnt down the firm of Cartooners Centroamericana causing \$800,000 of damage, bombed the Agricultural Commercial Banks and destroyed numerous electricity generators.

Two months ago, the US State Department launched a major propaganda offensive to discredit the FMLN. It had no popular support they said, it was merely an instrument of Soviet 'subversion', there would be no war in El Salvador if it was not for the interference of the USSR and Cuba. This stupid and reactionary conspiracy is now exposed. Even the CIA, in its own report of Cuba's and the USSR's international role, refutes its own State Department's allegations! The State Department's propaganda offensive was designed to justify increasing military aid to the Duarte regime and prepare 'public opinion' for direct US military intervention if this was necessary. Military aid has been provided and the revolution remains undefeated. US imperialism is no doubt going ahead with preparations to invade El Salvador. Communists in Britain say **No US intervention in El Salvador!** The war in El Salvador is a class war of the oppressed and exploited workers and peasants against US imperialism and its lackey ruling class in El Salvador. Communists say **Victory to the oppressed masses of El Salvador! Victory to the FMLN.**

Eddie Abrahams

## Grenada

In the course of a press conference, held during the recent celebrations in Grenada of the second anniversary of the 13 March 1979 revolution Prime Minister Comrade Maurice Bishop was asked whether the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) was surprised that Britain had recently cut off all aid to his country.

Comrade Bishop replied by first clarifying that in fact aid had been cut off since the revolution and that Britain's announcement was simply ratification of a prior decision. He went on to say that the PRG was not at all surprised.

'Look at Britain's ruling party, they are totally racist. If you don't believe me, look at how they treat Ireland.'

Bishop denounced the British Government as:

'... racist, ruthless and totally lacking in humanitarianism ...'

Noting Britain's good relations with South Africa and Chile, he added:

'Then they come out here and talk about human rights. What type of human rights are they talking about?'

It is hardly surprising that the PRG which also maintains a firm alliance with Cuba is the subject of attacks from US and British imperialism. The US has already sent a mission to Europe to try and stop the EEC from giving Grenada a \$60m loan to help build an international airport. Britain and the USA are also sending constant illegal flights over Grenada and British marines have been engaged in military manoeuvres in Barbados. As in Nicaragua, imperialism, and in this case in particular, British imperialism are searching out every opportunity to foment counter-revolution.

## Nicaragua

In July 1979, following a long and bitter popular war led by the Sandinistas, the Nicaraguan people smashed the hated US-backed Somoza regime and established an anti-imperialist people's government. Great strides have been taken in organising workers and peasants, in eliminating illiteracy and in the provision of social and health care. Nicaragua stands as a symbol of a successful anti-imperialist revolution.

Imperialism, however, can never reconcile itself to such defeat. It will relentlessly pursue counter-revolution; it will stop at nothing to destroy the social and democratic victories of the people and re-establish its ruthless rule. Using the pretext of alleged Nicaraguan aid to the FMLN in El Salvador the US administration took its first major step by cutting off \$24m in aid. \$9 of this was for the purchase of grain to supply bread for the people. US imperialism hopes that by starving the masses and making 12,000 bread workers unemployed it will turn the people against their own government.

Simultaneously US imperialism is providing increasing material and political support to the counter-revolutionary National Democratic Union (UDN) composed of rich businessmen and merchants. This organisation calls for the end of all international aid knowing that such an act would destroy the Nicaraguan economy and bring increasing suffering to the masses. But this precisely is its aim. It then hopes to emerge as the 'spokesman' of the people who they hope will turn against the Sandinistas. The UDN is also organising, with the assistance of the US, a counter-revolutionary army, which it will no doubt try to turn against the revolutionary masses of Nicaragua.

The Sandinistas have warned US imperialism:

'We do not want it, but if they are looking for confrontation then we can give the green light to the class struggle.'

Communists extend their full solidarity to the Sandinista government and demand 'Imperialist Hands Off Nicaragua!'



# BRIXTON UPRISING

It was the profit motive that built the tenement house and the city project. Profit and loss prevents repairs and maintenance. Free enterprise brought the monopolistic chainstore into the neighbourhood. The concept of private ownership of facilities that the people need to exist brought the legions of hip-shooting, brainless pigs down upon our heads, our homes, our streets. They're there to protect the entrepreneur! His chainstore, his property that you are renting, his bank.

*George Jackson*

On the weekend of 10-13 April the black people of Brixton, joined by some of the white working class people who also live there, rose up against police tyranny and racism. They fought with all the anger that long years of oppression have stored in their hearts. They fought with complete understanding of the British state and its police which long years of suffering at its hands have developed. They fought with the courage which only those who have nothing to lose can display. And the people of Brixton fought this battle with the weapons used by working class insurrectionists the world over, from South Africa to Belfast – the brick, the barricade and the petrol bomb.

The Brixton uprising was a rising by the most oppressed, by the people of no property. It was a rising not only against the police but against the system which the police are paid to defend. A system which decrees that a few shall possess riches whilst the oppressed and poor have nothing. The black people of Brixton have been robbed by this system. Robbed even of the right to earn a living. Robbed even of the right to walk the streets unmolested by the police.

Brixton has long been an area where the police show their real purpose – keeping the working class down. Raiding homes, beating people, using arbitrary arrests, open corruption and racist abuse and attack – these are their methods.

One week before the Uprising the latest operation by the police in Brixton began. Called 'Operation Swamp' it consisted of putting large numbers of plainclothes police onto the streets. Over 1000 people were stopped and questioned during this week. In particular no black person was safe from being stopped, searched, insulted and arrested.

## Friday

During the late afternoon the anger and outrage of local people finally broke when they saw police detaining and questioning a man suffering from severe stab wounds. A crowd gathered to demand that the police get the man medical attention. The police continued to question him for 15 minutes. The people, knowing that the police were quite capable of watching a black man bleed to death in front of their eyes, rushed the police van to rescue their brother. He was rescued and taken to hospital. Meanwhile the police brought in reinforcements and used dogs and truncheons to attack the people. One police van was driven directly at the crowd and it hit a black youth who was thrown right over the van. In DeFry the Army drove a van into a crowd of youths killing two of them. Such is the callous disregard the British state has for the oppressed.

The people of Brixton would not tolerate this murderous behaviour and the police and their vehicles came under attack from stones and other missiles. The police were forced to get out of the area.

## Saturday

Hundreds of police were evident in the area. The police were intent on proving that they ruled the streets of Brixton. Along Atlantic Road and Railton Road small groups of police gathered on every corner whilst pairs of policemen patrolled every few yards. All day the harassment continued. Finally in the late afternoon

the police arrested a black man outside the minicab office on Atlantic Road. As he was led to the police van the anger of the people erupted. The van windows were smashed and the doors pulled open. Bricks were thrown as more police arrived in the area. A policeman was felled by a brick. Within minutes an ambulance arrived to take him away. The people remembered the fate of their brother left bleeding the night before. No ambulance had come for him. Their anger mounted. More bricks were thrown at the police.

Feeling the fury of the crowd the police were forced to regroup at the end of Mayall Road. Police cars and dog vans doubtless summoned by panic stricken radio messages raced up and

- **Senior Police officer:**  
**'It is an outburst against private property. They stone us and then run away into the back streets and then re-appear somewhere else.'**

down Railton Road. But when they tried to get into Atlantic Road they were driven back by stones. Police cars that ventured up Atlantic Road were systematically stoned. Paving stones and a local demolition site supplied ready ammunition and the youth led a determined charge against the police who beat a hasty retreat up Mayall Road. A dog van they had left behind in their flight was overturned and set ablaze.

The people were jubilant at the victory they had achieved. The police had tasted their own medicine. But they also knew that soon greater forces of police would arrive and like maddened dogs the police would seek their revenge. And so word went round, barricades must be made to keep the police out.

- **Local Resident interviewed in Daily Star:**  
**'What's an extremist? A communist? We are all bloody communists around here. What else can you be when you live in a depressed, run down area where most of the people are out of work and with no hope of getting a job. The communists talk about redistributing wealth don't they? Well last night saw a greater distribution of wealth than any government will ever allow.'**

If stone throwing is the first stage of working class fightback on the streets then barricades are its second. For with the barricade comes an area that, for no matter how short a time, belongs to the people. Within that area the people will rule. And if there is one thing that the British state finds intolerable it is that there should be an area where the people are in control, that there should be, as they call it, a 'no-go' area for the forces of the British state.

Barricades went up along side streets leading off Railton Road and at the junction of Railton Road and Atlantic Road. Within that area the people made their decisions on where the barricades should go. They treated their wounded.



They organised the defence of the area. They recalled the fact that many photographers were around and so the word passed – wear masks. Strangers walking around were challenged. A bus was seized. Contrary to lies in the press, the driver was not chased with an iron bar. He was firmly told where the bus was wanted and then the youth took possession of it and it drove down Railton Road with the youth aboard it and hanging from its sides. The driver walked untroubled from the area.

- **Communist Party GLC candidate and representative of Stockwell Park Tenant's Association, Jean Styles:**  
**'God knows what will happen to the community policing experiment on our estate. We'll probably have to start from scratch and rebuild.'**

The police made numerous efforts to regain Railton Road, particularly through Leeson Road. But the youth kept them at bay using bricks, as well as petrol bombs. It was during

this combat that the Windsor Castle pub got burned down.

Meanwhile barricades were being strengthened and fortified. While these were being doused with petrol the people chanted 'Militant! Militant!' Police lines the other side of the barricade cowered behind their riot shields but soon discovered that they were no match for petrol bombs or for the militant fighters who jumped above the riot shields to land blows on the police.

The police launched an effort against the barricade at the end of Railton Road. The van and car comprising the barricade were set ablaze and the 30 or so youths defending the barricade held their fire until police were within ten yards. Then a hail of petrol bombs and bricks forced the police to retreat taking their many casualties with them.

Fighting also raged in Coldharbour Lane, Electric Avenue and Brixton Road. Shops were broken into and goods so long out of the reach of local people were taken. Many a child got Easter eggs. Many a family got a new TV set. Many a person suddenly possessed a diamond

*continued on page 12*





# A millionaire's interests

Following the Brixton Uprising Chief Francis Arthur Nzeribe, a millionaire, paid for a full page in the Daily Mirror on which he made a statement.

In it he said:

'Recognising that the majority of the less fortunate trouble-making youths are the descendants of Afro-Caribbean immigrants and also recognising their economic circumstances; I direct this appeal to those of us blacks who are in a position to assist, to come forward. Let us demonstrate that we are prepared to share the burden of helping ourselves by offering a tangible solution to the most pressing problem - FRUSTRATION. Let us reassure our less fortunate brothers and sisters that the system is not against us and that the system works, that her Majesty's government cares for all.'

'I am convinced from my personal experience that this country is fair to all.'

Chief Nzeribe is claiming to be a friend of the people. He says he will bring jobs to areas where unemployment is widespread amongst black youth. His solution is to sponsor private enterprise schemes to provide local employment. Is he a friend of the people?

We must first ask why is he only speaking out now, after the Uprising. Did he not know before that the people of Brixton were suffering. He did. But that is not the problem which he is trying to solve. He is addressing himself to quite a different problem, one which is worrying all sections of the British ruling class - the fact that many black people *know* that the present system doesn't work because it does not provide them with those things necessary for a human existence - a good home, a job, facilities for social and cultural life, education for the children, dignity and freedom.

Chief Nzeribe's solution is for the 'more fortunate' to provide reassurance to the 'less fortunate' that contrary to their whole experience, the system does work.

For what purpose must this 'reassurance' be given. Not for the purpose of assuring the people. No. Simply for the purpose of *protecting* the 'more fortunate' by *protecting* the private enterprise system from revolutionary outbursts by the 'less fortunate'. To protect the capitalist system which alone is responsible for creating the 'less fortunate'. The survival of capitalism depends on the existence of a class which has nothing, a class whose blood and toil creates profit for the 'more fortunate' so that they may live in luxury.

And it is this system which Chief Nzeribe rightly recognises to be threatened by growing revolutionary sentiments amongst black youth. So he, a millionaire, seeks to convince them, who have nothing, that the system can be made to work.

But of one thing we can be sure. Not everybody can be a millionaire. For each millionaire to exist there must also exist those from whom he made his millions - the poor and oppressed.

The provision of a few crumbs from a millionaire's table will not turn the people of Brixton aside from the road they have taken. They, along with others who have no stake in the system, will sweep it away - lock, stock and millionaire.

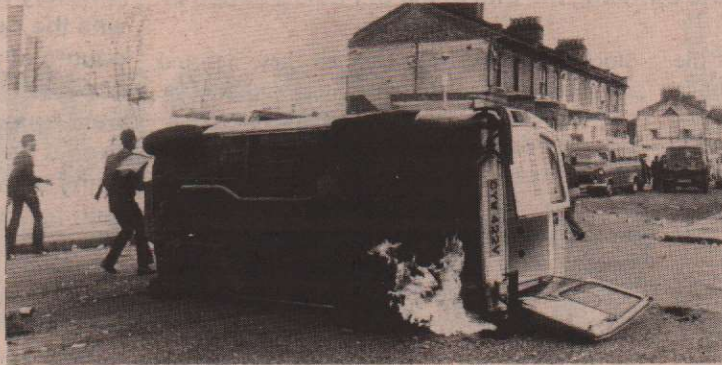
George Jackson wrote about who the friends of the people are and said:

'I do not include those who support capitalism in any appreciable degree or who feel they have something to lose with its destruction. They are our irreconcilable enemy.'

# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Brixton Newsheet No1

# THE BRIXTON UPRISING



On Saturday and Sunday, 11/12 April the black working class people of Brixton, joined by some white people, waged a long battle to drive the racist police force out of Brixton. The police occupation of Brixton, with its beatings, harassment and arrests of black people, has been the cause of much suffering and misery. In fighting back to assert their rights to live free from police harassment and walk the streets in dignity and freedom, the people of Brixton have taken an honourable place beside all those fighting for freedom: the black masses of South Africa, the oppressed people of El Salvador, the nationalist population of Ireland.

## The people of no property

Throughout the world the poor, the oppressed - the 'people of no property' - are fighting for freedom and for basic human needs. And all over the world those who rule - the rich and powerful - are using violence to try and crush the people's struggle. In Ireland it is the British army which raids, beats and terrorises the nationalist people. In El Salvador the regime backed by Britain and the USA has so far murdered 13,000 people. The British-backed South African racist regime shoots down school students opposing racist education. In Brixton it is the British police who are occupying Brixton, doing house to house raids, beating up frightened families and arresting youths on the street.

## Imperialism means poverty

The British Army in Ireland and the police in Brixton are protecting the very system which the rich and privileged, the money makers and the blood sucking banks gain their wealth from. It is a

system which gives wealth and comfort for a small number. But for most, for the oppressed, for the black people, for the low-paid and unemployed it provides **nothing**. Nothing but misery. Nothing but a daily struggle to survive. Nothing but injustice. Nothing but racism.

This is the system of imperialism. A small minority of the world's population live like Lords at the expense of the vast majority. It is a system which depends on forcing the majority of the world's population to live in poverty. It is a system which decrees that 25% of black children in South Africa die, and that most of the black youth of Brixton be unemployed. Imperialism depends on holding small and poor nations in poverty so that their wealth can be sucked into the vaults of British banks and a privileged few can continue to live in luxury.

## Imperialism means racism

It is a system which depends for its existence on racism. Britain's rulers once wanted black people to come to Britain to carry out the worst paid and hardest jobs. Now in crisis times Britain's rich rulers turn to black people and say 'We don't need you, keep out of our sight, go and live as you can. We no longer need you and if you dare to fight for your rights we will use our police to beat you down'.

But first in St Pauls, and now in Brixton, black people have risen against this system. Immediately the British rulers say that the fightback was started by 'outside agitators' and communists. What nonsense! They have said the same about every struggle the oppressed are fighting whether it be in Ireland, El Salvador or South Africa. The rich cannot admit that it is their system which leaves the people no choice but to

fightback and claim their rights. Not 'outside agitators' but systematic police brutality and racism caused the people of Brixton to rise and fight.

## Imperialism is the criminal

And when the people fight for their rights the rich and their newspapers attack them as 'criminals', 'terrorists', 'looters' and 'violent thugs'. What hypocrisy! It is the imperialist system which is based on violence and robbery. It robs the mass of people of their right to live a reasonable life. It loots the poor countries of their wealth so that the people starve. It uses violence by its army and its police to crush any rebellion against intolerable conditions. It is the rich and their lackeys, the police and their supporters who are criminals and the men of violence.

