STRONG HEARTS #3



Welcome to Strong Hearts #3 patient friends and fellow warriors! Spring and Summer has come and almost gone with little change or hope of it in my imprisonment. Of course, this just means you'll be enjoying a few more installments of this jailhouse 'zine before production is interrupted by that gathering light at the end of the tunnel, freedom!

As always I owe many thanks to the people who have written to express and offer their support but have yet to recieve a reply from me. Please accept my sincerest apologies, its not that I don't appreciate every letter, its just that now that I'm entering my second year of imprisonment I have developed a routine that allows me less time to do the things I really enjoy, like responding to your wonderful letters.

To those who thought I was only an animal liberator or an Earth First!er or indigenous traditionalist, let me explain. My love and devotion whether it be for free-roaming bison and wild horses, the Amazonian or Cascadian rainforests, or Yaqui, Mayan, Celtic and Incan descandant traditional peoples is all the same, one in the same. I am a lover of all things wild and free. And the struggles of anyone human or nonhuman to be free shall always recieve my total and unconditional support.

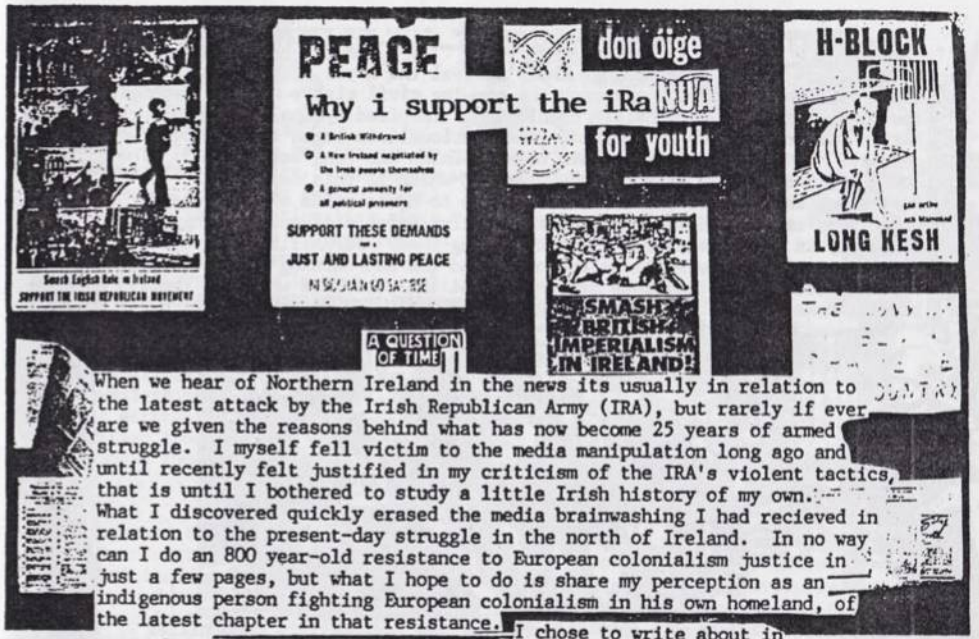
Though sometimes our struggles require action that others might consider violent, we must always remember that self-defense is a biological reaction found in almost every animal.

Recently I had the good fortune to read a book where a Latin American priest was quoted saying that violence had three seperate tiers. There was first, the violence of injustice, which brought about the second tier, the violence of self-defensive response, which in turn brought about the third and final tier, the institutional violence that we commonly see today in places like Mexico, Peru and Northern Ireland.

His point was that you cannot eliminate either the second or third tiers of violence without first removing the violence of injustice. If there is anything that I am committed to it's my opposition to this form of violence. Whether it be committed against humans or animals, the violence of injustice is the basic tool of our common oppressor who collectively across the earth is attempting to destroy all of us who desire to be free. Not free to choose once every four years one of two rich white males that will be our leaders, but freedom to pursue a way of life that recognizes the inherent worth of all life we share the planet with.

We're all in this together, and unless we can agree to afford eachother some basic human and nonhuman rights, I predict we're going to see alot more violence of all kinds. Goddess and Gods help us all. If you are reading Strong Hearts only for the animal liberation bits, cool.

But please try to read the other articles too. And no matter what you might think about the IRA, MRTA, EZLN or humans in general, try to keep an open mind and heart and remember we're all animals trying to survive the madness of our day. You need not support these struggles, but I hope with the help of Strong Hearts you'll at least understand them, and hopefully empathize with them. If we all could only do this with the oppressed of the world, oh what a happy place this would be! With that I leave you. Enjoy my friends and comrades, Our Day Will Come!



When we hear of Northern Ireland in the news its usually in relation to the latest attack by the Irish Republican Army (IRA), but rarely if ever are we given the reasons behind what has now become 25 years of armed struggle. I myself fell victim to the media manipulation long ago and until recently felt justified in my criticism of the IRA's violent tactics, that is until I bothered to study a little Irish history of my own. What I discovered quickly erased the media brainwashing I had recieved in relation to the present-day struggle in the north of Ireland. In no way can I do an 800 year-old resistance to European colonialism justice in just a few pages, but what I hope to do is share my perception as an indigenous person fighting European colonialism in his own homeland, of the latest chapter in that resistance. I chose to write about in particular, the IRA hunger-strikes of 1981 because as a prisoner held captive in one's own homeland for actions to defend her, I have a healthy amount of respect for prisoners of the same kind of war who were willing to give their lives for what they believed in. I also share the pain of anyone who has lost loved ones in the centuries-old resistance to a dominant power which has freely used legally sanctioned violence and terrorism to attempt to squash those who refuse to surrender their cultural identity and freedom.



When you begin to uncover the layer of lies that media and textbooks spread about the fight for Irish Independence, you begin to see a history of terrorism. But not one committed by the Irish Republican movement. You begin to see violations of basic human rights that we are more familiar with in Southeast Asia, China, Central or South America. In Northern Ireland the last 25 years have seen the British Government, especially its military operate with complete impunity as they ruthlessly attempt to maintain control in their oldest colony.

The crisis in Northern Ireland has almost nothing to do with religon. It is not the religous war between Catholics and Protestants that the media would have you believe. It is the story of those who are loyal to the British Crown (Loyalists) and in favor of Northern Ireland's continued union with Great Britain (Unionists), and those who are fighting for Ireland as it once was, one nation and one Republic, hence the label Nationalists and Republicans. The last 800 years have seen many a British invasion of the Emerald Isle which in turn were met with many a Irish rebellion.

But the greatest influence to Ireland's modern problems has been the result of British military troops stationed in the 6 counties that make up Northern Ireland since 1970.



Previous to their arrival the Royal Ulster Constablary (RUC) went on the rampage to crush the growing civil rights movement amongst the mostly Catholic nationalist population. Inspired by the actions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in America, Irish nationalists began to organize for adequate housing and voting rights both of which had long been denied. The RUC's actions in 1969 were brutal. The RUC which to this day is 99% Protestant and 100% Loyalist launched house to house raids of suspected organizers smashing down front doors arresting Irish citizens beating them viciously in the process and later torturing them. Paramilitary Loyalist gangs were given free reign to follow behind the RUC, burning out whole neighborhoods of nationalists and sniping at the residents who fled their burning homes.



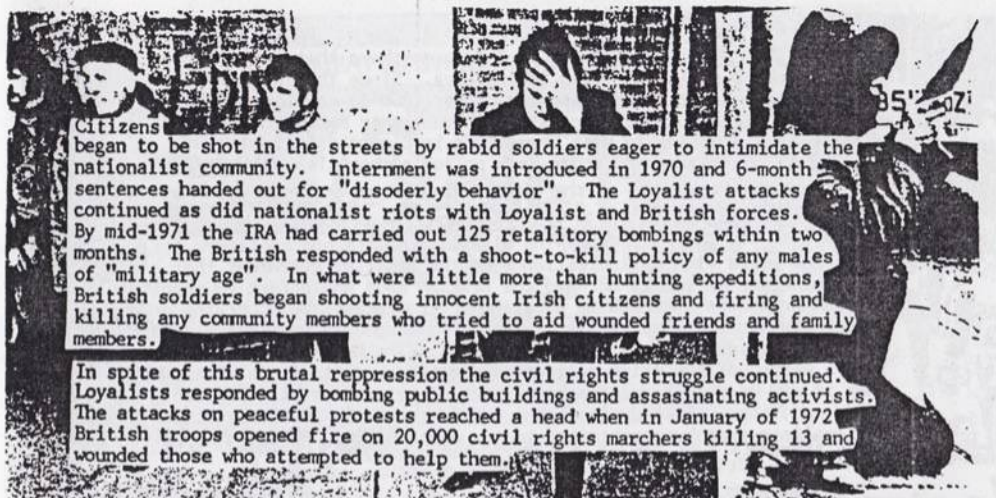
It was in this climate that the nationalists communities began to organize barricades to protect their families and working together, patrol against Loyalist attacks. Armed only with rocks, sticks and crude molotov cocktails, the nationalists communities battled the RUC and Loyalist gangs in the streets until the resulting riots led to the deployment of British troops. By the summer of 1970, the British forces rather than protect the nationalists population simply began to replace the RUC as guardians of Loyalist rule and dominance. Nationalists responded by raining bricks and bottles on British patrols who operated snatch squads that entered barricaded communities to arrest Irish rioters. In acts of pure bravery, nationalists would lure the British soldiers down dead-end roads and then seal them off with barbed-wire, nationalists would then rush out of their homes with hurling (an Irish sport) sticks and engage the soldiers in hand-to-hand combat.



The more abusive and repressive the British became, the more politicized and organized were the nationalist communities until women began patrols themselves, following British soldiers through neighborhoods verbally assaulting them for the violence they were committing against their families. In one Belfast neighborhood young people approached British soldiers and placed flowers in the barrels of their rifles. Still the Loyalists continued their attacks and firebombings of homes and churches.

British forces announced shoot-to-kill orders to be employed against rioting nationalists. It was in this climate of total urban chaos in the catholic neighborhoods of Northern Ireland that the Irish Republican Army that we know today re-emerged from their long slumber. With rusting and antique weapons IRA volunteers took up sentry duty, awaiting Loyalist incursions into nationalist neighborhoods where they made brave solitary stands against whole Loyalist mobs intent to burn them out of house and home. Many of these brave Irish warriors died protecting their friends and families.

The British responded with total military occupational tactics raiding homes in searches for arms and beating savagely whole families. Suspects were taken to military barracks where they were kicked, beaten and tortured.



Citizens began to be shot in the streets by rabid soldiers eager to intimidate the nationalist community. Internment was introduced in 1970 and 6-month sentences handed out for "disoderly behavior". The Loyalist attacks continued as did nationalist riots with Loyalist and British forces. By mid-1971 the IRA had carried out 125 retalitory bombings within two months. The British responded with a shoot-to-kill policy of any males of "military age". In what were little more than hunting expeditions, British soldiers began shooting innocent Irish citizens and firing and killing any community members who tried to aid wounded friends and family members.

In spite of this brutal reppression the civil rights struggle continued. Loyalists responded by bombing public buildings and assasinating activists. The attacks on peaceful protests reached a head when in January of 1972 British troops opened fire on 20,000 civil rights marchers killing 13 and wounded those who attempted to help them.

The following day the press reported that the IRA had launched an attack on the army post and that 5 "terrorist gunman" had been shot. All of this activity led to massive recruitment amongst the IRA. Where many residents had been previously opposed to armed struggle, many now saw it as the only means left to protect their families. Far from protecting Irish citizens, the British occupational forces had joined the RUC and Loyalist in waging a bloody war against the nationalist movement for civil rights and democracy.



By July British snipers were literally executing citizens in their own neighborhoods. In one attack, a 13 year-old girl was shot in one neighborhood while in another a priest and another man were shot and killed coming to the aid of teens who also had been shot by the same British snipers. A brave 15 year-old tried to reach the priest and other victims and was shot more than 7 times. The IRA arrived later on the scene and began to direct gunfire at the snipers positions while one survivor was evacuated.



By 1981 the situation in Northern Ireland had turned the 6 counties into a virtual war zone. Responding to the resiliant persistance of the Irish Republican Army who refused to surrender their homelands and communities to the imperialist rule of British invaders, the government had removed special catagory status for prisoners that had previously been recognized as political internees. Over 3,000 Irish citizens found themselves in British jails and prisons for opposing Britian's occupation in the north of Ireland. Meanwhile Loyalist paramilitary groups, many of whom were made up of off-duty RUC officers and British soldiers continued their campaigns of violence and intimidation.

It was in this atmosphere that IRA prisoners continued their resistance from behind bars. Since the suspension of political status for their prisoners of war (POW's) convicted IRA members had began "blanket protests" whereby they refused to wear prison uniforms opting to wrap themselves in blankets instead. This resulted in punishment and abuse from prison authorities which led to "no-wash" protests as the blanket protesters suffered from having washing privliges restricted.

The blanket protests had continued for over four years with no indication from the British government that a settlement was in sight, nor had the British made any effort to negotiate. The IRA prisoners intended to escalate their protests by embarking on hunger-strikes that had earlier in the 70's succeeded in winning the political status that was recently removed. The hunger strike had long been a weapon of the Irish nationalists dating back to feudal times when it was used to force the settlement of grievances with British lords and kings. It had also been used in the early 1900's by Irish nationalists that hunger-striked to the death.

ICTORY TO TH LANKETMEN

"One day the consciousness of the country will be electrified with a great sacrifice, and the multitude will break from lethargy or prejudice and march with a shout for freedom in a true, a brave and beautiful sense." Those words were spoken by Terence MacSwiney, Officer Commanding of a local IRA brigade who in 1920 was captured by British soldiers and jailed for sedition. With 60 colleagues he hunger-striked protesting that the British had no jurisdiction in Ireland. On his 74th day MacSwiney died in a British prison. Before his death he wrote, "A man who will be brave only in tramping with a legion will fail in courage if called to stand in the breach alone." In 1923 as many as 8,000 Irish republican prisoners hunger-striked for their release and against the partitioning of Ireland into its present state but suffered only 3 deaths. In 1946 Sean McCaughey, IRA Chief of Staff hunger-striked for political prisoner status and was allowed to die after only 22 days due to his thirst strike in the final days.



It wasn't until the 1970's with the increased reppression of the Irish independence movement that hunger-striking returned to Ireland. In June 1972 40 IRA prisoners striked for official prisoner of war status. After 37 days the British granted "special" status as part of a deal that also led to a short-lived cease-fire. The removal of this status in 1976 led to the blanket protests and hunger-strike of 1981. Along with the criminalization of the Irish republican struggle by Prime Minister Thatcher that began in 1976 also came a propaganda campaign that continues to ignore the brutal police and military reppression in Northern Ireland today.

In the early 1970's Irish republicans were interned in derelict World War II British Army bases. As the imprisoned of activists and IRA volunteers increased alongside their resistance, the British government responded by building a maximum-security prison that could be totally surronded and patrolled by the British Army.

STATEMENT AT START OF HUNGER STRIKE:



We, the Republican POWs in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, and our comrades in Armagh prison, are entitled to and hereby demand political status, and we reject today, as we have consistently rejected every day since September 14th, 1976, when the Blanket protest began, the British government's attempted criminalisation of ourselves and our struggle.

Five years ago this day, the British government declared that anyone arrested and convicted after March 1st, 1976, was to be treated as a criminal and no longer as a political prisoner. Five years later we are still able to declare that that criminalisation policy, which we have resisted and suffered, has failed.

If a British government experienced such a long and persistent resistance to a domestic policy in England, then that policy would almost certainly be changed. But not so in Ireland where its traditional racist attitude blinds its judgement to reason and persuasion.

Only the loud voice of the Irish people and world opinion can bring them to their senses and only a hunger strike, where lives are laid down as proof of the strength of our political convictions, can rally such opinion, and present the British with the problem that, far from criminalising the cause of Ireland, their intransigence is actually bringing popular attention to that cause.

We have asserted that we are political prisoners and everything about our country, our arrests, interrogations, trials and prison conditions show that we are politically motivated and not motivated by selfish reasons or for selfish ends. As further demonstration of our selflessness and the justness of our cause, a number of our comrades, beginning today with Bobby Sands, will hunger strike to the death unless the British government abandons its criminalisation policy and meets our demand for political status.



Irish prisoners in the H-Blocks (named after the shape of each cell-block) maintained a system of organization that recognized their military structure within the IRA. Officer Commanders were chosen by the outside IRA Army Council, and these prisoners ensured that grievances and demands of the POW's were heard. Morale amongst IRA prisoners was such that in republican H-Blocks lectures were organized on politics, Irish history, religon and the Irish language was taught. IRA prisoners also in a less formal atmosphere performed sing-along sessions, story-telling and poetry readings. The IRA though imprisoned, refused to be broken.

On February 5th, the commanding officer announced the beginning of a hunger-strike that would eventually end with the death of ten strikers. The demands of the hunger-strikers centered on political status that allowed them exemptions from wearing prison uniforms, forced labor and allowed freedom of association, improved mail and visits and the replacement of lost time-off their sentences as a result of the blanket protests.

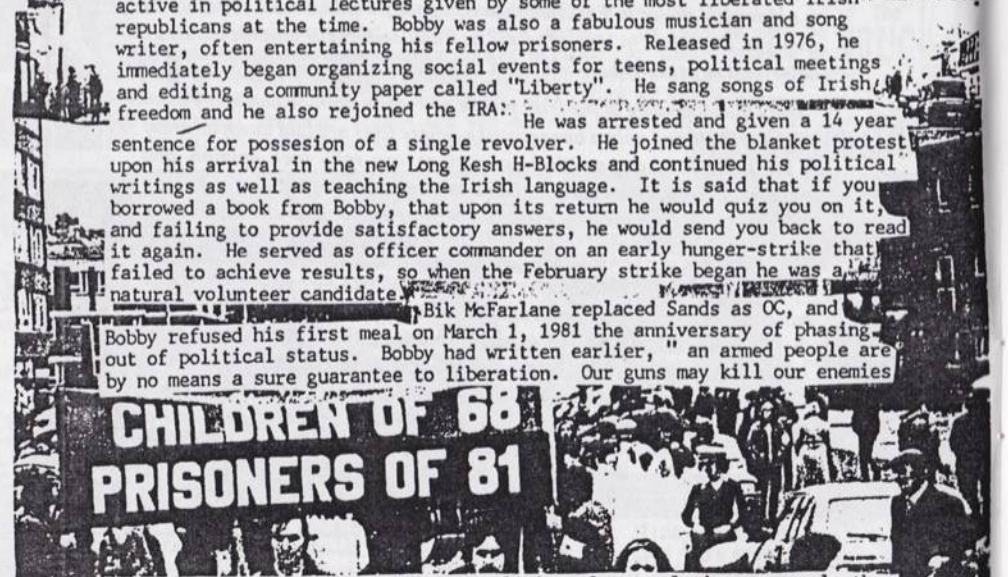


The first to begin the hunger-strike was a 27 year-old man by the name of Bobby Sands. For Sands the struggle against British occupation began in his teens as he watched his neighborhood go up in flames in the early 1970's and many friends and family members killed by British soldiers and Loyalists. Joining the IRA at 18, he was captured a month later and sentenced to 3 years in Long Kesh, the internment camp

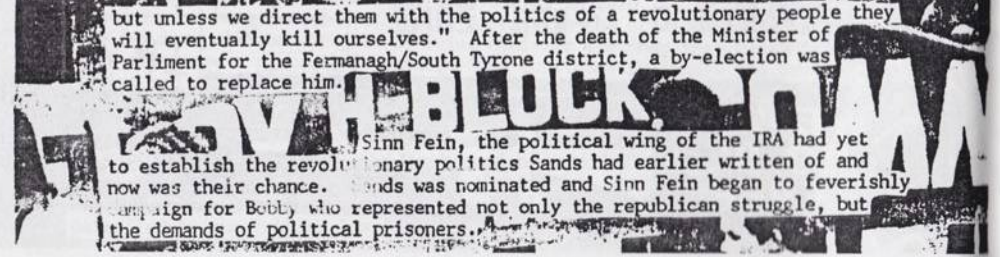
There he learned Irish and became very interested and active in political lectures given by some of the most liberated Irish republicans at the time. Bobby was also a fabulous musician and song writer, often entertaining his fellow prisoners. Released in 1976, he immediately began organizing social events for teens, political meetings and editing a community paper called "Liberty". He sang songs of Irish freedom and he also rejoined the IRA.

He was arrested and given a 14 year sentence for possesion of a single revolver. He joined the blanket protest upon his arrival in the new Long Kesh H-Blocks and continued his political writings as well as teaching the Irish language. It is said that if you borrowed a book from Bobby, that upon its return he would quiz you on it, and failing to provide satisfactory answers, he would send you back to read it again. He served as officer commander on an early hunger-strike that failed to achieve results, so when the February strike began he was a natural volunteer candidate.

