THE BRIGADE IS GETTING ANGRY – AGAIN!

ALMOST TEN YEARS have passed since the political situation in the UK called for the type of direct action as practised by the Angry Brigade. The wheel has turned full circle and we are obliged, once again, to prepare to defend ourselves against the provocations of a virulently anti-working class state and its multi-national manipulators, such as the Steering Committee of the Bilderberg Group and the Trilateral Commission.

SINC THE THATCHER GOVERNMENT came to power, we have seen a rapid increase in the power of the repressive organs of the state, with a correspondingly obsessive and paranoid emphasis on perfecting its machinery for ‘counter-subversion’ and ‘law and order’, political euphemisms for the control and elimination of all real, potential, and imaginary dissenters. The increased expenditure on police, prisons and army, the constant surveillance of trade unionists, harassment of investigative journalists, whistleblowers, environmental, ecological and community activists, the extended deployment of the SAS in Northern Ireland with their assassinations of outspoken socialists such as Miriam Daly and, probably, Noel Little and Ronnie Bunting, the overt terrorising and intimidation of anyone remotely connected with the struggle in Northern Ireland, the emphasis on population control in police training and the increased number of armed police patrolling the streets of Britain, the new picket laws, etc. all these things indicate that the consensus in British politics is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

IN THE PAST TEN YEARS we have operated mainly in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and North America, and have acquired new skills, expertise, personnel, and access to information sources. The more recent actions of Action Directe indicate the strategy and tactics we should employ. As before, there will be no ‘mindless terror’, no deaths, no hijackings, no hostage-taking of innocent bystanders. We have nothing in common with the tactics of the Red Army Fraction, Red Brigades, PLO, or any other authoritarian group committed to a struggle for power or control of the state at the expense of the man and woman in the street. The social revolution will not be built on the corpses of the old rulers or their functionaries; it can only be built by people taking control of their own lives, asserting their independence, their rejection of the state, of power politics, of authoritarian lifestyles and the competitive values of consumerism forced on us from birth to death.

THE GROWTH IN STATE SECURITY is necessitated by the political and economic policies of the Thatcher government and its supporters. They know only too well that the economic situation is unlikely to improve without a reversal of their policies. This, in turn, is going to lead to large-scale social unrest. There are no workable economic remedies available to them within the monetarist ideology with which they are obsessed. Unemployment will rise steeply, inflation will worsen, more factories and businesses will close down or go bankrupt, apathy and tension will pervade social relationships, the trade union leadership will be unable to restrain the rank-and-file. people will get angrier and more frustrated, and stronger and more desperate forms of control will have to be imposed as the system starts to fail, go hopelessly out of control, and finally collapse all together.

WHY NOW AND NOT BEFORE? The late sixties and seventies saw a similar period of strident anti-working class hysteria and legislation which led up to the infamous and unsuccessful attempt to control organized labour through the Industrial Relations Bill. This led to the downfall of the Heath government. Having failed to break the labour movement through the courts, the Tories have now turned to a more oblique approach: a deliberate policy of mass unemployment! No doubt the Thatcher clique will be strengthened in their resolve with the election of Reagan, and begin to intensify their policies with each concession made to them.

WE ARE NO VANGUARD, nor do we claim to lead or represent anyone other than ourselves in our resistance to the arrogance of the present government and the misery, frustration and despair created by its selfish and inhuman policies. It is simply that we as individuals are approaching the limits of our tolerance. We see ourselves as an expression of the anger, resistance and hope created by the impending failure of this rapidly polarizing society.

IN THE Past TEN YEARS we have operated mainly in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and North America, and have acquired new skills, expertise, personnel, and access to information sources. The more recent actions of Action Directe indicate the strategy and tactic we should employ. As before, there will be no ‘mindless terror’, no deaths, no hijackings, no hostage-taking of innocent bystanders. We have nothing in common with the tactics of the Red Army Fraction, Red Brigades, PLO, or any other authoritarian group committed to a struggle for power or control of the state at the expense of the man and woman in the street. The social revolution will not be built on the corpses of the old rulers or their functionaries; it can only be built by people taking control of their own lives, asserting their independence, their rejection of the state, of power politics, of authoritarian lifestyles and the competitive values of consumerism forced on us from birth to death.

