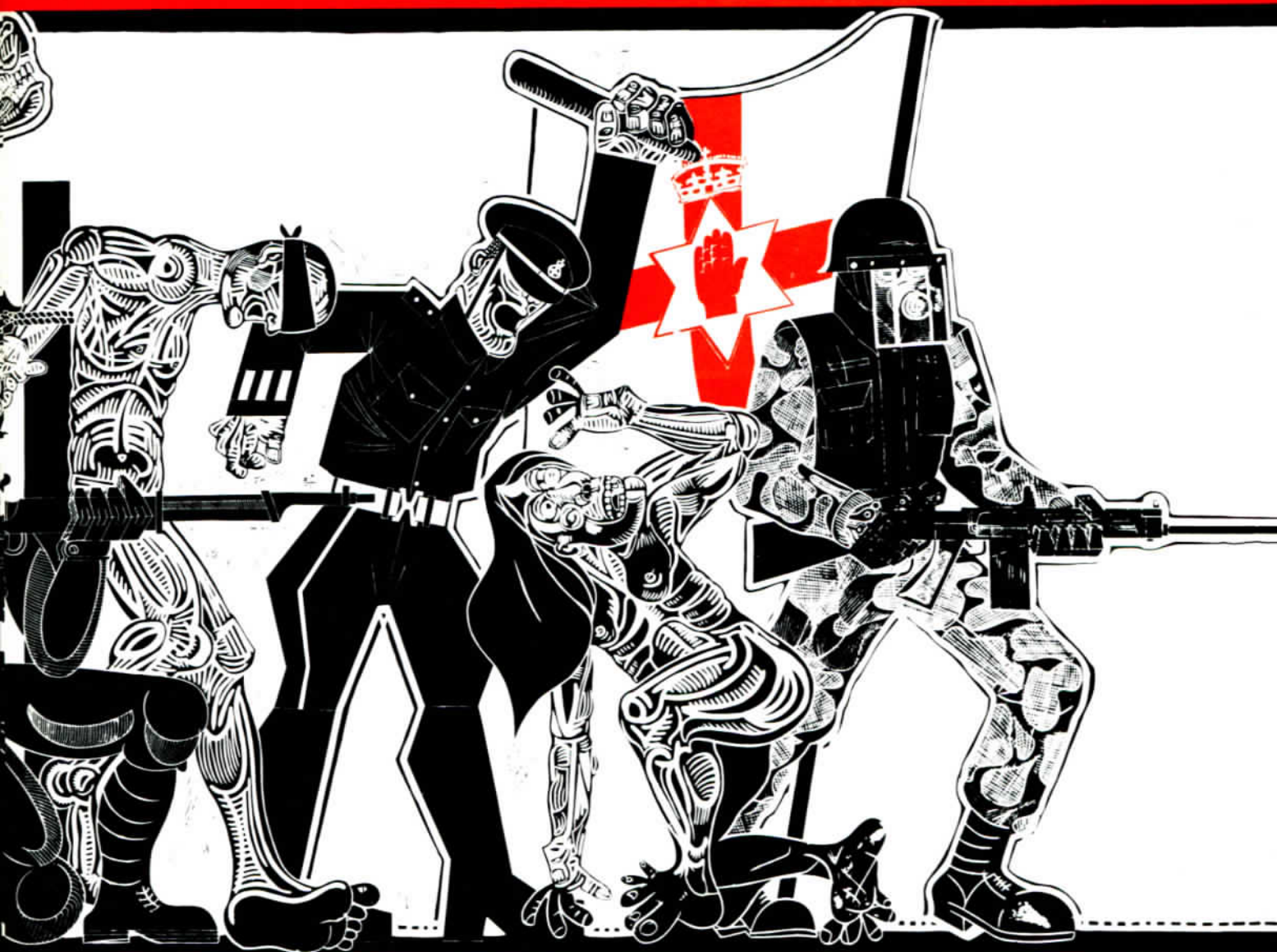


# IRELAND

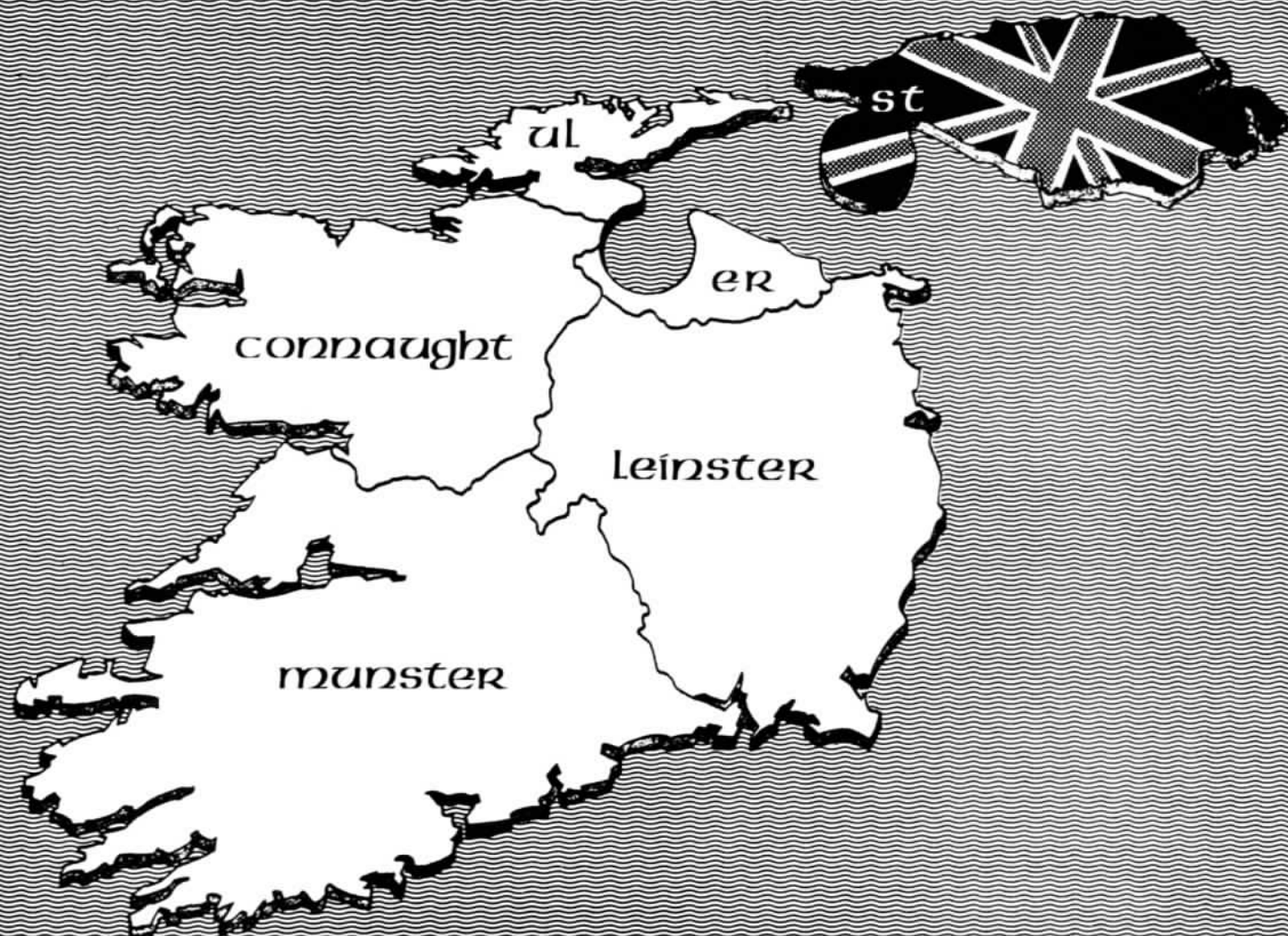
## VOICES FOR WITHDRAWAL



90p

'The moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned, the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, common prudence and common sense, and to act with the barbarity of tyrants and the fatuity of idiots.'