Bik McFarlane replaced Sands as OC, and Bobby refused his first meal on March 1, 1981 the anniversary of phasing-out of political status. Bobby had written earlier, " an armed people are by no means a sure guarantee to liberation. Our guns may kill our enemies

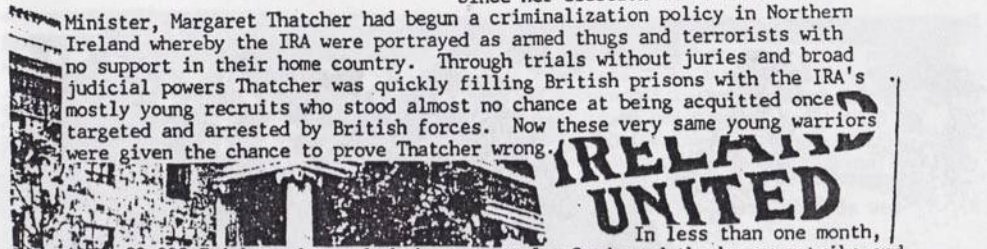


but unless we direct them with the politics of a revolutionary people they will eventually kill ourselves." After the death of the Minister of Parliment for the Fermanagh/South Tyrone district, a by-election was called to replace him.

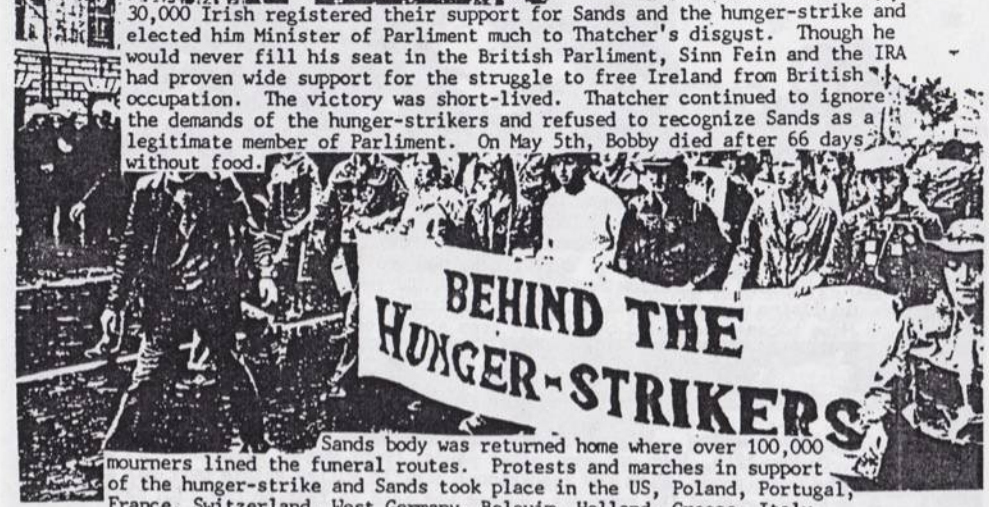


Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA had yet to establish the revolutionary politics Sands had earlier written of and now was their chance. Sands was nominated and Sinn Fein began to feverishly campaign for Bobby, who represented not only the republican struggle, but the demands of political prisoners.

Since her election to British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher had begun a criminalization policy in Northern Ireland whereby the IRA were portrayed as armed thugs and terrorists with no support in their home country. Through trials without juries and broad judicial powers Thatcher was quickly filling British prisons with the IRA's mostly young recruits who stood almost no chance at being acquitted once targeted and arrested by British forces. Now these very same young warriors were given the chance to prove Thatcher wrong.

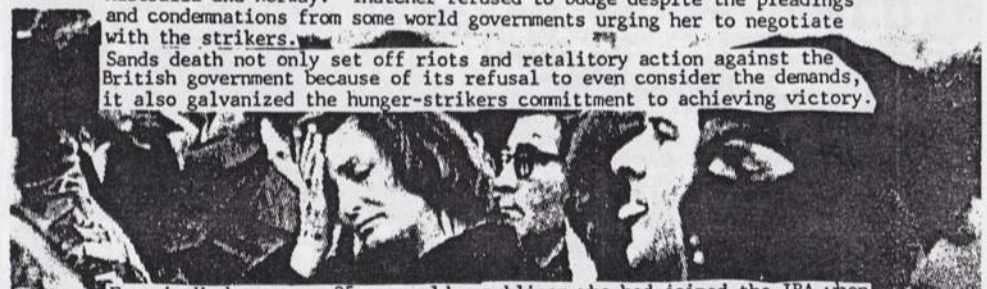


In less than one month, 30,000 Irish registered their support for Sands and the hunger-strike and elected him Minister of Parliment much to Thatcher's disgust. Though he would never fill his seat in the British Parliment, Sinn Fein and the IRA had proven wide support for the struggle to free Ireland from British occupation. The victory was short-lived. Thatcher continued to ignore the demands of the hunger-strikers and refused to recognize Sands as a legitimate member of Parliment. On May 5th, Bobby died after 66 days without food.

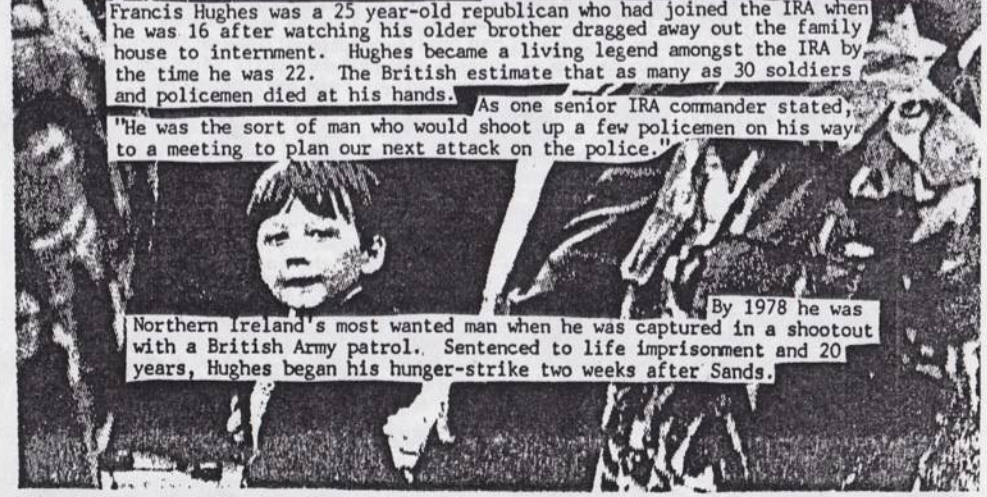


Sands body was returned home where over 100,000 mourners lined the funeral routes. Protests and marches in support of the hunger-strike and Sands took place in the US, Poland, Portugal, France, Switzerland, West Germany, Belguim, Holland, Greece, Italy, Australia and Norway. Thatcher refused to budge despite the pleadings and condemnations from some world governments urging her to negotiate with the strikers.

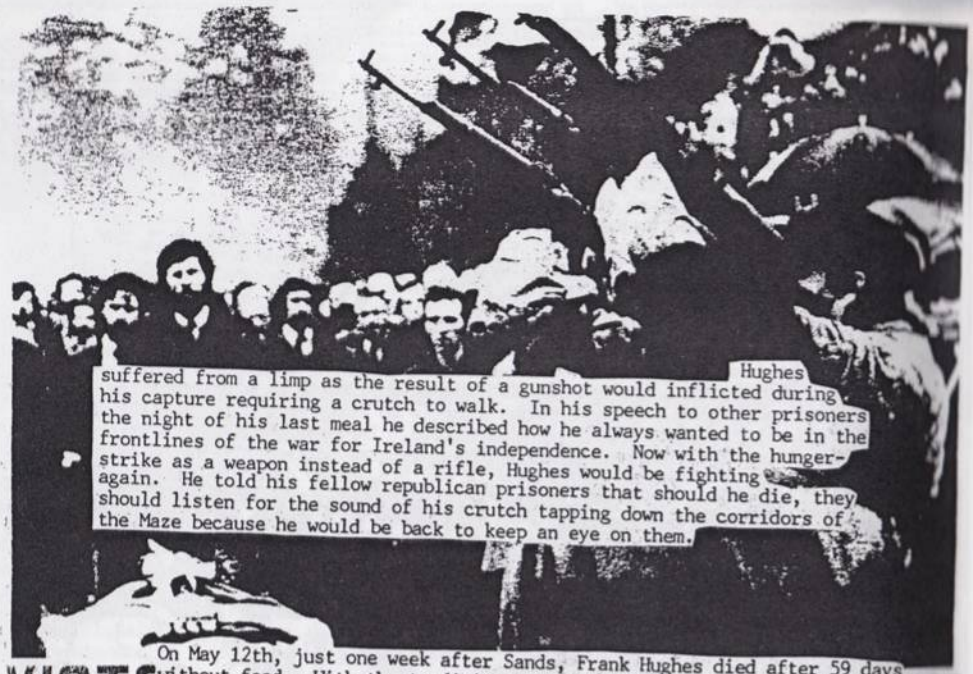
Sands death not only set off riots and retalitory action against the British government because of its refusal to even consider the demands, it also galvanized the hunger-strikers committment to achieving victory.



Francis Hughes was a 25 year-old republican who had joined the IRA when he was 16 after watching his older brother dragged away out the family house to internment. Hughes became a living legend amongst the IRA by the time he was 22. The British estimate that as many as 30 soldiers and policemen died at his hands. As one senior IRA commander stated, "He was the sort of man who would shoot up a few policemen on his way to a meeting to plan our next attack on the police."



By 1978 he was Northern Ireland's most wanted man when he was captured in a shootout with a British Army patrol. Sentenced to life imprisonment and 20 years, Hughes began his hunger-strike two weeks after Sands.



Hughes suffered from a limp as the result of a gunshot would inflicted during his capture requiring a crutch to walk. In his speech to other prisoners the night of his last meal he described how he always wanted to be in the frontlines of the war for Ireland's independence. Now with the hunger-strike as a weapon instead of a rifle, Hughes would be fighting again. He told his fellow republican prisoners that should he die, they should listen for the sound of his crutch tapping down the corridors of the Maze because he would be back to keep an eye on them.

On May 12th, just one week after Sands, Frank Hughes died after 59 days without food. With the traditional 3 rifle volley salute over his coffin by his masked IRA comrades, Hughes was laid to rest on May 15th having fought the struggle for Irish independence outside of prison and inside. Still no gesture of comprimise or negotiation came from the British government. On May 19th the IRA killed 5 British soldiers when their armoured troop carrier triggered a land mine on patrol.

Meanwhile on the streets of Belfast that May, 12 year-old Carol Anne Kelly was walking home from the store when 4 British Army landrovers roared down the road firing a plastic bullet which killed her.

Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara had been on hunger-strike for 8 weeks when Hughes died. Raymond joined the IRA when he was 17, he was captured 2 years later while on an operation to attack a British Army surveillence post. In 1977 at just 20 years old he was convicted of conspiracy and attempting to kill British soldiers, refusing always to recognize the occupational army's courts. Joining McCreesh on the hunger-strike, Patsy was just 15 when he was shot in the leg by a British patrol, he had joined Fianna Eireann (the youth wing of the IRA) two years previously. When he was 22 he was captured and sentenced to 8 years for possesion of a hand-grenade.

On their 61st day without food, both McCreesh and O'Hara died. Some of Raymonds last words to his mother were, "I'm sorry Mammy, we didn't win. Let the fight go on."

The British government responded by labeling the deaths as suicides and the media accused McCreesh's ever supportive mother of pressuring her son to continue the strike until his death.

There were still no signs of government willingness to negotiate. The hunger-strike's strategy was to pressure the British government into an embarassing situation in the media where their failure to negotiate a deal would be seen as callous and inhumane. Though the deaths of 4 hunger-strikers had ignited high emotion in the Irish and even parts of the international community, it failed to force the government to the table. Thatcher believed that any consideration of the prisoners demands was tatamount to negotiating with terrorists.



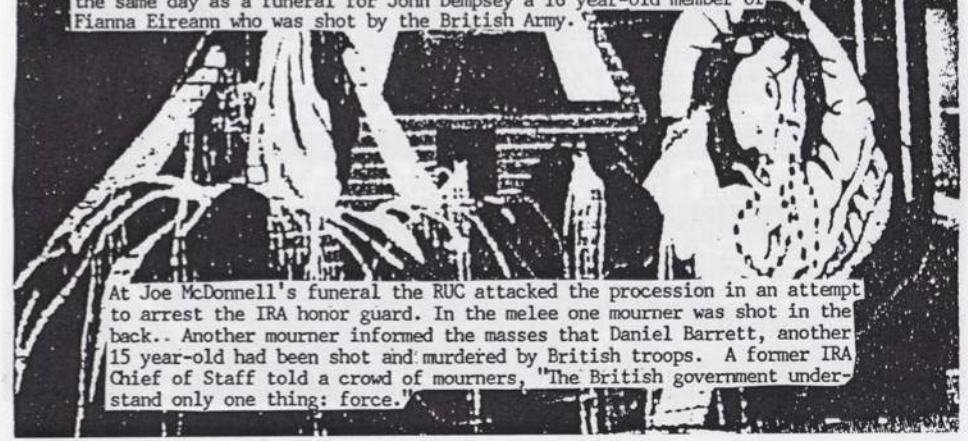
She blatantly reffered to the hunger-strikers as murderers, failing to recognize that the IRA was no different from their ancestors who for 800 years have fought against British colonialism with an equally defensive zeal. It was all a part of the criminalization policy which sought to remove the struggle in Northern Ireland in people's minds from a political and military occupation to an "anti-terrorism" campaign.

In Dublin, the capital of the free state, elections were called for June 11. Once again the republican community mustered their new found political savvy and ran 9 prisoners for office, 4 of them hunger-strikers. Running on the platform of supporting the republican prisoners 5 demands, two hunger-strikers, Kieran Doherty and Paddy Agnew were elected. A third, Joe McDonnell came within 300 votes of winning and was the sickest of the strikers. During this stage of the protests the British Foreign Office began secret negotiations with Sinn Fein on the condition that there be no public knowledge of them. But in the midst of negotiations the British pulled out and it was later learned that McDonnell had died on July 8th.

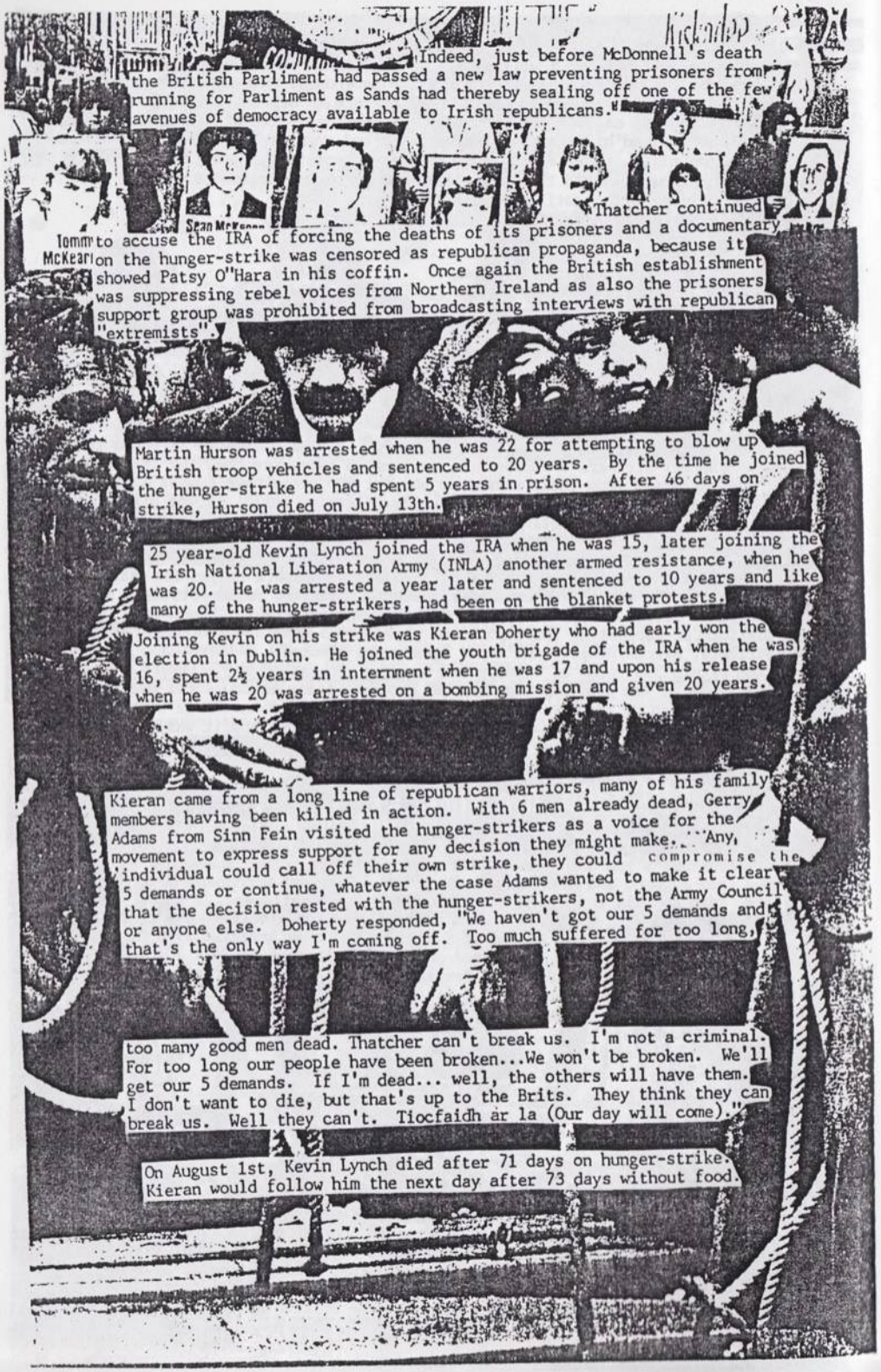
Blessed are those who hunger for Justice

Joe McDonnell's son had once drawn a picture of his father snatching the keys from a guard and opening all the cells. The text accompanying it said, "And now all the daddies are home with their children..."

Joe, the oldest of the strikers at 30 was a close friend of Sands who had been arrested with him and was buried next to his old friend and comrade-in-arms on July 10th, the same day as a funeral for John Dempsey a 16 year-old member of Fianna Eireann who was shot by the British Army.



At Joe McDonnell's funeral the RUC attacked the procession in an attempt to arrest the IRA honor guard. In the melee one mourner was shot in the back.. Another mourner informed the masses that Daniel Barrett, another 15 year-old had been shot and murdered by British troops. A former IRA Chief of Staff told a crowd of mourners, "The British government understand only one thing: force."



Indeed, just before McDonnell's death the British Parliment had passed a new law preventing prisoners from running for Parliment as Sands had thereby sealing off one of the few avenues of democracy available to Irish republicans.

Thatcher continued to accuse the IRA of forcing the deaths of its prisoners and a documentary on the hunger-strike was censored as republican propaganda, because it showed Patsy O'Hara in his coffin. Once again the British establishment was suppressing rebel voices from Northern Ireland as also the prisoners support group was prohibited from broadcasting interviews with republican "extremists".

Martin Hurson was arrested when he was 22 for attempting to blow up British troop vehicles and sentenced to 20 years. By the time he joined the hunger-strike he had spent 5 years in prison. After 46 days on strike, Hurson died on July 13th.

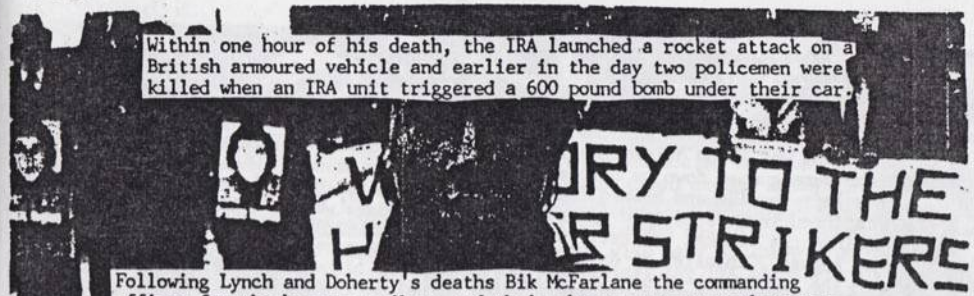
25 year-old Kevin Lynch joined the IRA when he was 15, later joining the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) another armed resistance, when he was 20. He was arrested a year later and sentenced to 10 years and like many of the hunger-strikers, had been on the blanket protests.