In fighting these evils we also have positive aspirations. We wish for a self-managed society as the only possible basis on which we can build a more just, equitable and libertarian world for ourselves and our children. The increased power of the state, the aggressive confrontation policies of the Thatcher government, the breakdown of free collective bargaining and consensus in everyday life, the ever-increasing estrangement of people from the decision-making processes, etc. indicate only one course of action. We must reject and resist this inexorable erosion of our humanity and hopes with whatever means are available to us.

WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT - DO YOU?
Organ of the Anarchist Black Cross

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WHICH WAY BLACK FLAG?
Should we revert to the tabloid style, as Black Flag used to be, or continue with the present large style? A few readers have expressed different opinions. There is in fact no difference in content or size; it is easier to send the present way, but on the whole easier to lay out the old way. What do you think?

We hope to have a report of the trial of the Scottish Republicans in our next issue. This has been a gross miscarriage of justice not reported fully in the press. As part of the nature of the trial, in itself a second-rate touring run of Persons Unknown, we may quote the words of the Procurator that the accused possessed: "a copy of the notorious Anarchist Cookbook, otherwise known as the Citizens Militia".

The 1980 Socialist Book Fair at the end of November, as usual in Camden Town Hall, London, showed a bigger anarchist presence than ever (testimony to the non-partisan approach of Bookmarks, the organisers). Cienfuegos Press/Black Flag again had a stall and there were also Freedom Press, and Box Morell (distributor for many American libertarian publishing houses) and a number of anarchist titles — of varying quality — shown by commercial publishers. After paying the £6 stand and giving full discount to the organisers, we broke even as regards bookselling profit (6 f. 9 d. per copy) but lost £34.50 on and around Black Flag — the Procurator that the accused possessed: "a copy of the notorious Anarchist Cookbook, otherwise known as the Citizens Militia".

Unfortunately many of our older titles and all of our new titles were not available at the Fair (for one reason or another). We missed particularly 'The Struggle to be Human', of which copies did not arrive; and 'The Christie File', somewhere on the Atlantic, or we would have had a runaway success; but the new catalogue, when it came, was impressive. Thanks to all who helped.

New Reality Komix is a new magasan outlet for anarchistic art . . .

What do journalists know about the Spanish Civil War? They failed to report it correctly at the time. They have learned nothing since. Perhaps there are some who think Orwell was a general and that the International Brigade made a decisive intervention. Listening to that interesting and colourful BBC Scotland TV interview with Stuart Christie, I heard them say that the "Christie story" began in Spain. Flashback to the civil war, when he was about minus twelve, and we were told that General Franco, who commanded the Loyalist forces, was everything that anarchists hate . . . but he defeated them.

This is the way it might well be told in Madrid, but for the record, the late General was not only an anarchist hate, he was a general who sold out on his country: so far from commanding the Loyalists, he was a rebel. His followers were called rebels — this was later softened by sycophants to "nationalists" — a word which the press now uses to describe all opposition to him and the successor regime. We have on video cassette tape the three BBC TV features on and around Black Flag — the Persons Unknown case.

Christie interview in Current Affairs, and the longer Angry Brigade case. Truth to tell, Black Flag comes out of it a lot more stable than it really is (at several points it is actually referred to as a fortnightly, when we have as a matter of fact a struggle to get it out monthly). But they do point out what counts in Black Flag.

In the Scotsman (December 18th) there is a half-page interview with — guess who? The "foreign subsidy" bogey actually comes into it (journalists love that one, it stems from the way they live) — Christie "denies out-right" there is any, "yet there is no doubting that the quality of production of Cienfuegos's many titles do not indicate a financial crisis". What a pity publishing is not like the old music hall days — then they could tell us we had a financial crisis by the tatty scenery, the outdated dresses, or the number of the chorus girls!

But don’t let’s knock them too much. It’s hard for them to shake off lessons of years and be objective in speaking of non-establishment politics.

REMEMBER BLOODY SUNDAY
DEMONSTRATE 1.30 SUNDAY
JAN 25
FITZALAN ROAD CARDIFF

Buses leaving at 9.00 am from Kilburn Sq. and Kings Cross.

JANUARY 30th 1972. 20,000 Irish people marched in Derry for civil rights. The British Army opened fire and killed fourteen.

SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE TROOPS OUT NOW

anarchist quiz

1. For what eminently practical reason did British sailors once take crucifixes upon their backs?
2. What highly topical military rebellion took place in Burford (Oxfordshire) 300 years ago?
3. Alfonso XIII of Spain had a favourite sport, which stood him in good stead when the Republic came in 1931; but what did he forget?
4. In which London public library is there a prominent portrait of a lifelong anarchist?
5. Of which emperor it was written that "he killed nobody, robbed nobody and deprived nobody of his country - which is more than can be said for most fellows in his trade"?
6. General Saturnino Cedillo was said to be a Mexican bandit who kept the line from San Luis Potosí to Tampico blocked for six years. When President Obregon sent to ask him what he wanted, what was his surprisingly libertarian (if hardly revolutionary) answer?

Answers on Page 12.
On December 12th police forcibly evicted a squat, arresting seven people, in a heavily squatted area. A crowd gathered and rioting broke out. It was reinforced as sympathetic broadcasters on Berlin's two local radio stations gave more or less a running commentary, with attracted support from left wing bars and other parts of the city. Street barricades were erected and defended against police counter-attacks. One barricade was smashed by police driving through it and crushing a guy's leg in the process. The rioting lasted eleven hours. Banks and shops were attacked, sixty-six police were injured, and seventy-five people arrested. The following day (13th) a spontaneous demonstration, in response to the police brutality and arrests as such as the attack on the squatters, took over the centre of the town. Since it wasn't an "official" registered demonstration the police were not expecting it and traffic was brought to a standstill and banks and department stores on Berlin's main street were attacked and looted. The police surrounded the area, and with difficulty, and after some hours fighting broke things up.

Monday 13th

The following Monday (15th) another demonstration had been called outside a church in the centre of town. 3-4000 people turned out but were prevented from forming up - any large groupings were baton-charged. Over a hundred people were injured - one person blinded, many left with broken bones. The police refused to let the injured out of the sealed off areas and had instructed hospitals to take details of those injured so that many were afraid to use them. The Kreuzberg area was totally sealed off using armoured cars and water cannon and open season declared on anyone on the streets. Sporadic incidents followed all night and many more arrests were made. Many of those arrested were badly beaten up. At the moment twenty-several of those arrested have still been refused bail and put in indefinite detention "pending investigations".

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**HAIGHT—ASHBURY**

The surge of "mindless thugs" vandalism in the Haight-Ashbury prompted the Chamber of Commerce to offer rewards yesterday under its Secret Witness program.

"We're not going to let our San Francisco merchants be ripped off," said Mel Wall, the chamber's vice president for special projects.

He said $200 will be paid for each vandal arrested and convicted. The number to call is 956-TIPS.

Since mid June there have been 22 store windows broken, most of them in the 1400 and 1500 blocks of Haight Street, said Police Inspector George Bodrov.

Damage is in the thousands of dollars, because many windows cost $500 to $700, he said.

Bodrov blisted a group of anarchists who call themselves the "Mindless Thugs Association of the Haight-Ashbury".

Bodrov said merchants have been verbally intimidated, and have had bricks thrown through their windows wrapped in fliers with such messages as, "You are tolerated only inasmuch as you provide a genuine service for the Haight community. Street people are part of the community."

Bodrov said store owners are so afraid of retaliation that they are unwilling to come forward to identify the vandals.

The Haight-Ashbury Merchants Association and other business groups have offered a $300 reward to try to catch vandals who have been breaking windows, knocking down fences and spray-painting graffiti.

This prompted a sarcastic response by the "mindless thugs" who circulated a flier saying, "Put an end to $300 rewards. Reward yourself by helping to arrest and eliminate the proliferation of authoritarian and capitalist relationships..."

So far the only person to be arrested for malicious mischief, Bodrov said, was Gary M. Crethers, 26, who has pleaded innocent to charges he threw a brick through a window of the Haight Street Deli on June 18.

Calling himself an anarchist but not a Marxist, Crethers said there are growing squatter-tenant street people and minority groups at the commercialization of the neighborhood.

