

Miscellaneous news items

Fifth Estate Collective

1977

POLICE HALT ATOM DEMO

On February 19, thousands of heavily armed riot police were massed on the Elbe River just outside of Brokdorf, W. Germany to prevent 10,000 demonstrators from occupying the site of a new nuclear power station as had been done on a previous occasion (see last issue).

Reports of anywhere from 3 to 6,000 police, backed up by para-military frontier police, mobile water cannons and helicopters, were positioned in the area to repel the protest.

Part of their defenses included a moat, barbed wire obstacles, a five-yard high fence and hundreds of police with automatic weapons manning sandbag barricades set up across all access roads about six miles from the site. It seemed they were ready for business.

Because of such heavy police precautions, the demonstration took place in the near-by city of Brokdorf with Reuters news service reporting that 30 people who headed for the plant were arrested.



Protest at Brokdorf, W. Germany, 1977

ANARCHIST FREED

As we were putting this issue of the FE together, we received a letter from our comrade Stuart Christie in Scotland. In his letter was the good news that Ronan Stenson, who was arrested with Noel and Marie Murray for the murder of an Irish cop, was released from custody last month and all charges against him have been dropped.

Ronan was arrested in October 1975 by Irish police and was told that he was going to be taken to the mountains to be shot. Instead, he was beaten with a hammer and whipped with a nylon rope, as well as the "normal" methods of fist beatings, humiliation and intimidation. When some sort of statement had been beaten out of him, he was taken to Curragh Military Prison where an army doctor examined him and found extensive bruises on various parts of his body.

The physical and psychological affects of the beatings given to Ronan were so extensive that he was on the verge of a mental breakdown and collapsed into tears whenever he was asked questions about the ordeal. The dropping

of the charges by the Irish court is tantamount to an admission of the torture used in obtaining a “confession” from him.

Christie also informed us that reports indicate Ronan is recovering quickly. More information has been promised in the near future.

As for the Murrays, things do not seem to have changed over the last month, with Noel serving a life sentence at hard labor while Marie is to have a new trial before a special criminal court on the charge of murder. Their execution was halted by the Irish Supreme Court in December.

Although saved from death at the hands of the state, the Murrays remain the victims of a frame-up. Letters of protest should be sent to: The Minister of Justice, 72–76 St. Stephens Green, Dublin, Eire.

Related articles on the Murray case: Search FE

VIETNAM: WHO'S VICTORY?

Our cynical speculation that Vietnam was preparing to invite back foreign oil companies to exploit that country's natural resources and labor force (See FE Oct. 1976) was confirmed in an article tucked away in the business section of the January 27, 1977 *New York Times*.

It was reported that the Southeast Asian country is planning to create its own state oil company and “will shortly approve a detailed foreign-investment code designed to pave the way this year for the large scale entry of foreign oil companies and other major international private investors.”

The state bureaucrats of Vietnam are anxious to reverse the disastrous balance of trade situation affecting them and have already signed a letter of intent with the French multi-national corporation, Comex, to develop the port of Vung Tau into a major oil-support facility.

While more deals are being sought with other foreign firms, the most startling speculation is that the Vietnamese Directorate of Oil and Gas is preparing to invite back the same American firms previously expelled at the time of the triumph of the “revolution” in 1975, to continue its development of Vietnam's off-shore oil deposits.



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