## Communists support the fightback

Communists declare their full support for the people of Brixton. Communists stand with the oppressed and the people of no property. We stand with and will defend all those who are fighting for the right to live as human beings should live, with decent homes, education for the children, jobs for all and freedom to walk the streets with dignity. We stand for the rights of black people. We stand against racism and discrimination. We oppose the imperialist system because it can **never** supply the basic needs and wants of the mass of working people.

## Police out of Brixton

Meanwhile, whilst the ruling class appoints one of their own kind, a rich Lord, Lord Scarman to conduct an enquiry which will only cover up for the police, the police continue to occupy Brixton. They are raiding and arresting, bursting into homes and leaving injured parents to mourn the arrest of their sons and daughters. Helicopters fly and spy above Brixton. The police, the media and others are trying to prevent the people of Brixton from holding a rally in protest against the police.

The people of Brixton have shown in action what they want and we fully support them in calling for:

**Police out of Brixton!  
Free the Arrested!  
Drop All Charges Now!**

PRESS ASSOCIATION



# Defend Brixton

Over 300 people have been arrested for their part in the Uprising. Most were arrested during the Uprising (many of them simply snatched off the streets whilst watching the events) but some have also been picked up in house raids carried out since the Uprising.

Charges so far range from obstruction of the police to theft and grievous bodily harm. Whilst most have received bail some have been remanded in custody.

Already 39 have had their cases heard and have received fines and periods at attendance centres.

It remains to be seen whether the police will try to push for serious and overtly political charges such as those of 'riot' tried in St Paul's. The victory in St Paul's may well deter them from this. Nevertheless serious charges are being pressed and all those who supported the Brixton Uprising must now defend those charged. The state must not be allowed to get its revenge through the courts and the prisons!

Further defendants will appear at Camberwell Green Magistrates Court on 18 May.

- 'I wanted to be objective and object to the police'. Defendant charged with throwing stones at Brixton police.

## Racists

The Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) wishes to totally disassociate itself from the racist and patronising comments made about the Brixton Uprising and the struggle of black people by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT).

Because of possible confusion arising from the similarity of the names of our organisations (confusion which the Press has added to) the RCG wishes to make it clear that we have no relation whatever to the RCT and its paper *the next step*. The founders of the RCT were expelled from our organisation five years ago, precisely because of their racism and national chauvinism.

The RCT is a publicity-seeking organisation which openly proclaims both in the Press and on TV that it tries to use black people's struggles for its own ends. Its latest idiocy is to set up an organisation called SOLWAR which is supposed to patrol the streets of Brixton vigilante-style to 'warn people when the police are coming'. What ridiculous arrogance for this tiny group to imagine that the black people of Brixton, who know and have shown how to deal with the police, need warning about, the police approaching!

The reality of the RCT's attitude to the police is shown by the fact that on 9 May 1981 at a street meeting in Balham on the hunger-strike, the two members of the RCT present promptly vanished when the police arrived.

# Boycott Scarman Inquiry

The Government has appointed Lord Scarman to head an Inquiry into the Brixton Uprising.

They have appointed Lord Scarman because he is known as a Liberal judge. If a matter is 'sensitive', (if that is the issue has popular support) then Scarman is trundled out to see 'both sides' and make fair-sounding recommendations which the authorities promptly forget about. Scarman headed the Grunwick inquiry and recommended the workers' re-instatement - this recommendation was of course ignored.

If he runs the true to past form, Scarman will find fault on 'both sides' in the case of Brixton, ie the police and the people. Meanwhile the court cases will go on. People will be gaoled. Raids will go on and the police will continue to harass people in Brixton.

The Scarman Inquiry is of no use to the oppressed people of Brixton. They need no Inquiry to tell them why they rose up against the police. They know the Inquiry could only divert their energy away from the urgent task - to defend the arrested and stop more police attacks.

That is why those who fought back in Brixton will ignore the Inquiry. They refuse to give credibility to this judicial farce by participating in it. Only those people intent on diverting the people from the revolutionary road will say and do otherwise. Revolutionaries will say:

**Boycott Scarman!  
Organise to Defend Brixton!**



# ST PAULS POLICE DEFEATED

On 20 March, almost one year after the Uprising, the trial of the St Pauls 9 ended in victory.

5 of the 9 were acquitted and the cases of the remaining 4 referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for a decision on whether to re-try them. The cases have since been dropped, supposedly in the interests of 'community relations'. The real reason is that the state had lost the confidence to proceed with the St Pauls frame-up.

Throughout the trial the police were exposed as liars. Their attempts to frame Frank Rapier as a 'leader' of the Uprising were revealed as a vindictive campaign against a man known for his opposition to police racism.

The use by the Defence of all its 39 challenges had produced a jury with strong working class and black representation. They were seen at times to join in scornful laughter which greeted police lies. And, much to the Judge, Justice

Stocker's dismay they rejected these lies and acquitted 5 defendants including Frank Rapier.

Whilst cheering and celebration reigned outside the court, Justice Stocker irritably ended the trial and praised the police for their 'gallantry'. The state's attempt to use a 'riotous assembly' charge, carrying a possible life sentence, came to grief.

On 2 April, the anniversary of the Uprising, a huge street party was held in St Pauls, despite police opposition. FRFI supporters were there to celebrate just as they have been present through the trials. Alone of all papers, FRFI has consistently supported St Pauls and reported the trials in every issue for one year.

We salute the people of St Pauls who, in court and on the streets, have shown the way to deal with police racism.

# Liverpool 8 Victory

A victory for the two Wilkie brothers was the outcome of their trial on five counts of assaulting police officers occasioning actual bodily harm. They were found not guilty on all counts, except that George Wilkie was found guilty on a reduced charge of common assault, and received a £25 fine.

The charges were brought after a raid on their house last July, following which both brothers were beaten up in Admiral Street police station. A defence campaign was organised in association with Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, which mounted two successful pickets of the committal hearing, and a picket on Chief Constable Oxford when he spoke at a meeting on 'community relations'. The trial itself was held in front of an all-white predominantly working class jury. But the result showed that white workers are now far less prepared to believe the police's stories when it comes to racist harassment. For during the trial, it became clear that the jury had one of two stories to believe - either that of the family or that of the police. And it was the family's side they took!

They could see that the police's stories were a pack of lies - and pretty bad ones at that! For whilst the police said that they did not go into the house until after the raid, and claimed that of the two CID men principally involved, Det Sgt Davies had been jammed in the front door, whilst Det Sgt Rafferty had been outside, they couldn't explain why it was Rafferty who had a large vertical weal on his back, whilst Davies had none. The truth was that Davies was inside strangling Patrick with his tee-shirt, whilst Rafferty was jammed in the door. We are glad to say that both Rafferty and Davies saw justice done, for they were present in court for all five days of the trial, seeing their 'evidence' torn to shreds.

It all proved too much for the judge, for at the end of the trial he attacked the prosecution for its conduct of the whole case. To which the prosecuting counsel complained feebly about 'outside interference', of campaigns against police racism, of pickets and leaflets which were in contempt of court. Clearly the campaign had upset the police, and for them to lose the case was to rub it in! One up against the racist Liverpool police!

# Anwar Ditta's children home

On 14 April Anwar Ditta and Shuja Ud Din were re-united with their three children. It had taken nearly six years of struggle, against both Labour and Tory Governments to achieve this victory.

During these years they had to suffer not only the pain of separation from their children but also numerous other blows and indignities. They were branded as 'liars' by the Appeal tribunal.

But the tide of support was growing. After hundreds of public meetings, pickets, demonstrations and other protests the Home Office was forced to reverse its decision. A World in Action television programme, sympathetic to Anwar's case was the final straw for the Home Office.

Reactionaries have been outraged by Anwar's victory. She has received vile racist letters one of which, it should be noted was first sent to the Home Office who carefully redirected this offensive letter to Anwar!

The Anwar Ditta Defence Committee won a victory and victory is expensive. Money is urgently needed to pay legal and other costs. Shuja suffered the further blow of being sacked whilst he was away collecting the children from Pakistan. Send donations to:

Anwar Ditta Defence Committee, 127 Crawford Street, Rochdale.

# Leeds Police

In the early hours of the morning of Sunday 12 April, soon after the police had been decisively beaten out of the streets of Brixton, the cowardly Leeds police set on two black youths walking home from a party. The two were nearing home when a police car skidded to a halt beside them and two policemen jumped out and started firing questions at them. The youths had no idea what they were talking about and told them that they thought they were just looking for trouble after being beaten in Brixton. One of the policemen was then heard to remark to the other

'I knew they would say that. I told you they would say that.'

The police then demanded the youths' names and addresses and radioed for assistance. Two more police cars arrived and the occupants began a pretend search in gardens and dust bins for... no-one, except of course the police, yet knows what the elusive item was! In the meantime a fourth police car arrived and a further four policemen emerged swearing and shouting at the youths. They tried to handcuff one of the youths who fought back and was then pinned to the bonnet of a police car with his face pushed against it. In the process of being handcuffed the youth's watch was smashed and his wrist so badly twisted that it needed hospital attention. The two youths were then bundled into separate police cars and forced to wait while the police continued 'searching'. The youths were then taken to Chapeltown police station where they were questioned and threatened and finally released after a further two hours. They have since been informed by letter that there are no charges against them.

This type of racist harassment is common in the Chapeltown area of Leeds where there has recently been a noticeable increase in the number of black youths arrested on Sus. This particular cowardly attack, however, came at a time when the Leeds police, nervous about the possibility of another Brixton in Chapeltown, had invaded the area in even larger numbers than usual.

Alison Scott

# Moss Side

On the evening of Friday 13 March, a black youth was followed through Manchester's Moss Side Precinct by plain-clothes police. The police tried to arrest him. His 'crime'? He was carrying a short length of bamboo reed. But the local youth had a great shock in store for the police. About 60 youths gathered round to protect their friend. The police, unable to arrest the youth, called on their radios for help. Within minutes, at least 40 policemen, carried in a fleet of 16 vans, invaded the precinct, preventing people from entering the precinct's library, so that they could drag the youth off to Moss Side Police Station. This did not happen before the youths had forced the police to let someone accompany the youth as an observer during custody. As a result, the racist Moss Side police were forced to release the youth after an hour, without charge.

Maybe they wanted the bamboo cane the youth was holding, to add to the collection of Knives, Coshes, Axes, Hatchets and Clubs which were discovered in police lockers shortly before this attack.

Dennis Brown

# HOLLOWAY SCHOOL FIGHTBACK

On 16 February 1981 eight police vehicles, accompanied by an ambulance and a helicopter, raided Archway school. It followed an 'anonymous call' about a 'riot' at the school. The raid was a straightforward racist attack on the black youth at the school by the police.

A group of twenty youth found themselves surrounded and abused. Two were arrested. The racist police called the youth black bastards and abused white youth who stood by their black friends.

The school authorities and the British media did their utmost to cover up this racist attack and it is only the fact that the students organised to expose the incident, which forced the authorities and media to comment on this police assault - some three weeks after it occurred. No doubt the ILEA and police whitewashing machine is hard at work to expunge the truth, revealed below in the interview with school students from Archway School.

FRFI A month after the police raid at Archway School The Hornsey Journal quoted what it called 'a young informant' speaking about the petition which was signed by 220 pupils at the school saying, 'We were told we needn't read it - just to sign if we were there.' Could you tell us more about the petition. Who signed it - why they signed it?

SS Old and young, black and white, all signed it. The whole point of signing it was to show concern about the pupils being arrested, the way the police came into the school. Really it was just to arouse concern, to show the support of fellow students, to show that they care, not like the teachers sitting down there doing nothing.

FRFI What do you think that the organisation of the petition has achieved for the pupils?

SS Well, it has achieved a lot for the pupils. Getting in to the so-called news media and on the telly. It's publicity and an act of self-defence. It's done a lot.

FRFI What advice do you give to other school students from your experience?

SS First thing I'd tell them to do is to get organised, not just a few but a lot of you so that they can't get you picked off or bought off to stop what you're doing. Just to get organised to have a lot of people who know what they are doing, who have confidence.

FRFI On the raid itself now. Why do you think that the police arrested two pupils. Why has the original question of the stolen moped been dropped?

SS The stolen moped was just an excuse for the police to raid the school, and arrest two of our fellow pupils. The pupils were arrested for resisting arrest, and for stopping a policeman in the line of his duty, that is assaulting his friend. Four police jumped on each student. One of the pupils was arrested for having a so-called substance, and the report, which we had to ask to come through to us stated that the substance

found on him was not drugs, but was chalk, so the charges were dropped. But his friend is held up for assault and stopping a policeman in the line of his duty. We are going to try to do something about it. We are going to ask for the charges to be dropped. We intend to show our displeasure.

FRFI The Head of the school has sent a complaint to Sir David McNee, Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, which has now been taken up by the Inner London Education Authority. Why do you think that the authorities have done this?

SS They have only taken up this complaint as a reaction to the kids organising. That is the only reason why the Head and the Press Office of the ILEA have taken it up. It is because of our action in organising the petition. Really I don't expect much more to come out of the enquiry, because they just want to smooth it down like they're smoothing butter on a piece of bread. Just to contain the pupils' anger, and let people up and down the country and in the borough and out of the borough know that they are complaining. It's to let them off the hook. We don't forget that nothing happened until we organised the petition and sent it off to every place we could think of, the press, the education authorities, the MP, the council. The teachers didn't have their meetings, the Head didn't complain until we did.

FRFI The petition states that the raid is part of the harassment suffered day in and day out by the local community.

SS First note that the petition has not been published anywhere at all except in this newspaper up to now. This business about 'day in and day out'. The police want to pick up these black youths, not just black, white as well, beat them up, get information out of them saying to the youth that 'if you just talk to us we won't say anything', which gives them the opportunity to go on the streets and pick up people and beat them up without arresting them.



# THE COMMUNIST TRADITION ON IRELAND PART FOUR

## IRISH REVOLUTION

**The first imperialist war gave revolutionaries in Ireland the opportunity they had been waiting for. England's difficulty was again Ireland's opportunity to free itself once and for all from the stranglehold of its brutal oppressor, British imperialism. By taking decisive action in this period, the Irish national movement could begin the process which would destroy British imperialism and lay the basis for the socialist revolution in Europe.**

### The Easter Rising

The Rising was planned for numerous dates before Easter Sunday 23 April 1916 was finally decided on. The plan was for simultaneous risings throughout Ireland beginning with the seizure of Dublin City Centre at 6.30pm, to be followed shortly after (7pm) by risings in the provinces.

The national movement was split over the issue of offensive action. Griffith, the leader of Sinn Fein, opposed a rising. Eoin MacNeill, the formal head of the Irish Volunteers, argued that the Volunteers and the Citizen Army should build up their forces in readiness to respond to offensive action by the British—such as the introduction of compulsory conscription or mass repression against the Volunteers. He was opposed to offensive action. Connolly and Pearse, the leader of the revolutionary wing of the Volunteers, opposed the vacillating arguments of MacNeill. They believed that any delay would not only cause demoralisation among the Volunteers but put the movement in grave danger of pre-emptive action by the British. Connolly also believed the opportunity provided by the imperialist war would be lost if the revolutionaries did not strike a blow now. The Military Council which planned the Rising, therefore, did not inform Griffith or MacNeill of their plans.

The plan for the Rising involved the mobilisation of all the Irish Volunteers as well as the much smaller Citizen Army. Orders for the Rising under the guise of 'three days of manoeuvres' beginning Easter Sunday were sent out. Close to the appointed day for the Rising things began to go wrong. An expected shipment of arms from Germany was destroyed. Roger Casement, who went to Germany to organise support and arms, was arrested on his return. On Good Friday, Eoin MacNeill discovered that the 'three days of manoeuvres' were in fact the signal for the Rising. He confronted Pearse and was told the truth. On Saturday morning MacNeill issued a countermanding order calling off all Volunteer activities over the three days. This was printed in the *Sunday Independent* and sent by messengers into the provinces. The Military Council which had planned the Rising met on Easter Sunday and decided to go ahead the next day, Easter Monday 24 April. The orders were sent out. They knew the British authorities would now be warned of the Rising and would be preparing mass arrests and internment of those likely to be involved. It was 'now or never'.