Sydney Smith (1771-1845)



'You can no more split Ireland into two parts than you can split England or Scotland into parts. Ireland is a nation; not two nations, but one nation. There are few cases in history, and, as a student of history in a humble way, I myself know of none, of a nationality at once so distinct, so persistent, and so assimilative as the Irish.'

H. H. Asquith, Prime Minister 1908-1915, Hansard vol. xxxix col. 787

'The first question is: Is Ulster to deny the rights of the rest of Ireland to self-government? We say, "No, emphatically not". Arising out of that, and a somewhat narrower question, is this: Is Ulster going to deny the right of Ireland ever to speak and act and govern itself as a united nationality? We say, "No, emphatically not".'

Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister 1924, 1929-1935, Hansard vol. xlix col. 938

'If you asked the people of Ireland what plan they would accept, by an emphatic majority they would say, "We want independence and an Irish Republic." There is absolutely no doubt about that. The elected representatives of Ireland, now by a clear majority, have declared in favour of independence.'

David Lloyd-George, Prime Minister 1916-1922, Hansard vol. cxxvii col. 1322



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# 60 years of partition: 11 years of war

IN 1968 world attention was focussed on the north of Ireland for the first time in 50 years. Suddenly the world became aware, through the civil rights marches and the violent response to them, that within the United Kingdom was a strange, anomalous, indeed monstrous province.

It was a province where there was no such thing as 'one person one vote'. A gerrymandered province, where a third of the population was systematically excluded from political life, from equal opportunities and from decent housing. A province maintained by an armed police force, by an armed special constabulary and by permanent emergency legislation.

In 1968 the nationalist people of Northern Ireland went onto the streets to demand their rights. Police and loyalists opposed them. A year later, in response to a request from the Northern Ireland Government, the British Government sent in thousands of troops to back up the existing garrison.

When the troops were sent in we were told they were going to keep the peace. We were told that democracy was going to be introduced. Yet where do we find ourselves today?

Some 13,000 troops remain on the streets. The police force – the Royal Ulster Constabulary – is still armed, and numbers 7,500 regulars and nearly 5,000 reservists. The Ulster Defence Regiment – the locally recruited wing of the British army which includes many former 'B' Specials – has 7,900 members.

Since 1969 over 2,000 people have been killed and many thousands have suffered

**Northern Ireland**  
Area 5,000 sq. miles  
Pop. 1,500,000

**Irish Republic**  
Area 27,000 sq. miles  
Pop. 3 million

serious injury. The unemployed youth of England, Scotland and Wales are still being signed up to kill and be killed by the unemployed youth of Northern Ireland.

Britain has repeatedly been shamed in the eyes of the world for the torture of prisoners. The prison population of Northern Ireland swelled from 600 prisoners in 1969 to 3,000 in 1978. Many of these have been imprisoned through special courts in which the right of jury trial has been abolished and for which the rules of evidence have been altered. Britain has responded to prisoners' demands for political status with unremitting punishment and the denial of human rights.

The political life of Britain, too, is being poisoned. Under the 1984-style Prevention of Terrorism Act a person can be deported



From the 'Mirror' front page, 14 August 1978

from one part of the UK to another with no charges being brought and without knowing the reasons for their deportation. The statistics show that the Act is used primarily as a weapon to intimidate the Irish community and deter them from political activity.

Despite cosmetic legislation in Northern Ireland, conditions have scarcely changed for the Catholic population. At around 13%, unemployment is twice the British average, while a Fair Employment Agency report has shown pockets of Catholic unemployment approaching 50% in parts of West Belfast, Strabane and Newry. Catholics in work have the worst jobs and lowest pay. Over a quarter of all families in Northern Ireland live below the official poverty line, and a third of the housing there is below standard.

Yet Northern Ireland receives an annual subvention from the British taxpayer of some £1000 million or more per year. So where is all this money going? For a start, a third of it goes on the army, the police, courts and prisons – unproductive expenditure which would be rendered unnecessary by a political solution to the 'troubles'.

Much of this money is, then, going not to those who need it most – but, arguably, to repress those who need it most.

## Partition

The situation we have outlined above – the presence of large numbers of troops and armed police, the continuing violence and death, the repeated use of torture, repressive legislation, discrimination – results from British governments' failure to come to terms with the fundamental cause of the renewal of war in the years following 1969.

For the problems of today, both political and economic, are directly attributable to the partitioning of Ireland 60 years ago, and the retention of the northeast corner of Ireland within the UK. So long as British governments fail to face up to this, there will

be no solution.

Partition was originally presented as a temporary compromise to reconcile the demands of the majority in Ireland, who were fighting for independence, and the demands of the minority – the descendants of British colonists – who wished Ireland as a whole to remain a British colony.

Partition allowed Britain to retain a strategic foothold in Ireland: while the setting up of a provincial Parliament allowed Britain to maintain the fiction that it was not Britain, but 'the people of Northern Ireland', who were putting obstacles in the way of Irish unity.

It was imposed by Britain against the wishes of the majority of people in Ireland, who had voted decisively in favour of independence in the 1918 General Election.

The border was drawn around six of the nine counties of Ulster. It was not based on considerations of history, geography, or

*In January 1920 Walter Long, chairman of a Cabinet committee on Ireland, went to the north of Ireland to gauge Unionist opinion. On 3 February he reported:*

**'Most of the people with whom I discussed this question were of the opinion that the whole of the province should be excluded; but on the other hand, the people in the inner circles hold the view that the new province should consist of the six counties, the idea being that the inclusion of Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan would provide such an access of strength to the Roman Catholic party, that the supremacy of the Unionists would be seriously threatened.'**

population. Rather, it enclosed an area in which there would be a potentially permanent majority (about 60%) of Unionists, while being large enough to be to some degree economically viable.

The principle economic effects were to retain Ireland's most industrialized areas within the UK, while cutting off Northern border towns from their natural hinterland.

The political effects were disastrous, and exacerbated the economic problems. Far from resolving the problem of the different national aspirations of Nationalists and Unionists, partition concentrated it explosively within the boundaries of the new province. Bloodshed marked the setting up of Northern Ireland, and its history since has been of recurring violence with periods of uneasy peace.

Within the new state, over a third of the population identified with the aspiration for a free united Ireland. They resented parti-



# Time Out

**TEN YEARS  
OF TROOPS  
IN IRELAND.  
THE FAILURE OF BRITISH  
PEACE KEEPING.**

## 1932 Dead.

## 20421 Injured.

## 26516 Shootings.

## 6309 Explosions.

## 3018 Bombs neutralised.

## 8076 Armed robberies.

## 2736 Malicious fires.

## £276,000,000 Damage compensation.

## £46,000,000 Injury compensation.

tion, felt apprehensive and isolated, and withheld their loyalty.