Joining Kevin on his strike was Kieran Doherty who had early won the election in Dublin. He joined the youth brigade of the IRA when he was 16, spent 2½ years in internment when he was 17 and upon his release when he was 20 was arrested on a bombing mission and given 20 years.

Kieran came from a long line of republican warriors, many of his family members having been killed in action. With 6 men already dead, Gerry Adams from Sinn Fein visited the hunger-strikers as a voice for the movement to express support for any decision they might make. "Any individual could call off their own strike, they could compromise the 5 demands or continue, whatever the case Adams wanted to make it clear that the decision rested with the hunger-strikers, not the Army Council or anyone else. Doherty responded, "We haven't got our 5 demands and that's the only way I'm coming off. Too much suffered for too long, too many good men dead. Thatcher can't break us. I'm not a criminal. For too long our people have been broken...We won't be broken. We'll get our 5 demands. If I'm dead... well, the others will have them. I don't want to die, but that's up to the Brits. They think they can break us. Well they can't. Tiocfaidh ar la (Our day will come)."

On August 1st, Kevin Lynch died after 71 days on hunger-strike. Kieran would follow him the next day after 73 days without food.

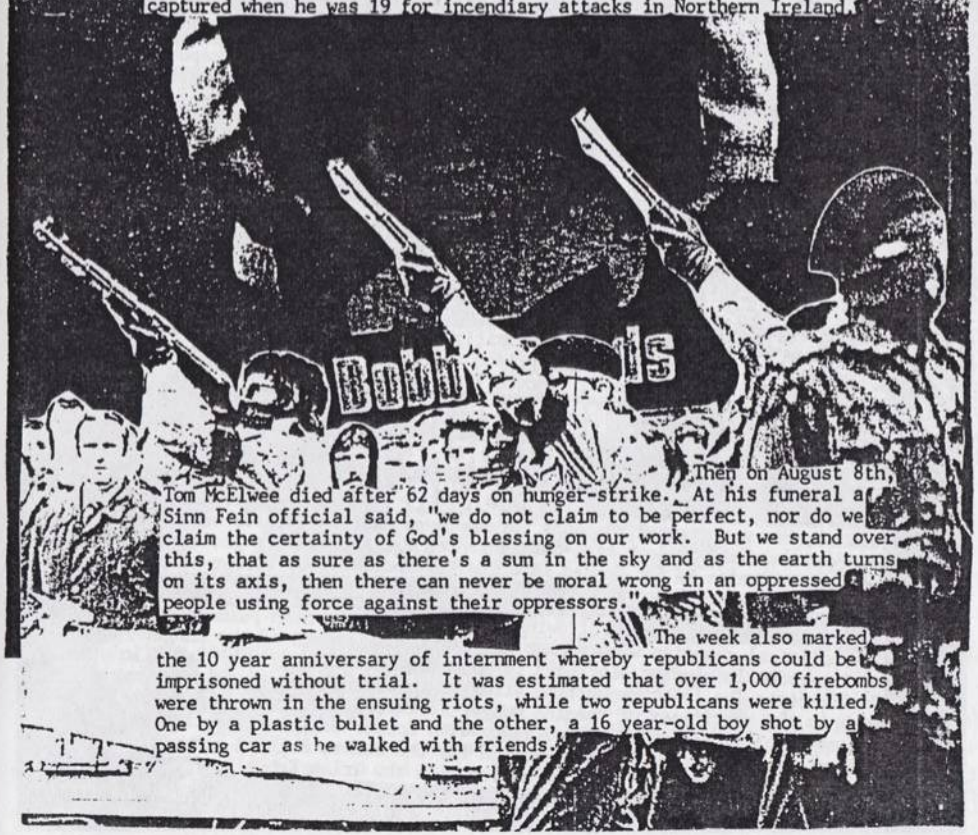
Within one hour of his death, the IRA launched a rocket attack on a British armoured vehicle and earlier in the day two policemen were killed when an IRA unit triggered a 600 pound bomb under their car.



Following Lynch and Doherty's deaths Bik McFarlane the commanding officer for the hunger-strikers and their chosen representative conducted a straw poll amongst the republican prisoners. 30% wanted to call a halt. 30% were not confident of winning, with the remaining 40% demanding no compromise. Police also released figures on the violence accompanying the hunger-strike; 51 dead, 10 policemen, 13 soldiers, over 1,000 injured and 1,700 arrested.

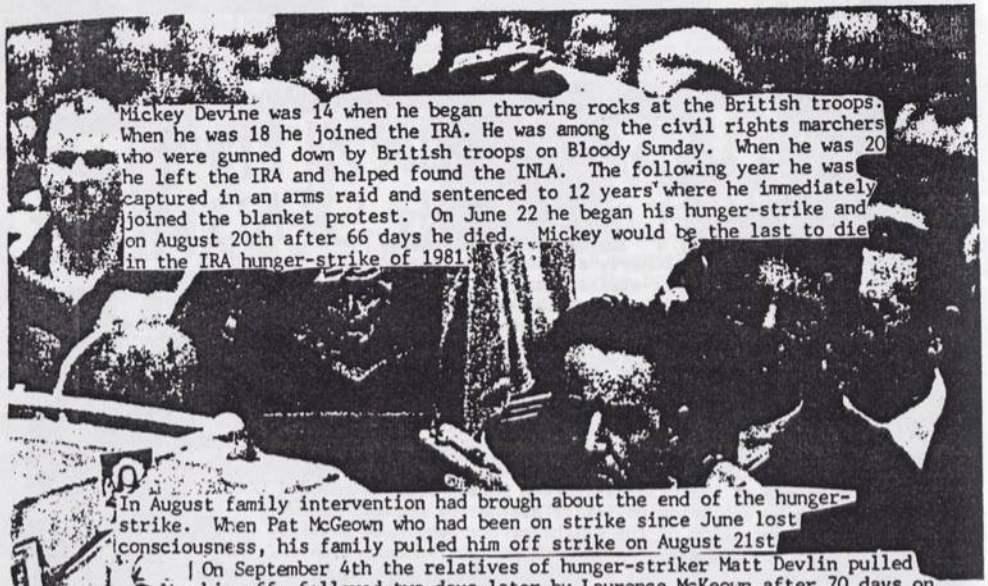
"I understand to the full extent with which my action involves the whole overall struggle for Ireland, freedom and self-determination. Because criminalization was introduced to break the freedom struggle. The weapon of the criminalization policy must be removed from the British by achieving political status for republican POW's. Thus would recognition of the plight of our people be obtained and support for the struggle at home and abroad consolidated. Victory is to be got. The Brit's stand can and will be broken. I am ready to give my life to help in its breaking. In a few months my body might be no more, but like Bobby, Francis, Patsy and Raymond I will not be dead. So long as one Irishman resists the occupation of our country and fights for the establishment of a democratic and socialist republic."

Those were the words of 23 year-old Tom McElwee captured when he was 19 for incendiary attacks in Northern Ireland.



Then on August 8th, Tom McElwee died after 62 days on hunger-strike. At his funeral a Sinn Fein official said, "we do not claim to be perfect, nor do we claim the certainty of God's blessing on our work. But we stand over this, that as sure as there's a sun in the sky and as the earth turns on its axis, then there can never be moral wrong in an oppressed people using force against their oppressors."

The week also marked the 10 year anniversary of internment whereby republicans could be imprisoned without trial. It was estimated that over 1,000 firebombs were thrown in the ensuing riots, while two republicans were killed. One by a plastic bullet and the other, a 16 year-old boy shot by a passing car as he walked with friends.



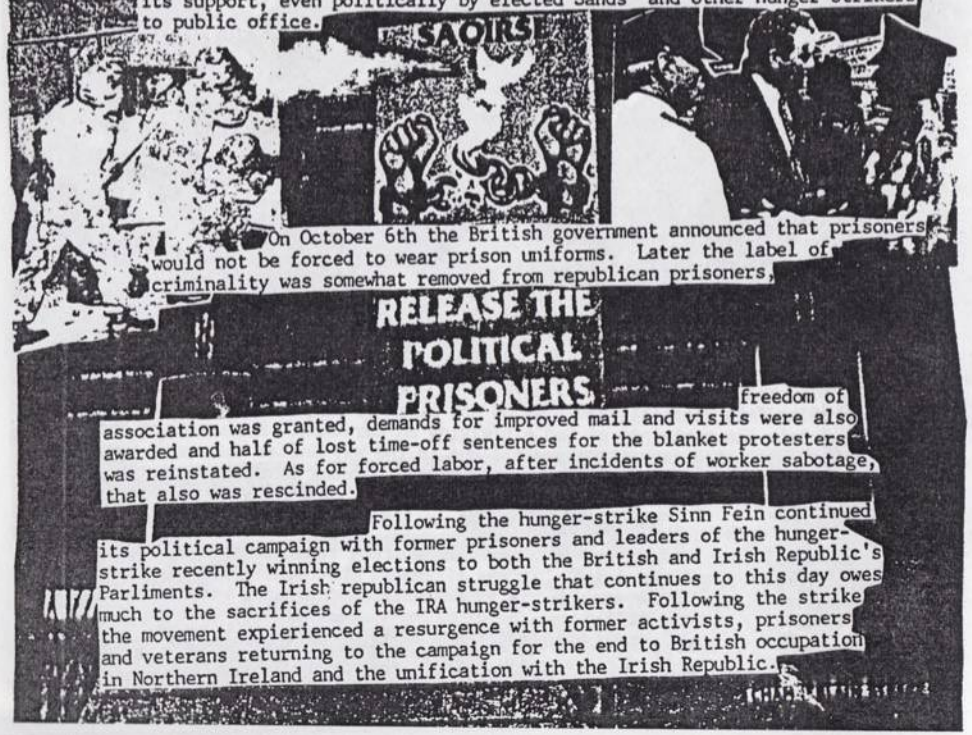
Mickey Devine was 14 when he began throwing rocks at the British troops. When he was 18 he joined the IRA. He was among the civil rights marchers who were gunned down by British troops on Bloody Sunday. When he was 20 he left the IRA and helped found the INLA. The following year he was captured in an arms raid and sentenced to 12 years' where he immediately joined the blanket protest. On June 22 he began his hunger-strike and on August 20th after 66 days he died. Mickey would be the last to die in the IRA hunger-strike of 1981.

In August family intervention had brough about the end of the hunger-strike. When Pat McGeown who had been on strike since June lost consciousness, his family pulled him off strike on August 21st.

On September 4th the relatives of hunger-striker Matt Devlin pulled him off, followed two days later by Laurence McKeown after 70 days on strike. By the beginning of October a Catholic priest's lobbying the hunger-strikers and their families to end the strike had contributed to the official ending on October 3rd. The clergy had also begun negotiations with a newly appointed British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who seemed eager to gain the credit politically for ending the hunger-strike.

Carol Ann Kelly, 12, was killed by a plastic bullet whilst returning home with a carton of milk in May 1981.

Far from being a failure, the hunger-strike gave the Irish republican movement international attention and allowed the struggle to prove its support, even politically by elected Sands and other hunger-strikers to public office.

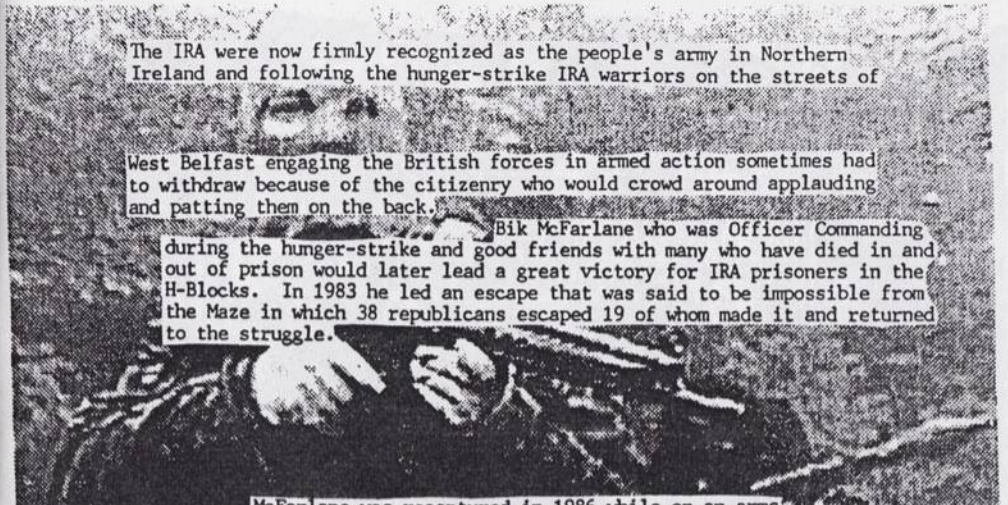


On October 6th the British government announced that prisoners would not be forced to wear prison uniforms. Later the label of criminality was somewhat removed from republican prisoners, freedom of association was granted, demands for improved mail and visits were also awarded and half of lost time-off sentences for the blanket protesters was reinstated. As for forced labor, after incidents of worker sabotage, that also was rescinded.

Following the hunger-strike Sinn Fein continued its political campaign with former prisoners and leaders of the hunger-strike recently winning elections to both the British and Irish Republic's Parliments. The Irish republican struggle that continues to this day owes much to the sacrifices of the IRA hunger-strikers. Following the strike the movement expierienced a resurgence with former activists, prisoners and veterans returning to the campaign for the end to British occupation in Northern Ireland and the unification with the Irish Republic.

The IRA were now firmly recognized as the people's army in Northern Ireland and following the hunger-strike IRA warriors on the streets of West Belfast engaging the British forces in armed action sometimes had to withdraw because of the citizenry who would crowd around applauding and patting them on the back.

Bik McFarlane who was Officer Commanding during the hunger-strike and good friends with many who have died in and out of prison would later lead a great victory for IRA prisoners in the H-Blocks. In 1983 he led an escape that was said to be impossible from the Maze in which 38 republicans escaped 19 of whom made it and returned to the struggle.



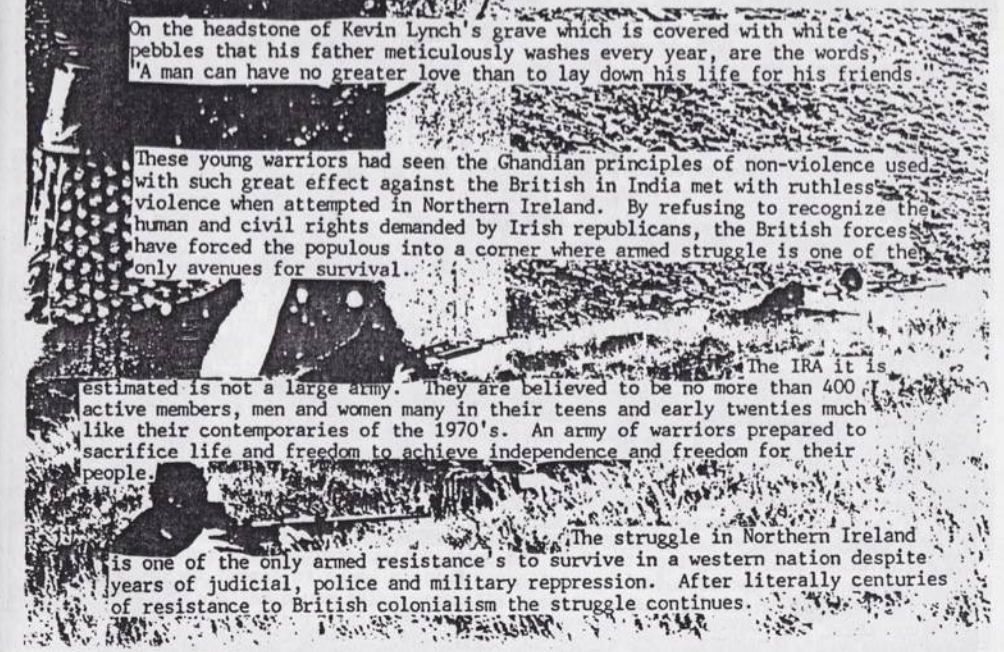
McFarlane was recaptured in 1986 while on an arms buying expedition in Holland along with fellow escapee Gerry Kelly who is presently one of Sinn Fein's negotiators in peace talks that will begin this September.

What will always be remembered is that the IRA hunger-strikers who gave their lives in 1981 were not hardened veterans trained and supplied by a foreign government, they were young men who as children had witnessed the atrocities committed against their communities by the British Army and RUC in the early 1970's.

Their's was a tale of intense love. Love for their homeland, love for their families and love of freedom itself.



On the headstone of Kevin Lynch's grave which is covered with white pebbles that his father meticulously washes every year, are the words, "A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends."



These young warriors had seen the Ghandian principles of non-violence used with such great effect against the British in India met with ruthless violence when attempted in Northern Ireland. By refusing to recognize the human and civil rights demanded by Irish republicans, the British forces have forced the populous into a corner where armed struggle is one of the only avenues for survival.

The IRA it is estimated is not a large army. They are believed to be no more than 400 active members, men and women many in their teens and early twenties much like their contemporaries of the 1970's. An army of warriors prepared to sacrifice life and freedom to achieve independence and freedom for their people.

The struggle in Northern Ireland is one of the only armed resistance's to survive in a western nation despite years of judicial, police and military reppression. After literally centuries of resistance to British colonialism the struggle continues.



The IRA hunger-strikers of 1981 represent but one generation of offspring warriors that have come to represent the indominatible spirit in Northern Ireland.

Now Sinn Fein has developed the political foundation that could bring a democratic settlement to the troubles in Northern Ireland, but it cannot work without the recognition by the British government and Loyalists as the legitimate demands of indigenous Irish.

The British government must cease its catering to those in Northern Ireland who are loyal to their authority while denying basic freedom to those who favor independence.

In 1993 after over 5 years of dialogue Sinn Fein and the Socialist Democratic Labor Party (SDLP) proposed a democratic process that would lead to peace. The IRA leadership responded, "If the political will exists or can be created (on the part of Britian) it could provide the basis for peace." Britain refused to respond positively. Still, Sinn Fein working with the Irish Republic and the SDLP created the Irish Peace Intitiative which Britian disliked because of the democratic mandate it gave in recognition of Sinn Fein. Nonetheless the efforts of a united Irish people led to the first complete cessation of military operations by the IRA in 25 years which began in August 1994.

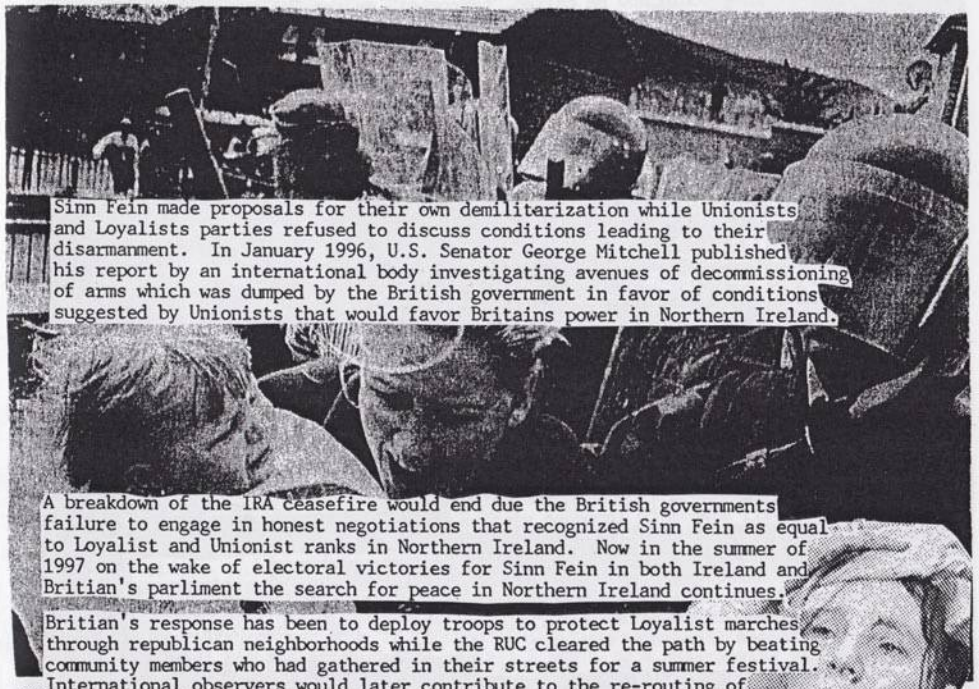
Gerry Kelly, who was convicted of bombing the Old Bailey in London in 1972 and who later escaped three times from prisons, took up offices set aside for Sinn Fein in the Stormont Castle Government buildings in Belfast

Accompanying him was Siobhan O'Hanlon, another party official, who was jailed after being caught in a bomb-making factory in 1983.

