

Anarchists Arrested in Britain

Johnny G.

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Attacking what they call “terrorists” and “idealistic persons” who would take “positive steps” to overthrow society, the British government’s elite Special Branch and Anti-terrorist Squad (ATS) have conducted a series of raids designed to create an atmosphere of conspiracy and suspicion.

The raids, generally directed against leftist groups and anarchists, have proven to be at times little more than acts of sheer buffoonery. One carefully planned foray into an assumed “den of anarchy” on the part of ATS landed the Special Branch in a legally licensed night club in North London which had been occupied by a political group two years earlier. In Highbury the ATS broke into a flat after bashing down the door with a sledge hammer and took three family photo albums; and in Finsbury Park on a raid, they arrested one person for a small quantity of dope.

Nevertheless, the ATS has recently arrested six “suspected” terrorists under Britain’s Anti-terrorist Act, legislation which allows the Crown to hold suspects seven days without bringing charges and, further more, denies suspects their right to legal counsel during the same period.

Despite the extra-ordinary leeway offered by the new law, the ATS saw fit to charge the six suspects (Ronan Bennette, Iris Mills, Dafydd Ladd, Stewart Carr, Vincent Stevenson and Trevor Dawton) with “conspiracy to cause explosions with people known and unknown” within twenty four hours of their arrest.

To call attention to the bogus aspect of the conspiracy charge, several groups in England have pointed out that there have been no known terrorist bombings in the country for over two years. From information made public by the ATS itself, the charges against the anarchists have been brought on the basis of a length of wire and some weed-killer discovered at the home of Bennette and Mills. And the Special Branch is reported to be searching for four more suspects.

Contacted by long distance by a comrade in Britain, the FE has been informed that the conspiracy charge is “nothing more” than a holding action and that the ATS is really interested in the anarchists in connection with a series of alleged bank and supermarket robberies. The comrade also reports that two months after detention of the suspects the ATS claims to have suddenly “uncovered” a cache of automatic weapons and “thousands of rounds” of ammunition. Surprisingly enough, this “discovery” took place the day after an hysterical report in *The Daily Mail* claimed that police had detained a group of extremists “with a hidden arsenal of weapons and explosives, thought to be planning attacks on several establishments.”

The six suspects, including one woman, Iris Mills, are being detained without bail in London’s all-male Brixton Prison.

In order to create conspiracy evidence the Special Branch confiscated photos from a member of the anarchist group Black Flag, Phil Ruff, and from the homes of the suspects, the idea being to identify and associate the detainees by demonstrating that they had been photographed together.

A recent issue of the London weekly *Time Out* headlined “Weedkiller to Overthrow Society” reports firsthand on a hearing held at Lambeth Magistrates Court. Detective Inspector Peter Bradbury said that “no explosive devices”

had been found at the raided Bayswater flat, but there had been weedkiller which Bradbury said he believed could be used to help make explosives and, also “other items.”

“What are they?” asked Grant.

“I would hesitate to expose them” said detective Bradbury.

Time Out continues: The “weedkiller factor” calls to mind the last main period of anti-terrorist squad activity in 1974. At that time they raided a series of houses and confiscated several packets of Tampax, which “could have been used as bomb fuses”.

The current line of police inquiry is attempting to “pin” something on the six suspects in an attempt to justify their detention in the first place.

Iris Mills, who was working in an antique shop at the time of her arrest, is the only woman in Brixton prison, so she is in virtual solitary confinement 24 hours a day. All six prisoners are being held in category A, conditions of top security, and Mills is the first woman to be held in the men’s prison since the Irish Republican Price sisters were held there in 1975. It is thought that the effects of prolonged isolation are intended to force incoherency, disorientation, and a “crack-up”.

FE staff note: If you would like more information or would like to help support the defense of these six comrades, write: Persons Unknown, Box 123, 182 Upper Street, London N. 1, England

You can also send letters to the six via the prison they’re presently being held at (they’re being held in top security, so we can’t say what chance letters will have in getting through):

Brixton Prison, Jebb Avenue, London SW2 England

STOP THE PRESS:

July 26. People wearing flak jackets and armed with pistols raided two addresses in Bristol. On July 27, at their weekly remand hearing each defendant received further charges as follows. Trevor Dawton and Vince Stevenson, possession six weapons and ammunition; Taff Ladd, possession of weapon; Iris Mills, Ronan Bennett, possession of three weapons; Stewart Carr, four robbery charges. All six are being held without bail and the main hearing is not expected to come about until the first month of next year! [FE staff]

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“British Anarchists Given Bail,” FE#296, January 29, 1979.

“British Anarchists Found Not Guilty,” FE #301, February 26, 1980.



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