The Unionists were a minority in Ireland, but had hitherto held a position of dominance because of their role as guarantors of British rule. Now they had become a dominant majority within Northern Ireland, administering the province on Britain's behalf.

But they feared a further transfer to a minority position in an independent Ireland where they would no longer hold the whip hand. They feared the possibility of the dismantling of the border, whether by force or by the Nationalist population increasing so that the province would be voted into a united Ireland.

The Unionists' siege mentality, which had characterised their history in Ireland, intensified. While Britain turned a blind eye, they introduced draconian measures to preserve their position. Politically the province became virtually a police state. Economically it was developed to the advantage of the Unionist population – concentrated in the

two easternmost counties of Antrim and Down – while the Nationalist population throughout the province experienced persistent discrimination.

### The British response

Since 1968 the Unionists have shown no inclination to dispense with their siege mentality. Instead, their over-reaction to the civil rights marchers and the attacks on Nationalist ghettos provided the conditions for the growth of the Irish Republican Army – which was further fuelled by the deployment of the British army and its concentration on the Nationalist areas.

So long as partition exists, the Unionists will continue to see any moves towards equality of treatment for Nationalists as a threat both to their immediate privileges and to the very existence of the province. While Northern Ireland is administered as part of the UK, Britain cannot afford to alienate the Unionists completely, since they provide both the tools of the administration and the political support for the present

status of the province.

But while British/Unionist rule continues, with all its attendant injustices, there will be no end to the instability and violence.

Clearly the solution is to remove the perceived necessity for one section of the population to oppress the other by removing the cause of this: partition and the status of Northern Ireland as part of the UK.

But instead of facing up to that necessity, disengaging from Northern Ireland and encouraging the unity of Ireland, British governments have attempted to resolve the situation within the present political framework.

This has meant firstly the introduction of reforms: the disbandment of the 'B' Specials, the outlawing of discrimination, the abolition of Stormont, the removal of powers that were being abused by sectarian local councils. Such reforms have had little practical effect, because they rely for implementation on predominantly Unionist administrative structures.

Secondly, British governments have attempted – with decreasing optimism – to implement 'power-sharing'. In essence, this involves further complicating the political situation by introducing artificial structures to limit the powers of the Unionist majority – itself the artificial creation of partition in 1920. The attempts at introducing power-sharing – Sunningdale, the Convention, and the talks initiated by Tory Northern Ireland Secretary Humphrey Atkins – have repeatedly shattered on the rocks of Unionist intransigence. Indeed, the word 'power-sharing' has been dropped from the political vocabulary because of Unionist objections.

Thirdly, British governments have used force and repressive legislation. This has mainly been used against the Nationalist community – the largest Loyalist paramilitary organisation, the Ulster Defence Association, is still legal. Force has been used not simply to attempt to crush the IRA – which senior army officers have admitted is impossible – but to try to cow the Nationalist population into accepting the status quo. This has further alienated them, increased the resistance, and worsened the polarisation of the 'two communities'.

Ineffective reforms, a succession of collapsed political initiatives, the deployment of large numbers of troops and paramilitary police, attendant abuses of human rights: these are all Britain has to show for her

**'There is no blacker or fouler transaction in the history of man! We used the whole civil government of Ireland as an engine of wholesale corruption. We obtained that union . . . by wholesale bribery and unblushing intimidation.'**

*Gladstone on the Act of Union, 1800. Film-maker Kenneth Griffith used this quotation in his film Curious Journey, made for Harlech TV. Harlech wanted the quote cut out, and subsequently banned the film.*

activities in Northern Ireland since 1969.

The time is long overdue for the British Government to commit itself to withdrawal

from Northern Ireland and to encouraging the unity of the Irish people. This option has till now been unmentionable in senior political circles, but is – as opinion polls confirm – the option supported by a majority of people in both Britain and Ireland.

Two main reasons are given by British governments for their refusal to withdraw. The first is that 'the majority in Northern Ireland does not wish it'.

But it is either naive or cynical to place the future of Northern Ireland in the hands of less than 2% of the population of the United Kingdom as presently constituted. Further, as we have seen, the Unionists are a minority in Ireland and only became a majority by artificial and undemocratic means. By backing them with constitutional guarantees Britain interferes in Irish affairs, intervenes

**'If Callaghan says, "Sort it out for yourselves", fair enough. But we cannot sort it out while there is a British standing army in this country.'**

**'They say we should take the gun out of Irish politics. I agree. But if Britain wants the gun out of Irish politics, let them start with themselves, with their standing army of 15,000 guns.'**

**There are those who say that troops out now would pose problems. The only problem is one of mathematics – how to get 15,000 British soldiers on one ferry.'**  
*Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey, September 1976*

on behalf of one section of the population and blocks progress. In practice, Britain is continuing to use the views of the Unionists as an excuse for retaining political control over part of Ireland.

Experience since 1969 has proved conclusively that the Unionists will never willingly yield up what they see as their privileges. But without Britain's backing they would be unable to maintain this stance, and would have to make an accommodation with the rest of the people of Ireland and take their place as equal citizens.

The second reason repeatedly given by government spokespeople and other politicians objecting to withdrawal is that there will be a 'bloodbath', 'civil war' or 'Loyalist backlash'.

But Britain has probably had more experience of withdrawing from occupied colonies than any other country in the world: if the disengagement is carried out in a responsible manner there need be no 'bloodbath'. If it is properly thought about, there are ways in which violence can be avoided: for example, the RUC could be disarmed and the UDR disbanded, for they are the main source of arms and recruits for the Loyalist paramilitaries.

As the experience of decolonisation elsewhere shows, when it becomes obvious that there is no way of halting withdrawal, that the clock cannot be turned back, there is no further motivation for a 'backlash'.

The 'bloodbath' argument was used by the USA in trying to justify its presence in Vietnam, and is one of the arguments most

# We've allowed a war to go on for over ten years.



frequently used by imperialist powers when they do not wish to leave a colonised territory. It implies that the 'natives' are not capable of governing themselves. It is also a form of blackmail: a way of saying, 'If we go, the allies that we leave behind will give you worse.'

We should also remember that the Nationalist population of Northern Ireland, who are supposed to be most at risk in this

**'We urge the British government to express its interest in the unity of Ireland and to join with the government of Ireland in working to achieve peace and reconciliation.'**

*From the St. Patrick's Day statement, 14 March 1980, of Senator Edward Kennedy and 13 other prominent US political leaders.*

scenario, remain unafraid of continuing to call for an end to the union, believing that it will be possible for all sections in Ireland to

live in peace once the present political anomalies are resolved.

An unequivocal commitment by the British Government to withdraw from Ireland is the essential first step towards unblocking the continuing political deadlock. It is the first step towards ending the violence, loss of life, abuses of human rights and the political and economic subjugation of one section of the community that have characterised the 60 years of Northern Ireland's existence. Without such a commitment, the next decade will be as disastrous as the last. This would be both tragic and unnecessary.

The Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland is a coordinating group which is supported by a wide variety of individuals and organisations who – while their positions may differ in some respects – share a belief in the fundamental necessity of a British withdrawal from Ireland.

We present this booklet as a contribution towards forwarding the campaign for withdrawal and towards a speedy resolution of 'Ireland's British problem'.



# Opinion polls and British withdrawal from Ireland

**OPINION POLLS** of varying quality in both Britain and the South of Ireland consistently show a majority in favour of British withdrawal from Northern Ireland. The one substantial survey done in Northern Ireland in recent years showed a majority of Catholics to be in favour of British withdrawal, while a majority of Protestants were against.