The IRA leadership made it clear that the cessation was meant to facilitate a democratic process that would bring peace. Britian's response to the IRA ceasefire was keeping in their 25 year tradition. Britian chose to stall the peace process by refusing to surrender their own self-interests in favor of a more democratic process while outside of negotiations British troop levels in Northern Ireland remained as they were previous to the ceasefire.

Also the reppressive judicial process that allowed jury-less trials and removed the right to remain silent remained in place. Conditions for Irish political prisoners in Britain deteriorated and to add insult to injury a British soldier after serving only two years for the murder of a 17 year-old West Belfast girl was released from prison and promoted back into the British Army.

Only after pressuring from the U.S. did Britian stop dragging its heels and respond to the call for negotiations. Britain began to demand the surrendering of all IRA weapons before all-party talks could begin, something that was never a precondition to the IRA ceasefire.



Sinn Fein made proposals for their own demilitarization while Unionists and Loyalists parties refused to discuss conditions leading to their disarmanment. In January 1996, U.S. Senator George Mitchell published his report by an international body investigating avenues of decommissioning of arms which was dumped by the British government in favor of conditions suggested by Unionists that would favor Britains power in Northern Ireland.

A breakdown of the IRA ceasefire would end due the British governments failure to engage in honest negotiations that recognized Sinn Fein as equal to Loyalist and Unionist ranks in Northern Ireland. Now in the summer of 1997 on the wake of electoral victories for Sinn Fein in both Ireland and Britian's parliment the search for peace in Northern Ireland continues.

Britian's response has been to deploy troops to protect Loyalist marches through republican neighborhoods while the RUC cleared the path by beating community members who had gathered in their streets for a summer festival. International observers would later contribute to the re-routing of Loyalists parades celebrating their victory in the 1700's over republicans.

July has ended with the new Labour government of Tony Blair taking office in Britain and a renewed hope for peace in Northern Ireland. Recognizing Sinn Fein's political clout the British government face no better time than the present to bring a close to the bloody chapter of warfare that has plagued Ireland for the last 25 years.

The IRA has once again committed to a ceasefire and all-party talks are scheduled for September, though Unionists have already expressed their intent to boycott any proceedings involving Sinn Fein.

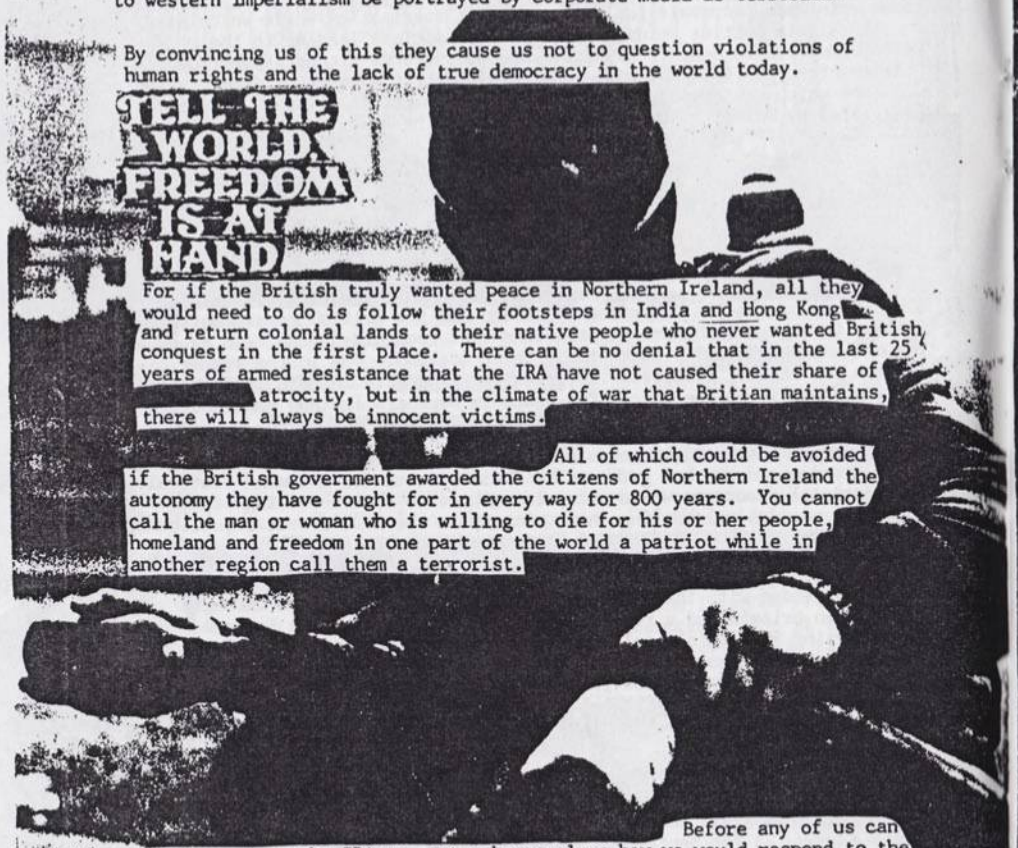
Where the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the Black Panthers were defeated with massive police and military reppression, the IRA and Sinn Fein have survived. And because of this they should lend hope to the beleaguered remnants of indigenous resistance the world over

It is my own perspective that views the indigenous peoples struggle in Northern Ireland no differently than that of the Mayans in Mexico or Native Americans of our own country. Had our forces not been squashed in the late 1800's and early 1900's, I believe our struggles for freedom would be very similar to those of Irish Republicans today.

And just as in past times all indigenous rebels were labeled as "bloodthirsty savages" they would now be called "terrorist" as the IRA are called today.

The struggle in Northern Ireland is a struggle whose face in the last hundred years has only changed in the media. It is in every world governments best interest that indigenous resistance to western imperialism be portrayed by corporate media as terrorism.

By convincing us of this they cause us not to question violations of human rights and the lack of true democracy in the world today.



For if the British truly wanted peace in Northern Ireland, all they would need to do is follow their footsteps in India and Hong Kong and return colonial lands to their native people who never wanted British conquest in the first place. There can be no denial that in the last 25 years of armed resistance that the IRA have not caused their share of atrocity, but in the climate of war that Britian maintains, there will always be innocent victims.

All of which could be avoided if the British government awarded the citizens of Northern Ireland the autonomy they have fought for in every way for 800 years. You cannot call the man or woman who is willing to die for his or her people, homeland and freedom in one part of the world a patriot while in another region call them a terrorist.

Before any of us can pass judgement on the IRA we must ask ourselves how we would respond to the murder of our own families and the terrorizing of our entire communities not by criminals, but by the very people society entrusts to preserve peace. Non-violence becomes the avenue towards extermination. Most of us will never find ourselves in the situation Irish nationalists find themselves in today. Yet many of us would not think twice to use deadly force if neccesary to protect the ones we love. Peace is only an option when both sides desire it.

BEIR BUA

In Northern Ireland over the last 25 years never has the British government offered terms that would allow Irish nationalists the same freedom that contemporaries in South Africa have now won. Britian has maintained its strong-arm military strategy in a desperate struggle to maintain its racist domain in Northern Ireland. They have for the last 25 years rescinded the right to trial by jury and have convicted nationalist activists based on evidence that was extracted by torture or paid informants.



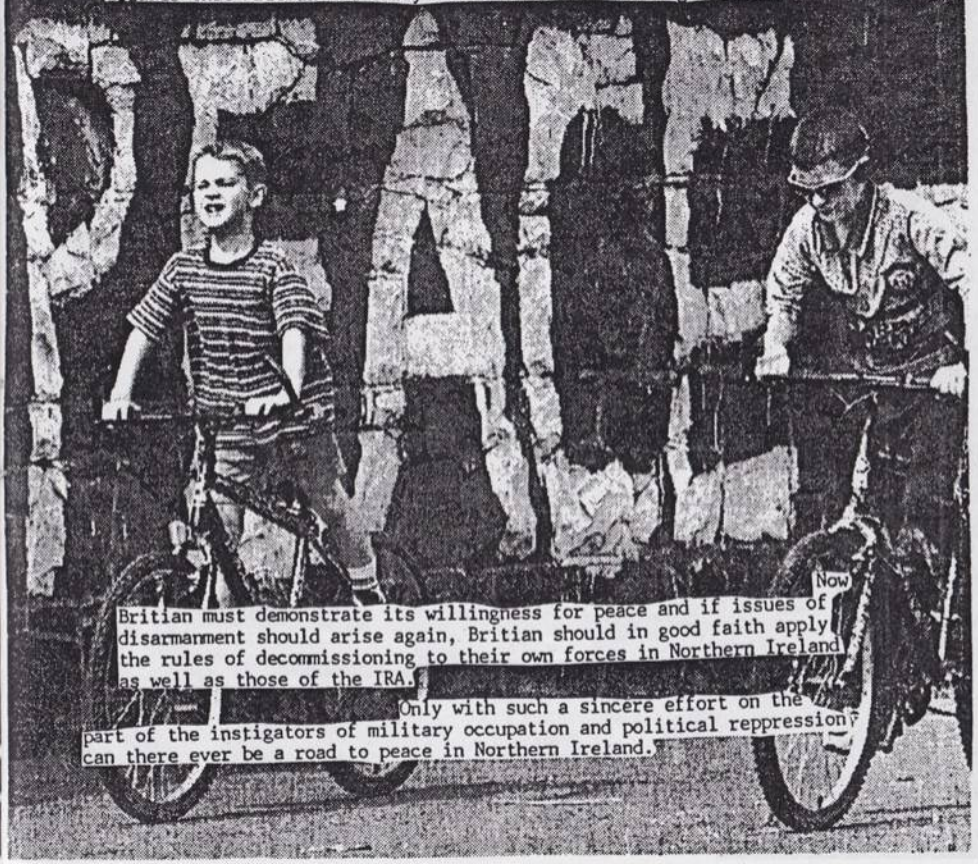
Summer '96

They have waged a bloody war in the streets that has claimed the lives of innocent children and have given free reign to paramilitary death squads that act on information supplied by the military and police, executing citizens who want nothing more than the rights that we so often take for granted.



Committed almost anywhere else in the world the atrocities and human rights abuses in Northern Ireland would recieve the condemnation we ordinarily reserve for dictatorial regimes in Third World countries. But it does not.

It is time for Britain to pull out of Northern Ireland. In 1982 Britain demonstrated its appetite for war when it lauched the Falklands War against Argentina after that country attempted to reclaim a small rock outcropping of Islands that Britain had early established as a whaling station.



Now Britian must demonstrate its willingness for peace and if issues of disarmament should arise again, Britian should in good faith apply the rules of decommissioning to their own forces in Northern Ireland as well as those of the IRA.

Only with such a sincere effort on the part of the instigators of military occupation and political reppression can there ever be a road to peace in Northern Ireland.

Irish Political Prisoners in Britain

FUASCAILT

IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS CAMPAIGN

Fuascailt (Liberation) has been formed to campaign on issues concerning the continues incarceration of Irish POWs. There are approximately 500 Irish POW's held in Ireland and England. Conditions for the prisoners in English jails have deteriorated rapidly in the last 18 months.

PO Box 3923, London NW5 1RA UK

four prisoners have been transfered to Ireland, and most of the prisoners in Britain have been moved from one prison to another For up-to-date information, ring the **Troops Out Movement** office, or view our web page **http://www.serve.com/tom/prislist**

NAME	PRISON	NUMBER	BIRTHDAY
Liam McCotter	Belmarsh	LB83693	02 January
Jan Taylor	Whitemoor	EN1977	18 January
Paul (Dingus) Magee	Full Sutton	BT3783	30 January
Nicholas Mullen	Whitemoor	MR0639	02 February
Liam Quinn	Full Sutton	49930	06 February
Pat Hayes	Full Sutton	EN1978	27 February
Denis Kinsella	Frankland	EN1944	12 April
Eddie Butler	Frankland	338637	17 April
Joe O'Connell	Frankland	338635	15 May
Peter Sherry	Full Sutton	B75880	30 June
Vincent Wood	Full Sutton	EN1049	07 August
Thomas Jack	Full Sutton	EN3177	10 September
Vincent Donnelly	Full Sutton	274064	25 September
Sean McNulty	Whitemoor	CL3440	13 October
Harry Duggan	Whitemoor	338638	31 October
Hugh Doherty	Whitemoor	338636	07 December
Liam O'Duibhir	Belmarsh	MT2485	14 December
Framed Prisoner			
Danny McNamee	Full Sutton	L481616	29 September

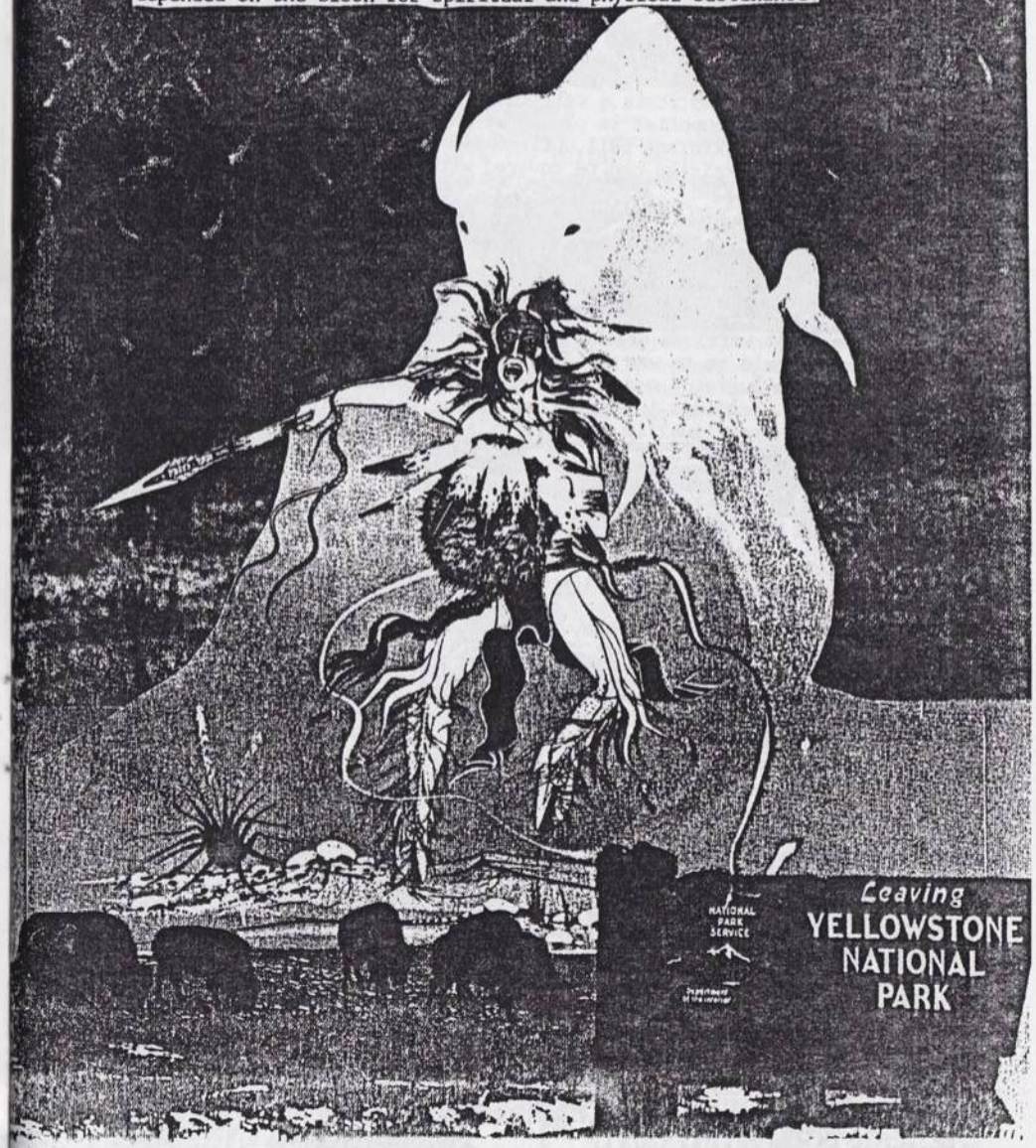


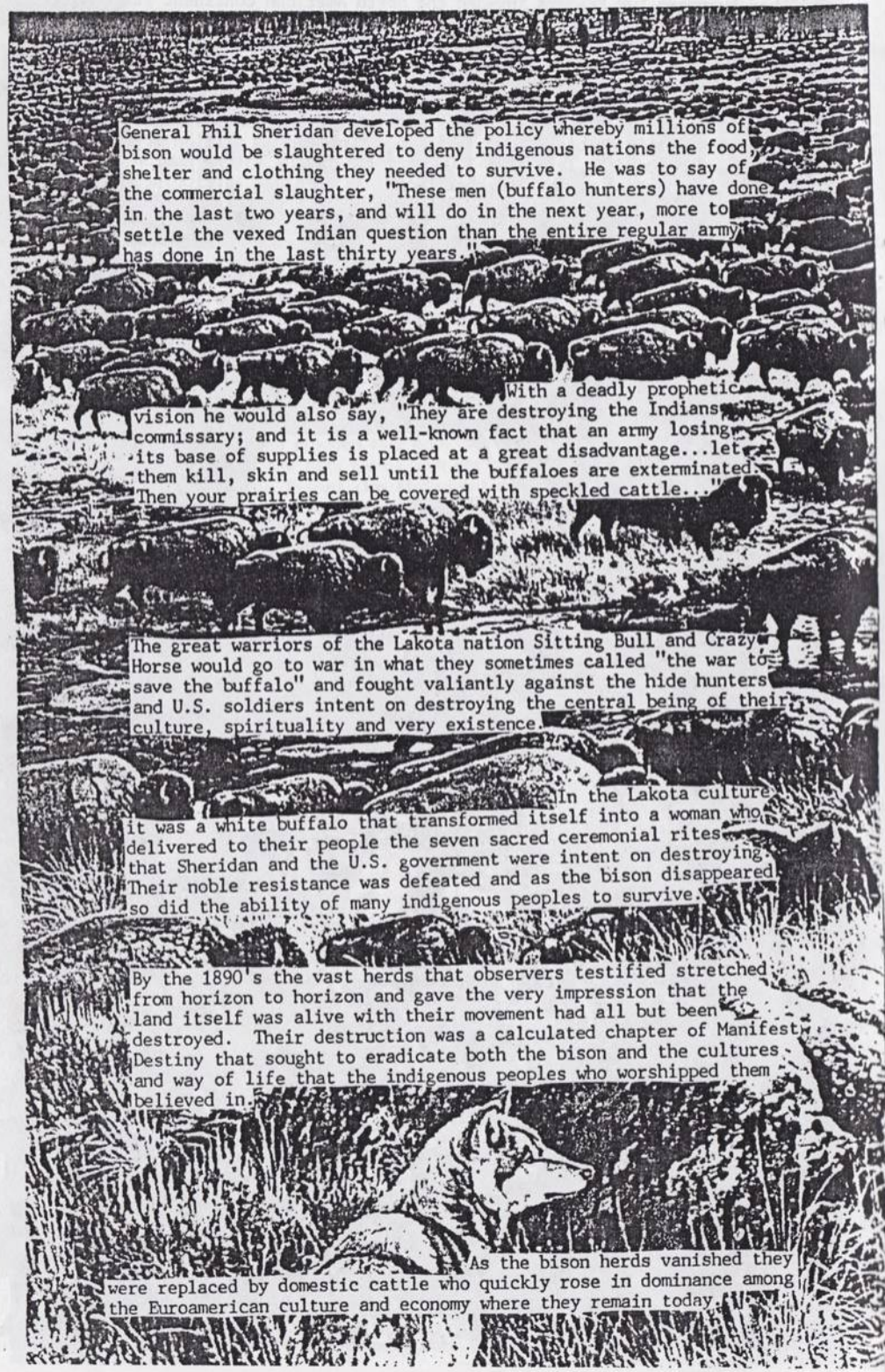
HMP Frankland, Finchdale Avenue, Brasside, Durham, DH1 5YD
HMP Full Sutton, York, YO4 1PS (ALL UK)
HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, Cambridge, PE15 OPR
HMP Belmarsh, Western Way, Thamesmead, London, SE28 OEB

Roisin McAliskey
TG 2456 HMP Holloway Women's Prison
Parkhurst Rd, Holloway N70N, London UK

When European fur traders invaded the North American continent it wasn't long before they had begun to push many of the animal people close to extinction. By the 1800's the beaver nation was so depleted that the fur trade began to shift its focus to the immense bison herds that blanketed the Great Plains. By the 1830's bison hides became the most sought-after animal fur in the American West. The next 60 years would see one of mankind's most atrocious onslaughts against wildlife as bison herds that once numbered 60 million or more were reduced to less than 1,000 animals in the entire nation. Commercial hunters would slaughter thousands each day, stripping only their hides and tongues and leaving the rest to rot.