The revolutionary socialist James Connolly had fully grasped the importance of this opportunity for the Irish working class. He became one of the driving forces advocating an armed insurrection. He prepared the Irish Citizen Army for such an eventuality. In January 1916, after secret meetings with members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, he became part of the Military Council preparing detailed plans for an armed uprising on Easter Sunday 23 April 1916.

On 8 April 1916 Connolly announced in the *Workers Republic* that

'The Council of the Irish Citizen Army has resolved after grave and earnest deliberation, to hoist the green flag of Ireland over Liberty Hall [headquarters of the ITGWU], as over a fortress held for Ireland by the arms of Irishmen.'

The flag was to be hoisted on Palm Sunday 16 April. It symbolised the commitment of the most advanced sections of the Irish working class to the revolutionary struggle for Irish freedom.

For Connolly the participation of the working class in the national revolution offered the only guarantee that a 'free' Irish nation would be 'the guardian of the interests of the people of Ireland'.

'We are out for Ireland for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting, slum-owning landlord; not the sweating, profit-grinding capitalist; not the sleek and oily lawyer; not the prostitute pressman—the hired liars of the enemy. Not these are the Irish upon whom the future depends. Not these, but the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared.

The cause of labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour. They cannot be dis severed. Ireland seeks freedom. Labour seeks that an Ireland free should be the sole mistress of her own destiny, supreme owner of all material things within and upon her soil. Labour seeks to make the free Irish nation the guardian of the interests of the people of Ireland, and to secure that end would vest in that free Irish nation all property rights as against the claims of the individual, with the end in view that the individual may be enriched by the nation, and not by the spoiling of his fellows.'

The initial proposal to raise the green flag over Liberty Hall was defeated (7 votes to 5) by the Executive Committee of the Dublin Branch (No 1) of the ITGWU. Permission was only granted to raise the flag when, at a later meeting, Connolly threatened to sever his connections with the Union. And then, only on the understanding that the Citizen Army would shortly leave Liberty Hall and 'probably never return'. Such a promise could easily be made as the planned Rising was only ten days away.

This clash of interests within the Union is of importance for later events. It pointed to a fundamental divergence of interests developing in the Irish working class movement. Already an influential layer was emerging in the Union which sought to separate 'trade union issues' from the struggle against British imperialism. The split in the international working class movement, between a reformist and revolutionary wing, which, with the victory of the reformists, had destroyed the revolutionary potential of the European working class, was starting to emerge in the Irish labour movement.

The ceremony to raise the flag over Liberty Hall took place as planned on 16 April, with the Citizen Army in formation in front of the Hall. After the ceremony, Connolly, in the presence of Irish Volunteer Officers, gave a lecture to the Citizen Army on street fighting. Later on that night he addressed the Citizen Army alone and informed them of the planned uprising. He told them that the odds were a thousand to one against them. And that

'In the event of victory, hold onto your rifles, as those with whom we are fighting may stop before our goal is reached. We are out for economic as well as political liberty.'

Members of the Citizen Army were offered the opportunity to withdraw from the planned Rising with no recriminations. No one did.

Sheehy Skeffington—a well known Irish pacifist who took no part in the Rising—was arrested along with two journalists by Captain Bowen-Colthurst. That evening, Sheehy Skeffington, taken on a raiding party as a hostage by Bowen-Colthurst, witnessed Bowen-Colthurst shooting dead a young boy called Coade. The next day Bowen-Colthurst shot dead Sheehy Skeffington and the two journalists. There was, of course, no trial not even a court martial. These murders, like so many before and since, were simply covered up.

By the Saturday it was clear that nothing further would be gained by continuing the battle. Pearse and Connolly signed an unconditional surrender document at 3.45pm 29 April 'in order to prevent the further slaughter of Dublin citizens and in the hope of saving the lives of our followers now surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered'. Two more days went by before all the insurgent commanders surrendered.

During the Rising nearly 500 people were killed (over 250 civilians) and nearly 3,000 injured. 179 buildings in Dublin alone had been destroyed by fire or artillery. Total damage costs were in the region of £2½ million. Relief had to be given to 100,000 people, a third of the population of Dublin.

### British Imperialism unleashes a reign of terror

Within a few weeks of the Rising, over 3,000 men and 70 women were arrested. Anyone suspected of Republican sympathies was imprisoned along with the Volunteers and Citizen Army members who had fought during the Rising. From all over Ireland they were brought to Kilmainham Prison and Richmond Barracks in Dublin. The prisoners were crowded into bare rooms, unprepared for habitation, thirty to each room. Over 1,800 men and 5 women were deported and interned in prison camps in Britain—most without any trial.

Ninety of the insurgents in the Rising, including all its leaders, were tried and sentenced to death by a secret court martial. The first the Irish people heard of this reign of terror was the announcement of the executions of Pearse, MacDonagh and Clarke on 3 May. Between that date and 12 May fifteen men were shot including all the signatories to the Proclamation. On 12 May Sean MacDiarmada and James Connolly were shot. Their courts martial had been delayed as both had been seriously injured in the fighting. Connolly had been wounded twice and his leg was shattered. On the morning of 12 May he was taken from his bed, placed on a stretcher, carried to the place of executions, tied to a chair and shot. Thus was one of the greatest socialist leaders of the working class movement murdered by British imperialism.

The number and manner of the executions caused a wave of anger and revulsion against British imperialism. Because of this, and after all the revolutionary leaders of the Rising had been shot, the executions, bar that of Roger Casement, were stopped. Those sentenced to death had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. Among those were Constance Markievicz, Eamon de Valera, William Cosgrave, and Thomas Ashe.

At the time of the Rising it was widely argued that the executions and mass repression were 'blunders' by the British authorities. Even today the standard bourgeois history of Ireland still peddles the myth that without these 'blunders' the mass support that quickly developed for the Rising and the struggle for Irish independence would not have occurred. The real facts show, however, that British imperialism had no choice but to unleash such repression if it was to maintain its rule in Ireland. As the imperialist war dragged on, opposition to British imperialism was bound to intensify. The British ruling class knew this, and was determined to deprive the national movement in Ireland of its revolutionary leadership.

The British ruling class recognised the significance of the Rising, and, in particular, the importance of its leaders, Pearse and Connolly. Connolly represented the militant working class. By uniting the armed Irish working class with the revolutionary wing of the national movement led by Pearse, Connolly had driven the national movement to the left.

*continued overleaf*

On Easter Monday at 10am the Rising began. About 1,200 answered the summons to parade in Dublin—nearly the whole of the Citizen Army and over 1,000 Volunteers. The plans which had been made required nearly twice that number. MacNeill's countermanding order and arrests of Volunteers by the British authorities had had a telling effect. Throughout the rest of Ireland there was only sporadic and short-lived action—the most significant being the seizure of Athenry in Galway by the 1,000 strong Volunteer units led by the left-wing Volunteer leader Liam Mellows.

The first act of the revolutionaries was the taking of strategic buildings in Dublin. Outside the GPO Padraic Pearse read the Proclamation of the Provisional Government. The Proclamation was a revolutionary democratic programme which united the aspirations of the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie and the Irish workers against British imperialism. It included the following:

'We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible...

The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences, carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.'

It was a democratic secular Republic which was declared. The Proclamation was signed by Thomas J Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada, P H Pearse, James Connolly, Thomas MacDonagh, Eamonn Ceannt, and Joseph Plunkett. Thomas J Clarke was a living survivor of the Fenian movement of the nineteenth century, P H Pearse represented the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie, and James Connolly represented the most advanced sections of the Irish working class. This was the alliance which led the Easter Rising.

The battle lasted nearly one week. The revolutionaries were faced by overwhelming odds. British imperialism used straight-forward terror to destroy the Rising. Major buildings were simply blown to pieces. Heavy artillery, even warships, were used to bombard Dublin City centre. By-passers in the street were simply shot dead by the British forces. On 25 April Francis



continued from page 7

This alliance posed the greatest threat to British imperialism. In the middle of an imperialist war it threatened to begin the process not only of destroying British imperialism's rule in Ireland, but also of sharpening the revolutionary crisis in Britain itself.

The Rising had shown that it was possible to take action against imperialism. It had fatally undermined the Irish Party's efforts to secure a bourgeois imperialist resolution to the Irish question. Imperialism could not possibly allow Pearse and Connolly to live. It had to demonstrate to the Irish people that rebellion would be answered with terror. The British terror that followed the Rising was as inevitable as the support that built up for the Rising and the revolutionary struggle for Irish independence. The Rising represented the fundamental interest of the Irish people, just as the terror unleashed by British imperialism was carried out in the fundamental interests of the British ruling class.

How could the British ruling class allow Connolly – the greatest revolutionary produced within these islands – to live? Who better than Connolly was there to organise the Irish working class against the deepening crisis of imperialism in the First World War? Who but Connolly would ensure that the Irish working class united with the revolutionary wing of the national movement to fight the Home Rule charade? British imperialism had no choice but to use terror. That this terror failed to prevent the rise of a mass movement for Irish independence does not alter this fact at all.

Not only British imperialism but the Irish bourgeoisie demanded Connolly's death. On 10 May, after 12 executions had taken place, William Martin Murphy continued the campaign, begun during the Dublin lock-out, to rid his class of Connolly. His newspaper, the *Irish Independent*, published a photograph of Connolly alongside a caption: 'Still lies in Dublin Castle recovering from his wounds'. An editorial menacingly demanded: 'Let the worst of the ringleaders be singled out and dealt with as they deserve'.

Not only British imperialism and the Irish bourgeoisie applauded Connolly's murder but so did the British Labour Party. The Labour MP, Arthur Henderson, was a member of the War Cabinet which brutally crushed the Easter Rising and ordered Connolly's execution. When news reached Parliament that the army had summarily executed James Connolly, this vile social democrat, Arthur Henderson, led other Labour MPs in spontaneous applause.

The Irish bourgeoisie, British imperialism and its agents in the working class – the British Labour Party – had all united to put down with terror the Easter Rising. They were forced to crush the leadership of the revolutionary alliance of the working class with the revolutionary wing of the national movement because it threatened them all. The execution of the leaders of the Easter Rising, far from being a 'blunder', deprived the national movement of those leaders most capable of representing the interest of the Irish people in a mass struggle to totally destroy British imperialism's rule in Ireland. As later events were to show, the loss of those leaders played an important role in the devastating splits and divisions in the coming struggle for Irish independence. Nevertheless, the Easter Rising was the birth of the modern revolutionary national movement in Ireland. And the working class, having provided one of its leaders, had shared in the formulation of the Republican standpoint – the position which has always guided the revolutionary wing of the national movement to this very day.

### Socialists and the Easter Rising

Just before he was executed, Connolly remarked '(The Socialists) will never understand why I am here ... They will all forget I am an Irishman'. How right was Connolly! The response, with very few exceptions, of the European labour and socialist movement was an almost unanimous condemnation of Connolly's action in leading a section of the working class into a national uprising.

The Easter Rising demonstrated again the thoroughly reactionary character of the British labour and socialist movement. The Scottish

ILP weekly *Forward* uttered the empty abstraction, 'a man can be a nationalist or an internationalist', to criticise Connolly. *Socialist Review*, journal of the ILP, announced in September 1916, 'In no degree do we approve of the Sinn Fein rebellion. We do not approve of armed rebellion at all, any more than any other form of militarism or war'. Pacifism in an imperialist nation oppressing the Irish people by armed force is, as Lenin remarked, 'the most pernicious opportunism'.

**'We are out for Ireland for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting, slum-owning landlord; not the sweating, profit-grinding capitalist; not the sleek and oily lawyer; not the prostitute pressman – the hired liars of the enemy. Not these are the Irish upon whom the future depends. Not these, but the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared.'**

George Lansbury's *Herald* informed its readers on 29 April that it was 'against all war – civil wars no less than wars between nations ...'. A week later it argued the reactionary consequences of that view: 'the rising was doomed to failure and in my (George Lansbury's) opinion was a crime against the Irish people'. For social democrats like Lansbury the question of Ireland came down to the issue of 'how we are to administer in a satisfactory manner this small country?'. The *Call*, soon to be the official organ of the British Socialist Party, while understanding the efforts of the 'Irish people to throw off the alien yoke' nevertheless argued 'to rise as the men in Dublin rose without adequate force ... was foolish'. It then went on to support Home Rule for Ireland. The *Socialist*, paper of the Socialist Labour Party 'left the merits, or demerits, of the revolt aside' and simply told its readers in June 1916 that 'armies are the force used by capitalist states to maintain their undisputed sway. Armies are not only used against "foreigners"?' Very practical!

Only *The Woman's Dreadnought* of 6 May 1916 (later to become *The Workers Dreadnought*) in a full page article written by Sylvia Pankhurst opened with a clear declaration of support for the right of the Irish people to self-determination. It was the most principled statement by a British socialist at a time of great anti-Irish hysteria. She thought the Rising may have been mistaken but she understood that

**'[The Socialists] will never understand why I am here ... They will all forget I am an Irishman.'**

'their rebellion was but a stage in the long struggle for Irish independence'. And she unreservedly joined 'in common sorrow ... for the Rebels who had been shot'.

Very few socialists were able to understand Connolly's determined action in participating in the Rising despite his very clear writings on the national question. Trotsky in an article on 4 July 1916 on the Easter Rising showed how little he understood the national question and its relation to the working class struggle for socialism when he wrote:

'An all-Ireland movement such as the nationalist dreamers expected simply failed to materialise. The Irish countryside did not stir. The Irish bourgeoisie, and likewise the higher and more influential stratum of the

Irish intelligentsia, held aloof. There fought and died only the workers of Dublin, together with some revolutionary enthusiasts from the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. *The basis for national revolution has disappeared even in backward Ireland ...* The experiment of an Irish national rebellion ... is over. But the historical role of the Irish proletariat is only beginning. Already it has brought into this revolt, even though under an archaic flag, its class indignation against militarism and imperialism. This indignation will not now subside.' (our emphasis)

Trotsky's assessment was totally wrong. His followers, to this day, refuse to recognise this fact. They, like Trotsky, deny the vital importance of the national question for the working class today. In attacking the Irish liberation movement as 'petit bourgeois' (nationalist dreamers) they, like Trotsky, write off the real forces fighting in a revolutionary manner and substitute for them an 'ideal' movement which does not exist. That is the essence of what is called *petit bourgeois socialism*.

Lenin alone pointed to the real significance of the Rising and in so doing laid the foundation for our understanding of the Irish revolution today. In attacking those in the European socialist movement who denied the significance of the national struggle or wrote off the Rising as a 'putsch', he argued:

'The term "putsch", in its scientific sense, may be employed only when the attempt at insurrection has revealed nothing but a circle of conspirators or stupid maniacs, and has aroused no sympathy among the masses. The centuries old Irish national movement, having passed through various stages and combinations of class interests ... manifested itself in the street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie and a section of the workers after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations, suppression of newspapers etc. Whoever calls such a rebellion a "putsch" is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of envisaging a social revolution as a living phenomenon.'

'To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletariat and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression etc – to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution. So one army lines up in one place and says, "We are for socialism", and another, somewhere else and says, "We are for imperialism", and that will be a social revolution! ...'

Whoever expects a "pure" revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.'

The misfortune of the Irish was, according to Lenin, that they rose 'prematurely' before the European revolt of the proletariat had time to mature. But Lenin knew that revolutions cannot be conducted according to a time-table:

'It is only in premature, individual, sporadic and therefore unsuccessful, revolutionary movements that the masses gain experience, acquire knowledge, gather strength, and get to know their real leaders, the socialist proletarians, and in this way prepare the general onslaught ...'

Connolly's position, endorsed by Lenin, was vindicated by history when nine months after he died Tsarism was destroyed in Russia and nine months after that the Bolsheviks triumphed and the Soviet Union was established.

### Revolutionary Nationalism after the Rising

The Easter Rising became popularly known as the 'Sinn Fein Rebellion', despite the fact that the leader of Sinn Fein, Arthur Griffith, had played no part in the Rising, had condemned it and rejected its Republican standpoint. A new Sinn Fein movement was soon to arise on the foundations laid by the Easter Rising. The



The Irish Citizen Army, led by Connolly, was the first

British jails and internment camps became training schools for this new Sinn Fein standpoint. When the interned, untried prisoners were released in December 1916, they spread the Republican position all over Ireland. The ex-prisoners were eager to build the organisations necessary for a new uprising. The IRB was reconstituted, and the Volunteers were reformed with Michael Collins, who had fought in the GPO during the Easter Rising, as Director of Organisation. They began drilling and training in secret.