## Britain

In the spring of 1978 a Gallup poll done for the BBC's Panorama programme showed that 53% of British people thought that the Government should declare its intention to withdraw 'whether the Northern majority has or has not indicated its consent'. Of these, 27% thought that no specific date should be given, while some 26% said there should be a fixed date. 30% thought a withdrawal 'would not be helpful', while the remaining 17% said, 'Don't know'.

A survey whose results were published in the Economic and Social Research Institute report of October 1979 showed 56% of British people in favour of withdrawal, again regardless of the opinion of the majority in Northern Ireland. 33% disagreed with withdrawal, while 11% didn't know.

When asked their views on the future of Northern Ireland, only 25% of respondents in this survey (based on a sample of 1,027 people) were in favour of retaining the constitutional link with Britain. 21% favoured a united Ireland, 24% favoured an independent North (a far higher percentage than in either part of Ireland), and 30% didn't know.

## Ireland

There have been two major surveys of public opinion in Ireland relating to the question of Northern Ireland.

In May 1979 the Northern Ireland Attitude Survey: an Initial Report was published. This survey was done under the direction of E.P. Moxon-Browne of Queen's University, Belfast. After two preliminary surveys, the main survey was carried out in the summer and autumn of 1978, based on a sample of 1,277 people. A book giving a final analysis of the results is planned for the end of 1981.

In October 1979 the Dublin-based Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) published the first report of a major study on attitudes

in the South of Ireland. Data was collected in July to September 1978, using a sample of 1,758 people. This report also utilised the Moxon-Browne findings and a survey done in Britain – referred to above – for purposes of comparison.

## The South of Ireland

The ESRI survey showed overwhelming support in the South of Ireland for a unilateral British withdrawal (i.e. a withdrawal whether the Northern majority agrees or not) and for a united Ireland.

70.8% thought there should be a unilateral British withdrawal, while 25.5% disagreed and 3.8% didn't know. Even more – 77.8% – supported the view that the British Government should announce its intention to withdraw at a fixed date in the future, while 18% disagreed and 4.2% didn't know.

There was also a strong majority – 67.9% – in favour of a united Ireland. Of these, 41.2% favoured a unitary system of government, while 26.7% favoured a federal system. (Of the remainder, 5.1% thought the North should remain part of the UK with a devolved government, 3.5% thought it should be under UK direct rule, 9.8% thought it should be independent, and 11% thought it should be under joint British-Irish control, with a devolved government of its own.)

**The most controversial aspect of the ESRI survey proved to be its finding that 21% of people in the South support IRA activities and 41% are sympathetic to their motives.**

The figures broke down as follows:

IRA's activities:	oppose	60.5%
	neutral	18.7%
	support	20.7%
IRA's motives:	reject	33.5%
	neutral	24.6%
	sympathetic	41.8%

Critics of this finding pointed out that a survey carried out for the BBC the previous year (which also found 72% in the South in favour of withdrawal) found only 2% supporting the IRA. However, in defence of the ESRI report others responded that the BBC survey asked people only if they supported IRA 'violence' – a highly emotive term likely to provoke a negative response.

## The North of Ireland

There are major problems associated with polling in the North that are not found either in the South or in Britain. Firstly, there has been what Moxon-Browne calls

'survey saturation' of Northern Ireland. Secondly, the British army frequently conducts surveys to add to its computer picture of the population. Others conducting surveys may be suspected of feeding information to the security forces. So people – especially those living in Nationalist areas – are likely either to refuse to give their opinions or to give inaccurate answers. (It would be impossible, for example, to obtain an accurate view of attitudes towards anti-State violence – because to say you support it is the first step towards a prison sentence.)

Thus 16.2% of all those approached for the Moxon-Browne survey refused to answer all or more than half of the questions. His effective interview rate was 63.9%, compared with a response rate of 87.0% in a similar survey conducted by Richard Rose in 1968.

Where people live is also very important. A Catholic working class person living in an area heavily monitored by the British army is likely to give a different response to a similar person living in a different type of area. But none of the surveys – while they may give a class breakdown – give details of where respondents lived.

These limitations must be borne in mind when we assess the results of surveys done in Northern Ireland. In these circumstances an extensive, carefully prepared survey such as Moxon-Browne's, despite the limitations, is likely to give a more accurate picture than the type of 'instant' polls conducted for television companies. His survey is very detailed, and only a few of its findings can be given here.

**The survey reveals a deep division on the national question. A large majority of Catholics aspire to Irish nationality, while most Protestants reject this.**

The survey found that 76% of Catholic respondents thought of themselves as Irish, as opposed to 20% of Protestants. (Interestingly, a smaller proportion of Catholics in social class E, unskilled workers, thought of themselves as British – 10.7% – than in any other social class.)

82.8% of Catholics agreed with the statement that 'a united Ireland is a worthwhile objective provided it can be achieved by peaceful means' (they were not apparently asked about non-peaceful means, and in any event this would have been unlikely to prompt honest answers). 70.7% of Protestants disagreed with this.

71.3% of Catholics agreed with the statement that there would be no peace until partition was ended, while 64.4% of Protestants disagreed. 69.2% of Catholics disagreed with the statement that 'the Irish Government should remove from its Constitution the claim to Northern Ireland', while 91.4% of Protestants agreed. 66.2% of Catholics agreed with the statement that 'the British Government should announce its intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland at a fixed date in the future': 15.6% of Protestants agreed with this.

The survey does however indicate that, while the majority of Catholics aspire to a united Ireland, a substantial proportion – 39.3% – would be prepared to accept the interim solution of 'Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK with a devolved government based on power-sharing, that is, guaranteeing the Catholic minority a right to be part of the government'. 35% of Protestants said they found this acceptable too – but, crucially, 37.9% of Protestants preferred its polar opposite, 'Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK with a devolved government based on majority rule'. (The idea of an independent Northern Ireland, which provoked a favourable reaction from British respondents, was supported by only 3.2% of Protestants and 3.3% of Catholics. Direct rule by the UK was supported by 15.8% of Protestants and 9.3% of Catholics.)

When the results of the Moxon-Browne survey were published, the press used the evidence of favourable Catholic attitudes to power-sharing to distort the survey's findings. It was widely reported that '50% of Catholics want to remain part of the UK.'

This 50% figure was obtained by taking the 39.3% who said power-sharing was 'acceptable', and adding to it the 1% who opted for remaining part of the UK with majority rule and the 9.3% who supported direct rule. The remaining 50% opted for solutions outside the UK.

So if we look again at the 50% of Catholics whom the press described as 'wanting to remain within the UK', we find that four out of five of them made no such positive statement, but simply said they would find power-sharing acceptable. The evidence quoted earlier shows that in fact a large majority of Catholics aspire to Irish nationality.

This aspiration does not clash

# Economic and social conditions in Northern Ireland

## Unemployment

UNEMPLOYMENT in Northern Ireland hovers between 11.5% and 13.5% – twice the British average. This figure disguises the plight of Catholics, who suffer especially severely.

Partition and the endemic sectarianism of Northern Ireland are responsible for this. Partition cut off mainly Catholic border towns, such as Derry and Newry, from their natural hinterlands, causing them to wither into economic insignificance. Then the infrastructure – roads, railways, electricity stations – was developed in the eastern Protestant-dominated part of the province, while the mainly Catholic area to the west of the river Bann was neglected. Systematic discrimination against Catholics in job allocation compounded the situation.