Bison were not the only beings targeted for extermination at this time on the Great Plains. By the 1870's the U.S. military was engaged in a campaign of genocide against the indigenous peoples of the Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho and other nations all of whom depended on the bison for spiritual and physical sustenance.





General Phil Sheridan developed the policy whereby millions of bison would be slaughtered to deny indigenous nations the food, shelter and clothing they needed to survive. He was to say of the commercial slaughter, "These men (buffalo hunters) have done in the last two years, and will do in the next year, more to settle the vexed Indian question than the entire regular army has done in the last thirty years."

With a deadly prophetic vision he would also say, "They are destroying the Indians' commissary; and it is a well-known fact that an army losing its base of supplies is placed at a great disadvantage...let them kill, skin and sell until the buffaloes are exterminated. Then your prairies can be covered with speckled cattle..."

The great warriors of the Lakota nation Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse would go to war in what they sometimes called "the war to save the buffalo" and fought valiantly against the hide hunters and U.S. soldiers intent on destroying the central being of their culture, spirituality and very existence.

In the Lakota culture it was a white buffalo that transformed itself into a woman who delivered to their people the seven sacred ceremonial rites that Sheridan and the U.S. government were intent on destroying. Their noble resistance was defeated and as the bison disappeared so did the ability of many indigenous peoples to survive.

By the 1890's the vast herds that observers testified stretched from horizon to horizon and gave the very impression that the land itself was alive with their movement had all but been destroyed. Their destruction was a calculated chapter of Manifest Destiny that sought to eradicate both the bison and the cultures and way of life that the indigenous peoples who worshipped them believed in.

As the bison herds vanished they were replaced by domestic cattle who quickly rose in dominance among the Euroamerican culture and economy where they remain today.

At the close of the 19th Century, a small herd of less than 30 bison was discovered to be hidden in the high valleys and forests of the Yellowstone area. Yellowstone National Park, before it was stolen in violation of congressional treaties with indigenous nations was the home of many people.

After their forced relocation to reservations in the Oklahoma Territory a band of Cheyenne attempted an exodus back to the Yellowstone area leaving behind the starvation and disease of the reservation. In the midst of winter hundreds of Cheyenne, mostly women and children broke away and crossed the plains where they were hunted down and slaughtered by U.S. troops before finally surrendering and returning to the reservation.

Though the people who lived in harmony with the Buffalo Nation had also been nearly exterminated like their four-legged relations, many survived on scattered reservations across the Great Plains. They were both to share the struggle for survival in that dark chapter of U.S. history that was the early 20th Century.

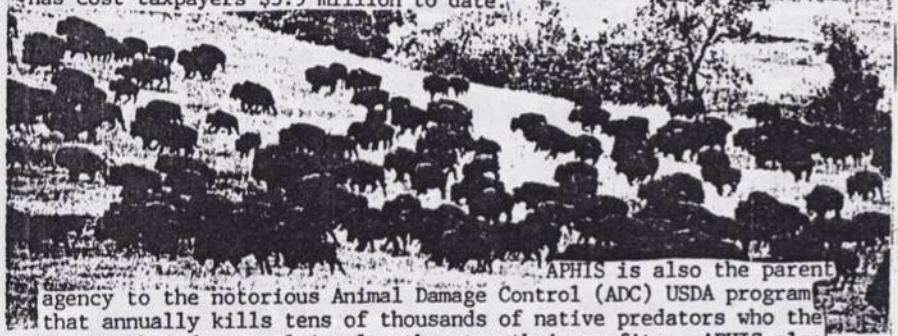
Meanwhile, the remnant bison tribe that had found sanctuary in Yellowstone began to grow. In 1917 the small bison herd had become infected with brucellosis by the "speckled cattle" that had replaced them on their former range. In the 1940's a ban was placed on the live transportation of Yellowstone bison to area indigenous tribes at the bequest of the cattle industry who feared a brucellosis outbreak. Previous to the ban Yellowstone bison had provided tribes with the handful of animals that would eventually become many of the herds that exist today.

The bison of Yellowstone were managed much like cattle through the 1950' and '60's, they were herded and penned, fed hay in the winter and when their numbers grew they were slaughtered. By the late 1960's with their numbers at just 400, Yellowstone Park officials allowed the bison and nature a longer leash and the bison were allowed to resume a more natural migration, leaving the park in the winter in search of grazing lands at lower elevations, but returning to the park in spring time.

In 1985 the U.S.D.A's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) declared Montana's cattle "brucellosis-free" and began to pressure the state of Monatana and Yellowstone National Park to kill or control any bison that left park boundaries. So was to begin the second war to exterminate free-roaming bison.

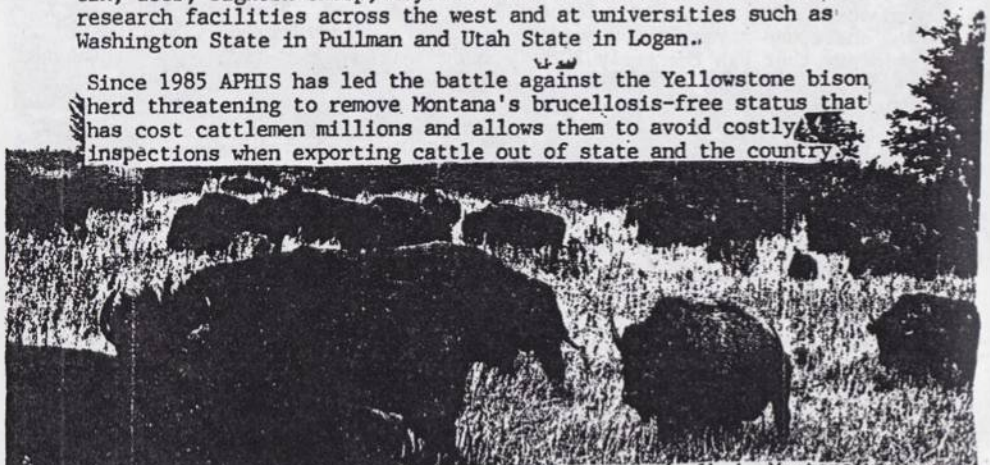
At the heart of the present day controversy is the unsubstantiated hysteria created by APHIS that if allowed to roam freely outside of Yellowstone, the bison will transmit brucellosis.

Eradicating brucellosis has been a goal of APHIS for 65 years and has cost taxpayers $3.5 million to date.



APHIS is also the parent agency to the notorious Animal Damage Control (ADC) USDA program that annually kills tens of thousands of native predators who the livestock industry claim also threaten their profits. APHIS also is funding animal research into diseases that impede the growth of the livestock industry. These experiments are conducted on bison, elk, deer, bighorn sheep, coyotes and other animals at federal research facilities across the west and at universities such as Washington State in Pullman and Utah State in Logan.

Since 1985 APHIS has led the battle against the Yellowstone bison herd threatening to remove Montana's brucellosis-free status that has cost cattlemen millions and allows them to avoid costly inspections when exporting cattle out of state and the country.



Despite many bison and elk in Montana carrying the brucellosis bacteria, there has yet to be even one documented case of transmission from bison to cattle anywhere outside of the laboratory in the wild.

Brucellosis, which can only be transmitted to cattle from the fresh afterbirth of bison, can cause pregnant cows to abort their fetuses costing the cattle industry potential profits from lost beef production. Brucellosis can be carried by many species of wildlife who scavange the afterbirth of bison who can become infected but not infectious. In 1989, 900 bison left Yellowstone and scattered among cattle. Montana later tested the cattle and 20 other herds for brucellosis and found no evidence of the bacteria.

In 1988 over 500 bison were shot by private hunters and game wardens. Following the slaughters of the late 1980's, Yellowstone Park officials the state of Montana and APHIS began the eradication program that exists today, all with the justification of preventing a brucellosis outbreak.

In the winter of 1991-92, of 218 bison slaughtered none were infectious animals capable of transmission.

By the winter of 1993-94 the combined governmental and private forces had enacted a "shoot-on-sight" policy towards bison leaving Yellowstone. These included not just infectious females (the only bison capable of Brucellosis transmission) but also young and old male bulls and calves.

The winter of 1996-97 would become the year that once again wild bison herds felt the heaviest attack. In the last year the state of Montana and the U.S. government have sanctioned the largest slaughter of free-roaming bison since the dark days of the 1800's.

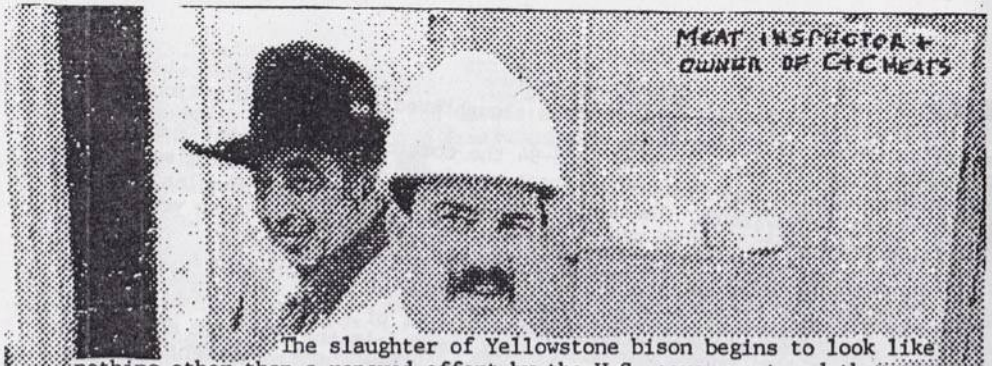
Over 1,100 bison, half of Yellowstone's entire herd has been slaughtered, many captured and shipped live to slaughterhouses such as RC Western Meats in Rapid City, South Dakota, C&C Meats in Sheridan, and another in Livingston, Montana where they are sold commercially once again.

It must also be remembered that in many cases the bison who leave Yellowstone do not immediately enter onto private lands. Much of the killing is done on national forest lands that are leased to cattlemen at below market value. It is no secret that cattle recieve more protection on public lands than native wildlife.

Coupled with these obvious deceptions is also the fact that when bison who are infectious are giving birth in the springtime, they are inside the park boundaries and far from grazing cattle.

Bison are naturally gregarious animals, roaming freely from range to range and knocking down any fences that stand in their path. They are not the docile beasts cattlemen have bred cows to be. Park boundaries and the special interest politics of the USDA and the state of Montana with its powerful livestock industry refuse to allow for the natural habits and migrations of wildlife such as the Yellowstone bison herd.

BISON HEADS AT C+C MEATS



The slaughter of Yellowstone bison begins to look like nothing other than a renewed effort by the U.S. government and the livestock industry to control or eradicate any potential free-roaming herds of native grazing animals that they believe not only threaten their economic grasp on western lands, but also represent a resurgence of indigenous wildlife and the people whose beliefs allow them to live harmoniously.

The result of the bison's failure to conform to the desires of man, in particular cattlemen is leading to the treatment dealt out to both human and animal resistors to Manifest Destiny of the last century; slaughter.

Ultimately it appears that what the livestock industry fears most is not brucellosis, but losing ground to native wildlife they thought they had under control or eradicated a hundred years ago.



Just as the livestock lobby was able to lay claim to the very land once the indigenous peoples were removed, they have also been able to control grazing rights on public and private lands once free-roaming bison were extinguished.

In 1996 the state of Montana and the Church Universal and Triumphant which operates a cattle ranch adjacent to Yellowstone filed a successful lawsuit that called on the federal government not only to remove bison that threatened brucellosis, but also non-infected bison who knocked down fences.

It appears evident that many believe wild animals such as bison who cannot be broken from their natural desire to roam should be destroyed.

The same people who believe that Yellowstone should resemble a zoo more than an ecosystem have possibly contributed to the bison migrations by demanding snowmobile access throughout the park. Bison in Yellowstone have learned to use the hard packed trails to travel to areas that were previously inaccessible. Still there exists the possibility that the bison's migration out of Yellowstone represents something much larger than biologists and bureaucrats can imagine.

There are stories I have heard of the last herds of bison that were led into a cave by the Creator, taken back into the very womb of the earth mother where they would remain until we could prove ourselves worthy of sharing their existence.



Maybe the bison are trying to tell us that its time to return to the days when humans and animals lived together in peace. After all, bison are not threatening humans out of house and home, only their "speckled cattle" that bring money only to a few and ill health and environmental destruction to many.

In the early 1900's the U.S. Census Bureau signaled the close of the "wild frontier" as statistics revealed that there was now a ratio of more than one family per land unit that formally constituted the frontier.



With the economic reppression of the 1970's and 80's, the Great Plains have once again depopulated to the degree that was formerly considered the wild frontier. It is in this climate that indigenous people and others are now proposing that we allow bison to return from whence they came. There is much scientific fact behind what indigenous peoples have been saying for generations and that is that bison are much more healthy for the Great Plains ecosystem than cattle ever were. Bison do not overgraze rangelands nor cause destruction to riparian habitat or erosion like federally subsidized cattle leased on public lands do.

In 1993 the InterTribal Bison Cooperative, a consortium of 40 indigenous nations began to call on the state of Montana and the federal government to end the slaughter of Yellowstone bison. ITBC proposed that the tribes be given the authority to operate a quarantine facility on a nearby reservation where upon inspection bison with a clean bill of health could be given to member tribes eager to increase their herds. The governments refused.

In 1994 ITBC recieved bison that had been slaughtered from the Yellowstone herd and were saddened by the disrespect they saw exhibited towards their sacred relations. The following year ITBC refused to assist in the program stating that the bison were worth more to indigenous peoples alive than dead.

In the midst of the 1996-97 slaughter at Yellowstone, ITBC joined with the National Wildlife Federation in calling for an end to the slaughter. Once again there pleas went unheard and the war against the bison rages on.

Later this past spring video documentation revealed the brutality and dishonor the bison people were being forced to endure as they were shipped to slaughterhouses. Many animals had been packed so tightly in trailers that they had gored eachother, broken legs, gouged out eyes and slaughterhouse workers were jabbing electric prods into their wounds, faces and testicles to get them moving.

One worker stated that of 200 bison recently delivered for slaughter, only 2 tested positive for brucellosis.

If the ITBC's proposal would have been accepted this past winter, over 700 Yellowstone bison could have been spared and distributed to member nations seeking to expend their herds.

ITBC has once again this year offered to establish a quarantine facility on the Fort Belknap reservation in Montana and until the winter snows arrive again, it will be too early to tell whether the bison of Yellowstone shall be granted freedom to roam.

In 1992 I found myself living on the Great Plains and working with the indigenous peoples who wanted to see the bison return to their homelands. The open prairie can be a lonely place. As I hiked many miles alone on days it wasn't hard to imagine the land alive with the thundering hooves of herds miles wide.

I would travel to where a private herd of bison were kept that numbered in the hundreds. Creeping up to them at sunset, the bulls would sense my presence and run away shaking the very ground I lay on. On the land I lived on no cattle grazing was allowed while the surronding lands showed the scars of their presence.

On the land without cattle there was a tremendous abundance of wildlife. Mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, badgers, antelope, prairie dogs, eagles and an incredible diversity of plant life existed where the cattle were absent. The only ones who were missing were the bison.

One day I observed the attempted herding of one tribes bison herd from one pasture to another some distance away. As the Indian cowboys attempted to head off the running bison with their cattle weary horses, the bison would unexpectantly shift and frighten the horses which threw their riders like ragdolls into the tall grass. The riders were almost euphoric in explaining how their horses were totally unfamiliar with the wild habits of bison as they were used to working cattle.

At another observation point I saw a full grown bison cow hurdle a barbed-wire cattle fence from a dead stop. It was clear to see that on the prairie bison were in their most natural and wild home.

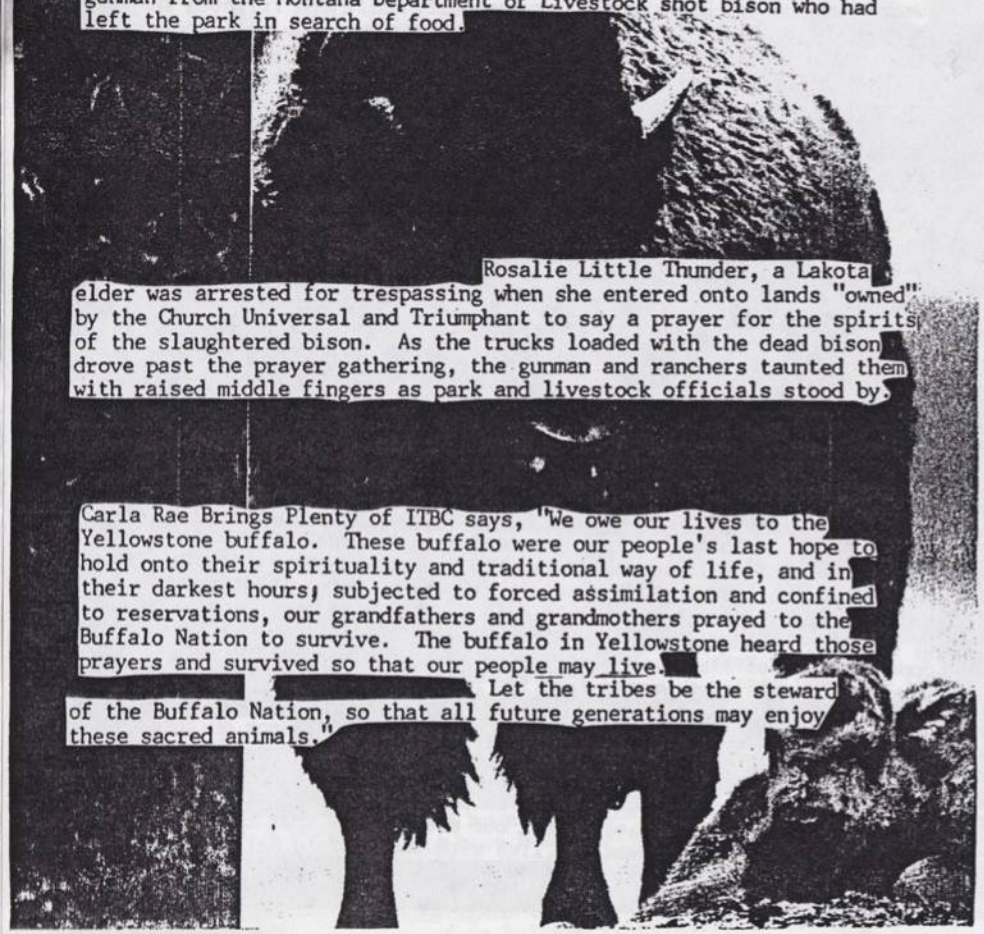
The following year I attended an international bison conference with an indigenous delegation where we were dissapointed to see how the livestock industry itself was planning the commercial and genetic exploitation of bison much as they have many other nations of animals. The topics of genetic manipulation that would lead to the domestication of bison and yet produce the largest quantity of meat was all the cattlemen wanted from the Buffalo Nation.

Back on the reservation I was the guest at ceremonials where bison were spoken of with tremendous love and respect. It was the first time in my life that I heard elders speak of animals as our brothers and sisters, not some being put on this earth for our use. I saw that the Lakota nation were prepared and ready to live with the Buffalo Nation once again.

I remember a story an Assiniboine elder from Fort Belknap told me at a ITBC meeting in 1993. He spoke of a program on his reservation where recovering alcoholics were assigned to "watch" the tribe's bison herd at a remote location on their Montana reservation. He said one woman first resented the assignment, and then as the weeks passed she began to really watch the bison.

She followed the behavior of the bison, in particular the relationship between a cow and her calf. She began to remember what it meant to be a mother by learning what her ancestors had learned long ago from the Buffalo Nation about how a mother should nourish and protect her children. I remember another elder telling me that every animal and even plants have lessons to teach us if we would only watch and listen. Sadly enough, some still refuse to even consider that animals and nature can be our teachers.

This past March ITBC organized a National Day of Prayer for the bison of Yellowstone near the park's entrance. As the indigenous participants and others gathered to offer their prayers the morning stillness was shattered by the sounds of nearby gunshots as hired gunman from the Montana Department of Livestock shot bison who had left the park in search of food.

