

SPECIAL BRANCH

Special Report

SUBJECT

Reference to Papers

Socialist Workers Party

400/78/26

when the edit said this was...  
 ...day of week... 1978  
 ...

1. The following information has been received from a reliable source:-  
 2. "On Friday, 3 March 1978, between 7.30 pm and 9.30 pm, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1, the Socialist Workers Party held a public meeting entitled 'Prisoners of War - political status for Irish prisoners'. About 80 persons were present in the large hall and the meeting was chaired by Jim KILLY of Provisional Sinn Fein.

3. There were four speakers on the platform and KILLY allowed them to speak for about 10 minutes each before opening the meeting to contributions from the floor. The first speaker on the platform was 'Eileen', a mother from the Turf Lodge area of Belfast who has a son in the special 'H' block of Long Kesh prison. She gave a long description of the conditions in the block (summarised on the back of the attached Socialist Worker leaflet).

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4. After this very emotional speech, Ken LIVINGSTONE, prospective Labour Party parliamentary candidate for Hampstead, gave a brief talk, in a more restrained and calm manner, on the history of Britain's 'imperialist role' in Ireland. He proclaimed that it was time Britain left the Irish to sort out their own problems, particularly since the UK had already been forced to give up virtually all other colonies and territorial interests in the years since the Second World War.

[Redacted]

5. Jackie KAYE of the Prisoners Aid Committee then delivered the most controversial speech of the evening. She made scathing attacks on all the left-wing groups in this country for their attitude towards the Irish situation. She started by criticising Amnesty International for not taking up the question of the serious deprivation of rights for Irish political prisoners, both in Ireland and Britain, and for the prisoners that had been inflicted on them. At this point she turned to her

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... KAYE for 'telling lies to the audience'. However, she refused to withdraw her remarks and stormed out of the meeting. KAYE then turned her attack on the Peace and Movement. She said that there had been too many splits within that movement and that they had been too busy fighting amongst themselves to do any good work on the 'troops out' issue. She mentioned that the latter were now pushing for an 'International Tribunal' which nobody wanted and which had come far too late, since the British Government had already been found guilty of... by the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Finally, she criticised the Socialist Workers Party for its total non-

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TO [Redacted]  
 27 MAR 1978  
 P.A. IN

BOX 500

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SPECIAL BRANCH

involvement in the Irish problem. She said that the SWP made no interventions unless they gained from it themselves, a factor which had been amply illustrated in their refusal to publish the epitaph to the late Noel JENKINSON, because the sentiments expressed in it did not coincide completely with SWP doctrine. She concluded that the only way to help Irish prisoners achieve political status was to lend wholehearted support to the Prisoners Aid Committee, which she claimed looked upon the prisoners as 'prisoners of war' in need of help and had no concern for their political persuasions.

6. 'Moira', another mother from the Turf Lodge area of Belfast, was next to add a few emotional words. She was followed by Jim HILLI, who sought support for the Prisoners Aid Committee and exhorted those present to buy 'Republican News', this being the only paper, in his view, which carried the full truth of the situation in 'H' block at Long Kesh.

7. Before the meeting was brought to a close, the undermentioned persons made contributions from the floor (apart from putting forward their own sectarian viewpoints, little of interest was said):

- Privacy (Socialist Workers Party)
- Privacy (Socialist Workers Party)
- Privacy (Sinn Fein and TUCAFTA)
- Privacy (Revolutionary Communist Group)
- Privacy (United Troops Out Movement)

8. References:-

Persons identified as being presents:

Privacy

Jackie IATE RF 405 Privacy

Privacy

Jim HILLI Post: 1/v RF 335

Privacy

Ken LIVINGSTONE

Poss.i/w

Privacy

Organisations mentioned:

Amnesty International	400/72/25
Prisoners Aid Committee	400/74/61
Provisional Sinn Fein	335/78/46
Sinn Fein	335/77/24
Revolutionary Communist Group	400/75/14
Troops Out Movement	400/77/68
United Troops Out Movement	400/77/12
Trade Union Committee Against the Pre- vention of Terrorism Act(TUCAFTA)	400/76/37

9. Noel JENKINSON is the subject of RF 40

Chief Inspector

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
 CHIEF SUPERVISOR

# Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

WHERE WE STAND ON IRELAND

We recognise that:

1. The whole of Ireland is dominated by British imperialism. It is centuries of British interference, and the continued presence, that has divided the Irish working class in both the North and South.
2. That Northern Ireland is an artificial creation of the British ruling class. The roots of the present conflict lie in the artificial and undemocratic partition of Ireland in 1921. It was created against the wishes of the majority of Irish people, and has been martyred ever since.
3. That religious sectarianism is an intrinsic part of the Northern Ireland set up. The whole statelet is based on discrimination against the Catholic minority. It is unreformable, any attempt to do so will threaten the very existence of the statelet.
4. That the Irish people have the right to fight back against the British presence in any way they see fit.
5. That the blame for the violence and continuing troubles belongs not to Irish republicans, but to the British ruling class who have exploited and oppressed Ireland for centuries.
6. That the two ongoing progressive struggles, the class struggle and the struggle for national liberation, are inextricably linked. As long as the national question remains unresolved the Irish working class will remain divided, North and South, Protestant and Catholic, and incapable of successfully waging the class struggle. However, at the present development of international capitalism, it is only the Irish working class that can solve the National question. A revolutionary socialist workers party must be built which will link the day to day economic struggles, especially in the South, to the resistance in the North.

We argue:

1. For the immediate withdrawal of all British troops.
2. That Ireland will never be free, even once the troops have gone, as long as it is dominated economically and politically by the British ruling class.
3. That the Irish people have a right to determine their own future from British guns.
4. For unconditional support to all those fighting British imperialism in Ireland, even if we don't like all their methods. We maintain the right to criticise the methods used while giving unconditional support.
5. For the return of political status for all Republican and socialist prisoners of war. For the transfer of prisoners from English jails to Ireland.
6. For the ending of all repressive legislation such as the Emergency Powers Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
7. For an independent United Socialist 32 county Ireland as the only solution to Ireland's British problem.

**JOIN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

Name .....  
Address .....  
Trade union .....  
Please send me more information

Send to: Socialist Workers Party, 15 Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

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The British government withdrew political status from Irish prisoners after 1st. of March 1976. After this date people suspected of 'terrorist type' offences were to be tried in front of no jury courts as common criminals. This was all part of the British governments policy of branding those fighting against the British presence as gangsters. The compound system used in Long Kesh was to be phased out and replaced by isolated cells. Prisoners would be forced to wear prison clothing and co-operate with prison routine. In other words the prisoners, a symbol of the resistance to British rule, were to be forced to admit that their actions had not been politically motivated, just criminal.

The first prisoner to be denied political status was Kieran Nugent. He insisted that he was a political prisoner and refused to wear prison clothes. He has since been joined by over 250 other prisoners. The penalty for non-co-operation is severe. Most of the prisoners are held in the special H Block of Long Kesh. They are held in solitary confinement for 24 hours a day, and having refused prison clothes are kept naked except for a blanket. During the day their beds are removed, leaving only a chair in their unheated cells. They are deprived of all privileges, receive no parcels or letters denied reading material, and not allowed their right to a monthly visit. They also lose their chance of gaining remission on their sentences. Republicans have been locked away by no jury courts because of the role they have played in the fight against the British presence in Ireland. It is this presence which is the root cause of the present 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. As long as Britain remains in Ireland there will be no peace. It is up to us as British Trade Unionists and socialists to force the British government to withdraw from Ireland so that the Irish people can decide their own future free from British guns. It is up to us to put an end to the conditions that drive ordinary Irish men and women to resort to acts of violence in retaliation for centuries of British violence. Then it is up to us to expose the real culprits. We must recognise that the Irish people have a right to fight back against the British army of occupation, and defend them in that fight. We might not like the methods they choose to retaliate with but have no right to criticise them while we do nothing to end their suffering and exploitation.

Karl Marx once wrote, 'That a nation that enslaves another can never itself be free! These words are still true today. As long as British capital oppresses and exploits Irish workers it will continue to exploit British workers. While Irish political prisoners languish in British jails Britains name will be as notorious as the names of Chile and South Africa. The Republican prisoners have by their gallant resistance continued to be part of the struggle to end the British presence in Ireland. They deserve the support of every socialist and Trade Unionist.