Thus in the west in mid-1979 Strabane had an unemployment rate of 28.5%, Newry had 24.6%, Cookstown had 23% and Derry 18%.

Within the eastern counties, the relatively low 9% unemployment rate for Belfast disguises the very high rate in Catholic West Belfast. While unemployment in Protestant East Belfast is around 8%, in West Belfast it is far higher, as this January 1978 breakdown shows:

	Men and women aged 16-65	Adult males
Ballymurphy/New Barnsley	74.6%	49.2%
Whiterock	68.6%	30.2%
Lower Falls	67.7%	27.9%
Andersonstown	64.3%	18.1%

In January 1978 a survey by the Fair Employment Agency (FEA) showed that Catholics outnumber Protestants on the dole queue by nearly three to one. It also showed that a disproportionately high number of Catholics are employed in unskilled jobs.

Another study by the FEA published in January 1980 showed that in the last generation Catholics have tended to move down the jobs

ladder more commonly than Protestants, and suggested that the proportion of Catholics in low status jobs could increase in the next decade.

## Housing

While Protestant working class homes in some areas are in equally poor condition as those of Catholics, once again Catholics suffer particularly badly. This is due firstly to decades of sectarian housing allocation, and secondly to the fact that thousands of Catholics, threatened by Loyalist pogroms, have fled from mixed areas to the relative safety of areas like West Belfast.

A survey done on behalf of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, published in September 1979, concluded that Belfast had the worst housing conditions in Western Europe. More than 20% of the city's homes lacked four out of five of the basic amenities – bath, kitchen sink, wash basin, inside lavatory and hot and cold water.

The report showed that 14% of households in Belfast are overcrowded. Overcrowding is worst in the Catholic west of the city: the proportion of vacant dwellings in Protestant areas is relatively high.

To alleviate the problem of overcrowding in West Belfast, a plan was put forward for 4,000 houses in the new Poleglass development. But due to Loyalist pressure, only 2,000 houses are now projected.

## Children

A Child Poverty Action Group report in August 1978 said that there is 75% more child poverty in Northern Ireland than in Britain.

In March 1979 a report by an Ulster Polytechnic team showed that there are far fewer day care facilities for children of working mothers than in Britain. There are fewer nursery schools, playgrounds and childminders, and virtually no creches or day nurseries.

## Payments for Debt Act

The problems of the Catholic poor in particular have been exacerbated

by the Payments for Debt Act. This allows the state to deduct directly from people's benefits – unemployment, sickness, pensions, family allowances etc. – where they owe money to state bodies for rent, rates, tax, public services or mortgage instalments. Deductions can also be made from the wages of state employees.

The Act was introduced in 1971 to combat the Rent and Rates strike, which had been organised in Catholic areas with the encouragement of SDLP politicians as a protest against internment. Initially aimed at the strikers alone, it was twice extended by the Labour Government: first, in March 1976, to cover the collection of all rent and rates debts, and then in early 1978 to cover all public debt, including electricity and gas.

Current rates of deduction are about 12%-13% of a person's, or couple's, income on benefits, plus a 'collection charge' of 50p per week.

## Investment

Government investment in Northern Ireland is largely a propaganda exercise, to suggest that 'something is being done' about the chronic unemployment, but has had little practical effect on the economic situation.

Exceptionally generous handouts are given to industries investing in the North, including capital grants at 50%, 50% research and development grants, and until recently electricity charges at half the domestic rate. £700 million has been made available for industrial incentives over the next five years.

But the type of grants offered are most attractive to technology-based, capital-intensive industries, which do little to solve the unemployment problem.

The last Labour Government invested £52 million in grant aid in John Z. de Lorean's controversial sports car plant on the outskirts of West Belfast. But as the company requires mainly skilled labour, the bulk of the 2,000 jobs promised will

in fact go to Protestants.

## The British subvention

The subvention paid by British taxpayers to Northern Ireland is estimated at between £1,000 million and £1,500 million per year, and may in fact be more. The subvention is the money spent over and above the amount received from Northern Ireland in taxes etc. (The sum is the equivalent of Britain's contribution to the EEC.)

A third of this money is spent on 'security'. £238 million goes on police, courts and prisons. £80 million is the official figure for the additional cost of stationing troops there, over the basic cost of maintaining them. Not only have the security forces been exempted from the public spending cuts which will be implemented in Northern Ireland, but the RUC is to be increased from 6,500 to 7,500.

Further, phenomenal sums are spent on compensation. Between 1 October 1978 and 2 February 1980, £309,400,000 was paid out in compensation for damage to property alone.

Thus over half the subvention, far from going to those who need it, is spent on repressive or unproductive areas as a direct result of the unresolved political situation.

## The future

A British withdrawal and a united Ireland would provide the conditions for resolving Northern Ireland's economic problems. The border towns would be reunited with their hinterlands. The sectarian allocation of resources, jobs and housing would cease. The six counties would no longer be a peripheral region of the UK, but a major part of the Irish economy. A united Irish labour movement would be in a far stronger position to pursue the interests of the working class. And British aid, were it to continue over a period, would no longer be spent on 'security' and propaganda investments, but on reconstruction.

## Opinion polls and British withdrawal from Ireland, continued from previous page

with a willingness to accept a genuine power-sharing arrangement, whether in the short or long term, since this could in theory solve some problems faced by the Catholic population.

But experience from 1974 has shown that power-sharing is

unworkable, since it is unacceptable to a majority of Unionists. However the evidence of the survey shows that the vast majority of Catholics would be unwilling to accept a UK solution in any other form, and would certainly prefer some kind of united Ireland to the other

options.

The survey confirms, as Moxon-Browne points out, the intractable difficulties that face any attempts at resolving the problem within the framework of the Northern Ireland state. Quite simply, there is no 'solution' that satisfies a majority in

both communities.

Taken together, the surveys in both parts of Ireland and in Britain indicate that a majority of people in both islands, and a majority of Catholics within Northern Ireland, would like to see a British withdrawal.



# Steps to peace in Ireland

SOME OF US who signed the letter to the *Times*, 13 December 1974, argued at the time that the decision to set up a Constitutional Convention was a very dangerous way of not facing the issue. The Convention, we argued, would lead only to a situation where 'we will be confronted with further intransigent demands from the Ulster Unionists'. The choice would be between handing over power to them or continuing with indirect rule. Either way means continued violence and repression.

## We now have that result.

With good reason, Dr Paisley and his friends find many things to their liking in the government's statement of 12 January, which scraps the idea of a Council of Ireland, increases the security forces, and promises a return to the old Stormont rule. They believe that they can extract further concessions from the government. So they can!

What the government has done, and continues to do, is to underwrite the perpetuation of the Northern Ireland state as it was set up in 1921. This is the most dangerous of the options open. It offers no solutions. It is not a recipe for peace in Ireland, but for peace between the parties in Westminster.

It should now be clear that bipartisanship over Ireland means that policy is dictated today, as it has been since the end of the last century, by the Tories and the Ulster Unionists.

The violence in Northern Ireland, which has logically spread to Britain, is the result of repression and injustice. In every one of the 55 years since the province was created there has been repressive legislation in force. That cause has not been acknowledged. On the contrary, repressive legislation has been extended into Britain in the form of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The only achievement of 1975 was the phasing out of internment without trial. This should have been the prelude to a political solution with the initiative coming from the government.