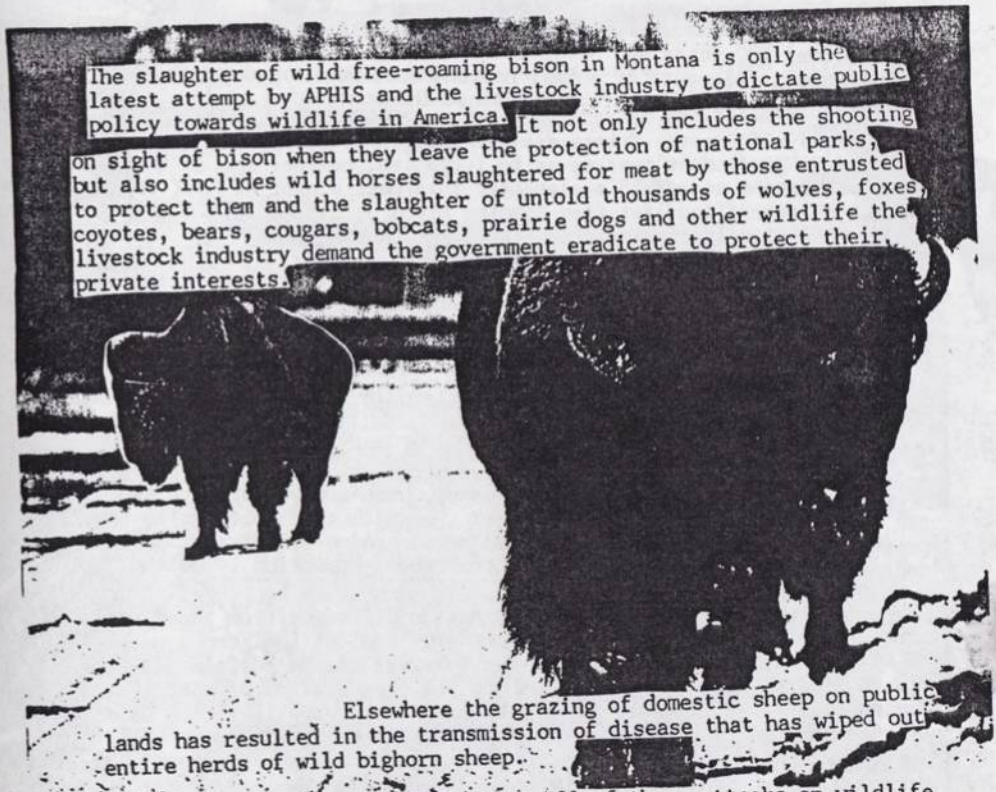


Rosalie Little Thunder, a Lakota elder was arrested for trespassing when she entered onto lands "owned" by the Church Universal and Triumphant to say a prayer for the spirits of the slaughtered bison. As the trucks loaded with the dead bison drove past the prayer gathering, the gunman and ranchers taunted them with raised middle fingers as park and livestock officials stood by.

Carla Rae Brings Plenty of ITBC says, "We owe our lives to the Yellowstone buffalo. These buffalo were our people's last hope to hold onto their spirituality and traditional way of life, and in their darkest hours; subjected to forced assimilation and confined to reservations, our grandfathers and grandmothers prayed to the Buffalo Nation to survive. The buffalo in Yellowstone heard those prayers and survived so that our people may live.

Let the tribes be the steward of the Buffalo Nation, so that all future generations may enjoy these sacred animals."

The slaughter of wild free-roaming bison in Montana is only the latest attempt by APHIS and the livestock industry to dictate public policy towards wildlife in America. It not only includes the shooting on sight of bison when they leave the protection of national parks, but also includes wild horses slaughtered for meat by those entrusted to protect them and the slaughter of untold thousands of wolves, foxes, coyotes, bears, cougars, bobcats, prairie dogs and other wildlife the livestock industry demand the government eradicate to protect their private interests.



Elsewhere the grazing of domestic sheep on public lands has resulted in the transmission of disease that has wiped out entire herds of wild bighorn sheep.

All of these attacks on wildlife have been orchestrated by state and federal agencies such as APHIS to appease the livestock industry and protect its importance to state and national economies, especially in western states like Montana.



The livestock industries profits and agencies like APHIS's very existence depends on continuing to control and eradicate native wildlife such as Yellowstone's bison who call America's grasslands, forests and deserts home.

It is time that we stop listening to the pure bullshit coming out of politicians and livestock officials mouths and start seeing their actions which speak a louder truth than their mouths are capable of telling.

Those actions tell us that the war against native wildlife that began over 100 years ago never ended. It is actually on the rise as the last fragments of animal nations that have survived the last century such as bison struggle against the continuing onslaught.

And just as much as the crimes against indigenous peoples committed by the U.S. government must never be forgotten, neither should the state of Montana and APHIS's slaughter this past winter of half of America's largest and last free-roaming bison herd.

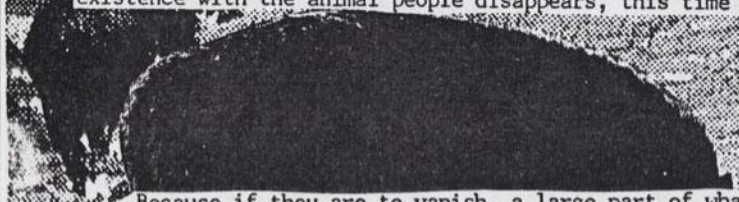
Such an action is nothing short of the Invader's continued attempts to dominate, subjugate or exterminate any being, human or nonhuman, that refuses to bow down before the descendants of those who first conquered this beautiful land and spread genocide on a scale that would humble Hitler.

The survival of a healthy Yellowstone ecosystem, rather than its transformation into a roadside zoo crisscrossed with snowmobiles and surronded by cattle lies in your hands.

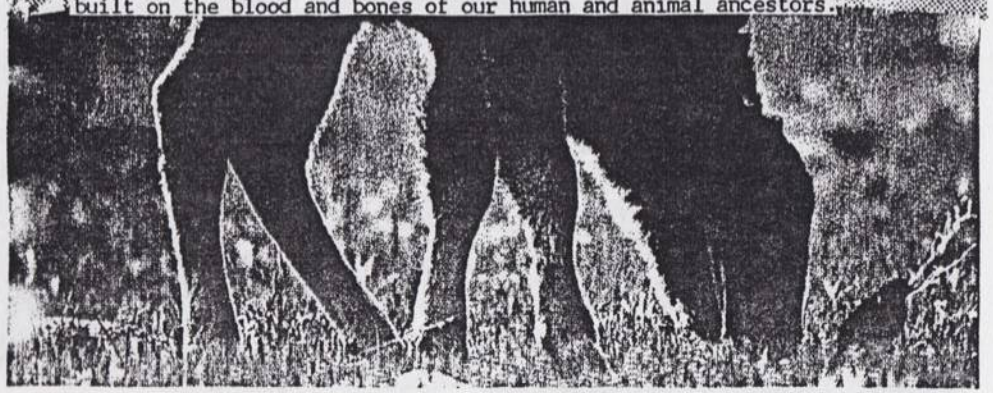
The question becomes, what are we doing to stop the slaughter? Which side are you on? We are either partners in the preservation of all that remains wild or we are co-conspirators contributing to the continued slaughters and destruction by doing nothing.

Those who choose the latter are no different from those who turned a blind eye to the genocide committed against indigenous peoples and wildlife in the last century. The survival of the Buffalo, Wolf, Wild Horse and other Animal Nations and the preservation of what little remains of their wilderness homes they need to survive lies with us not governments.

We can either resist the vested interests of the livestock industries and their lapdogs in federal and state government with the fighting spirit of warriors like Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, or we can simply roll over and watch passively as the last hope for a harmonious existence with the animal people disappears, this time forever.



Because if they are to vanish, a large part of what it means to be alive will die with them also. And in their place will remain those drunk with power and addicted to greed who will continue to see in all of us and nature only our economic worth or our threat to their empire built on the blood and bones of our human and animal ancestors.



On March 23, 1997 Delyla Wilson of the Bison Action Group (BAG) was arrested in Gardiner, Montana after dumping a bucket of bison entrails on a table in front of the two U.S. Senators, U.S. Secratary of Agriculture and Governor of Montana responsible for the Yellowstone bison slaughter. Wilson was immediately charged by the state of Montana after her non-violent direct action protest with disorderly conduct and misdemeanor assault. Wilson is one of the founding members of BAG which have with the help of others like ITBC succeded in bringing the Yellowstone bison slaughter international attention. Wilson has been active against the slaughter since 1989 when she was first arrested for interfering with the shooting of Yellowstone bison. Wilson's efforts on behalf of the Buffalo Nation have now led to her targeting by federal law-enforcement and on July 13th, a federal grand jury handed down an indictment charging her with two felony counts of Assault on a Congressional, Cabinet or Supreme Court Member.



If convicted Wilson faces a year in prison, fines and federal probation. By indicting Delyla Wilson the U.S. government is attempting to intimidate any activists who oppose the corruption and manipulation of public agencies for the private gain of industries like the beef trade in the U.S.

Not only does Wilson's federal indictment threaten to drain her energy and resources and remove her from the frontlines of the battle to save America's last wild bison, but it also signals the federal government's readiness to direct law enforcement, investigation and prosecution against citizens who oppose the destruction of America's wildlife. While at the same time ignoring those in the livestock industry who both legally and illegaly poison, shoot, trap and sell for profit animals ranchers believe threaten their herds of cattle and sheep grazed on public lands.

It is imperative that we support Wilson and BAG as they fight a legal battle that has serious implications for all who oppose state and federal government catering to the livestock industry. Wilson like many of us cannot afford an attorney as she and her small family dedicate most of their time and energy to the campaign to protect bison in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Please consider sending her a donation to help with her upcoming federal and state court cases and costs and remember that Wilson and BAG are our allies in the struggle against earth and animal abuse.

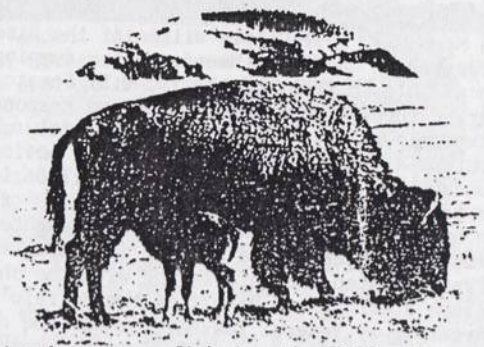
For information on the Yellowstone bison slaughter and how you can help stop it, or to send donations write:

BISON ACTION GROUP P.O. Bx. 7326 Bozeman, MT 59771

INTERTRIBAL BISON COOPERATIVE P.O. Box 8105 Rapid City, SD 57709

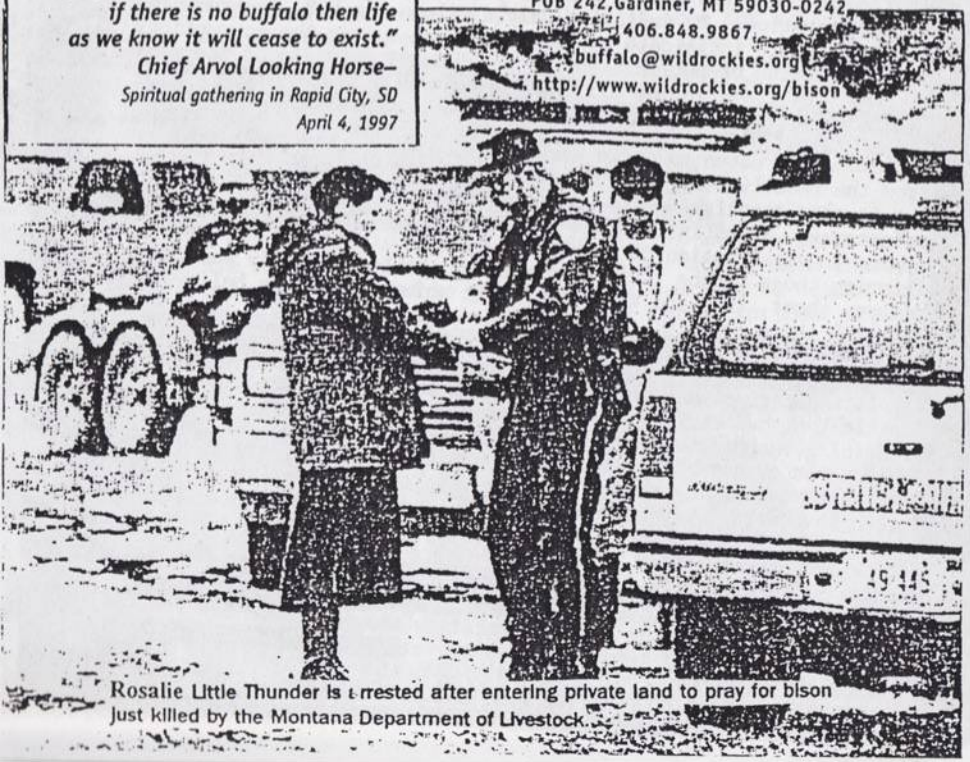


"With the teaching of our way of life from the time of being, the First People were the Buffalo People, our ancestors which came from the sacred Black Hills, the heart of everything that is. ...As 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe, I pray for health and well being of many nations. I humbly ask all nations to respect our way of life because in our prophecies if there is no buffalo then life as we know it will cease to exist."
Chief Arvol Looking Horse–
Spiritual gathering in Rapid City, SD
April 4, 1997



Another group fighting the Yellowstone bison slaughter is Buffalo Nations, founded by Rosalie Little Thunder and other residents of the Yellowstone ecosystem. They have been active in the park itself informing tourists of the slaughter and are planning a winter campaign to protect buffalo this year. Buffalo Nations is also hosting a conference of traditional indigenous leaders with the hopes of developing a solution to the slaughter. Buffalo Nations is based near the entrance to Yellowstone where they maintain a presence on the front lines to protect the Buffalo Nation.

Buffalo Nations
Rosalie Little Thunder or Michael Mease
POB 242,Gardiner, MT 59030-0242
406.848.9867
buffalo@wildrockies.org
http://www.wildrockies.org/bison

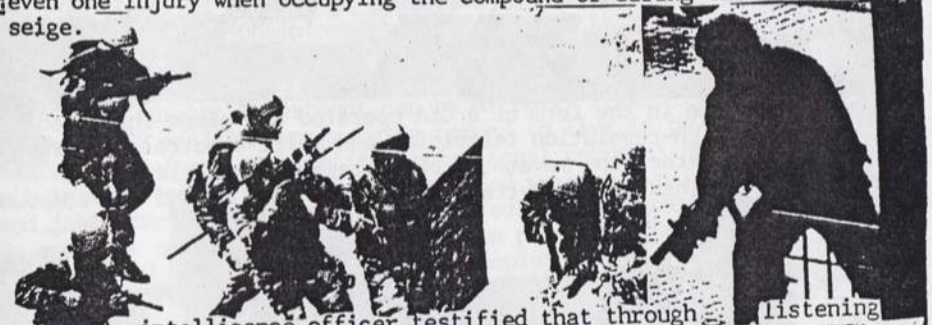


Rosalie Little Thunder is arrested after entering private land to pray for bison just killed by the Montana Department of Livestock.

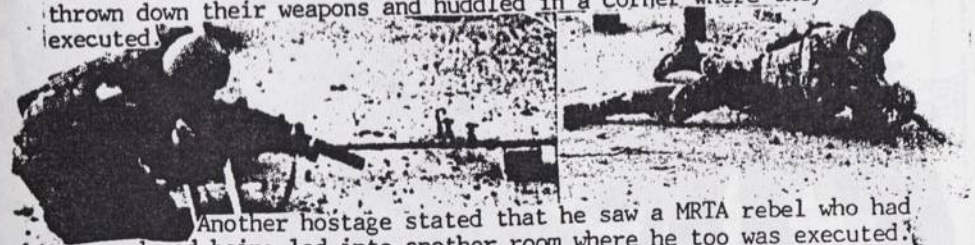


MRTA MASSACRE UPDATE

On April 22, 1997 150 U.S. trained and assisted Peruvian soldiers stormed the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Lima, Peru massacring the 14 Tupac Amaru rebels who held 72 hostages for four months. Earlier the same week Peruvian officials had promised the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) there would be no military action as long as no hostages were harmed. None were until the military's attack. A network of tunnels was built as MRTA suspected, under the compound which allowed soldiers to use periscopes to see into the compound. These were used to guide the placing of explosive charges directly beneath the feet of MRTA rebels who were playing soccer at the time of the blasts. 5 MRTA were instantly killed. Seconds after that initial blast soldiers launched their assault from tunnels and neighboring buildings. MRTA members were shot in the back as they ran from the blast and former hostages reported that one rebel refused to shoot them as was the plan in case of a military attack and instead turned his back and left the room where he was instantly gunned down by soldiers. "I saw a slaughter." said one hostage first speaking of the killings of MRTA's members none of whom had caused even one injury when occupying the compound or during the 4 month seige.



An intelligence officer testified that through listening devices he heard two MRTA women screaming, "We surrender! We surrender!" while a hostage who was eyewitness said the women had thrown down their weapons and huddled in a corner where they were executed.



Another hostage stated that he saw a MRTA rebel who had surrendered being led into another room where he too was executed.

Peruvian television aired scenes of President Fujimori touring the carnage and at his feet could be seen a headless and armless rebel body, mutilated just as MRTA's namesake Incan rebel leader Tupac Amaru was in the 18th Century.

Fujimori could also be seen staring down at the body of MRTA leader Nestor Cerpa which had a gunshot wound straight to the forehead and had a slashed throat. An army officer involved in the attack said of the rebels bodies, "Each terrorist must have had 500 bullets in them when it was over. Their heads were totally destroyed." Soldiers carrying Cerpa's body were said to be joking that it "was heavy from all the lead".

No autopsies or funerals were allowed for the MRTA rebels nor were the families allowed to see some of them which were buried hurriedly in unmarked graves in unspecified cemetaries. One woman who was at Cerpa's burial said, "He fought for us, for the poor. Look at how we live. Look at how we die."

The U.S. is Peru's largest source of military aid. Peruvian soldiers have for the past ten years been trained in counterinsurgency operations, commando tactics and pyschological operations at the U.S. Army's School of the America's at Fort Benning, Georgia. The "school" was dubbed the "School of Assassins" because of its history in training soldiers who commit repeated human rights abuses and assassinations against those opposed to U.S. backed governments in Latin America.

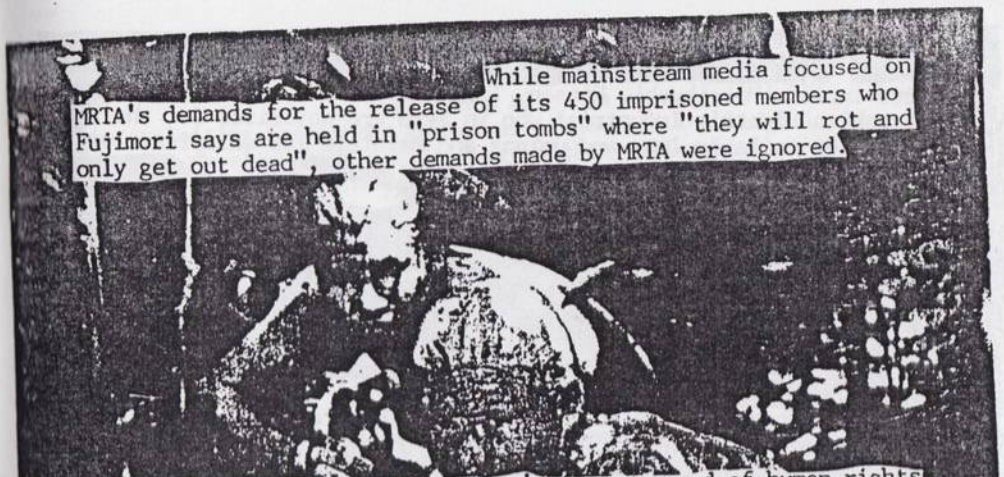
It is now known that not only had U.S. Special Forces assisted in the planning and attack on MRTA, but also that the CIA and Pentagon provided high-tech surveillance equipment that was smuggled into the compound by intelligence agents disguised as government doctors allowed in by MRTA to verify the good health of the hostages.

U.S. material support for the massacre came in the form of a CIA operated spy plane that used infrared, high-resolution television and multi-spectral sensor cameras to detect the movements of hostages and rebels as well as to detect landmines and boobytraps planted by MRTA around the compound.