Arrests of Volunteers and Republican agitators soon took place. The arrested men refused to recognise the jurisdiction of the courts. In gaol they demanded political status and answered the British refusal by going on hunger-strike. In September 1917, the death after force-feeding of Thomas Ashe, a Commandant during the Easter Rising, led to massive protests. Almost all Dublin was in mourning and on 30 September 1917, 30-40,000 people took part in a funeral procession in military formation. Its advanced guard were Irish Volunteers carrying rifles, and it included 9,000 Volunteers in uniform, and thousands of trade-union members marching in formation. Constance Markievicz led a Citizen Army contingent wearing full uniform with a revolver in her belt. At the cemetery three volleys were fired over the grave. Collins, in a very short funeral oration, said: 'that volley we have just heard is the only speech which it is proper to make over the grave of a dead Fenian'. After this massive show of strength, the British authorities conceded political status. A new mass, militant and Republican Sinn Fein had been born.

On 25 October 1917, nearly 2,000 delegates attended the Ard-fheis (Conference) of a revitalised Sinn Fein. A new Constitution was drawn up. In the debate Griffith vigorously opposed Republicanism but was defeated. He stood down as President of Sinn Fein and was replaced by Eamon De Valera, the only surviving Commandant of the Easter Rising. Arthur Griffith became Vice-President and the executive included Eoin MacNeill, Cathal Brugha and Constance Markievicz. Sinn Fein, despite the very divergent trends in its membership, now stood







workers' militia in Europe

firmly for Irish Republicanism.

### Irish Labour after the Rising

The aftermath of the Easter Rising left the Irish labour movement in disarray. With Connolly's murder, Irish labour lost its most capable leader – the only socialist leader who had really understood the importance of the national cause. Liberty Hall lay in ruins, files had been seized or destroyed, and the printing press and equipment of the *Workers Republic* were destroyed. Immediately after the Rising, the government arrested all trade union leaders who had shown nationalist sympathies.

Connolly's successors to the leadership of the Irish labour movement had not supported the alliance he had created with the revolutionary nationalists. They had not taken any part in the Easter Rising. After the Rising, they concentrated on 'economic' issues and on the revival of the trade union movement. Although prepared to use their association with Connolly to rebuild and expand the movement, they did not attempt to maintain organisational ties with the revolutionary nationalists. They made no attempt to revive the Citizen Army at the time the Irish Volunteers were being rebuilt. These men believed political power could be won through an advanced social-economic programme which would appeal to the workers. The national issue played little part in their calculations. For these leaders, Connolly's revolutionary courage and leadership had gone unheeded.

The leadership of the Irish labour movement fell on two members from Belfast who were in no way involved with the Rising – Thomas Johnson and David Campbell. They disassociated the labour movement as a whole from any responsibility for the Rising. While they demanded the immediate trial or release of the imprisoned trade-union leaders, they did not protest at the executions of the leaders of the Easter Rising. Neither did the Dublin Trades Council when it resumed its meetings in July 1916. The Irish TUC Executive, at its first Congress for 2 years in August 1916, announced through Johnson's opening address:

'This is not a place to enter into a discussion as to the right or wrong, the wisdom or the folly, of the revolt... as a trade-union movement, we are of varied minds on matters of historical and political development...'

Delegates were asked to stand in memory of Connolly and others who died in the Rising, but were also asked to remember those that died fighting on the side of the British in the imperialist war 'for what they believed to be the cause of Liberty and Democracy and for love of their country'. Johnson himself gave his personal support to the 'Allied cause'. The Executive also attempted to disassociate the Transport Union from the Citizen Army stating that 'not more than half' of the army participants in the Rising were members of the Union and that the army was simply a tenant in Liberty Hall. The 'unity' of the Irish labour movement – there were the Unionist members in Belfast to consider – and the protection of its organisations became the dominant consideration. This was now put before the real interest of Irish labour which was to build an alliance with the revolutionary nationalists in the struggle to establish a democratic Irish Republic. Because of this, Irish labour's political influence continually diminished in the revolutionary struggles ahead.

Irish Labour and Sinn Fein did unite in a successful mass campaign against the attempt of Lloyd George to introduce conscription in April 1918. The Irish TUC-Labour Party called a 24-hour general strike for 23 April 1918 – it was the first general strike against the war in any Western European country. It was a near total success apart from the Belfast area where Unionist workers were concentrated. It demonstrated the power Irish Labour could wield in the national cause.

### The General Election December 1918

Immediately at the end of the war, Lloyd George called a General Election. This saw the destruction of the Irish (Home-Rule) Party and a massive electoral victory for Sinn Fein. Out of 105 seats returned for Ireland, Sinn Fein won 73, while the Irish Party won only six, and four of these in Ulster were due to an agreement with Sinn Fein. The Unionists won 26 seats. Of the nine counties of Ulster, the Unionists polled a majority in only four. The vast majority of the Irish people, nearly 70%, had voted for an independent Irish Republic.

The Irish TUC-Labour Party did not contest the elections. Sinn Fein had offered a pact with Labour, to stand down in certain constituencies if Labour candidates would sign a pledge, which committed them to an independent Irish Republic and to unconditional abstention from the English Parliament. The Irish Labour Party refused to accept this principled position. Its manifesto supported abstention but said that they might attend the English Parliament at some time 'if special circumstances warranted it' and a special Congress-Party meeting approved it. The Labour manifesto also said nothing about participation in an Irish national assembly that Sinn Fein proposed to establish after the election. As the election drew near, it became clear that this position of the Irish Labour Party would receive little support. Nationalist workers would now vote overwhelmingly for Sinn Fein. Most Unionist workers would not vote for any degree of Irish independence. The Irish Labour Party decided not to stand. Its executive rationalised this on the grounds it wanted to give the electorate a chance to decide on the question of self-determination. But this was nothing more than the inevitable result of official Labour's bankrupt policy on the national question.

### Dail Eireann

The extent of the Republican victory at the election was much greater than it seems. The British authorities had done everything in their power to prevent it. Sinn Fein election meetings were banned, election agents and speakers arrested, election addresses were censored or suppressed, and election literature was confiscated. More than a hundred Sinn Fein leaders were in gaol after arrests following the anti-conscription campaign, and the greater part of the country was under military rule. Of the 73

Republicans elected, 36 were in gaol, including De Valera and Griffith, and many others were 'on the run' or in the USA evading arrest. As with the recent election of Bobby Sands, the British would ignore the results. 'Democracy' for the British ruling class was only evoked when its effects strengthened their own class rule.

An Irish national assembly was called for 21 January 1919. Everyone elected in Ireland was invited regardless of Party. 27 Republicans eventually met in the Mansion House, Dublin. Dail Eireann (Assembly of Ireland) was declared. A declaration was adopted which affirmed Ireland as 'a sovereign and independent nation' and which ratified the 1916 Proclamation. The Dail also adopted, but not without opposition, a 'Democratic Programme' which was drawn up after advice from the leaders of Irish Labour. It was a social programme which expressed the continuing influence of Pearse and Connolly.

There were now two 'governments' in Ireland. The one, Dail Eireann, backed by the vast majority of the Irish people. The other that of the British authorities, operating from Dublin Castle possessing the forces of repression to impose their decrees. It is worthy of note that it was not the so-called 'Western Democracies', which had just fought an imperialist war under the guise of protecting small nations, that recognised the newly founded Irish Republic. The only national government to recognise Dail Eireann was the revolutionary government under Lenin in the Soviet Union.

**The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences, carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.'**

On 6 March, all Irish political prisoners were released from gaol after a member of the Dail died in Gloucester prison. De Valera, who had escaped from prison in February, now back in Dublin, became on 1 April 1919 President of the Irish Republic. One of those freed, Constance Markievicz – the first woman elected to Parliament in a British election – became Minister of Labour in the Dail.

### War of Independence

The first phase of the war came with the actions taken by the British to prevent the Dail establishing its machinery of government. The attempt by the Dail to raise a loan of £250,000 was treated as 'seditious'. Newspapers publishing advertisements for the loan were suppressed. Warrants were issued for the arrest of many of the Ministers and Deputies of Dail Eireann. The National Arbitration Courts set up by the Dail were declared 'illegal assemblies' and finally on 10 September 1919, Dail Eireann itself was suppressed and all national movements in Ireland were banned.

Thousands of English troops were being poured into Ireland from the beginning of 1919, with tanks, armoured cars and other weapons. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) with nearly 10,000 men maintained fortified barracks commanding each town and village. Clashes occurred with the Irish Volunteers – now renamed the Irish Republican Army. A clash between IRA men of Cork and the military in Fermoy on 7 September resulted in a soldier being killed. The response of the British gave

some idea of the terror that was to come. 200 English regular soldiers on the following day descended on Fermoy and in an orgy of destruction sacked and looted shops and wantonly destroyed anything they could get their hands on. A guerrilla war had started.

Early in 1920 a Curfew Order was placed on the towns and the British adopted an official policy of terrorism with the introduction of the 'Black-and-Tans', named after their mixed uniforms, and the 'Auxiliaries'. Both were officially off-shoots of the RIC – the British refused to admit officially that more than extended 'police measures' were necessary to maintain law and order in Ireland. The same policy they adopt today. The 'Tans' were recruited from England and chosen from a 'tough' class of men including ex-army recruits and criminals who had had their sentences remitted if they volunteered for service. The 'Auxiliaries' were a mercenary force recruited from ex-officers of the Army, Navy and Air Forces.

The struggle that developed shocked the whole world and eventually had a dramatic effect on public opinion in Britain once the truth became known. Murder, arson, torture of prisoners, systematic beatings, looting and destruction of whole areas became the routine of British inflicted terror. The British forces were seen by the Irish people in the same way as the Nazi Gestapo were viewed in Europe during the second imperialist war. The IRA fought back. They ambushed British forces and destroyed official British government buildings. In one weekend in April 1920 most of the income tax offices in Ireland were sent up in flames. IRA ambushes of the British forces were replied to with terror – by beatings up, looting and destruction of houses, buildings, businesses in the surrounding area. Recruits joined the IRA in larger and larger numbers and the British forces had to retreat into the larger towns from most outlying areas. In such areas Republican Courts were established which maintained basic law and order and were accepted by the people. The impotence of the British authorities in the face of the popular acceptance of the authority of the Dail increasingly became clear.

The British then as today called the popular forces of the IRA 'terrorists' and 'murderers'. Then as today the real terrorists were the British forces. A report of one of the 'Tans' atrocities gives some idea of what the British forces were like:

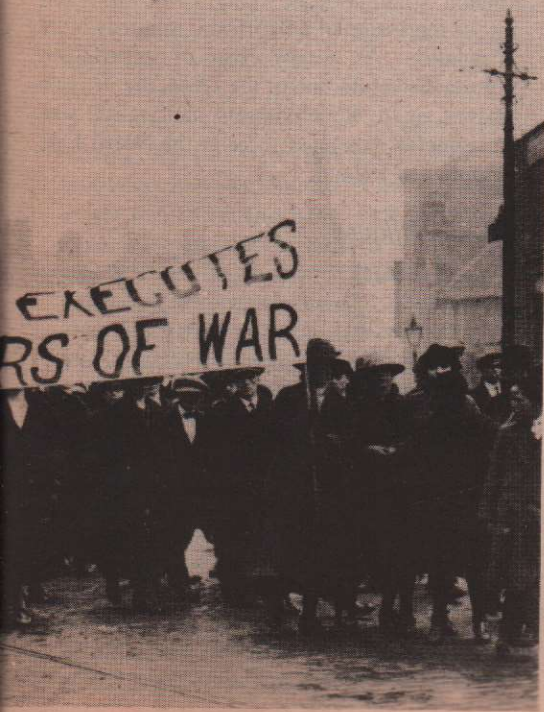
'A party of the Black-and-Tans, capturing six unarmed Volunteers at Kerry Pike, near Cork, cut out the tongue of one, the nose of another, the heart of another, and battered the skull of a fourth.' (Frank Pakenham, *Peace by Ordeal*)

In total contrast, then as today, as confirmed in non-official British army reports, the IRA were regarded as a highly trained disciplined force which 'imbued the military spirit, the sense of military honour etc...'. Behind their organisation it was said 'there is the spirit of a nation'. The secret army Document 37 recently captured and made public by the Provisionals gives a similar description of the IRA forces today.

### The People's War

In this period of the war, small-holders and landless peasants were seizing large estates mostly owned by absentee landlords and dividing them up among the workers. The Dail had set up Land Arbitration Courts in May 1920 to deal with the problem of land disputes. But these courts leant over backwards to be helpful to Unionist landowners. The majority of verdicts were in favour of the landlords and the IRA in certain areas was used as a counter-revolutionary force to put into practice what these Courts decided. However in others areas especially where the people were most active in the national struggle eg West Cork, Co Clare, the IRA cooperated with the people in seizing, confiscating and redividing the large estates. The class divisions in the national movement, on issues like these, were bound to come to the fore.

The Irish working class became increasingly militant in this period. Already before this phase of the war, a general strike had been called by the Trades Council in Limerick in continued overleaf





April 1919 in response to the British authorities proclaiming Limerick a special military area with special permit regulations for access to the city. The General Strike lasted 12 days. With support of the public, the local leaders of the IRA, and the IRA Chief-of-Staff, the Strike Committee organised food distribution, issued notes of exchange and controlled the operation of traffic. This strike became known as the Limerick Soviet. It achieved its aims and the British military order was soon withdrawn.

On 5 April 1920, a two-day General Strike was called by the Irish labour movement in support of 100 Irish prisoners who were on hunger-strike in Mountjoy prison for Prisoner-of-War status or release. It was dramatically effective. The prisoners were unconditionally released and British policies towards prisoners were forcibly changed.

May 1920 saw the munitions transport strike. It followed the example of the refusal of British dock workers to load munitions on the *Jolly George* because the arms were for the Polish government, then at war with the Soviet Union. Dublin and Dun Laoghaire dockers refused to unload a British munitions ship. The Transport Union supported them. The strike soon spread. When the British used troops to unload the munitions, the railway workers refused to move them. Some railway men were threatened with shooting by British army authorities, in some cases actually having a revolver put to their heads. But they refused to move the trains. These men were members of the British based National Union of Railwaymen and they also saw the Polish case as a precedent. While the NUR had supported the Polish boycott, it did not approve the actions of its Irish branch. The NUR Executive, led by the treacherous Mr J H Thomas MP, attempted to bargain the men back to work. A special TUC Congress was called to consider the whole Irish issue in July 1920, as a bargaining measure in the hope of getting the men to call the strike off. It refused to take a principled stand. Instead it passed a militant sounding call by the miners for a general strike if Britain did not call a truce, withdraw its troops, and give Ireland self-government under Dominion status with guarantees for minorities. Even this essentially reactionary motion (the Irish wanted a Republic) could not lead to action – it was never intended to do so – because it embodied no timescale after which the strike would be called. However in spite of the lack of support from the British unions, the railwaymen continued their action for some months in defiance of the British authorities. 1,500 men were dismissed during the dispute which received wholehearted backing, including financial support, from the Irish Labour movement. According to General Macready, the British Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, this action of the Transport workers created 'a serious set-back to military actions during the best season of the year'.

In spring 1920, after a strike for higher wages, fifty workers took over a creamery in Knocklong owned by a prominent Unionist. The creamery was a trading centre for all farms in the district – one of the biggest in Ireland. Under the slogan 'we make butter not profits' they decided to seize control of the factory and mill as the Knocklong Soviet Creamery. The farmers continued to supply milk to the creamery which continued to process and distribute. It was eventually destroyed by British troops on 22 August as part of a systematic attack on Irish industrial life. By April 1921 British troops had destroyed some sixty-one co-operative creameries alone.

In May 1921 the Arigna coal mines in Co Leitrim were taken over by the workers, and a red flag hoisted. In September, the port of Cork was taken over and run as a Soviet.

The Irish Revolution, as the War of Independence conclusively demonstrated, involved the mass of Irish people. It not only challenged British imperialism but threatened the continuation of capitalist class rule itself.