S.F. CHRONICLE

Black Flag Page 3
As early as 1975, only three years after Smalls had sided with the police and the offices of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the crown would boast that at least twelve major criminals had supergrassed some one hundred and fifty accomplices. The advent of the supergrass was due primarily, as Assistant Scotland Yard Commander, Front Commissar, to the high sentences which were a frequent premium for armed robbery. (The normal sentence for straightforward armed robbery was two life sentences.) Graydon claims that in some cases the simple possession of marijuana was put out to grass, but it also avoided the other central issue, that those most likely to become supergrass and earn their statutory five years maximum sentence were those very people who had instigated and committed the most serious crimes.

During the supergrass boom of 1978 and 1979, Scotland Yard representatives indulged in a good deal of posturing about the gentlemanly agreements between detectives and supergrass; in order for the police and the DPP to succeed in prosecutions, the police officers and the offices of the Director of Public Prosecutions. A word was spoken publicly about the manner and style of custody utilised for long periods by the police, while at the same time during this period of the supergrass the crown would boast that at least twelve major criminals had supergrassed some one hundred and fifty accomplices.

By 1978, bizarre but explicable stories had begun to circulate in the Daily Mirror. The story of Charlie Lowe, who, while waiting to give evidence, was escorted by detectives the criminal world about the jet set life of various informers, men and received five years after admitting to one hundred and twenty two years. The possiblity of doing ten or more years inside is obviously making men think hard about their behaviour if they should be caught. The Sunday Times article (June 6th 1975) which quotes John Wilson, made the fact that in this kind of circumstance at least, it could be seen that long sentences did deter the criminal. This argument though, was meant only for home consumption to an audience which was also aware of the undertakings if the police. Not only did not the apparent solution of the supergrass not deal with the rub of the problem; that the crime had happened in the first place, Wilson was put out to grass, but it also avoided the other central issue, that those most likely to become supergrass and earn their statutory five years maximum sentence were those very people who had instigated and committed the most serious crimes.

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'Towards a Citizens' Militia' has stirred up a lively controversy: not since 1940 has the general subject been aired, and the climate has changed a lot since then. The furious reactions of the gang of would-be betrayers has already been commented on in Black Flag: they can always be remembered that times of military defeat may be times of setback in terms of national ideas, but they are also times of opportunity in terms of politics. The seizing of initiative from politicians is something that they naturally regard with apprehension, however. It is no coincidence that excess of patriotism produces the most national traitors.

In France in 1940 it was not the fascists who had knocked heads in the streets, and had their heads knocked in, either, who came to power. Neither Pétain nor Laval were fascists, in the true sense of the word. Laval was a 3rd-rank arch-patriot, respected by all nationalists (which in France meant nearly everybody), and Laval was Centre-PP and an opportunist. Looking from the vantage point of history, we can see why Winston Churchill MP, Ian of "terror", yet the patriot, respected by all of history, we can see why.

The left, on the whole, while talking about revolution, sees it as an end in itself. It can't be done perfectly legally (as, by coincidence, the Spanish revolution, since the fascists were in rebellion against the government) or in a position where nobody is willing to stand by other than anyone else (as in Russia 1917), then at least let it be a moral stand that way, so that it legalises itself automatically. But things don't necessarily work out that way. The left has to take action against the oppressors, and then the option of terrorism. It is because of the issues are clear-cut in this way, that the left, in Northern Ireland that the booklet viewed from such a viewpoint looks unrealistic. Most of the population is going about its daily business in the normal way -- subject to annoying body checks in the centre of the city and exposure to indiscriminate bombing or shelling. The right talk about uprooting trees and dislodging cars to do with urban guerrillas not at all in this context.

In order to establish a dictatorship -- either in Spain or anywhere else, it can only rule that way or because an internal group has failed. National methods are needed.

The population cannot go about its business in the normal way: if it were allowed to do so, it might by industrial action bring chaos. It would be the only way to standstill and prevent the coup. What must be done by the dictators are spectacular actions, massacre, and being the most obvious. The Nazis did not fill up trains with Jews, who were out of malice: they did it to impress the rest of the population into subervience, and the Spanish falangists - who were faced with the problem of wiping out revolution, went to the factories and shot one in ten; or rounded people on the streets and for years filled railways with prisoners - travelling from one jail to another - for precisely the same reason: to impress the population and dominate, such terror tactics have to be countered by more spectacular actions than can be, or need, to be seen, in anything other than a dictatorship. Occupation over the years, even accompanied by police repulsion, does not amount to a dictatorship: nor does it evoke the same repercussions which amount to those of war.