But how could that happen when the government made no proposals to the Convention, and remained outside the discussions while the Unionists, with a built-in majority, used the opportunity to demand full restoration of the power they had abused for so many years?

While sectarianism and privilege are protected by Britain, Ulster Unionists do not have to face the reality — their future depends on finding a political structure that

does not depend on British arms and money to hold it together.

## We propose an alternative policy.

**First:** Northern Ireland must again be placed in an all-Irish context. This means that the Unionists have to be understood as being a minority in Ireland. This does not mean that they should have any less rights than the majority, but that the power of veto which they have under the Constitutional Act of 1973 must be removed.

Northern Ireland has to be recognised as a sectarian, unjust, economically exploited and dependent province created by the Partition of Ireland. A new situation must be created. Constitutional changes have to begin to be made, which involve the people of Ireland, and of Britain. Unionists can no longer have exclusive rights in deciding the future of Ulster.

**Second:** There must be a clear declaration by Britain that it aims to withdraw from Ireland, politically and militarily, within a limited period of time. By this we do not mean a precipitate withdrawal of troops without there being steps of equal importance to end our political responsibilities in Ireland. Negotiations and actions must go side by side.

There must be more democracy in Northern Ireland, a repeal of the Emergency Provisions Act and a phasing out of the role of the army.

These are the fundamentals of a new policy on Ireland. The extremely difficult task of working out short, medium and long term actions in the process of transferring power could then begin.

In the interim period, immediate action could be taken to make it possible for the two communities in the North to live and work together in peace. The demands of the Civil Rights movement could be met; repressive legislation repealed; sectarianism and discrimination outlawed; harassment of nationalist areas by the British Army ended.

It is Britain's responsibility to initiate consultations with Southern Ireland and all political organisations involved in Northern Ireland on the process of withdrawal, and on the essential constitutional changes.

The Protestant backlash, which so often provides the last ditch argument of those who have no policy, has also to be taken seriously, instead of being used as a reason for doing nothing.

The Protestant minority in Ireland has to understand that its future cannot be that of

an ascendant oligarchy and has to be reconciled to living in a non-sectarian state, which calls for changes in Southern Ireland as well.

The reality is that Northern Ireland suffers an average of more than 10% unemployment (approx. double the UK overall average) and nationalist/Republican areas suffer most — up to 30% in particular areas. From its creation Northern Ireland has suffered lower wages, wider unemployment, lower living conditions than any British average. This colonial burden has not been distributed across the 1½ million population of Northern Ireland. The half million nationalist/Republicans trapped inside the partitioned area carry, and have always carried, the full weight of the colonial burden, and the full weight of discrimination in every area of life imposed by a sectarian constitution.

Some British interests have benefitted from the exploitation of Ireland. *We do not represent them.*

In the interim period (which we propose) the importance of assistance and cooperation between Northern Ireland and Britain in overcoming the particular blight of unemployment and discrimination cannot be overestimated. *It concerns all Northern Irish workers.* And it concerns British workers, in that we are asked to support the compensation of fellow-workers who have suffered this particular colonial exploitation.

The government of Britain has positive instruments to hand if it will only use them. The ultimate solution, as it has been with other nations divided by a colonising power, lies with the people themselves. But for us the only solution lies in going to the root of the problem which is here in Britain: in our unwillingness to actually get out!

**Andrew Bennett MP**  
**Sydney Bidwell MP**  
**Maureen Colquhoun MP**  
**Martin Flannery MP**  
**Tom Litterick MP**  
**Eddie Loyden MP**  
**Joan Maynard MP**  
**Ron Thomas MP**  
**Stan Thorne MP**

—House of Commons, 17 Feb 1976

*This statement was published as a leaflet by the British Peace Committee. A longer version was printed in the letters page of the Times, 20.2.76.*

'For over 60 years now, the situation in Northern Ireland has been a source of instability, real or potential, in these islands. It has been so because the very entity itself is artificial and has been artificially sustained. In these conditions, violence and repression were inevitable...

'We must face the reality that Northern Ireland, as a political entity,

has failed and that a new beginning is needed...

'In my view, a declaration by the British Government of their interest in encouraging the unity of Ireland, by agreement and in peace, would open the way towards an entirely new situation in which peace, real lasting peace, would become an attainable reality...

'Let me also say that in any discussion, or negotiation, which may be embarked

upon, or any settlement which may be proposed, the safety and welfare of our fellow-countrymen of the Protestant faith in Northern Ireland would be for me, personally, a special priority... 'We look forward to some new free and open arrangement in which Irishmen and women, on their own, without a British presence but with active British goodwill, will manage the affairs of the whole of Ireland in a constructive

partnership within the European Community.

'This Government sees Northern Ireland as the major national issue, and its peaceful solution as our first political priority.

*Charles Haughey, Irish Taoiseach (Premier), addressing the national conference of his party, Fianna Fail, 16 February 1980.*

# Ireland: always one country

**ON 11 April 1976 the eminent British historian A.J.P. Taylor spoke out on Irish radio in favour of British withdrawal from Ireland. His remarks led to an outraged response from the British press. Shortly afterwards the paper *Troops Out* (Summer 1976) published an interview with Mr. Taylor: we reprint extracts here.**

**Q. IN YOUR OPINION what is the root cause of the troubles in Ireland?**

A. The British have always been the root cause of the trouble in Ireland for the past 400 years.

**Q. And what do you think of partition? Do you think Ireland should have been partitioned 50 years ago?**

A. It's not a question of should, it's a question of what was possible, and with Lloyd George dependent on a Conservative majority in England in the British Parliament, the 26 Counties was the most that he could get. This in its turn has a long background. If before the war the Home Rule Bill had been carried, in my opinion the unity of Ireland would have continued. After all Ireland has always been a united country. People sometimes go on as if Northern Ireland – or even Ulster – has always been a separate province from the rest of Ireland. This is totally untrue. Until 1922 Ulster was an integral part of Ireland and it was deliberately partitioned because of the Unionist insistence in this country.

**Q. With a British withdrawal from Ireland do you think Ireland will become one country again?**

A. This is a matter of relative strengths. Owing to the history of the last 30 years or perhaps longer, owing to history since 1885, when Randolph Churchill – Winston's father – first raised the cry of 'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right' – in the past therefore 90 years the Protestants of Northern Ireland have been taught to think of themselves as a separate body, almost a separate nationality within Ireland, and have established now a long-term domination of Northern Ireland, partly because of their superior economic strength, partly because of the backing which they have received from the British Government, and partly because they are, or up to now have been, the more determined. For them, Protestant domination is the answer to the situation in Northern Ireland.

**Q. The Loyalists in the North claim that they're British and base their fight for a continued British presence on this. What do you think of that claim?**

A. I think that this is historically nonsense. They are colonists. Most of the Loyalists were brought in 350 years ago and established separate communities, Protestant communities, which were on the whole more prosperous than those of the Roman Catholics both in the province and elsewhere. On the other hand they've been in Ireland for 350 years. Until the partition they thought of themselves as Irish, though they thought of themselves as British as well. None of them contemplated, until the last moment, partition. When Carson raised the cry against Home Rule – 'Home Rule is Rome Rule' – he hoped by this, by the resistance of Ulster, to prevent any Home Rule for any part of Ireland, and he was as disappointed – heartbroken – by the partition as anyone in the south was, because he wanted to maintain the existing position of Protestants everywhere.