### The response of the British Labour movement

The social democratic wing of the British labour movement – the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party – did not support the struggle of the Irish people for a democratic Republic. They only raised their voice on the

Irish question to condemn the Republican movement or to head off any support for that movement which might be building up in the British working class. They opposed the violence and brutality of British imperialism only because it created a revolutionary opposition to imperialism among those it oppressed. 'Repression has driven many Nationalists belonging to the Constitutional school into the arms of Sinn Fein'. And 'under such conditions it is practically impossible to bring the Irish Republican Army to bay... Executions and torture are not deterrents; they have indeed, the opposite effect'. (Labour Party Report, Jan, Dec 1920)

The Labour Party and its supporters wanted better management of Irish affairs under some form of non-violent neo-colonial rule – that is Home-Rule or Dominion Status under the umbrella of the British Empire. The Irish however wanted an independent Republic and were engaged in a war against British imperialism to obtain it. The British, therefore, could only maintain their rule by atrocities and terror. Ireland had become ungovernable by British imperialism. It was in this context – and rather late in the day – that the British Labour Party started to speak on the question of Ireland. And its primary concern was to save British imperialism from its own 'excesses'.

The Labour Party policy on Ireland in 1921 was arrived at after two Commissions of Enquiry in January and December 1920. It began by saying that the Labour Party was in favour of self-determination, and then went on to show that it clearly wasn't. It called for

1. The withdrawal of all armed forces from Ireland.
2. The placing of responsibility for the maintenance of order in each locality on local authorities themselves, as in Great Britain outside the Metropolitan area.
3. An immediate election by proportional representation, of an entirely open Constituent Assembly, charged to work out at the earliest possible moment, without limitations or fetters, whatever constitution for Ireland the Irish people desire, subject only to two conditions – that it affords protection to minorities and that the Constitution should prevent Ireland from becoming a military or naval menace to Great Britain.

This position might deceive some British socialists today but it was viewed by revolutionaries with contempt at that time. The question was 'are you for or against the Irish Republic?' (*Workers Dreadnought* 12 November 1921). On British Labour official policy, it therefore asked, what do Labour's conditions for self-determination mean? It answered:

'Labour Party Statement, Protection to Minorities.

*Probable Meaning*, The handful of people in Ulster to be given equal power with the rest of Ireland.

*Labour Party Statement*, The Constitution should prevent Ireland from becoming a naval or military threat to Britain.

*Probable Meaning*, Ireland to be kept within the Empire under the control of the British Army and Navy...

The *Communist* 13 January 1921 (successor to the *Call* as paper of the British Communist Party) offered the Labour Party what it regarded as a 'charitable' suggestion. It was to cut out from their policy all but clause 1 the withdrawal of the British forces from Ireland. It asked of the proposed Constituent Assembly etc 'By whose authority will this conclave assemble?' and answered 'that of the British Empire of which the Labour Party is a worthy pillar'. It said that the only solution to the Irish question was 'to recognise the Irish Republic as an established fact and to enter into a proper and reasonable treaty of peace with its accredited representatives'. Revolutionaries then recognised that the Labour Party's policy on Ireland was only designed to protect British imperialism and maintain the British Empire.

Those very small sections of the socialist movement in Britain which took the communist side of the split in the international working class movement did consistently support the Irish people's struggle for self-determination. Revolutionaries such as John Maclean and

Sylvia Pankhurst gave a lead to the movement speaking at meetings and writing articles and pamphlets commenting on the unfolding events. But they were never able to build a mass movement like that associated with the Hands Off Russia campaign. That campaign was built on an anti-war, pacifist mood in the British working class. A Hands Off Ireland Campaign would have had to directly confront British imperialism. It never got off the ground. The Communist International therefore took British Communists to task:

'The International will not judge the British comrades by the articles that they write in the *Call* and the *Workers Dreadnought*, but by the number of comrades who are thrown in gaol for agitating in the colonial countries. We would point out to the British comrades that it is their duty to help the Irish movement with all their strength, that it is their duty to use all their resources to block the policy that the British transport and railway unions are at present pursuing of permitting troop transports to be shipped to Ireland. It is very easy at the moment to speak out in Britain against intervention in Russia, since even the bourgeois left is against it. It is harder for the British comrades to take up the cause of Irish independence and of anti-militarist activity. We have a right to demand this difficult work of the British Comrades.' (Radek, Second Congress of Communist International July 1920)

It is one of those bitter facts of British Labour movement history that at the very time when the Irish struggle should have been central to communist propaganda and agitation, the communists in Britain were devoting pages and pages of their press to the question of affiliation to the Labour Party. That is, affiliation to the very Labour Party which throughout its short history had done even more to undermine the Irish people's struggle for self-determination than anything done by the British ruling class.

### The Treaty and Partition

The increasing political difficulties facing the British Government forced Lloyd George to introduce the Government of Ireland Act (1920) – an amended version of the old Home Rule Act (1914). It proposed two Parliaments, one for the six north-eastern counties of Ulster, the other for the remaining 26 counties. The Parliaments would be subservient to Westminster. Only six counties of Ulster were chosen, so that the Unionists would have a large majority. The Ulster counties of Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan where the nationalists had overwhelming majorities were excluded whereas Fermanagh and Tyrone with small nationalist majorities were included. The Act included a provision that the two Parliaments might, if they chose, set up an All-Ireland Council, which could agree to a reunited Ireland. However this was mere window dressing for the benefit of Americans and the British Labour Party. Lloyd George knew that the Loyalists in the proposed six-counties would never agree to a united Ireland.

Dail Eireann simply ignored the Act. Municipal and Urban elections in January 1920, under a proportional representational system designed by the British to severely undermine Sinn Fein, only confirmed that the majority of the Irish people wanted a Republic. In the nine counties of Ulster, 23 towns fell to Sinn Fein and only 22 to the Unionists. The June 1920 county election results strongly confirmed this result. The northern capitalists and the Orange Order began to panic. Pogroms were organised against the Catholics. All Catholic workers were driven out of the Belfast shipyards and out of factories where 'loyalists' predominated. Some 10,000 men and 1,000 women were expelled from their jobs by loyalist thugs wielding stones, bludgeons and revolvers. Only after four days did the military intervene. 22 civilians were killed and nearly 200 were severely injured. During August 400 Catholic families were driven out of their homes. Those responsible for this thuggery and murder received the backing of the British authorities. They were the 'loyal' friends of Britain who were there to prevent the establishment of a united Republican Ireland.

The inability of Britain to defeat the IRA,

and the growing opposition in Britain to British terror in Ireland forced the Truce of July 1921. However in Belfast there was no truce. Orange mobs and the newly formed 'special police' burnt down 161 Catholic homes, killed 15 people and injured another 68. This was soon after the Northern Ireland Parliament had been elected with Craig as Prime Minister. Initial negotiations showed the Government was prepared to give the 26 Counties Dominion Status within the British Commonwealth, but Partition would remain as long as the parliament of Northern Ireland wanted it. The Dail unanimously rejected these conditions on 23 August 1921 but appointed plenipotentiaries to resume negotiations.

On 6 December 1921, Collins and Griffiths signed the Treaty. It gave the twenty-six counties of Ireland Dominion Status within the British Commonwealth in the form of a 'Free State'. The Six Counties were to remain partitioned and part of the United Kingdom. The agreement had been signed under the threat of 'an immediate and terrible war'. It immediately split the Republican movement. On 7 January 1922, 64 members of the Dail voted for the Treaty, 57 demanded its rejection. On 9 January, De Valera resigned as President of the Dail and Griffith was elected. The IRA's nineteen divisions had split into eleven for the Republic and eight for the Free State. The Civil War soon began. With the aid of British imperialist arms and weapons the reactionary 'Free State' forces eventually gained total control. A bourgeois neo-colonial state had been created. In the North pogroms and killings of Catholics continued. Connolly's all too prophetic warning in March 1914 had come true. Partition of Ireland had brought a 'carnival of reaction both North and South'.

The British Labour movement must take a great deal of responsibility for these developments. Time and again – Dublin lock-out 1913, Easter Rising 1916, War of Independence 1919-21 – through its subservience to British imperialism, the British Labour movement had betrayed the Irish people's struggle for self-determination.

Lloyd George could not have threatened Griffith and Collins with a 'terrible war' if the Labour movement had taken a principled stand. After 'pacifying' Ireland, British imperialism could more easily take on the British working class. For it was the same leadership of the labour movement which having betrayed the revolutionary Irish, would so easily betray the struggles of the British working class up to and including the 1926 General Strike.

While the British Labour Party, the ILP, and the British TUC welcomed the reactionary 'Free State', the tiny Communist Movement in Britain continued to support the anti-Treaty forces. It followed the lead of the Communist International in siding with those revolutionary forces of Republicanism still determined to fight for a united Ireland. That stand taken by the Communist Movement should be our starting point today.

The legacy of the British Labour movement's betrayal of the Irish people remains. Partition did not 'solve' the Irish question. Revolutionary Republicans have continued to fight. The Northern Statelet, artificially created by British imperialism to maintain its domination over Ireland, could never be stable. For it was based on the repression of a significant minority of its population. As a new crisis of imperialism approached at the end of the 1960s, the struggle revived again. Revolutionary nationalism was to reemerge as a mass force in the North-East Counties of Ireland.

To be continued

David Reed  
May 1981

### Correction

Communist Tradition on Ireland Part 3.  
On page 10 Column 3 line 27 the date of the General Strike against conscription should read 23 April 1918.



# Namibia

The British and US governments are now engaged in a concerted move to undermine the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) who lead the struggle against the South African occupation of Namibia. On May 30, Britain and the USA, along with France vetoed UN Security Council resolutions calling for economic sanctions against the apartheid regime. The resolutions, tabled by African states, were a move against the apartheid regime's refusal to accept UN plans for Namibian independence embodied in Resolution 435.

This resolution, which calls for free elections prior to any constitutional settlement, would guarantee SWAPO a total victory. Britain and the USA are now seeking to alter the basis of any UN settlement of the war in Namibia in such a way as to ensure that SWAPO is ousted from its leading position in the Namibian liberation struggle. As in Zimbabwe, they are trying to push through an 'internal settlement', in which the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance and other collaborationist forces will emerge with the real power in what would be regarded as a free Namibia. Under the guise of protecting the political and economic 'rights of the white minority', the imperialists are trying to give parity to the DTA and SWAPO in any settlement plan. These moves are nothing more than a stratagem to protect imperialist raw materials, especially uranium which are today controlled by the white minority against any attempts by the black masses to take possession of the minerals and wealth of their own country. The US, British and French veto of the UN sanctions resolutions is a means of ensuring that South African tyranny over Namibia and its people is in no way jeopardised.

In anticipation of the veto a SWAPO leader declared:

'Ever since Pretoria began setting up its black stooges in Namibia, our people have analyzed and clearly understood the choice to be made. And they have made it.

There is a constant flow of men and women out of the country for military training. And our guerillas are hitting the enemy harder and harder.'

Since that date repression has continued. In Buffalo four black men were murdered in one week by a white racist, in Mobile Alabama two young blacks were lynched, in Miami police have continued their shooting of unarmed blacks, and attacks have taken place in New York, Boston, Salt Lake City, New Orleans and Tennessee. The most horrific murders have been in Atlanta Georgia, where to date 26 black children have been savagely murdered, most of them strangled and then thrown in local rivers to be found. A number of children are still missing. The murders have taken place every two weeks since Autumn 1979, and the killer or killers remain on the loose. One thing that is most striking about the Atlanta murders is the way in which the local and federal authorities, police and press have reacted to them, for it is identical to the way in which the British police, press and Westminster politicians have reacted to the New Cross Massacre - to cover up, to deny any racist intent.

After ten children had died in Atlanta only ten police had been put on the case. Not until Autumn 1980, a year after the killings began, was a 35 member task force assigned to investigate and this only after pressure from the Committee to Stop Children's Murders (STOP), a group formed to support the families of murdered children. As new murders take place the police have persistently refused to link

# SOUTH AFRICA

## North Sea Oil for the Apartheid regime

The collapse of the apartheid regime and the liberation of the black masses of South Africa will also herald the collapse of British imperialism. British governments, both Tory and Labour, have, therefore, resorted to any and every means to ensure the survival of the racist regime. The Anti-Apartheid Movement pamphlet 'South African Mining Interests Move Into North Sea Oil' reveals one particularly significant method by which the British state is helping to fortify the apartheid regime against attempts to economically isolate it.

The South African economy is entirely dependent upon oil imports. Any effective embargo on exports to South Africa would have a devastating effect on the massive profits imperialist banks and multinationals obtain from their investments. To avoid such a possibility the regime has intensified its efforts to produce oil-from-coal in its SASOL plants, three of which were bombed last year by the ANC. But the South African regime is also seeking to obtain independent supplies of oil and Anglo-American - the huge South African mining conglomerate - has already secured oil exploration interests in Indonesia, the Philippines, USA and Canada.

The British government is now directly collaborating with the apartheid regime to ensure the success of these ventures. Two South African controlled companies - Charter Consolidated (British arm of Anglo-American) and Unilon

Oil Exploration Ltd - have been awarded petroleum licences in the North Sea. In addition British Petroleum is negotiating the possible sale to Charter Consolidated of some of BP's North Sea oil interests. The result of these apartheid stakes in North Sea oil will be South Africa's ability to circumvent any international oil embargo.

Such criminal moves are not the property of the Tory Party alone. During the last Labour Government two South African firms were awarded oil exploration licences under the then Energy Secretary Mr Benn! The Labour Party has ever been a faithful servant of British imperialism. Whilst in power not only has it always opposed economic sanctions against South Africa, but as we see has actively aided South Africa to defend itself against any such sanctions.

### British teachers for apartheid regime

In a past issue of FRFI we exposed and denounced the apartheid regime's attempts to recruit skilled British steelworkers to work in South African steel mills. The South African government is now considering a campaign to recruit white teachers from Britain to teach in white only schools in South Africa.

British workers who choose to go and work in South Africa will form part of an all white privileged stratum based on the ruthless oppression and starvation of the black masses in South Africa.

### South African Elections

Referring to the April 29 election in South Africa, the British press spoke of general elections. This is a lie. Under apartheid elections are not general - they are for 2m whites only, where all the slaveowners vote on the best way to maintain their tyranny over the 28m black masses. At this election 600,000 people voted in the Nationalist government. Talk of elections brings to mind democracy. In South Africa this democracy is the democracy of barbarians who live a comfortable, privileged and wealthy life at the expense of the oppressed black masses.

# ATLANTA

A racist campaign of terror has been unleashed against black communities in the USA. This attack, designed to intimidate the people into accepting massive poverty and unemployment and to throw back the political and economic gains made by black people in the 60s and 70s, has been met by a wave of protests of which the most significant was the Miami Uprising of 1980.

them with those previously committed until forced to do so, and, as at New Cross, they refuse to investigate a racist motive for the crime. When a white in a car with police-type roof lights was seen trying to pick up black children the police failed to investigate. Whites have been reported on a number of occasions seen picking up black children, but the police, with no evidence whatsoever, are working on the assumption that the killer is black. They are using this assumption to harass blacks and constantly stop light skinned blacks driving cars with young boys in the back. Further evidence of the police attitude to the investigation was revealed when they refused to respond to a distress call from 11-year-old Patrick Baltazar, who saw a white man in a car ordering youngsters to get in. Patrick doubled back to get the license number. He was never seen alive again.

The racist press have embarked upon a campaign against the black community of Atlanta. They have blamed local black residents for the murders, claiming that the youths were killed by relatives or in underworld drug-related feuds. When this has failed they blame the parents, unstable families, or the children themselves who they call 'hustlers' and 'vulnerable'. And the press continually refer to the killer as black, just as the British press did at New Cross, again on the basis of no evidence.

While all this goes on the black residents of

Atlanta live in fear for their lives and under great mental stress. Children fear to go anywhere alone, even in their own homes. Parents and siblings of the murdered children have been under psychiatric care, some have lost their jobs and as a result been evicted from their homes. Throughout they have received no help from the city's black administration who have sided with police and press. The middle class black leaders have done everything to cover up the killings. Local Mayor, Maynard Jackson, along with leaders of the reformist black organisations like the NAACP and National Urban League have denied that there is a racist link to the killings and state that such allegations are 'irresponsible'. Jackson has refused to push for federal aid for the beleaguered community, and has held a press conference at which he refused to include a missing child in the investigation because he had a history as a 'runaway'. Hours after the conference the child's body was found floating in the Chattahoochee River.

Black people in the USA have not tolerated this. Massive protests took place in cities across America. In Harlem 20,000 people marched, in New Jersey 7,000 in Miami 1,500 in Atlanta 2,000, and marches have taken place in many other American cities. On 9 May a National day of demonstrations is planned. A Green ribbon campaign has been started in contrast to the

### Unemployed workers organise in South Africa

South African and imperialist employers in South Africa confronted with striking workers immediately sack them. The massive pool of unemployed and starving black workers will, they hope, provide easy replacements and on their conditions too. This method of defeating black workers on strike will not, however, proceed as smoothly as they expect. The South African Allied Workers Union is setting about the organisation of an unemployed workers union. The union's General Secretary stated:

'We hope the time will come when employers will not be able to break the union by hiring new workers because they will find that the new workers they want to hire will also be union members.'