This is why those with Army training can recognise elements of basic survival skill in theConn that those with experience of Ireland find themselves, on this issue, as sceptical as those who have military experience at all.
ACTION-DIRECTE

There has been speculation as to whether Action Directe is now, to all intents and purposes, following the arrest of Jean Marc Rouillan and Nathalie Menigon in Paris, at 62 Rue Pergolesi. The couple responded at first to have been caught in a neat trap by the police of the Renseignements Généraux but closer examination, however, suggests that they may not have been the real targets. The Renseignements Généraux branch does not normally effect arrests, this being left to other branches. One of the arresting officers described the pair as merely suspects under observation and went on to add: "If we were able to say whether they were members of Action Directe we would have sent for the anti-terrorist brigade who would be better equipped than we are for this type of operation'. Rouillan and Menigon were taken to police HQ. Spotting the tail they escaped and made for their parachute. Rouillan captured, but Menigon managed to elude them and fired sixteen shots at them before she too disappeared. All sixteen were passed harmlessly through the leg of one police officer's trousers. The couple, after abandoning their car made for No. 62 Rue Pergolesi. By some odd coincidence a number of Renseignements General were inside waiting for them.

Under questioning the pair accepted responsibility for the attacks claimed by Action Directe. However both he and Menigon were moving around being so central to Action Directe activities, there is now some doubt as to their ability to survive his capture. However both he and Menigon were carrying phone ID cards - part of a hoard stolen by an armed gang from a Paris district mayor's offices. Both, however, deny having participated in that raid. How many Action Directe members are still at large?

The spate of arrests of alleged members of Action Directe, has done much to remove the embarrassment the Renseignements Généraux were caused when it was discovered recently that it had been infiltrated by the Corsican separatists of the FLNC and the neo-Hazis of FANE. The R.G. have even hinted that they managed to plant a man in Action Directe and win the confidence of the man pretended as the moving spirit of the group, Jean Marc Rouillan. This would explain some of the curiousities surrounding the capture of Rouillan and Nathalie Menigon. Soon afterwards a warrant Louessard and Maria Arago-Eltur were arrested in connection with offences claimed by Action Directe. According to the R.G. themselves, Rouillan refused to talk but Menigon and Arago-Eltur did.

There was a further sensational development in the campaign against Action Directe when police swooped on a commune-farm at Trynas in the rugged countryside of the Ardèche. There in under-ground concrete buildings, they discovered no less than 1,250 kilos of explosives, plus eight assault rifles with ammunition. The explosives were part of a two-ton load stolen in the 1976 raid on a roadbuilding project.

The discovery of Trynas was followed by the arrests of Maite Merliou, Jean-Pierre Bolognini and Bruno Dariber, residents on the farm. Philippe Marc was picked up at Hauteville-sur-Mer. The men in the cell and the seizure of the arms and explosives has made the making of a press sensation involving 'Terror International' and one of the 'stas' of modern French crime, the mysterious Pierre Conty.

CONTY

In March 1980 600 kilos of explosives stolen in the same batch as two 1,250 recovered recently, were discovered in a Paris flat belonging to Olga Girotto, allegedly a member of the Italian guerrilla group Prima Linea. Police speculate that the 600 kilos were moved to the capital by Rouillan, Louessard and Philippe Marc. There is also talk of liaison with ETA through Arago-Eltur and Louessard. Maite Merliou is a former (?) girlfriend of Pierre Conty who vanished while police were hunting for him in 1977. There are now a half a day. Was Conty the mysterious mastermind behind Action Directe and Prima Linea and ETA-military?

Who is (was?) Conty? Known as the 'killer of the Ardèche', Conty was a 'leader' of the group in the Ardèche. With two companions he carried a hold-up in Villeport in 1977. There was mix-up with the getaway and Conty and Stephane Viaux-Peyro were scurried away as best they could. A policeman, Dany Luezac, was murdered. Later, two farmers, father and son Cyprien and Roland Malosse, were also killed and their car seized. That was on 25th August 1977.