**Q. Do you think there is any precedent, for instance, in the France/Algeria situation?**

A. There is some, certainly. In a way there was a similarity. That the white Algerians were certainly colonists who'd come in over the last hundred years or so. They certainly enjoyed a privileged position and were clearly divided from the majority of the population, they were a different people. Now I do not accept the view that the Protestants in Northern Ireland are a different people from the rest of the community. They are different in certain ways, in their traditions, in their religion and, because of the events of the last fifty years, in their political outlook. But whatever they may say, you've only got to talk to a Protestant in Northern Ireland to appreciate that he is Irish. And after all it was the north which produced the first champions of Irish freedom. The Republic was born not in Dublin in 1922 but in Belfast in 1798. And there is a whole series of very honourable Protestant nationalists from Belfast, who were if anything more extreme than the people in Dublin. In fact the hardest freedom fighters in the nineteenth century came from Belfast. There is no doubt that there were a lot of Irish people there then and I suspect that there are a lot of Irish people in Belfast now.

**Q. Over the past six or seven years repeatedly British governments have claimed that a solution is in sight. Lately this has involved the hoped emergence of some form of power-sharing. Do you think that's likely in the present circumstances?**

A. It doesn't seem likely in the present circumstances because the Protestant majority have repeatedly rejected it. And we're now back in the situation where power-sharing seems quite impractical. I

can only repeat what I've said on many occasions, that if the Protestants stop being Protestants and the Roman Catholics stop being Roman Catholics and thought of themselves as all Irish, there would be no insoluble problem. But then this is a counsel of perfection, or so it seems. I think we've tried again and again to have policies and they've not succeeded. Therefore we can't produce any more. The British people, or the British Government, has run out of resources. Maybe this is disappointing, maybe they ought to be more constructive, but it has become insoluble. Therefore the problem should be left to the Irish.

**Q. What do you think of current Labour Government policy towards Ireland?**

A. It has no policy. Its policy is simply to keep the situation as it is and hope that some solution will arise. But it seems to have run out of solutions.

**Q. What do you think the Labour Government should be doing?**

A. I think the policy of any British government should be withdrawal. Not necessarily at a moment's notice, but over a period of time. The British governments have successively failed to solve the problems of Northern Ireland. They should therefore hand it over to the people to solve.

**Q. Many people in Britain say there'd be a bloodbath if the British troops were withdrawn. What's your answer to that?**

A. I don't know what the term bloodbath means. If it means people will be killed, they are being killed all the time. The alternative is not between an entirely peaceful Northern Ireland and a Northern Ireland in which a lot of people will be killed. If the British withdraw some sort of settlement would be arrived at. You can't tell what it is because the forces in play can't be judged until they can operate. I have very grave doubts whether, faced with the responsibilities of a position after the British withdrawal, the Protestants would, in fact, resort to an all-out civil war. And if they were to seek for a more peaceful solution, then, so it seems, the Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland would cooperate with them.

**Q. We were interested in what you said about India – I think you said that if Britain had withdrawn from India in the twenties, you thought there would not have been the same amount of violence.**

A. It's very foolish really to make ifs of this kind, but certainly in the early nineteen twenties when Gandhi first began to lead the movement of Congress, nobody



envisaged partition. That there should be securities for all the communities, that was accepted, but it was assumed that it would be within a united India. And it was the twenty years thereafter that produced the increasing division between the two main communities and led to the establishment of what in a sense you could call non-historical states, Pakistan and India. Fair to say of course that India had never been basically united until the time of British rule. Ireland has always been united, until it was artificially divided in 1922.

**Q. What do you think the role of the British Army is in the north of Ireland?**

A. I think that the role of the Army inevitably is – it encourages the growth of extremism on both sides. Because if you fight extremists you produce more extremists. And the general lesson of national struggles in Europe in the 19th century, in Africa and Asia in the 20th century, is that the more you resist by force the demands of those who want liberation, the more you strengthen them.

Anybody would like a peaceful unification, reunification of Ireland if they could get it. The problem is how you get it. And I think that the presence of the British Army in Ireland prolongs the period of conflict and uncertainty.

**Q. Since you did your interview on Irish radio, what do you feel about the British press coverage of your interview?**

A. I can't say anything about that.

**Q. The Guardian in its editorial more or less rejected your call for withdrawal and they seemed to be recommending that Britain go for increased repression. What do you think of that?**

A. Well the Guardian I'm sorry to say, contrary to its attitude of fifty years ago when it was the champion of Irish freedom, seems now to have become the advocate of partition and of the Protestant hegemony. The great weakness of this last leader I thought was the implication that the only cause of conflict in Northern Ireland was the IRA, that if the IRA would simply stop their campaign, there would be peace in Northern Ireland. But this isn't true.

The immediate cause of the troubles in Northern Ireland was not nationalist agitation in the south, but Protestant extremism in the north, and it has to some extent therefore provoked a nationalist response in return. This I think is less true than the practical resentment of Roman Catholics against the way in which they are treated in Northern Ireland as an inferior part of the community. The practical cause therefore is simply the continuance of Protestant domination, which is after all still being maintained under direct rule.

**Q. A few months ago the Daily Telegraph conducted a poll in which it was found that a majority of British people favoured**

**a British withdrawal from Ireland. Do you think that feeling will increase?**

A. Yes, when they think about it at all. The real difficulty is that if you've been in occupation of a place for a long time – it just goes on and on – it becomes a habit. People are no longer shocked that British soldiers, Irish people, are being killed every day. They may be troubled in Belfast, but they're not very troubled in this country. It has become one of the facts of life. Unless there is some strong new impulse, I think the British people will – you can't say acquiesce... they don't think about them. Except when there are actually bomb incidents in their own country.

**Q. You've mentioned the bombings. Many people in British cities are worried about the bombings. What do you think will bring an end to them?**

A. In my opinion the only thing that will bring an end to them is a successful policy of conciliation in Northern Ireland.

**The interview ended with Mr. A.J.P. Taylor saying:**

The Irish problem is undoubtedly difficult because British people have been interfering there for four hundred years and I suspect that many of them can't get it out of their heads that the British know much better how to rule Ireland – how to run Ireland – than the Irish know themselves. It is a view which has made them tolerate the troubles for quite a long time.

## A Tourist Guide to England

£ Welcome to England!  
England is a happy country.

£ Here is a happy English businessman.  
Hating his money, he spends it all  
On bibles for Cambodia  
And a charity to preserve  
The Indian Cobra from extinction.

£ I'm sorry you can't see our happy coal-miners.  
Listen hard and you can hear them  
Singing Welsh hymns far underground.  
Oh. The singing seems to have stopped.

£ No, that is not Saint Francis of Assisi.  
That is a happy English policeman.

£ Here is a happy black man.  
No, it is not illegal to be black. Not yet.

£ Here are the slums.  
They are preserved as a tourist attraction.  
Here is a happy slum dweller.  
Hello, slum-dweller!  
No, his answer is impossible to translate.

£ Here are some happy English schoolchildren.  
See John. See Susan. See Mike.  
They are studying for their examinations.  
Study, children, study!  
John will get his O-levels  
And an O-Level job and an O-Level house and an O-Level wife.  
Susan will get her A-Levels  
And an A-Level job and an A-Level house and an A-Level husband.  
Mike will fail.

£ Here are some happy English soldiers.  
They are going to make the Irish happy.