Also hidden in a chess piece, crutches, guitar, thermos and even a Bible were microphones supplied by the CIA that allowed Peruvian intelligence to listen in on MRTA's conversations.

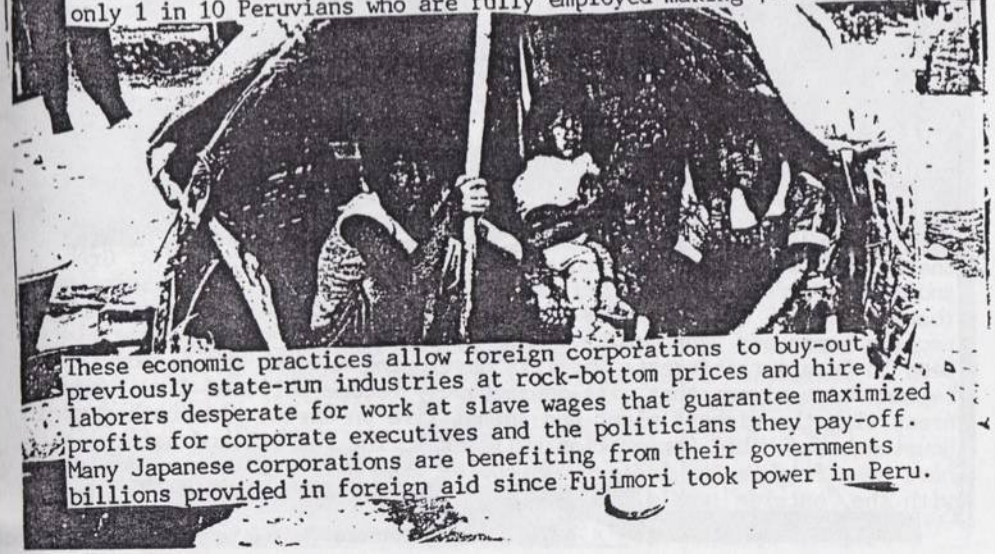
While mainstream media focused on MRTA's demands for the release of its 450 imprisoned members who Fujimori says are held in "prison tombs" where "they will rot and only get out dead", other demands made by MRTA were ignored.



Two of the key issues were Peru's gross record of human rights abuses and government reppression that result in imprisonment of anyone critical of Fujimori's government (see S.H.#2) and the environmental, economic and cultural impacts on Peru caused by multinational corporations.

A MRTA communique states, "We have realized this military occupation in protest against the government of Mr. Fujimori, as well as its economic policy that has brought nothing but increased misery and hunger to the majority of the people of Peru. If we stay in the realm of imperialist globalization we are condemned to unemployment, misery and extermination."

Since 1992 foreign investment can be directly linked to 14 million of Peru's 22 million people being forced to live in poverty. Neoliberal reforms to benefit multinational corporations have eliminated legal protection for salaried workers, workers rights and job security. The firing of hundreds of thousands of workers as a result of Fujimori's privitization policy has resulted in only 1 in 10 Peruvians who are fully employed making $2.75 a day.



These economic practices allow foreign corporations to buy-out previously state-run industries at rock-bottom prices and hire laborers desperate for work at slave wages that guarantee maximized profits for corporate executives and the politicians they pay-off. Many Japanese corporations are benefiting from their governments billions provided in foreign aid since Fujimori took power in Peru.

These include Mitsibushi, Nissan, Toyota Motor Co., Mitsui, and Matsushita Electric Industrial who in Peru are notorious for their opposition to labor laws and unions and maintain low salaries, long hours and physical mistreatment of workers.

All of this has been part of the economic plan to move Japanese corporate operations and production closer to its growing markets in North and now South America for cars and electronics. The Japanese government has in accordance with the plan pledged hundreds of millions of dollars to road projects that will cut through the Peruvian and Brazilian Amazon rainforests as its corporate interests vie for domination of the economic development in South America.

All of which caters to a very small segment of Peru's population while Fujimori and his corporate bedfellows ignore and profit from the poverty caused to millions of indigenous peoples and the poor. Its the same genocidal campaign strategy that led to the environmental destruction and indigenous houlocast on the North American continent that survives in South America today. And here once again is where U.S. and European corporations also rear their ugly heads.

Shell, Chevron, Mobil, Occidental Petroleum, Eastman Kodak, W.R. Grace and many others are busily beginning the rape of Peru. It is estimated that already 17 million acres of lands that are home to indigenous peoples human and nonhuman have been co-opted by oil corporations alone. Deep in Peru's rainforests Shell is developing natural gas fields in the region where rivers that will consequently become polluted flow through areas with the richest plant and animal life on earth. In another region Houston-based Mobil Corporation while exploring for oil and natural gas have been frightening indigenous peoples that have yet to make contact with the "outside" world.

Monsanto also has operations in Peru where it is exploiting indigenous medicinal plants and knowledge in its efforts to develop pharmacuetical drugs that will make them billions none of which will be shared with Peru's poorest citizens.

Logging is also a multinational operation that is threatening Peru's lands and people with Mitsibushi alone clearcutting 750,000 acres of Amazonian rainforests in Peru a year.

Many tribes of uncontacted indigenous peoples have in the recent past also been decimated by common diseases like colds and whooping cough introduced by foreign corporations exploratory teams to a people with no immunity.

U.S. mining corporations such as Cyprus Amax, Asarco, Phelps Dodge and Anaconda Mining also operate copper and zinc mines which are causing severe air and water pollution that is destroying local food crops grown by the mostly agrarian population of Peru.

The Denver-based Newmont Corporation declared a $96 million profit for 1996 much of which came from gold mined in Peru through "heap leaching" where cyanide is poured over raw ore to extract the metal that drives men crazy. Heap-leach mining is responsible for the poisoning of entire river systems throughout the world including in Peru where rivers that once teemed with abundant life are now dead.

These are only some of the reasons MRTA is fighting Fujimori's government and military in Peru. It is a struggle that inevitably will continue despite the recent death and imprisonment of MRTA members and leaders.

Some are saying that now that Fujimori has given the military since his 1992 congressional coup such wide ranging powers he can no longer control them.

Fujimori's abuse of power has resulted in military involvement with the cocaine trade with hundreds of pounds found on naval vessels and even the presidential plane.

In 1996 A notorious drug kingpin testified that he paid off Fujimori's closest advisor since 1991 Vladimiro Montesinos, the head of the intelligence service to keep him informed on U.S. DEA activities.

GOLD RETRIEVAL AT A COPPER MINE

In 1993 a MRTA unit successfully interrupted a large drug deal between the army and Columbian drug dealers that led to a counterinsurgency campaign that destroyed the MRTA camp that was responsible and executed civilians the army suspected of supporting MRTA.

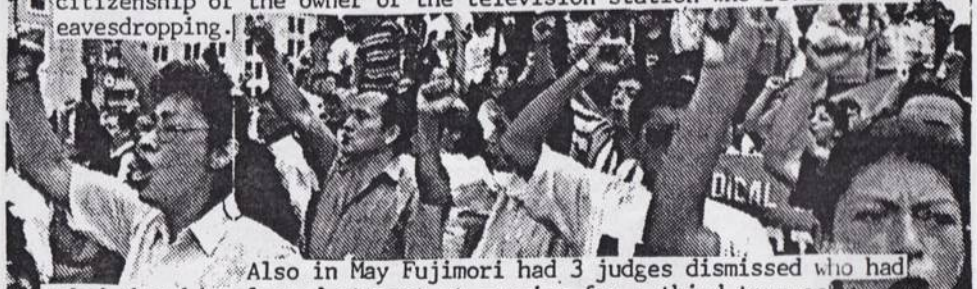
Also army officials recently refused to release a retired general whom they had jailed after he publicly disclosed cases of torture and murder within the military and intelligence service.

Such actions have failed to make the international press because of censorship by Fujimori's government which frequently arrests and imprisons journalist who report such events.



Reporters who have investigated or interviewed MRTA have been threatened and charged with "apologizing for terrorism" or for those who attended the MRTA press conference during the Lima occupation at the compound "advising a terrorist group".

Recent allegations have revealed that Montesinos and Gen. Nicolas Hermosa, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff had been wiretapping political opponents, foriegn and local journalists. Fujimori has responded to the expose by revoking the citizenship of the owner of the television station who revealed the eavesdropping.



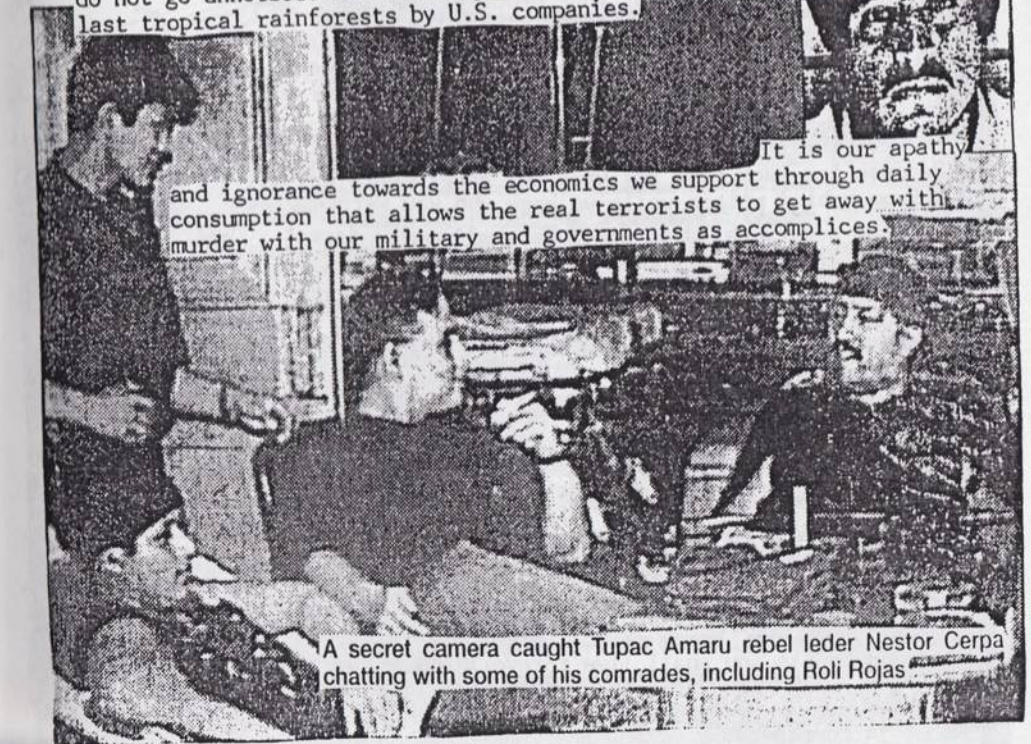
Also in May Fujimori had 3 judges dismissed who had ruled that his planned attempt at running for a third term as president was unconstitutional. Fujimori's popularity rating which was reported to be at about 80% following the MRTA slaughter has now fallen to 20% as the scandals surronding his presidency are revealed.

Thousands of Peruvians have been taking to the streets in a rare display of overt protests. One demonstrator said, "A few weeks ago I would have been afraid to march against the government, because people who protest are often killed and tortured. But Fujimori has gone too far this time. There is no democracy left. There is no hope for our children."



We in the United States can accept an equal share of the responsibility for the injustice, slaughter, torture, imprisonment, poverty and environmental destruction as it is our government, military and corporations that aid Peru's politicians, military and police committing these and many more crimes.

Remember this the next time you purchase a new car, tank of gas, computer or roll of film. It is up to us to ensure that slaughters of indigenous peoples defending their lands in Peru do not go unnoticed nor the corporate destruction of earth's last tropical rainforests by U.S. companies.



It is our apathy and ignorance towards the economics we support through daily consumption that allows the real terrorists to get away with murder with our military and governments as accomplices.

A secret camera caught Tupac Amaru rebel leder Nestor Cerpa chatting with some of his comrades, including Roli Rojas

For Nestor, Micaela, Roli, Eduardo, Salvador, Tito and the other brave MRTA warriors murdered in Lima, Peru on April 22, 1997

Where have you gone proud defenders of Incan descendants?
Standing tall and strong you spoke for all of us
Shy fierce eyes darting from behind shrouded indigenous faces
Fists clenched around rocket-launcher and rifles that made them listen
Unfamiliar with the attention of oppressors who left you to die,
in the poverty and slums their stolen wealth created
My heart swelled with pride as you spread your new grown wings
for all the world to see
Where have you gone?
You with voices like thunder speaking the words that will not die
Words of love and devotion for the long and painful path to libertad
Murdered by forked-tongued bureaucrats who live a lie
Afraid of your indominatible warrior blood
coursing through your veins like the rivers of your jungles
In another conquered land I watched Invader spring the deadly trap
You could have killed those who tried to destroy you but didn't
Tears filling my eyes as each explosion shattered my heart
Part of our own dreams and desires dying with you
Bullet-riddled broken bodies a testament to conquistador peace
Executed without mercy like so many who fought before you
Your limbs ripped from your bodies and buried in unmarked graves
Fearful of you even in death
You gave everything for your people
In cold darkened prison cells the tears of those you would free flow
A woman whose husband's love was her only chance for freedom
A child whose father gave his life to return the mother
A nation whose human rights are ignored
You were their only hope
Because too many care not what our governments and militaries do
From behind prison walls we knew who you were
As the hungry children sleep we shall never forget you
Where you are now you are at last free
Where their death squads and secret police cannot find you
In the jungles of your homelands you are dancing with your ancestors
¡Vencera!
Your cries will never be forgotten
You with your sacrifice showed us how to live
How to crawl out from under their thumbs and their sewers and ghettoes
to spiral upward where all can hear our screams for justice
We march forward in your footsteps chanting your cry for freedom
The Invader may have won the battle
But la gente shall win the war
In our hearts you shall live forever
Our memories of you will never die
Our 14 compañeras y compañeros who soared like condors

WILD HORSE UPDATE



On July 22, 1997 the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) struck Cavel West Slaughterhouse in Redmond, Oregon where thousands of wild horses were illegally slaughtered for export to Europe and Asia.



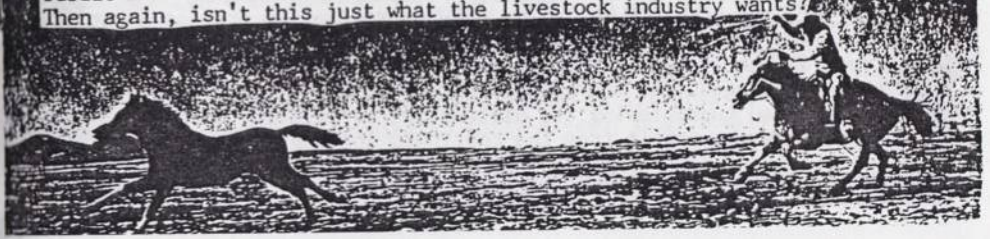
Incendiary devices ignited a $1 million fire that destoyed the entire meatpacking plant. As SH goes to print, there have been no arrests for this successful nonviolent action which caused harm only to the illegal practice of capturing and slaughtering wild horses for money.

Following the Associated Press investigation that first revealed the illegal trade (see SH#2) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for, Congress demanded an explanation for the gross mismanagement and corruption that is rife in the Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Program. BLM officials responded by stating that due to their vigilant enforcement of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act 125 people had been convicted for violating the law.

Government records contridicted this revealing only 3 convictions over the last ten years. Further investigations once again by AP reveal that the Departments of Justice and Interior records show that US Attorneys dropped or declined to prosecute at least 75 cases of violations of the wild horse act. Additional incidents were not even investigated such as the shooting of literally thousands of wild horses on public lands nor were there any arrests.

BLM law-enforcement officers continue to testify that wild horses can and are being sold to slaughter despite the illegality. "The law is supposed to keep wild horses and burros out of the slaughter-house, but without enforcement there's no teeth to it. It's a joke," said a retired BLM law-enforcement agent for Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas in the 1980's and 90's.

BLM officials plan on capturing another 11,000 wild horses in the next year to provide more grazing lands for domestic cattle. Cattle ranchers threatened to sue the BLM in August unless they reduced a wild horse herd in northeastern Colorado by 80%. BLM is compliying in the request. Also in northeastern Nevada BLM has announced they will "reduce" a herd of wild horses there from 1,250 animals to less than 230. Wild horse advocates say at least 500 animals are required to maintain a genetically viable herd, less can result in a weak herd that could be easily destroyed by drought. Then again, isn't this just what the livestock industry wants?



LYNX UPDATE

On March 27, 1997 a federal judge ruled that the Department of the Interior and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) had failed to act responsibly to list the Canada Lynx as protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). It is estimated that as few as 500 of these majestic cats remain in the lower 48 states scattered throughout the Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountains, Great Lakes region and in the Northeast woodlands.



On May 22, USFWS responded to the judge's ruling by acknowledging that the lynx's protection was warranted, but still refused to offer lynx the protection of the ESA stating that other species are in more critical need of the agencies attention. One is left to wonder how dire an animals balancing act on the brink of extinction must be before it deserves the "attention" of USFWS and the protection of the ESA! Many biologist working for the USFWS itself have supported with evidence a plan that would have offered protection to the lynx, but US officials in Washington D.C. have refused to listen. It is suspected that the reasons are the same as those that have originally imperiled the Lynx Nation in the first place, commercial logging, road-building and trapping.

USFWS biologists since 1994 have concluded that lynx habitat is being destroyed by timber harvests, fire suppression, road construction, clearing of forests for urbanization, ski areas and agriculture.

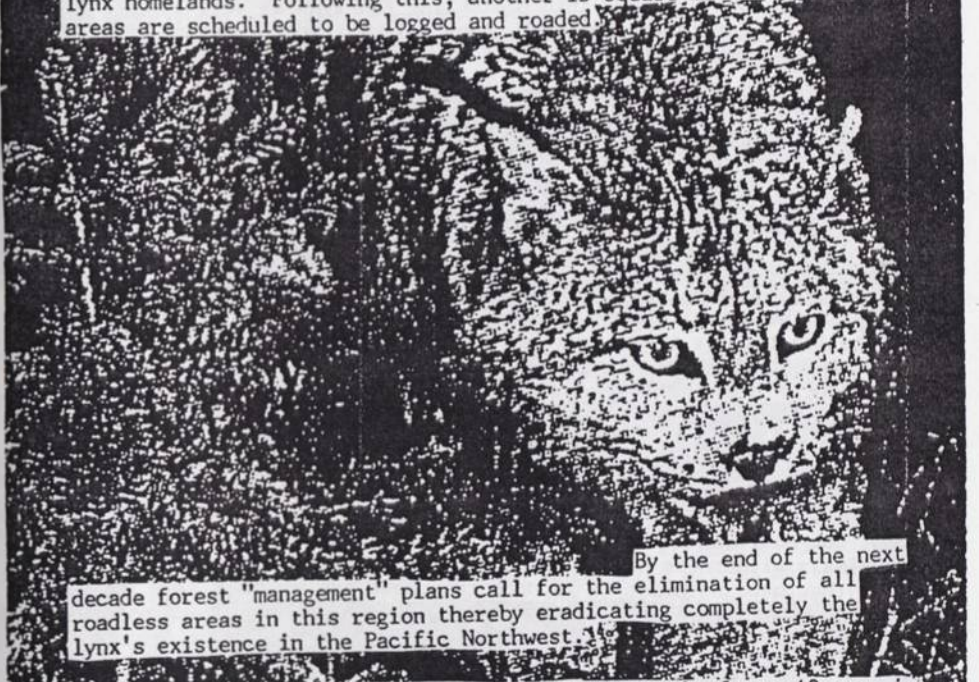


As a matter of fact, not a single USFWS biologist or lynx expert disagrees that the lynx should be protected by the ESA. In the federal judge's own words the USFWS, "relied on glaringly faulty factual premises and ignored the view of its own experts" when it refused to list the lynx. The USFWS's refusal to protect a native wildlife species on the brink of extinction in the lower 48 states such as the lynx is a clear violation of the ESA. Once again an agency charged with the responsibility to protect American wildlife is instead guaranteeing its destruction by catering to commercial interests who profit from the continued logging of the lynx's marginalized habitat.

In the Pacific Northwest lynx populations have been decimated by a combination of habitat destruction and commercial trapping in the 1970's and 80's. Today the major threat to the last of the Lynx Nation in states such as Washington is logging and road-building.

High in the Northern Cascade Mountains near where two lynx were released after being rescued from a fur farm (see S.H.#2) the US Forest Service and Washington Department of Natural Resources are pushing forward with major timber harvests and road-building operations in the Okanogan National Forest and Loomis State Forest, in the heart of the lynx's last stronghold in the Pacific Northwest. It is estimated that no more than 100 lynx inhabit this area.