Vial's police force was was undermined by the anti-terrorist squad in Groningen (Holland). Jean-Philippe Mouillot, the getaway driver, was also captured. On 21st May 1980 the former was sentenced to eighteen years in prison, although only five years. Conty, who was never caught was sentenced to death in his absence. What became of Conty is a mystery. No proof exists that he is dead. "His girlfriend with her children, stayed on the commune. Now she is said to have been Conty who built the bunker where the cache was hidden. Locals speak darkly of his still being "...out there, but in hiding". Was the bunker his hiding place? Conty seems to have sent sensational reports of the Mt. Big of European terrorism...Action Directe, Prima Linea and ETA-military. Some locals, however, believe that he is dead "...and not of natural causes".

Outcome of the trial of alleged 2nd June members on charges of: (1) membership of a terrorist group (2) killing of the chairmain of the Merlin CGD, Peter Lorenz (3) assault on an arsenal in Berlin (4) two bank robberies.

Sentences were Ralf Reinders and Till Meyer, 15 years each. Gerald Klopper, 11 years 2 months. Ronald Fritsch, 13 years, 3 months. Andrea Vogel, 10 years. Fritz Teufel, 5 years. (Having been already in custody that long Teufel is now free). At the trial Teufel, known as the 'Politclown' of the extraparliamentary opposition, dismantled the prosecution case and exposed the sham that the trials have become... He announced..."I have an alibi for the Lorenz kidnapping, for the murder of Judge Dreimann and an alibi for the attack on the arsenal." Teufel held all this in reserve until near the end of the trial. He explained: "To show at last the real face of terrorism... That was my aim and I have achieved a great opportunity to expose the methods of State Security and the courts. Where urban guerrilla activity is concerned they invent proof if none exists and make do (and this is the rule, not the exception) with vague innuendo and circumstantial evidence to condemn anyone who is unable to prove his innocence and is unwilling to dissociate himself from the actions criticised."

GARI CASE—POSTSCRIPT

When the MI1 was smashed in Spain in 1973, a number of actions were carried out in solidarity with them. These were claimed by the GARI (Autonomous Intervention Group). After the execution of Puig Antich this group evolved into GARI. (Internationalist Revolutionary Action Group). GARI claimed around 20 bombings and hold-ups against Francoist targets. They kidnapped Angel Baltasar Suarez for 3 weeks before releasing him unharmed on payment of a ransom by his employers, the Bank of Bilbao. Only once did any GARI action cause an injury. On 28th July 1974 a bomb placed on the roof of the Spanish consulate in Toulouse exploded while being defused. Twelve people were injured - three firemen, seven police and three others. GARI sent a crate of champagne and a note of regret to the fire-station. Earlier, in August 1974, GARI's members met in Italy where they decided to dissolve the group.

ARRESTS

On 29th July 1974 Pierre Roger was arrested in Toulouse and charged with membership of GARI. On 4th September 1974 Victor Manrique, Jean-Michel Martinez, Mario Ines Tarroz and Michel Cavallieri were arrested too. After police picked up Floreal Cusadro, Raymond Delgado and Jean-Marc Rouillan in Paris in a car carrying explosives on 3rd December 1974 they concluded that GARI was thus no more. The accused were referred to the Court of State Security - a sure answer to any of political nature of the offences. On 27th December 1974, seven of those charged went on hunger strike for recognition as political offenders. On the 43rd day of the strike their demands were granted "...on humanitarian grounds". After a few months, Manrique, Cusadro, Martinez and Roger were freed. One and a half years after the arrests the Court of State Security declared itself incompetent to try the case which was referred to the Paris court. On 6th June 1979, the latter referred the case to the Assize Courts. In the meantime, the remaining GARI suspects had been released in June 1977. In July 1977, Jean Marc Rouillan, it is alleged, has since joined 'Action Directe' and is wanted for questions in connection with the machine-gunning of the Ministry of Co-operation and the Ministry of Labour and Participation. Therefore, it is now ten accused who will face the Court d'Assizes and try to explain, in criminal proceedings, the political nature of the offences...an explanation that the jury cannot take note of in that type of court.

JUNE 2nd: EXPOSE

All because the hostages love...