Such revolutionary initiatives by black trade unions in South Africa stand in stark contrast to the indifference the trade union movement in Britain has shown to the 3m unemployed here. Workers in Britain have a lesson to learn from black workers in South Africa.

## The People

by John Matshikiza

The people are beautiful  
The people have brains  
The people can laugh  
They can't vote

The people have made the land  
The people have died  
The people can sing  
They can't vote

The people could tell you tales  
The people could weep  
The people can give  
They can't vote

The people speak many tongues  
The people write words  
The people can love  
They can't vote

The people come fighting back  
The people come first  
The people can rule  
They shall vote

The people are beautiful  
The people have brains  
The people can laugh  
THEY CAN'T VOTE

chauvinist yellow ribbons worn for the US spies held in Iran. In Atlanta itself armed defence patrols have been established because of police inaction. This political pressure has forced the police to step up their investigations, and has forced the Reagan administration to give \$2.5 million federal aid for social services and the police investigation. A Reagan aide admitted that this aid was a way of 'blunting' criticisms of Reagan's budget cutbacks.

Nevertheless the killings go on, while black leaders are attempting to damp down protest. The middle class layer of black Americans established in the 1960s has played its role as a buffer between the imperialist state and the black working class. The people of Atlanta and other US cities have turned away from these reactionary leaders and have formed new, militant organisations such as the National Black United Front or are organising in Communist groups. As the Miami rebellion and the nationwide demonstrations have shown, black people in the USA will not be intimidated or terrorised by the imperialist state and its racist allies, and are fighting back for their rights to freedom, dignity and life.

William Grey



# POLICE FILE

## Standards drop

I see the Sheffield force are letting standards drop. Sgt Keith Rudd and Inspector Brian Worthington fabricated a little story and Malcolm Beasley received £100 fine for assaulting our inspector on a steel workers picket. Some careless colleague however allowed TV cameramen to film the same Malcolm Beasley at the other end of the road from where the alleged assault occurred. Malcolm Beasley was acquitted. The Recorder Peter Baker QC didn't fail however to commend the two policemen—he was satisfied that they had tried to give a true and honest account of what had happened. Concluding his comments on this botched frame-up, he said:

'We take the view that the police officers concerned all behaved in the best traditions of the police force'

How true!

## £1000 damage — £200 fine

K Division, Merseyside have kept things very quiet this month, but I'm glad to say that PC Hicks of Maldon, Essex has kept up the tradition. After a session of drinking and watching blue films, Hicks and two friends poured a toxic chemical over a van and an E type Jaguar causing £1000 damage. The attack was revenge after a 'scuffle' in a local pub. PC Hicks' defence council said that Hicks had been an exemplary officer for almost 10 years and had been commended for his conduct. We're not surprised.

## Indecent Assault

A group of Surrey policemen who charged Sheldon Crimes with assaulting a police officer are due to get their come-uppance. Far from assaulting a police officer, Mr Crimes was himself viciously and indecently assaulted and then left without medical attention in police cells at Guildford. Crimes has now been acquitted of the charge, and the court transcript has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

## 'Escape'

Notorious Brit front-man John Banks, jailed after a bizarre attempt to blackmail the overthrown fascist regime in Nicaragua, has escaped from an open prison in Surrey when given a 6 hour parole pass.

Banks is an unofficial but well paid lackey of the British state. He organised mercenaries to invade Angola and terrorise its people. He has worked for the Special Branch, assisting in framing John Higgins, Sinn Fein Organiser in Britain. John Higgins got 10 years. Banks got 2 years in an open prison—but it seems even that was too long for Banks and his employers.

## Peter Hain's career?

I note that Peter Hain, well-known Labour Party member and ANL supporter was very impressed with the police response when he reported harassment by fascists.

'They listened carefully to what we had to say and appear to be carrying out the investigation with vigour.'

This must have been a welcome publicity boost for the police at a time when their cover-up of the New Cross murders was being exposed. Hain forgot to point out the contrast between his treatment and the way the police have harassed the black community in New Cross. But then perhaps he has his career to think about...?

## Home Office slip

A report criticising police internal investigation procedure has been suppressed by the Home Office. This would be neither unusual nor newsworthy except that the report was written by the Home Office's very own research department. The police are up in arms, indignant that such a report could be written in the first place. Someone at the Home Office isn't concentrating!

# BRIXTON UPRISING

continued from page 4

as the jewellers shops were entered. So pre-occupied with defending themselves were the police that people had the leisure to try on shoes and clothes before taking them away.

At around 9.30 the police made a determined and successful charge to clear Railton Road. Banging their riot shields and screaming they rushed in. Groups of black and white youths fought fiercely to keep them out. A considerable number of white people had by this stage joined the uprising following the lead of their black brothers and sisters. In Barnwell Road a 15 minute combat took place before police were able to break through. It was at this stage that firemen assisted the police by turning their hoses on the youth. Behind the lines of police came snatch squads who pounced and arrested those unable to escape in time.

Woe betide those who were captured at this stage. *Time Out* reporter Colin McGhee witnessed a black youth of about 14 viciously beaten by police while other police jostled to land a blow on him. Freelance photographer Neil Martinson took one picture of a black man being arrested before he was himself violently assaulted and his camera smashed.

The police also broke into homes. They broke into the home of the Swaby family, dragged out two of the Swaby sons and violently assaulted 50 year old Mr Swaby breaking his arm and leaving him covered in bruises.

Despite the fact that the police had won back control of Railton Road nothing could rob the people of the victory they had won.

## Sunday

The police spent the daylight hours conducting a Public Relations job for the benefit of the hundreds of pressmen who flooded into the area. The streets were littered with rubble, glass and burned out cars and resembled a scene, as many newspapermen were to write the next day, from the North of Ireland. Whilst local people were still jubilant at the beating they had given the police they knew their enemy well enough to know that as night fell and the Press disappeared the Police would be on the streets with revenge in mind.

# Edinburgh 8

**On 3 April the trial of the Edinburgh 8 ended in a victory with six verdicts of 'not proven' and one of 'not guilty' — already halfway through the trial one of the 8 had been totally acquitted and another's charge dropped. The three-day trial was the result of the police arrests at a Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! open street meeting on Saturday 29 November at the mound in Princes Street. The meeting was held in support of the hunger strikers and so enraged Edinburgh police that they made little attempt to dress up their censorship, openly declaring that they wanted the meeting 'broken up'.**

Although the charges were designed to look non-political, eg obstruction and breach of the peace, the trial itself was obviously political. Under able cross-examination, Police Inspector Campbell was forced to admit that he was ordered by his superiors to ensure that the street meeting did not take place. He obligingly emphasised that he would stop the meeting taking place at any cost.

So due to Inspector Campbell's statements, and the obvious lies of Sgt Heavy (with a name like that need I say more) and his 'sincere young men', the prosecution case lay in shreds exposed as a clumsy attempt at censorship and criminalisation of work in support of the hunger strikers.

This particular attempt was a little too clumsy and the Magistrate was forced not to convict in

William Whitelaw hurriedly walked up Brixton Road, keeping well away from the frontline, guarded by armed Special Branch men. Had his visit been publicised in advance he would have received a reception much rougher than the jeers and shouts of 'Sieg Heil' which greeted him.

A Defence Committee was announced by Rudy Narayan as meeting at 7pm. When the time came many of the youth who wanted to participate in it were reluctant to enter the Melting Pot building lest the police should trap them inside. Large numbers of police reinforcements were present in the area. The youth therefore gathered on the street and wanted the meeting there. Suddenly the police attacked the

## ● Soviet Union

**'The descendants of the slaves of the British Empire have raised their voices to defend their human dignity. The flare up of the people's wrath in the Brixton ghetto has again exposed one of the ugliest sides of British society.'**

**Official London's attitude to non-whites is in fact the continuation of the racist policies pursued by Britain for centuries in its former colonies.**

**The British bourgeoisie which built its prosperity by plundering colonies would like to prosper now at the expense of the non-whites who are subjected to ruthless exploitation.'**

crowd driving their vans at high speed into the crowds. Meanwhile in Barnwell Road a police coach was trapped and the police realised with terror that they were being attacked from both front and rear. As police reinforcements arrived the youth dispersed. Large numbers gathered near the Town Hall and here about 30 youths tried to erect a barricade. Railings were ripped from the church to provide ammunition. Smaller scale confrontations continued throughout the evening.

At around 8pm the police chased a group of youths up Stockwell Road. Police vehicles again drove into the crowd. Their plans were foiled however when they came under a hail of masonry and rocks from youths high up in a

building. Several vans were wrecked.

Stockwell Park Estate was sealed off for three hours with nobody allowed to leave or enter. People witnessed a handcuffed black youth have his head repeatedly banged against the wall by the police.

Throughout Brixton the police were out for revenge. They picked off individuals. A young black woman was seen being viciously assaulted by police who ran off when people approached. The Swaby family was again raided and their third son was arrested.

A widespread cordon had been thrown round Brixton and a police helicopter used a high intensity searchlight and infra red cameras over the area. Police cordons were used not only to keep people out of the area but to encourage fascist hooligans. Witnesses saw two black youths let through a cordon only to be followed by 8-10 fascist typed. To the latter the police said 'Get them Lads!'

The Brixton Uprising was more intensive and covered a wider area than any previous working class fightback for decades. It has sent shivers of horror down the spines of the British ruling class. Even on the Saturday night the authorities had an Army Liaison officer on hand in Brixton police station to liaise with the Army should the police have proved unequal to dealing with the Uprising. There will come a day when they use the troops, as they do on the streets of the North of Ireland, to put down rebellion by the workers.

One factor, in particular, horrified the ruling class. Under the leadership of black people, whites joined in. Many of the young white people have no stake in this system. That they responded to the Uprising by joining in is of great importance. Black people have once again shown the way to fight the system. In taking militant action against their oppressors they have given an example to and pointed out the revolutionary road to the working class as a whole. And a section of white youth responded to this revolutionary lead.

The Brixton Uprising, like the St Paul's Uprising points to the future. As this vile racist, profit-seeking system lays ever more burdens on to the oppressed and poorest workers—they will unite to fight back. They spurn the weapons beloved by the corrupt and aristocratic official Labour Movement — Parliament, peaceful protest and petition. They choose the weapons which are the only weapons understood by the British state—the weapons of revolutionary Uprising.

the face of such obvious police censorship and blatant lying. To do so would have rendered the trial a farce, a consideration necessary in the light of the vigorous and public fight waged by the Edinburgh 8 Defence Campaign. There is no doubt, however, that had the Edinburgh 8 not had the good fortune to have photographs, witnesses to the arrests and a very good lawyer, the outcome would have been different. Arbitrary arrests for so-called breach of the peace etc happen all the time in poorer working class districts of town. Without determination and clearly directed Defence Campaigns there is no chance of defeating the police; imperialist justice being what it is.

Steve Pearce

# Glasgow 2

**The Glasgow Appeal Court of April 29 took approximately 3 minutes to consider the Glasgow 2 appeal and to reject it. The highest judicial authority in Scotland has now confirmed that it is a crime to criticise British rule in Ireland and to support revolutionary forces opposing that rule.**

Mike Duffield and Kirstin Crosbie were arrested while selling Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! at Parkhead Glasgow in August last year. They were originally charged under the PTA and remanded in prison for a week. During this week a vigorous FRFI campaign forced the dropping of the PTA charges. A charge of breach of the peace was substituted.

The Appeal Court has confirmed that revolutionary communism disturbs the peace of the

ruling class. However the current cost of this has been reduced from £275 to £125, plus 1 week in jail, the loss of your job and perpetual police harassment. Nevertheless, Mike Duffield and Kirstin Crosbie and all FRFI supporters are continuing to sell FRFI in Glasgow and throughout the country. And every attempt to harass us and stop us selling will be resisted.

# Commons expels Ron Brown

On 7 April, Ron Brown MP was expelled from Parliament for 5 days. A consistent defender of the Glasgow 2, he had raised the matter in the Commons on 11 February. The Solicitor General for Scotland replying to his question *lied* and stated that the Glasgow 2 had not been charged under the PTA. Ron Brown decided to pursue the matter.

On 7 April, again in the Commons, he demanded to know why the Solicitor General had lied. He was not even allowed to complete his question. This den of liars—the 'mother of democracies'—broke into uproar to drown the truth. The speaker demanded that Ron Brown should sit down. He naturally refused and for his pains was expelled from the House. He received no support from the Labour Party benches for his stand on democratic rights for socialist newspaper sellers and as he was ushered out of the House he shouted 'so much for democracy'. Indeed so much for the democracy of the imperialist House of Commons, when at the merest spark of truth its ranks are closed to snuff it out.



# NEW CROSS INQUEST

The inquest into the murder of thirteen black youths in the New Cross arson attack 18 January 1981, opened in London on Tuesday 21 April. The determination of the police and the coroners court to cover up this racist attack was shown by the original intention to give the hearing only three days. Three days to examine the murder of thirteen youths! So far, thanks to the determined resistance of the relatives and friends of the murdered youth to any cover-up, the inquest has lasted for three weeks.

## Police cover up racist murder

One fact stands out in this inquest: the police from the beginning have suppressed evidence, refused to investigate and invented their own lies, to cover up the fact that the New Cross Massacre was the work of an arsonist.

The police suppressed the fact that an incendiary device was found in the garden of Mrs Ruddock's house after the fire. One forensic 'expert' tried to describe this fire-bomb as an 'amateurish' home-made firework. First the police suppress the discovery of a fire-bomb. Second their hired 'experts' deny, or try to deny, that it is a fire-bomb. In the inquest police witnesses maintained that there was no connection between the fire-bomb found in the garden and the burning to death of thirteen black youths in that very house!

Despite the well known fact that the New Cross area has a long history of racist fire-bomb attacks, the police refused to investigate the known racists in the area. Why not? Commander Stockwell's explanation provoked just shouts of derision from the public galleries: 'Police officers cannot go willy-nilly to search people's premises or question people without reasonable grounds for suspicion'. The uproar that this remark provoked reflected the experi-

ence of black people at the hands of the racist British police who never hesitate to kick in the doors of black homes, to beat up black people in their homes, in police stations, on the streets, to arrest and frame black youths and inflict a reign of brutality and intimidation upon the black working class. The police simply refused to investigate known racists because their sole concern was to cover up this vile racist terror attack on black people.

## Police attack the victims

Stockwell's 'concern' for the formalities of bourgeois law did not apply to the black youths at the party. Youth after youth came into the witness box and denounced the police intimidation which was used to force them to make false statements about a fight which never took place and for which there is no evidence at all apart from the statements extracted by force. At least six youths were illegally detained for three days to force statements from them. Robert McKenzie was held in a cell and told 'Right you black bastard you better spit out all you got in the back of your head'. Another youth was told he would have his neck broken if he did not say what the police wanted to hear. Denise Gooding, 11 years old and sister of

Andrew Gooding murdered in the fire, was attacked and abused by three police officers. She was repeatedly called a liar despite the fact that she herself was seriously injured in the fire. The youths were forced to make statements about a fight the details of which were invented by the police. Two youths, Errol Lieba and Derek Lieba, did not break under the police pressure for which the coroner attacked them. Threats of other court cases, charges of arson and sheer physical brutality were used against the victims of the fire.

The most disgusting part of this police conspiracy against the black people attacked in the fire was the attempt of the police to defame the character of Owen Thompson one of the murdered youth. He was described in the police fabrications as 'mad', always wanting to fight, and the instigator of the fire itself! This vicious attack on a murdered black youth could only occur to the poisoned mentality of the racist British police.

## Black people fight back

The police, supported throughout the hearing by the coroner, hired defender of the racist British state, did not have things their own way. Throughout the hearing the relatives, friends and supporters have attacked and denounced this crooked inquest. Constant interruptions and demonstrations have shown the coroner and the police that their schemes are not going unchallenged. The slogan chanted outside the court sums up the attitude of the black people to this filthy imperialist farce 'Blood ah go run if justice no come'. The coroner has repeatedly threatened to clear the public gallery so that his

foul work can be carried out in secrecy. But he dares not do it! For the black people will not go and he knows it!

