

FREE CITIZEN

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TROOPS BATTER FALLS

Five people died in the Lower Falls this weekend. Hundreds were injured, and over 300 people have been arrested. Why? Was this just another instance of the British Army stepping in to "Keep the peace"? That is the explanation the Unionist Press would like us to accept. But it becomes impossible to believe when it is recalled that the British Army were not called in to prevent the people from attacking a Protestant area. They chose the time and place of the disturbance, and they did so because they were themselves engaged in a full scale attack on the Lower Falls.

The attack escalated from an incident in Balkan Street, where arms were found in a house. Little would have come from this if it had not been for the over reaction of the British Army and their extraordinary eagerness to demonstrate "impartiality" by blanketing whole areas in foul C.S. gas.

The imposition of a curfew after the fighting, gave the authorities the chance they were waiting for to clear the area of all arms. The discovery of the arms has been greeted with pious horror by the "moderates" and with cynical surprise by the Unionist government who have been loudly applauded by the Paisleyites for their new imposition of "law and order"

What the "liberals" and the Unionist press forget so quickly is that less than a year ago the area came under armed attack from the state. B-Specials and the R.U.C. attacked the area, backed up by Paisleyites. Defences, except in the form of barricades and stones, were non-existent. Since then the people have quite sensibly prepared themselves for similar onslaughts. The history of the last 50 years has taught the

people of the Falls not to expect much else. The people have a complete right to defend themselves against attack - that right has now been taken from them.

The disarming of the Lower Falls leaves the area completely at the mercy of the British Army and the government which they serve. Successive Unionist Governments have always used the Falls as a "hostage" against unrest. They did it very successfully in the unemployed riots of the 1930's, when there was a possibility (danger in the eyes of the government) that Catholic and Protestant unemployed might unite against their Tory oppressors. The last thing any oppressive government wants to see is people preparing to defend themselves.

The British Army remained true to imperial traditions of attacks working-class and national movements, traditions which were fully lived up to in Aden and Malaya and which were given their best expression in the Falls this weekend.

For at the end of the day, the army stands for the continued exploitation of this country by imperialism - it stands to protect the big business-

SPECIAL POWERS 'Not ruled out'

It seems as if Stormont are preparing once again to re-activate the Special Powers Acts and intern people without trial. This destroys once and for all any pretence which may still exist that the "new reforming Unionist government" has changed its spots. It should also make it much clearer that the British government, whether Conservative or Labour, is no friend of the oppressed people of N.Ireland.

The Special Powers Acts which have been publicly admired by such well known fascists as the late and unlamented Dr Verwoerd of S. Africa, give the police unlimited power to arrest without warrant and jail without trial anyone they want to. People can die, even in police cells, and no inquest need be held. Internment in the past has been used against socialists and republicans and we can have no doubt that it will be used in the future to hinder and stop those who are attempting to oppose British exploitation in this country. Anyone with any interest in basic justice must oppose the re-introduction of internment and demand that the infamous SP Acts be repealed at once. All the other paper reforms are negated if people whose only 'crime' is holding and propounding views contrary to the wishes of those in power can be jailed indiscriminately.

P. D. MEETINGS
Every Thursday 8p. m.
34 Berry Street.
All welcome.

men, the international corporations whose wealth and power would be threatened by the creation of an Irish Worker's Republic. The solidarity and the fighting power which the people of the Falls have demonstrated strikes a warning note which those who oppress and exploit, North and South, cannot fail to ignore

LYNCH - Pathetic Appeal

In yet another of his ineffectual "gestures" Jack Lynch -- the 26-Co. premier -- appealed for an "impartial disarming of the civilian population in Belfast". The Taoiseach's statement said:-

"We hope that the elimination of arms from the present situation will be an impartial activity, and will be done in such a way as to ensure that circumstances such as occurred last August, in which a defenceless sector of the population was left open to attack, will not occur again."

What sort of foolery is this! What happened last week end was just such an "attack on a defenceless sector of the population." Compared to last weekend's events, August was child's play. Was the Lower Falls saturated with riot gas last August? How many houses were looted in the Lower Falls last August? At least there was freedom behind the barricades last August: this time 20,000 people were under house arrest.

Make no mistake about it, in the Lower Falls last week-end there took place the most serious attack that was ever launched against the Lower Falls. And what does Lynch mean by "impartial" disarming?

The Falls is now full of armed men - the British army. Any "impartial"

disarming must include the disarming of the agents of British Imperialism. How dare Lynch talk of "impartial" disarming of the civilian population, when what has happened is that the Falls area has now been flooded by the armed agents of British Imperialism.

In another part of his press statement, Lynch talks about "bringing pressure" on the British Government. What sort of pressure can Lynch exert, when his government are nothing more than the puppets of British Capital? While all the trouble goes on, Lynch continues to encourage economic co-operation with the Orange-Controlled junta in Stormont

The Northern economy is on its last legs; Northern capitalists desperately need markets wherever they can get them. They are dying for an economic link-up with the South. They call this "cross-border economic co-operation."

We say that Lynch ought to break off all cross-border co-operation with the Northern Government, until they break their link with the sectarian Orange Order, guarantee an end to sectarian demonstrations and recognise the right of civilians to defend themselves if attacked -- which is all that the people of the Lower Falls ever did or claimed to do.

INVESTIGATE LOOTING

The behaviour of many of the British troops during the enforced searches for arms in the Lower Falls over the weekend, and the tragic escalation which resulted in so many casualties must raise the question of whether anyone in the future can reasonably co-operate with the military. Unless they are prepared to hold an inquiry, and an impartial one at that, into the actions of some of the Royal Scots few will retain any faith in them. Even from the point of view of the soldier, it is surely in his interest that he isn't equated with some of the thieving thugs who conducted house to house searches.

IMPORTANT

Report all cases of military impropriety during the searches to one of the complaints centres set up in the area. All cases must be investigated;

McAteer Not Sure Whose Side Troops Are On

A minority "rightly or wrongly" believe that the troops have "gone completely over to the government side" says Eddie McAteer. Wake up Eddie -- the government employs the troops.

WOMEN DEFY CURFEW IN FALLS

Around 6 O'clock Sunday about 3,000 women defied the government ban and marched through the streets. They were protesting against the virtual internment of their menfolk and the brutal treatment handed out them by the agents of Imperialism. This was a magnificent symbol of resistance to the thousands of troops who are occupying the area. These courageous women marched defiantly chanting slogans such as 'Army out', and 'Looters out'. 'If you hate the British army, clap your hands' they shouted, whereupon 6,000 hands clapped simultaneously. They sang songs like 'We shall overcome' and traditional verses uncomplimentary to the armed forces of Imperialism.

As the women marched one could see that many soldiers were openly ashamed about the behaviour of some of their mates the night before, although some unrepentant looters at the corner of Slate St waved union jacks and even kicked and punched several women and children as they passed. Truckloads of RUC in full riot gear also menaced women but there was no repetition of previous disgraceful behaviour. The march ended in Leeson St beside the grim faced troops who stood beside the sandbagged emplacements and barbed wire barricades. The women then returned home peacefully as had those in the morning who had brought provisions to the beleaguered area.

TEAR-GAS RECIPE

Last week the Free Citizen published a useful formula which affords protection against C.S. gas. The blanket saturation of the Lower Falls area last week makes it necessary to repeat it.

Beat up 8 - 10 eggs with a glass of water. Add a tablespoon of baking soda. Mix into a thin space. Smear this over face, around the eyes nose and mouth.