Black Flag Page 6
There is a possibility that the current conflict between Iran and the USA may have drastic consequences. Hence it is especially important that a serious attempt be made to understand what issues are at stake and why they are being handled in an intelligent manner.

When human lives are involved it is not enough that such issues should arise, especially when "national prestige" is allegedly threatened.

It is worthwhile recording other incidents which led to popular hysteria being inflamed. For example, the alleged North Vietnamese attack on the US torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964, which the US government exploited as a means of whipping up popular support for its massive assault on Vietnam. Only years later it was discovered that if the attack did in fact take place, it was most likely a response to US shelling rather than an action that the government had been keeping covert.
The widespread readiness to swallow such attacks as evidence of the chauvinistic hysteria had horrendous consequences which we need not examine here. However, many such instances offer us.

**Media**

A propos of the Iranian crisis, the media have lent anything but sterling service to the public at large. It is a matter of common knowledge that none of the attacks carried by the media as a liberal reformer who could not quite get his noble intentions over to his backward colleagues. In fact, the only public demonstration was an outraged letter to the editor for the Shah and the US government.

The Shah was destroyed by a massive popular upheaval in which virtually all sectors of Iranian society (a society which lost 20,000 dead in its confrontation with one of the mightiest armies in the world) were participants. The Shah's destruction of the media was a sign of the regime of which they had hitherto been a part. The media had become a means of holding the population hostage to the changes it seeks to make in the foundation of the system. In Vietnam, too, the economic collapse virtually destroyed by the USA, which refuses to pay any sort of compensation to the Vietnamese for the war, Vietnam, and even refuses to normalise relations whilst the USA does not.

The US have successfully driven Vietnam into alliance with the Soviet Union, an alliance which it probably does not desire. In June 1977 the USA Senate decided to issue instructions to US representatives to block proposals of additional agencies should offer aid to Vietnam. Senators voted in favour of the US contribution to the World Bank by 20 million dollars, precisely the amount of the US share of the funds involved in the scheme involving Vietnam. Further in one year, the Bank's director, Robert McNamara has gone so far as to cancel loans to Vietnam, alleging cynically that Vietnam's projects were not beneficial to it people. The USA's policy of imposing suffering and death upon societies brought to ruin by US violence is aimed at achieving the goals frustrated by the resistance that proved successful. Such instances in which an entire nation is held hostage, costing death and suffering on a massive scale, are particularly grotesque in that the USA is effectively responsible for the distress and devastation faced by Indochina today. Furthermore the instances we have examined in this article show that there is no way out.

Another surprising case is that of East Timor, invaded by Indonesia in 1975 and since then subject to unbelievable atrocities, with the blessing of the USA, which has been supplying the weaponry and diplomatic assistance needed by the Indonesians whilst the media have covered up the butchery. Deplorable it may be, but it can be shown how the US media tend to ignore the atrocities of which their own State is the perpetrator.

Indonesia's foreign minister recently admitted that the position in East Timor may be worse than that of Biafra or Cambodia, and the few remaining observers whom Indonesia has admitted to speak in the same opinion. The same Indonesian spokesman, a year ago, asserted that Indonesia would admit aid for East Timor, but only if the entries listing the assistance increased Indonesian sovereignty over the territory. For well over four years even the International Red Cross was denied access to Timor by the Indonesian invaders. In short, the present position of the hostage whilst ten of thousands have perished and all in an effort to extract the intelligence which is the results of the Indonesian aggression. The USA continues to back Indonesia in its monstrous aggression.

**Manipulated**

To sum up: the USA indignantly opposes the defence measures of the weak, and the few instances of a small number of hostages, but she herself employs and tacitly approves the much more grievable defence measures of the mighty, such as the holding of hostage of entire nations and the causing in fact of the mass murders, whilst in the zone threatening to cause) an enormous amount of suffering and death. This should not surprise us, the USA is not the only nation to act thus nor are the USA the only media that cover up crucial facts and even events such as those which we have mentioned. But reflection upon real historical practices reveals the spectacle of a highly moralistic indignation is the ultimate in cynicism.

This article is too brief to permit us to reflect the true nature of the current situation in Iran and elsewhere; but they do suggest guidelines that Americans may wish to follow when reflecting on how best they should react to events which are currently taking place. Whatever the outcome, substantial efforts will be made to win support for the policy of intervention and subversion throughout the world. Over the past few decades, US citizens should think carefully about the media which are having their emotions manipulated and how their perception of events is being deformed. The results could be extremely serious for us and for many others in a world that is daily more troubled.