Currently state and federal forest management plans are scheduled to clearcut in the Loomis and Okanogan Forests reducing roadless areas from 58 square miles to less than twenty. An additional 11 miles or more of new roads are planned for the Okanogan alone. 2,000 acres of known lynx habitat in the Loomis Forest is being clearcut this summer alone as you read this. Also 20 of 36 planned timber sales in the next 5 years on state lands are in roadless areas in occupied lynx homelands. Following this, another 15 square miles of roadless areas are scheduled to be logged and roaded.



By the end of the next decade forest "management" plans call for the elimination of all roadless areas in this region thereby eradicating completely the lynx's existence in the Pacific Northwest.

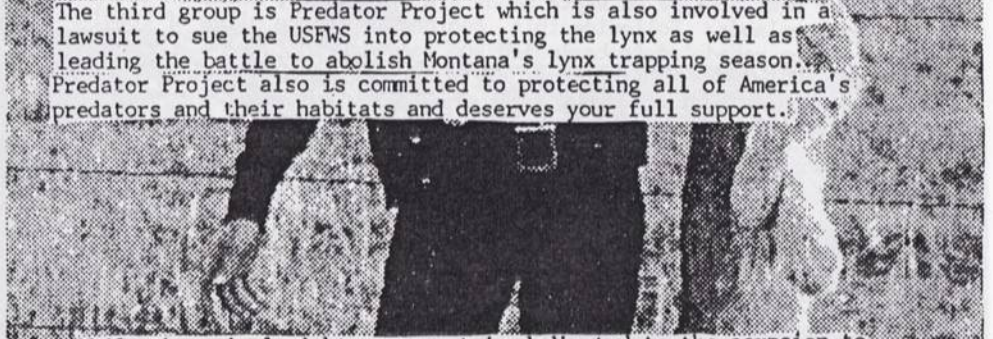
Just six weeks after USFWS admitted that lynx in the lower 48 were in danger of extinction the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission (MFWP) proposed an increase in the quota of lynx trapped in the 1997-1998 season from two to three individuals statewide.

While 3 animals does not seem like a threat, to a race of animals as endangered as the lynx every member is integral to maintain [illegible]thy genetic diversity in their already drastically reduced gene pool. Also the trapping of mature animals could leave cats with less breeding history alone to face the harsh winters that a lynx mother must support her kittens through.

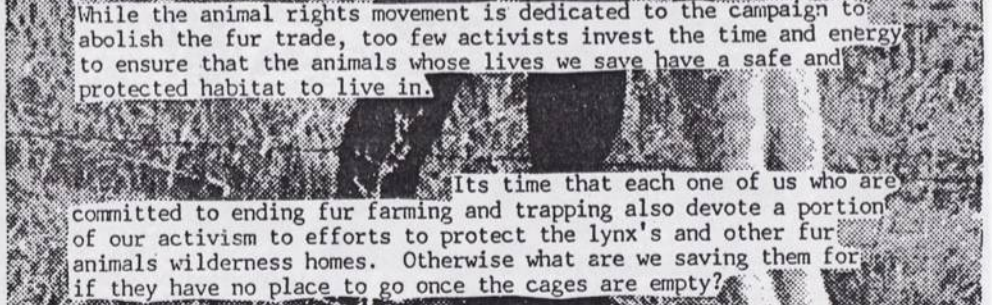
Three grassroots groups are opposing all of the above mentioned attacks on the Lynx Nations continued survival. They are the Northwest Ecosystem Alliance who has with other groups led the legal battle to win ESA protection for the lynx as well as to protect forests in the Pacific Northwest, the Friends of the Loomis Forest who have for years been conducting forest carnivore surveys and the impact of clearcutting on them in the Loomis and surronding wilderness. Both groups plan to appeal timber sales that threaten the lynx and other forest animals as they arise.



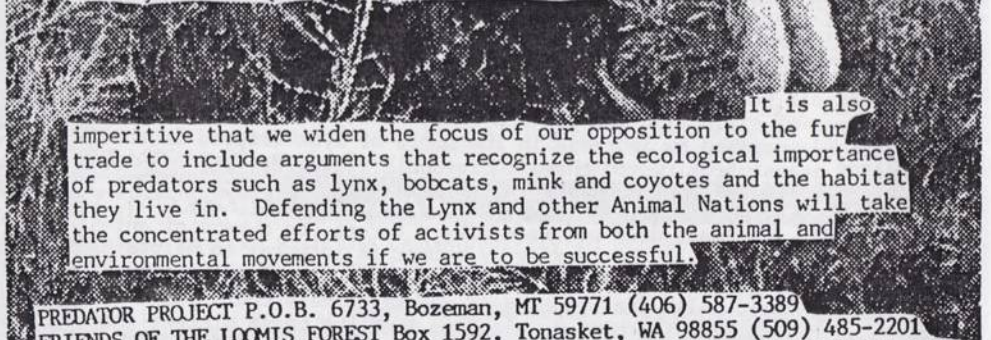
The third group is Predator Project which is also involved in a lawsuit to sue the USFWS into protecting the lynx as well as leading the battle to abolish Montana's lynx trapping season. Predator Project also is committed to protecting all of America's predators and their habitats and deserves your full support.



While the animal rights movement is dedicated to the campaign to abolish the fur trade, too few activists invest the time and energy to ensure that the animals whose lives we save have a safe and protected habitat to live in.



Its time that each one of us who are committed to ending fur farming and trapping also devote a portion of our activism to efforts to protect the lynx's and other fur animals wilderness homes. Otherwise what are we saving them for if they have no place to go once the cages are empty?



It is also imperitive that we widen the focus of our opposition to the fur trade to include arguments that recognize the ecological importance of predators such as lynx, bobcats, mink and coyotes and the habitat they live in. Defending the Lynx and other Animal Nations will take the concentrated efforts of activists from both the animal and environmental movements if we are to be successful.

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FRIENDS OF THE LOOMIS FOREST Box 1592, Tonasket, WA 98855 (509) 485-2201
NORTHWEST ECOSYSTEM ALLIANCE http://www.ecosystem.org/~nwea/ (360) 671-9950

MINK TRACKS

The Mass 4 were sentenced July 11th for their part in a Thanksgiving raid on the Carmel Mink Farm in 1996 where a dozen mink were released from their cages. It was the third raid of the year on the fur farm. The four accepted a plea and were ordered to pay $3,100 in restitution and given a year of probation.



On March 30, 1997 5 Americans were arrested and charged with releasing 1,800 mink from Belenheim Fur Farm in Chatham, Ontario, Canada. The same fur farm had been raided two weeks previously by the Earth Liberation Front. two of those arrested have allegedly testified against the other three, Hilma Rudy, Pat Dodson and Gary Yourofsky. Letters or donations can be sent via the Direct Action Defense Fund clearly marked "Chatham 3".

In Medina, Ohio three activists were arrested on July 8th following a raid on a mink farm where 40 mink were released from their cages. One of the three has testified against the other two, Jesse Parsh and Stephanie MacDougall. Though allegedly most the mink were recaptured, the fur farmer has verified that their breeding histories were ruined by letting them out of their cages.

Both Parsh and MacDougall have pled guilty to five felony counts and are out on bail awaiting sentencing. Both mink warriors have expressed no regret for their actions and say, "He's (the fur farmer) the one that's murdering 20,000 animals a year for profit, and we're the ones in jail." Letters and donations can be sent also to the DADF marked "Ohio 2".

In June there was a massive mink release from Arritola's Fur Farm in Mount Angel, Oregon where almost 10,000 mink were released from their cages. And in July 4,000 mink were released by the ALF from a fur farm in Cle Elum, Washington.

I support these actions fully because of their destruction of breeding records that will cost fur farmers plenty when they attempt to breed their mink next year. The action in Mount Angel also will mean less revenue for the fur farmer because of mink kits who were seperated from their mothers thereby preventing their being raised for slaughter.



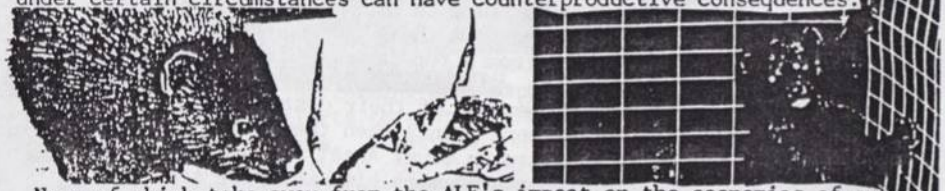
Also anytime you release a mink from its cage it stands a significantly greater chance at survival than any left behind.

But it's time the animal liberation movement stops living in the world of media fantasy and recognizes that though 100% successful, raids like the one at Mount Angel at that particular time of the year do indeed cause some animal suffering. The action caused extensive economic sabotage which is a primary objective of the ALF, but it also cost young mink kits their lives by seperating them from their mothers and probably led to vicious fights between other animals also released.



Mink are naturally ferocious animals. There number one predator in the wild is other mink who fight eachother over territory. Often on fur farms and during mink rehabilitation I have witnessed mink fighting with eachother when placed together. Other times I've seen many mink living together just beyond a fur farm they escaped from. Mink do not always run off happily when you open their cages. Often a mink will mill about its new surrondings eating food that has fallen beneath cages or trying to get at another mink in a cage. I have also seen mink who as they saw the mobile gas chambers approaching did everthing they could to escape from their imminent death. Given an ample opportunity a mink will escape the surronding guard fence if it also has been cut, and explore its new surrondings all the while getting further from the fur farm until it locates an area of its own where it can establish its own territory.

But in the middle of the night thousands of mink released who are only two months old can more than expect death. A death that does not put money in the fur farmers pocket, but a death nonetheless. This is a reality that we as animal liberationists would rather not face and instead bask in the glory of believing that thousands of mink are now free, but if we are to represent more than just rhetorical press statements that deny the truth as much as our opposition, we need to accept that mink liberations under certain circumstances can have counterproductive consequences.



None of which take away from the ALF's impact on the economics of an individual fur farm, but which result in "collateral damages" that sometimes cost the lives of individual mink.

In 1991 when friends and I bought out a fur farm (see S.H.#1) with 60 mink we knew that as they were, these mink had about a 50% chance of survival in the wild with no rehabilitation whatsoever. That wasn't good enough. We wanted guarantees that these mink would have the best chance possible of survival so we implemented a variety of rehabilitative processes to increase their likelihood. The most important and controversial was live feeding of animals just before their release. This gave them a taste for blood that every predator has imprinted in their DNA.

Next we chose isolated wilderness areas for release in Spring when prey was abundant and after the mink had a whole winter to build up reserves of body fat. By the time we released the mink they all had proven themselves efficent in hunting and had been isolated from human contact during rehabilitation. These were precautions we could afford as our actions were only technically illegal, but not identical to the midnight raids of the ALF.

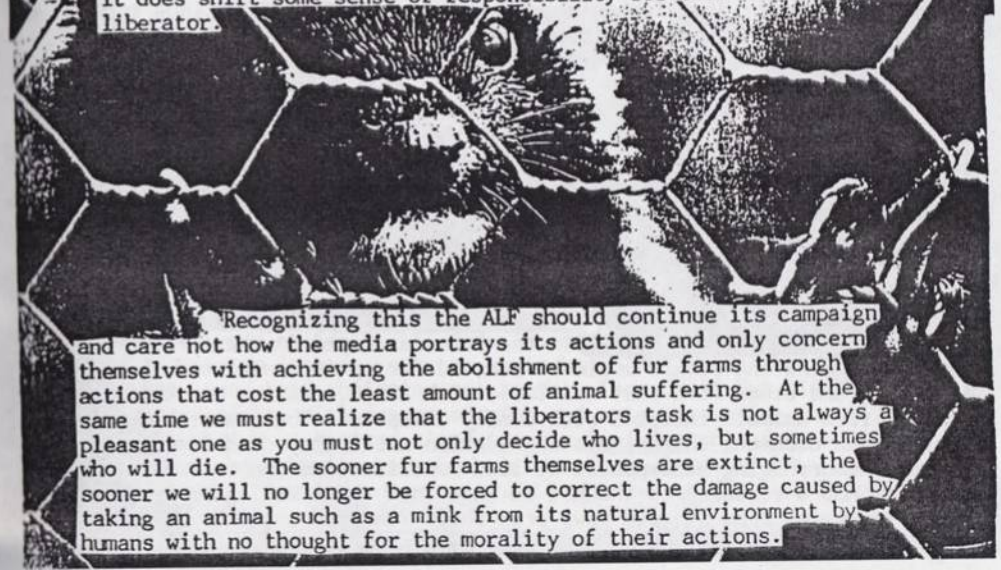
Personally I can only say that as an animal liberator there are many moral dillemas one must accept before you can rush out and save lives. All of which must be equally weighed so as to preserve our own moral integrity and maintain the degree of responsibility we as animal liberators have chosen to accept.

The raid at Mount Angel was a good thing. It spared the lives of thousands of mink by preventing their birth as a result of destroying breeder mink records. It also seperated mink mothers from their kits who were too young to survive on their own, and as a result spared them a life of misery in a cage awaiting a painful death.

Whether a mink choses to die while young before it has time to suffer 7 short months of life, or live out its existence to die in a gas chamber is the question that animal liberators must address. I feel it is best to acknowledge these truths than fool ourselves into believing that 10,000 mink are happily roaming the Oregon countryside.

Otherwise we too become humans who in a position of domination attempt to hide the reality of our actions with spin doctoring in the mass media. I believe it best to accept that yes, the ALF's mink liberation campaign is pushing fur farmers closer to bankruptcy, but unfortunately in isolated circumstances at the cost of many present prisoners in the cages.

Their death on fur farms is a fordrawn conclusion. The ALF's actions might sometimes result in the premature deaths of some mink, but if so, it is only denying them their short life of misery. Still it does shift some sense of responsibility for that death onto the liberator.



Recognizing this the ALF should continue its campaign and care not how the media portrays its actions and only concern themselves with achieving the abolishment of fur farms through actions that cost the least amount of animal suffering. At the same time we must realize that the liberators task is not always a pleasant one as you must not only decide who lives, but sometimes who will die. The sooner fur farms themselves are extinct, the sooner we will no longer be forced to correct the damage caused by taking an animal such as a mink from its natural environment by humans with no thought for the morality of their actions.

In testimony before a House Appropriations subcommittee on March 12, 1997 FBI Director Louis Freeh cited my involvement with the arson at Michigan State University's mink research facility in 1992 as an example of "special interest terrorism". Cal Thomas, a nationally syndicated columnist recieved national attention when he ran with this, stating that PETA's finacial assistance with my legal fees as well as their past and continued defense of ALF actions proves that "these people have condoned violence to advance their cause."



Considering that the ALF has never caused nor sustained a physical injury in its 15 years of existence in this country we must than assume that the violence that Louie and Cal are talking about is the destruction of government and private property.

In the case of the ALF's raid at MSU, US government and Mink Farmers Research Foundation funds were used to forcibly feed and infect mink and otters with known deadly toxins and diseases. These experiments were not done with the aim of saving human lives or protecting the environment, they were done to aid fur farmers who need to lower their costs of production if they are to survive the reduction in the demand for their product, mink pelts.

None of the diseases researched by Richard Aulerich at MSU are found in mink in the wild. They are all the product of intensive confinement on fur farms. Other experiments at MSU involved the force-feeding of PCB infected fish to captive mink and otters to "study" the impact on wildlife from paper mills and other industries which pump pollutants into the Great Lakes ecosystem.

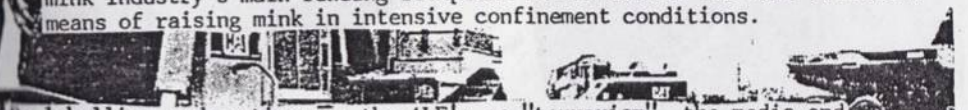
Personally, I dont think it takes a rocket scientist to conclude that over 200 PCB producing industrial smoke stacks and discharge pipes might be the cause for widespread wildlife depletion in the Great Lakes.

What such experiments allow is a strategy of inaction which allows corporations to continue to pollute in violation of Environmental Protection Agency guidelines while the problems are "studied" further. At MSU mink and otters must pay the price for this type of what I call special interest terrorism where the environment and wildlife are forced to suffer so as to not interrupt the profits of the fur industry and polluters of the Great Lakes ecosystem.



In the labs destroyed in the ALF's 1992 raid mink and otters would be starved for up to a week and then fed fish and other feed that was laced with PCB's, dioxins and brain matter from animals infected with deadly diseases. The researchers would than document the animals degradation until they died from severe hemorrhaging accompanied by loud vocalizations and convulsions. Some of MSU's researchers thought it cute that their collegues had made keychains from severed paws from their research subjects.

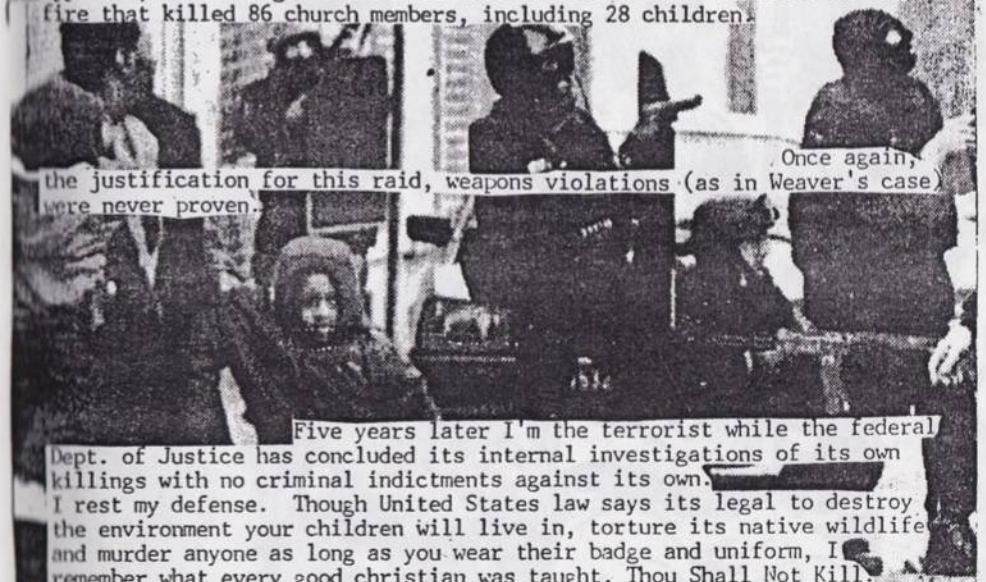
Until mink and otters (both aquatic animals) were used in these grisly experiments, they were housed in wire cages barely 12 inches wide and with the otters, in slightly larger cages. The ALF's raid rescued two of these mink which were later released in a wildlife refuge, but more importantly for the researchers, a fire was started in their laboratory that destroyed 32 years of animal research data that could have aided fur farmers in staying in business. Up until the raid, MSU was the mink industry's main funding recipient in its search for more efficient means of raising mink in intensive confinement conditions.



By labelling such actions as the ALF's as "terrorism", the media and Dept. of Justice's FBI is saying that polluting our environment and intentionally poisoning wildlife (which is illegal outside of the labs) is not only perfectly legal, but interference with such practices constitutes acts of terrorism. Once again, we are talking about the destruction not of life, but of the facilities and equipment used to destroy it. Now let us look at the pot that is calling the kettle black.



In August of 1992, just 5 months after the ALF's MSU raid the FBI raided the mountain home of Randy Weaver in Idaho shooting his dog, 14-year old son Samuel and his wife Vicki dead. It is believed that the raid was instigated by Weaver's refusal to infiltrate white supremist groups for the FBI. One year later to the day from the ALF's raid federal agents raided the Branch Davidian church in Waco, Texas killing 6 church members. In the first assault and later with Louis Freeh's boss Janet Reno's approval, federal agents launched another attack which resulted in the fire that killed 86 church members, including 28 children.



Once again, the justification for this raid, weapons violations (as in Weaver's case) were never proven.

Five years later I'm the terrorist while the federal Dept. of Justice has concluded its internal investigations of its own killings with no criminal indictments against its own.

I rest my defense. Though United States law says its legal to destroy the environment your children will live in, torture its native wildlife and murder anyone as long as you wear their badge and uniform, I remember what every good christian was taught. Thou Shall Not Kill.

I sleep well at night, with dreams of mink and otters swimming free.

I am ready to meet my maker and stand proudly in judgement of my actions.

But to those whose legalized crimes include the fiery death of innocent children and animals, I and the Creator shall ask, Who is the real Terrorist?

NEXT ISSUE: FIND OUT JUST WHO IS THE REAL TERRORIST

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