The inquest is not yet over but the role of the racist police has already been thoroughly exposed, despite the cowardly refusal of the press to reveal this. Thirteen black youths have been burned to death in a vicious racist terror attack. British 'justice' and British 'law and order' is directed not towards defending the black people attacked but defending and protecting their attackers. The inquest only underlines what the oppressed already know: the unofficial racists of the NF/British Movement etc and the official racists of the police and courts are part and parcel of the same imperialist state. The New Cross Massacre will not be forgotten by black people. Commander Stockwell and his puppet Coroner Davies will not be forgotten. The 2 March demonstration has shown beyond a shadow of doubt that the murder of thirteen black youths in New Cross on 18 January will be avenged.

## Terry Marlowe

### The Murdered Thirteen

Humphrey Brown	18
Peter Campbell	18
Steve Collins	17
Patrick Cummings	16
Gerry Francis	17
Andrew Gooding	14
Lloyd Hall	20
Lilian Henry	16
Patricia Johnson	15
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## NOTES & COMMENTS

### People's March - to nowhere

The Liverpool May Day rally to launch the 'People's March' to London had nothing to offer to the working class. Described lavishly as of 'historic significance', it was a complete farce, revealing the contempt the labour aristocracy has for the oppressed and the unemployed. The March has been quite clearly devised as a gesture to head off the growing anger amongst workers at the constant attack on their living conditions. The trade union and Labour Party leaders who have organised it, with the enthusiastic support of the petit bourgeois left, have as their main concern the prevention of any 'social disorder' amongst workers who are unwilling to accept falling wages and unemployment as their lot. They are terrified lest the example set by the revolutionary youth in Bristol and Brixton is adopted by other sections of the working class.

That the ruling class sees it as no threat at all is evidenced by the approval it has in the press and media, who hail it as a model of democratic demonstration. At a rally the night before, the 'broad support' it has was enthusiastically described by Gordon McLennan, General Secretary of the CPG. Not only the Catholic Bishop of Liverpool, not only the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, not only the Methodist Church, but even the Salvation Army had been won to the cause of peace, progress and democracy - to the ecstatic delight of the assembled pot-bellied labour aristocrats. The working class seem to be a little less enthusiastic about its 'historic significance', since only 2000 turned out to see the march.

Of course, none of the platform speakers made any mention of the plight of the hunger-strikers, more concerned as they were with jockeying for positions in the Labour Party. Tony Benn was there, of course - he refused to comment on the hunger strike when approached by supporter of the Merseyside Hunger Strike Support Committee. This committee had a street meeting at the Rally, which

attracted a small but attentive audience, although with a smattering of Loyalist clowns. Over 1000 leaflets announcing its demonstration next day were distributed, and £30.00 collected very easily. This showed the potential support amongst workers for the cause of the hunger-strikers. The SWP had before the event insisted that the Committee ask permission of the 'People's March' organisers to hold the street meeting, since it might be seen by them to be disruptive! However, the majority of the committee rejected this obsequiousness.

As the 'People's March' goes on its way, we may expect the tone of the ruling class to become even more enthusiastic. This is the way to demonstrate! No violence, no disorder, nothing to disturb our peace of mind! Plenty of godliness and respect for property! Nothing that poses a threat to anything. And that is the intention of its organisers - an empty gesture, whose sole purpose is to postpone the day when workers in Britain follow in the revolutionary footsteps of the youth of Derry and Brixton.

### Lee Jeans women fight on

While 240 women workers in Lee Jeans Factory in Greenock were 6 weeks into a militant occupation struggle for their jobs, over 5,000 workers in the Talbot car-plant at Linwood voted to accept redundancy money, long term unemployment and the devastation of their area. All of these workers realise the full horrors of unemployment - why was it that while the poorer paid, less organised women workers in Greenock had the strength to fight the men at Linwood did not?

The Linwood plant has been the pride and joy of the official trade union movement for years. 100% organised into trade union membership, it has been dominated by the corrupt leadership of the Communist Party and Labour Party Trade Union officials. Linwood workers were 'supported' by the Scottish TUC (STUC), Moss Evans of the TGWU himself

pledged support, and a 700 strong West of Scotland shop stewards conference had voted them 'moral, material, and financial support'. Having seen the vigorous class struggle launched by the labour and trade union bureaucracy in defence of the working class, the Linwood workers voted 2 to 1 to take the money and not to risk opening the box!

In Lee Jeans in Greenock, neglected and unknown even by their officials let alone by the STUC, the 240 women voted to occupy in the face of opposition from their officials who they had never before called on for help. The incensed women sang 'We shall not be moved' to drown their officials' frantic pleas to take the redundancy money. Two thirds of the women are their families' main breadwinners.

While Lee Jeans women are campaigning for work-sharing with their Irish sisters who were being offered overtime to take on their work, Jimmy Milne, Secretary of the STUC, started the Linwood 'campaign' by writing to every French Presidential candidate asking them to support the fight to keep Talbot going - by joining with Britain in imposing sanctions against the Japanese car industry!

While the women of Lee Jeans, without the benefit of CP or LP advice, extend the hand of international solidarity and unity, the STUC sticks its racist boot into our Japanese brothers and sisters!

Deep in the working class, where the official labour movement's patriotic pro-imperialist poison has not penetrated, the revolutionary organisation of workers is being born. Women, black and immigrant workers at Grunwick, Garners, Lee Jeans and elsewhere have given the lead to the ranks of workers organised by the TUC(GB).

### Keep Capitalism British! Fly the Flag

The CPG has launched an all-out campaign to ensure that the capitalists who exploit us are British. In a fit of nationalist hysteria the *Morning Star* (30 January) warned us of the 'Japanese Car Invasion' and 'Nissan is on the way in'.

Two weeks later, still hysterical, the *Star* told us that Datsun have 'feudal' labour relations, victimise militant union members and have harsh labour manage-

ment. This reminds us of British Leyland where Derek Robinson and, recently, four more shop stewards were sacked; where they threatened to shut down factories when the workers went on strike for a decent wage; where workers have to ask to go to the toilet.

Of course the CP believes that if the capitalists are British then British workers will get a better deal - the profits will be reinvested in British industry leading to more jobs and better conditions. 3 million unemployed know this is a lie. 89,000 redundant car workers know it is a lie. Whether the capitalists are Japanese or British makes no difference to the working class.

### Mind your own business!

In January this year Foreign Office minister Nicholas Ridley gave a press conference in Kingston Jamaica, at which he displayed the full arrogance of the British ruling class.

Ridley said 'I simply don't accept any criticism whatever about race relations in Britain'. When asked about police harassment of blacks in London he said 'I would deny it utterly and I would consider it highly irresponsible to make that allegation.' Ridley was asked about the growth of fascist organisations, and did this not raise the question of racism? 'No it does not', he said. 'There is no rise in neo-fascist organisations in Britain. It is these myths and these allegations which are peddled and thrown about in abandon which are the main source of damage to race relations in Britain at the present time. And none of this is true. And I think it would be much better to stop this'.

Why was the Nationality Act necessary? 'It was necessary because we haven't got such an act'. But would the rights and privileges of British citizens be affected according to the category they fall in? 'No'. Then why the definition? 'Because we haven't got such an act. It's none of your business anyway'.

This is the stunning logic of a man with the mentality of a spoilt child. Racist Nicholas Ridley and the racist British state can be sure, whether they like it or not, that democratic and revolutionary forces throughout the world are making the destruction of British imperialism very much their business.



# REACTIONARY ALLIANCE DISRUPTS H-BLOCK CAMPAIGN

In Scotland and Northern England the official Labour movement, Loyalist thugs, the police and assorted middle class socialists have all united to disrupt the Hunger Strike campaign.

## Liverpool

On Saturday 2 May a march organised by the Merseyside Hunger Strike Committee took place through the centre of Liverpool, calling for Victory to the Hunger Strikers! Political Status Now! The police and Loyalist thugs united to attack this demonstration. The police forced the organisers to change the demonstration's assembly point from Granby Street in the centre of Liverpool 8 to a point on the edge of the area. They knew that the fascists and loyalists, some of whom had travelled from Scotland, would not have dared to enter the Granby Street area. The black youth – and many white youth – would not have tolerated either fascists or police invading their area.

At the new assembly point, without any police in sight, and with a police helicopter observing overhead, the Loyalists attacked the march. Only sheer determination enabled the march to reach its destination at Pier Head, as it was constantly attacked by the much larger crowd of Loyalists and fascists.

The committee will not be driven off the streets in this way. It is already making plans to call further demonstrations.

## Glasgow

On Sunday 3 May the Glasgow Hunger Strike Action Committee (GHSAC) attended a May Day demonstration organised by Glasgow Trades Council. The GHSAC banner proclaiming Victory to the Hunger Strikers!, Political Status Now! was taken on the march as all other marches in the area had been banned for 3 months. The GHSAC contingent went only 300

yards before the police rushed in and pulled the banner down. Immediately Loyalists began to assault members of the contingent. Mike Duffield, one of the Glasgow 2, drawing the attention of other marchers to this was arrested and charged with a breach of the peace.

The CPGB dominated Glasgow Trades Council allowed a Loyalist Flute Band to join the demonstration. The Band wore caps with UVF insignia and were dressed in red, white and blue. The march organisers fully approved the police action against the GHSAC stating that the Committee was not part of the Labour Movement.

## Edinburgh

On Thursday 7 May the Labour controlled Lothian Regional Council banned a demonstration calling for Victory to the Hunger Strikers! Political Status Now, which was due to take place on Sunday 10 May.

The demonstration called by the GHSAC was opposed not only by the Loyalists and the press. The CPGB dominated Edinburgh Trades Council and the SWP/IMG/TOM dominated Edinburgh H-Block/Armagh Committee also opposed it.

Jim Maclean, Loyalist spokesman, was able to cite Edinburgh Trades Council and the Edinburgh H-Block/Armagh Committee opposition to the demonstration, together with 'the threat of violence' as grounds for banning the demonstration.

But the GHSAC will not be deterred. It organised a rally on the day the demonstration was due to take place.

years. That such a disgraceful sentence could be passed is indicative of the imperialist nature of British courts, but a strong and determined campaign by British socialist organisations could have forced the state to drop the charges. But of course the middle class socialists of the SWP and IMG made no effort to build such a campaign. They demonstrated their utter indifference and disdain for Republican victims of British 'justice'. So indifferent and disdainful were they that their newspapers did not even bother to report the trial or the verdict.

There is no justice for Irish Republicans like Gerry MacLochlainn in British imperialism's courts. The courts are just sentencing tribunals for the enemies of imperialism.

FRFI sends its solidarity to comrade Gerry MacLochlainn. We will continue the struggle to destroy the system of imperialist injustice, murder and brutality of which Gerry is the latest victim.

Gerry is now being held at HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Road, London W12. We urge all readers to send him messages of support and solidarity.

## Irish revolutionary gaoled

**On Tuesday 16 April 1981 Mr Justice Purchas sentenced Gerry MacLochlainn South Wales Sinn Fein organiser, to six years in prison. Purchas rejoiced in his task of consigning another Irish Republican to a British imperialist prison. With the hypocrisy of his class Purchas talked about the 'appalling violence, death and destruction' which is carried out by the IRA. He has no objection to the violence, death and destruction carried out by imperialism which guarantees him his well-paid job as persecutor of anti-imperialist fighters.**

Gerry MacLochlainn was charged along with Jim Reilly, Sinn Fein Home Counties Organiser, with conspiracy to cause explosions. But Gerry stood alone in the dock. Jim died in hospital before the British state could get him into prison alongside Gerry.

The trial was the customary affair for such trials. The 'evidence' was a police story made up of bits of letters, notes of speeches and 'incriminating' items such as Jim Reilly's Sinn Fein membership card. The now standard rigmarole of the secret witness, a Colonel X, was brought in to impress the jury. Mr Purchas (Purchased would be more accurate) added his own summing up to the prosecution evidence in case the jury had missed anything. He described Gerry MacLochlainn's politics as 'the mentality of a man who will not pull the trigger but might provide the gun'.

So Gerry MacLochlainn was tried and convicted of conspiracy to cause explosions and sent to one of Britain's hell-hole prisons for six



Glasgow Hunger Strike Rally, 4 April 1981

## GLASGOW MARCH BANNED

A 3-months ban on marches beginning 3 April has been introduced in the Strathclyde Region. The Ban, under the Public Order Act, is one of the longest in the present round and is clearly designed to silence the growing Glasgow campaign in support of Irish political prisoners on hunger strike for political status. The Ban was aimed specifically at the demonstration on 4 April called by the Glasgow Hunger Strike Action Committee (GHSAC). The demonstration would have been the third in as many months and 3,000 were expected. The Police used Loyalist threats as an excuse to have the Ban implemented, but in reality the prospects, as the 'Daily Record' predicted, of a 'huge' march and further evidence of growing and militant anti-imperialism of Glasgow workers horrified the Police and their local paymasters, the Labour-controlled Strathclyde Region.

The response of the Glasgow Hunger Strike Action Committee was to hold two open air rallies, attended by hundreds of workers on 4 and 25 April. Both rallies were supported by Republican Flute Bands, whose speakers expressed complete solidarity with the hunger strikers. The RCG was the only British left group supporting both rallies. Present at the first rally were Sinn Fein and a speaker from the Eritrean Students Society who delivered his message of international solidarity to enthusiastic cheers. The GHSAC has now called for marches outside Strathclyde, principally in Edinburgh, has picketed Strathclyde Regional Council and widely distributed leaflets exposing the undemocratic and anti-working class nature of the Ban.

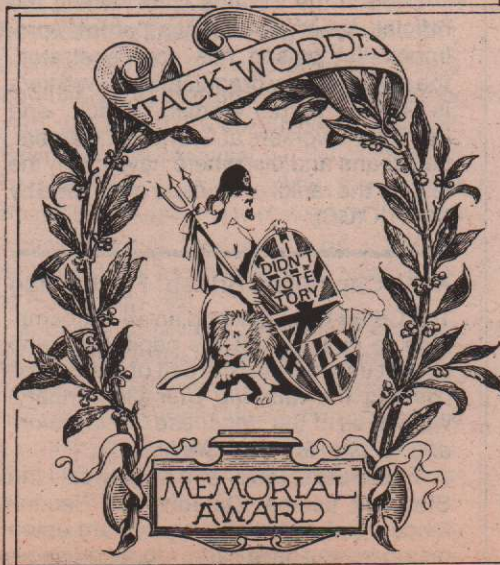
Glasgow, the principal area covered by the Ban has been the scene of vicious attacks on the working class – health conditions are the worst in West Europe, redundancies have decimated factories and areas such as Greenock and Port Glasgow. Glasgow slums, presided over by the local Labour Party are notorious. The unity of the battle against these conditions with the fight for Irish freedom is what the imperialists fear. The Labour Convenor of Strathclyde said as much when he stated that he feared the effects of unemployment on youth linking up with what he called 'sectarian' marches. He has reason to fear this unity as it would spell a quick and timely end to the whole rotten Labour-controlled machine which controls Glasgow.

The silence from the organised Glasgow labour movement in the face of these conditions has been notable over the past years, no fight-back has emerged from what was once Red Clydeside and the home of John Maclean. The

reasons are not hard to find; the loyalty of the Communist and Labour Parties in Glasgow to British imperialism has ensured these defeats and others such as Linwood and Singers. Therefore it is no surprise that these pro-imperialists and labour bureaucrats have done nothing faced with a three-months ban on working class demonstrations. Indeed, the Loyalism and Orangism which riddles the official Glasgow labour movement, was exposed when Jane MacKay, CP member and Secretary of Glasgow District Trades Council, was asked for her comments on the ban. First she said she was opposed to sectarian parades – the usual bourgeois lie that there is no difference between revolutionary Republicanism and reactionary Loyalism – then she tipped the scales decidedly in favour of... Loyalism and its master British Imperialism, when she said 'Many trade union members will be on the Orange marches and that is their right.' (Glasgow Herald 2 April 1981). This 'friend' of the working class and espouser of international causes everywhere but in Ireland deserves the OBE! This is the same Trades Council which refused to do anything for the Glasgow 2's right to sell socialist newspapers. The Communist Party itself has contented itself with fretting about whether a June CND march would be affected. The SWP, true to their record of absolute hostility towards work in support of the hunger strikers, through their Right to Work Campaign called for the ban to be lifted '... for labour and trade union demonstrations'. The message being that their friends and allies in the Labour Party should be allowed to march but the 'croppies' and those who stand with them should lie down once more. Edinburgh SWP members have greeted the news of an Edinburgh march with horror and called us 'loonies'.