Black Flag Page 7

**Chomsky: Iran: U.S. Imperialism**

How can we say on the matter of the hostages. From the international law, the taking of hostages is reprehensible. But when judged according to standard Western practice, the issue is somewhat more complicated. The United States is consistent in its objections to the hostages in small groups. But the US is equally consistent in approving the practice of holding hostage whole nations under the direct threat (actually not a threat, a fact) of hunger and death on a large scale. Long minutes to report that hundreds of thousands are threatened by starvation in an impoverished country where the agricultural system was destroyed by US violence. However, the USA refuses to allocate more than the usual drop of aid, holding the population hostage to the changes it seeks to make in the foundation of the system. In Vietnam, too, the economic collapse virtually destroyed by the USA, which refuses to pay any sort of compensation to the Vietnamese for the war, Vietnam, and even refuses to normalise relations whilst the USA does not.

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This article is too brief to permit us to reflect the true nature of the current situation in Iran and elsewhere; but they do suggest guidelines that Americans may wish to follow when reflecting on how best they should react to events which are currently taking place. Whatever the outcome, substantial efforts will be made to win support for the policy of intervention and subversion throughout the world. Over the past few decades, US citizens should think carefully about the media which are having their emotions manipulated and how their perception of events is being deformed. The results could be extremely serious for us and for many others in a world that is daily more troubled.
During the war German airmen committed the most terrible crimes against civilians - British airmen did the same thing over there. It was generally accepted that this was a cross we had to bear, though the control by the civilian population over whether there should or should not be war and least of all how it was to be conducted, was nil. When airmen crashed, the population did not rush to lynch them. It was more likely that after bombing Coventry, London or Liverpool, they would be offered a cup of tea.

Was this invariable? No, sometimes people did jeer at captured POWs (usually soldiers rather than airmen). It was considered bad form by most. Those who did it could generally expect a tongue-lashing from someone or other. In fact, people who did nothing at all in the war came off worse than those who committed crimes - there were far more incidents of German civilians being ill-treated (though more generally in the first world war than the second) than of POWs - and certainly not air bombers. This was a touch of civilisation in war in England, which was far from universal.

But in the Irish dimension today it does not exist. Why?

No Irish Republican - nor all put together - ever caused as great an atrocity as a single air bomber on a one-off mission. But there is so great an antagonism to them that the government can afford to sit back and watch prisoners starve themselves to death covered in their own excrement. Is it that they are volunteers and not conscripts? But so, generally speaking, were airmen, even in Germany, and they were the ones who came off best. Did people admire those who took their lives into their own hands even though detesting the cause for which they were fighting? The same goes for the IRA and not even a hardline Unionist would say the cause they represent is equally detestable.

The prisoners in H-Block are demanding the right to wear their own clothes; the right to refrain from prison work; the right to free association amongst other political prisoners; the right to organise their own educational and recreational facilities and receive one visit, letter and parcel a week, and the right to full remission of sentences.

Demands

These are scarcely revolutionary demands. They amount to a demand to be treated as POWs. We do not ourselves accept the idea of political prisoners (it invariably means worse treatment than for others, and opens the way for further political sentences). But in practice H.M. Government does accept the idea of political prisoners. After every prison riot we hear of "political and Irish" prisoners; every Governor can say how many "IRA prisoners" he has; convicts are asked "if they object to mixing with IRA prisoners" or how they feel about them. All that is in question is simply how such prisoners should be treated; and while we have no great faith in prison reforms - believing in the abolition of prisons almost all the demands made could easily be granted. Granted by Governors to ease the pressure within our overcrowded prisons, and only refuted by the government because they are pandering to public opinion (as manufactured by the media) which is hostile to the prisoners.

Faced with the fact that they do have Irish political prisoners, whether they regard them as "British convicts" or not, the government has to make up its mind how it is going to proceed. It could proceed by giving these demands to all prisoners. The right to wear their own clothes is a demand granted in a great many countries. The right to work at something other than prison is nothing new. In Spain, even under fascism, they worked on a system of private enterprise capitalism in