The banning of the GHSAC march on 4 April exposed the fear of the imperialists and their servants in the working class. The unity of the working class here with the Irish liberation struggle will shake the whole foundation of the British state. The 4 April march in Glasgow is the first anti-imperialist and progressive march to be banned for years. It is also the first march on Ireland to be banned. All other bans in the recent past have been instituted ostensibly because of NF etc marches. This ban was specifically aimed at the GHSAC march, and it is no coincidence that the issue should be Ireland and the place Glasgow. The growing Glasgow support for political status and for Irish freedom has been met head on. The job now is to carry on undeterred and unintimidated.

Glasgow Correspondent



More and more people are qualifying for the Jack Woddie Award for National Chauvinist Hypocrisy. Despite close competition from Sabina Norton (RCT) who boasted that the RCT uses black people's struggles for its own ends, Gordon McLennan of the CPGB has won by a nose.

On the very day that Bobby Sands was murdered, McLennan declared: '... The Labour Party and labour movement also bear some responsibility.'

This crow-thumper is the General Secretary of a party which refuses to support Political Status, slanders the IRA, of which Bobby Sands was a heroic member, and in Scotland joins with Loyalist scum to try to destroy the campaign for Political Status.

The CPGB – Her Majesty's Loyal Anti-Communist Party – has earned the hatred and contempt of all democrats and revolutionaries fighting imperialism.



# LETTERS

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

## CP splits hairs

Dear Comrade,

Perhaps you would print a response from the 'crawling dogs' to whom you refer in your story headlined 'Morning Star Leads The Hunt' in the Jan/Feb issue of FRFI.

The quotation from the MS that you publish contains a typographical error, unfortunately unnoticed before going to print. The word 'not' should have read 'out'. This changes the meaning of the sentence. Given your attachment to colourful language, misleading argument, and the differences in our political positions, I doubt if this will trouble you greatly. But your readers, and yourselves, have a right to know the true intention of the writer of that Morning Star editorial whether or not you agree with that intention.

Yours Fraternally,  
**Bert Ward, Secretary, CP National Advisory Committee on Ireland.**

**PS.** I presume that I will be too late with this letter to make your March/April deadline. Because I consider it harmful to the cause which we share, though our policies differ, for this unwitting misstatement of our opinion to be uncorrected for a further two months, I am sending this letter to the Morning Star, with a request that they publish it.  
**Bert Ward**  
Sydenham

## Support in Tasmania

Dear Comrade,

Thanks for your letter of Feb 27 1981, the copy of Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! and also the subscription form.

Also thanks for requesting my comments as regards the paper. Except for the centre page Part 2 article on the Communist Tradition and Ireland I have read all of FRFI since I received it last week. I am honestly impressed, it is hard I suppose to be much of a judge when you're thousands of miles away in Australia and don't know English conditions or the situation in depth, but I think I am fairly well informed of the struggles in Britain and Ireland. I agree with the assessment that FRFI takes up the most crucial questions that face communists in Britain, those of racism, emerging fascism and national oppression. I believe the paper takes up these tasks well and combats racism, etc forcefully and seriously, and is a good example of an anti-imperialist paper combining clear political line with an easy to read style, being factual, and not too 'wordy' (it does not go over the heads of ordinary people). I salute your real unashamed support of the Irish peoples war of national liberation. There are a lot of communists here who really shy away from such clear stands on Ireland. Good supporters of other struggles of national liberation, but mention Ireland and support the Provos', and I don't mean the SWP types here either but Marxist Leninists

## our reply

The Morning Star cannot excuse its opposition to the armed struggle of an oppressed people by pointing to their own *unfortunate* 'typographical error'. The original sentence in the Star read,

'There is no doubt that if he [Gerry Tuite] is not to plant bombs in shops and pubs the best place for him is in jail.'

To change this from 'not to plant bombs' to 'out to plant bombs' in no way alters the implication that, a) the IRA attacks civilian targets, and b) that those waging armed struggle against British imperialism should be locked up in jail! Nor will we concede that to use the word 'out' absolves the Morning Star of making an assumption of Tuite's 'guilt'. The only people in this world who have claimed that Tuite is 'out to plant bombs in pubs and shops' are the racist British police, the gutter press - and the Morning Star.

We also note that nowhere in your letter do you attempt to justify or deny the CPGB's call on the IRA to surrender. Does this mean that your organisation remains, as ever, the faithful servant of the British imperialist state?

## Fine paper

A Chara

Thank you for my copy of FRFI No. 9, which I received recently.

There is no doubt but that it is a fine paper, dealing with all the struggles against Capitalism around the world.

I wish the two republican papers which I buy here had a more international flavour, but I suppose it is inevitable that they concentrate so much on the national question.

I enclose a small amount for your £3000 appeal and 60p p&p for the book 'Marx and Engels on Ireland'.

I will finish here, I wish you luck with your attempt to make FRFI monthly.  
Yours truly,  
**WR, Dundalk**

with good clarity on many important questions, and there is no such objectivity. Much work needs to be done yet in building support and tackling the slanders thrust at the Republican Movement and the Irish Republican Army.

Except for the work of some individual marxists and a group of people in South Australia that produce Adelaide Anti-Imperialist Newsletter, the left here either ignore the Irish struggle or in the case of the Trotskyites attack the IRA's resistance. I am in contact with Provisional Sinn Fein in Melbourne and obtain literature from them and they carry out most of the support work in Australia without the support of any of the communist groups.  
Yours in solidarity,  
**SK, Tasmania, Australia**

## John Maclean

John Maclean (1879-1923) was one of the greatest Communist working class leaders in Britain. An implacable enemy of British imperialism he believed that:

'Since the British Empire is the greatest obstacle to Communism it is the business of every Communist to break it up at the earliest moment.'

As a Communist he was a resolute supporter of the Irish national liberation movement. In 1916 he was one of the very few working class leaders who supported the Easter Rising, in the Anglo-Irish war of 1919 he supported the Irish and subsequently opposed the British partition of Ireland.

As is always the case for such fighters, he was labelled a criminal and served many prison sentences. His revolutionary spirit and determination could not however be broken. The imperialists and their agents turned to slander and abuse to discredit him - they circulated the scurrilous and vicious lie that he was insane. This 'insanity' slander is still circulated today. We print the letter below from the John Maclean Society refuting this dirty lie. It only goes to show that imperialism fears even dead revolutionaries.

I am writing on behalf of the John Maclean Society, with the support of Glasgow District Trades Council, in connection with the documentary programme 'The Revolutionaries' produced by BBC TV Scotland. It was transmitted on the network on 16th July last year to mark the birth centenary of John Maclean (one year late). During the course of the programme Lord Shinwell stated that John Maclean 'had been for some time in an institution because his mind was disturbed'. These are his exact words. This is quite untrue, and can be proved to be untrue. His family, hurt and bewildered, maintain categorically that it is a falsehood, and nobody else has ever suggested such a thing. I myself, as John Maclean's biographer, am aware of all his activities week by week right up to the end of his life on 30th November 1923, and can state quite definitely that he was never even in an ordinary hospital, let alone a mental one.

I was instructed to inform the BBC about the error, and ask to have something done about

correcting it. I wrote to the producer of the programme, and received no reply. I then wrote to the Head of Scottish Television and to the Controller of BBC Scotland. Both replied that they could do nothing about Lord Shinwell's 'view of events'. I replied pointing out that it was not a 'view of events' but an unqualified statement purporting to be a fact, and was accepted as such by the viewers. On receiving more or less the same replies as previously I wrote to George Howard in London, BBC Chairman, and received the same kind of reply.

The members of both the John Maclean Society and Glasgow District Trades Council are deeply troubled by the BBC's apparent lack of integrity and are horrified that in a so-called democracy a dead man can be slandered with impunity.  
Yours Faithfully,  
**Nan Milton,**  
Secretary, John Maclean Society.

## Don't vote Labour

Dear Editor,

I attended the May Day demonstration in London, organised by the Labour Party, to show support for Bobby Sands. I arrived at the assembly point only to be greeted by 800 police - more than the number of demonstrators. I went straight away to a demonstrator holding a Bobby Sands placard. Two people then unfurled a 'Victory to Bobby Sands MP' banner. Immediately the police moved in to remove it. The person I was with was also taken away, as was an Irishman selling 'The Irish Democrat' and anyone else who protested against these actions. The police said they were acting on the orders of the organisers of the march - the Labour Party! When I brought this to the attention of a steward he told me to 'F... Off'.

When Michael Foot spoke he said that he believed in freedom for all people of the world, including Ireland! He was heckled throughout his five minute speech. I constantly shouted 'Victory to Bobby Sands! Political Status Now!' much to the annoyance of the police and those loyal anti-Irish Labour Party supporters. As the march moved off, a helicopter appeared as did mounted police. Is the Labour Party really that scared of the Irish people that it needs such protection? Well, if so, it has good reason to be. Their record on Ireland from 1969 to today speaks for itself.

No Irish person should ever again consider voting or supporting the Labour Party in any way.

UTP  
CMc  
London.

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# HANDS OFF IRELAND!



IRA honour Bobby Sands

**Bobby Sands was buried with full Republican military honours in Belfast on 7th May.**

Ninety thousand people, many carrying black flags, joined the funeral procession or lined the five mile route as the procession made its way from Twinbrook to Milltown cemetery.

Black flags flew from many houses along the route and a message written in large letters on one wall read simply: 'Bobby Sands, murdered 1.17am, 5th May 1981'.

A coffin, covered by a tricolor and a black beret and gloves, was flanked by an IRA guard of honour. When the procession reached Andersonstown, it stopped briefly while a volley of shots was fired over the coffin. At the graveside the mood of the thousands of mourners was not just one of grief at the loss of a brave comrade but also of defiance and determination to continue the struggle for which Bobby Sands gave his life. In his oration, Owen Carron, Bobby Sands' election agent in the Fermanagh/South Tyrone bye-election, outlined the way in which Bobby Sands had become politically educated until at the age of 18 he had taken up arms against the British occupation of Ireland. 'Bobby Sands', he said, 'will be remembered as a freedom fighter and a political prisoner hungering for justice.' He concluded: 'Bobby Sands has not died in vain. His hunger strike and the sacrifices of his life were not in vain. We

will never surrender. Today, we pledge ourselves, not only to win the five demands, but to drive England out of our country once and for all. Victory to the soldiers of the Irish Republican Army'.

## Support in the 26 Counties

On the day of Bobby Sands' funeral many factories, shops, offices and whole towns closed down in demonstrations of support. This was despite the opposition of the official Trade Union movement to any stoppages.

In Limerick all factories and most shops closed for part of the day. Waterford, Tralee, Wexford, Bray and Dundalk shut down for the whole day. In Co Monaghan all the towns shut down for the day except Castleblayney which closed for half the day. Stoppages occurred all over Co Leitrim. In Letterkenny and Tralee thousands attended marches and rallies. In Dublin over 5,000 marched in support of Bobby Sands.

The strikes, closures, marches and rallies all over the 26 Counties showed the massive support among the Irish working class for the hunger strikers.



**The hunger strike by Bobby Sands, Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara was marked from the beginning by local marches, pickets and demonstrations in nationalist areas throughout the Six Counties as well as in the Twenty-six Counties. This activity culminated in mass marches in Dublin on 18th April and in Belfast on the following Sunday.**

In Dublin the marchers proceeded to the GPO - scene of the Easter Rising in 1916 - and expressed their militancy along the route of the march with chants of *IRA, Bobby Sands - MP, and Brits Out, North and South*, indicating their disgust at Charles Haughey's collaboration with the British government. The Belfast march was by far the largest of the campaign, stretching for three miles from its starting point on the Falls Road to Andersonstown. On the following Sunday, as Bobby Sands approached death and with Francis Hughes also rapidly weakening, a march was held at the village of Toomebridge in Co Antrim. Despite attempts by the RUC to disrupt the march by sealing off the area with a massive show of force, several thousand people marched into the centre of the village for a rally. The main street of the village was dominated by tricolour flags and a large banner proclaiming support for the hunger strikers, while walls and road signs were covered with posters and slogans supporting the hunger strike. Oliver Hughes, the brother of Francis Hughes, told the hushed crowd how he had gone into Long Kesh that morning with the Sands family and how they had found that Bobby had gone into a coma, and he described the appalling condition to which Bobby had been reduced by the intransigence of the British government. The mood of the crowd was solemn but determined, and speakers at the rally emphasised that even if - as seemed inevitable - Bobby Sands dies, the hunger strike and the struggle for political status would still go on.

While peaceful demonstrations continued throughout the duration of the hunger strike, however, it was clear to many people even at the beginning of the hunger strike that the British government would pay no attention to such forms of protest. At the same time appeals to 'prominent' and 'influential' people such as Charles Haughey, John Hume (leader of the SDLP), and Church leaders predictably resulted only in evasion and double-dealing. Accordingly, as it became increasingly clear that the British government - aided and abetted by its allies in Ireland - was going to persist in its cruel and intransigent attitude towards the hunger strikers the young people of Derry, Belfast and other nationalist areas began to take matters into their own hands. In Derry hundreds of

young people came onto the streets to attack the British Army and the RUC with bricks, stones, petrol bombs and acid bombs, and at the same time set up barricades at the entrances to the Bogside. Similar attacks were launched in Belfast, Newry, Strabane and other nationalist areas.

**At the time of going to press, hunger-strikers Frankie Hughes, Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara were joined in the hunger-strike by Joe McDonnell. Frankie Hughes was reported to be extremely weak and close to death. FRFI salutes these revolutionary fighters against imperialism.**

The response of the British Army to this expression of anger by the nationalist youth was the same as ever. In Derry two young people were killed when a British soldier deliberately drove his land-rover at them at full speed, another young person was killed by a plastic bullet, while a fourth lost an eye when he was also hit by a plastic bullet. Far from quelling the spirit of the young people, however, this crude repression - as on Bloody Sunday 1972 - served only to increase their anger and determination.

This anger exploded with renewed force after the death of Bobby Sands, with the British Army and the RUC coming under constant attack in nationalist areas of Belfast, while in Dublin there was a similar response from the militant working class youth of the city who attacked the police guarding British businesses and smashed the windows of shops in Dublin's richest shopping area. Once again, therefore, it was left to the young working class people of Belfast, Derry and other nationalist areas to show the only way in which the struggle for political status would ever be won - not by humanitarian appeals to politicians, Church leaders and other 'prominent people', still less to the British government itself, but through militant protests and a sustained and determined use of force - the only argument that the British government has ever listened to.

Irish correspondent

## BY-ELECTION VICTORY

**The election victory of Bobby Sands signified a crushing defeat for the British government's entire criminalisation policy. At the very centre of this policy has always been the argument - repeated ad nauseam by British politicians and the bourgeois media - that the IRA has no popular support. The 30,000 people who voted for Bobby Sands have now proved once and for all that this is a lie.**

The result of the election accordingly left the British government utterly dismayed. The significance of the result can be gauged from the desperate efforts which were made by the British government and its allies to prevent it. Not only did the British government refuse to allow Bobby Sands access to the media to put his views to the electorate (despite the fact that television interviews had been given by the former hunger-strikers Brendan Hughes and Raymond McCartney) but the election workers for Bobby Sands were continually harassed by the RUC and UDR. At the same time loyalist politicians were joined by leaders of the SDLP in urging the nationalist voters of Fermanagh and South Tyrone not to vote for Bobby Sands. The final desperate intervention - on the very day of the election itself - was made by Don Concannon, the Labour Party spokesperson on the North of Ireland. As a Minister in the Northern Ireland Office from 1976 to 1979 Concannon played a full part in implementing the British govern-

ment's criminalisation policy and it was no doubt the prospect of seeing the final destruction of this policy which led him to make his unprecedented intervention, arrogantly telling the voters of Fermanagh and South Tyrone that they had 'a unique opportunity to denounce the men of violence'.

In the event, of course, the electorate did indeed denounce the 'men of violence' - those like Concannon who are responsible not only for the H-Blocks but for the whole apparatus of torture and repression by which Britain maintains its hold on the North of Ireland. With Bobby Sands' election, therefore, and in the full glare of world publicity, the central plank in the British government's criminalisation policy was finally and irrevocably shattered. Even more than before the continuation of this policy can now only be seen for what it is - a cruel and vindictive refusal by the British government to admit defeat.