£ No. please understand.  
We understand the Irish  
Because we've been sending soldiers to Ireland  
For hundreds and hundreds of years.

£ First we tried to educate them  
With religion, famine and swords  
But the Irish were slow to learn.

£ Then we tried to educate them  
With reason, poverty and unemployment.  
They became silent, sullen, violent.

£ So now we are trying to educate them  
With truncheons, gas, rubber bullets,  
Steel bullets, internment and torture.  
We are trying to educate the Irish

To be as happy as us.

£ So please understand us  
And if your country  
Should be forced to educate  
Another country in the same way,  
Or your own citizens in the same way -  
We will try to understand you.

Adrian Mitchell



# Why worker fights worker in 'Ulster'

**ANYONE** looking upon Belfast and its politics from outside, and thinking about them and talking about them in terms of 'the working class and trade union movement', must be prepared for a few jolts if he or she expects to find the laws of class conflict, as conventionally conceived, operating in the same way as they generally do in an advanced industrial democracy.

Particularly, British trade unionists who really wish to understand the complex political difficulties facing class-conscious trade unionists in the six counties must first try to grasp the reasons for the woeful truth that working class politics in Belfast are like working class politics nowhere else.

For instance, despite Belfast's highly-concentrated industrial working class, that compulsion which arises out of trade union and working class activity to provide independent leadership in the political sphere is almost totally absent. All efforts to provide it have failed. We have never even had a moderate-socialist type of Labour Party which has had any success, or any hope of success.

Why? Sectarianism is undoubtedly something British trade unionists have heard of. Religious animosity and all that. And it exists, all right. But to accept its existence as a glib, easy and satisfactory explanation of the problem is to accept the irrational. Unless we are to believe that it is quite natural for workers to fight, and sometimes even shoot each other on account of religion, then the real question must obviously be: Why is there sectarianism?

The explanation which must be grasped, to obtain a real understanding of the problem, is that a political system exists in the six counties which is founded upon sectarianism. It needs sectarianism to sustain it, and its continued existence perpetuates sectarianism.

The system, to put it bluntly, is called British rule. Whether direct or through local political agents, the sectarian system has been coddled and protected by successive British Governments, both Tory and Labour. Because of its failure to oppose Tory policies towards Ireland, and its acquiescence in the upholding of the sectarian system, the British trade union movement must share some of the blame for the ugly and bitter nature of the conflict in the six counties today.

The accusation that they could be anyway to blame for bigotry and sectarianism in 'Ulster' may appear far-fetched to some British union leaders. If so, it may be because they have always taken such a far-off view of the problem, and wished it wasn't there.

We who are on the receiving end in the six counties, however, know too well the widespread bitterness caused by the failure of the British labour movement to face up to the problem which is its responsibility. That

failure could be counted as one of the most important factors leading to the present IRA campaign of violence. When the voice of the most democratic section of British society is silent – with a few notable and well-known exceptions – the resultant frustration can only encourage the view that 'you'll get nothing out of England except by violent methods.'

## The root of strife

But how does British rule cause sectarianism? How does it produce the great Protestant-Catholic conflict along political lines? There are two simple explanations.

First, the defenders of imperial rule themselves turned its maintenance into a 'religious matter', insisting that Protestants must cling to Britain for their safety and their 'benefit'. Being 'Protestant and British' is the kernel of the sectarian doctrine. This politico-religious dogma is at the root of all sectarian strife in the six counties.

Second, imperial rule, as part of its divide-and-conquer policy, has always accorded a position of privilege to the Protestant people, as a means of buying them off. Privileges, both imaginary and real, are in fact granted to workers merely on account of their being Protestants. This political policy is at the root of the well-known and widespread religious discrimination in employment.

What effect, in practice, do these politico-religious conflicts and the practice of discrimination have within industry itself, and within the trade union movement?

First of all, it must be appreciated that the ghetto system which keeps Protestant and Catholic workers living in their own 'quarter' has a parallel of sorts in industry. There are large industrial enterprises which are exclusively 'Protestant', or almost so, and smaller firms which may employ mainly Catholics.

There are exceptions, of course, just as there are still some 'mixed' residential working class areas (although getting fewer every day). There are some large firms well 'mixed', but these instances do not alter the general pattern.

The factual position, if it could be set out, would provide an extremely important social statistic. But the trade union movement, which is in the best position to discover the facts, has never made an attempt at such an analysis. To do so would be regarded as 'introducing sectarianism'. And, paradoxically, if any attempt were made to conduct a survey of that sort, it would probably be resented as 'sectarian' most of all by the Protestant workers who benefit from the actual sectarian practice – probably from an instinctive fear of being found out.

Broadly, however, it may be said that employment in the better-paid skilled trades is predominantly Protestant, while the

Catholic proportion increases as employment becomes more of a semi-skilled nature and in labouring jobs. By their trade you can often tell them, more easily than by their names. If a man is a boilermaker or a shipyard plumber, caulker or rivetter, or a sheetmetal worker, the odds are that he is a Protestant. When you come to fitters, it is more doubtful. And bakery workers, due to the geographical location of the big bakeries in Belfast, are about half-and-half. Indeed, in Belfast there are people who would jump to conclusions about your political sympathies on the basis of whether you eat 'Protestant' or 'Catholic' bread.

And, as a broad picture, that does not exclude, however, the possibility that Belfast Corporation, say, might give preference to a Protestant who needed a job brushing the streets.

Two of the biggest engineering firms in Belfast are Mackies foundry and the Sirocco works. One of them is in the heart of a Catholic area, and the other on the fringes of another Catholic area. The entire workforce of one is, as a deliberate matter of policy, exclusively Protestant, the other, as a result of all the pressures and manipulations concomitant with a religiously-divided working class, has become almost exclusively Protestant, if not totally so.

One of Belfast's largest bakeries also applies a rigid, managerial policy of not employing Catholics. And before the decline of the old textile industry, the pattern of employment even on the Falls Road was that the entire workforce of mill girls and factory girls (i.e., spinners and weavers) would be Catholic while office jobs and managerial positions would be exclusively Protestant.

The position at the shipyard is well known. Out of a workforce of over 8,000 there are only a few hundred Catholics employed (300 was the last figure publicly suggested), and most of them are in the more menial jobs. Some of the old craft union trades quite deliberately exclude Catholics.

There is a particularly interesting division at Belfast docks, which are divided both geographically and politically, into the deep sea docks (ocean-going ships) and the cross-channel docks. The cross-channel section is controlled by the British-based Transport Workers (11/10 branch) and the deep sea by the Irish Transport Workers' Union.

The cross-channel section offers the most highly-lucrative employment, and draws largely on a Protestant workforce. When the selection policy of excluding Catholics, as practised by the union branch, is criticised, the reply is usually to point at the deep sea docks and retort that they employ no Protestants. A Protestant docker, of course, has no need to seek employment



there, when his religion offers him a better chance further up the queue.

Thus we have an example of the cream even of one 'labouring' sector of industry being captured for one section of the working class on the basis of religion. And from the example, it should be readily understood how the division of the workers in this way permits the ascendancy of ultra-right-wing reaction in the sphere of politics. Class solidarity and united action are virtually precluded by the system.

## Aristocracy of labour

If the sectarian problem consisted merely of mutual dislike or antipathy between workers on account of different religious beliefs, it would be ridiculous. It could not, in fact, exist – if that was all there were to it. Identical class interests would overshadow such insubstantial prejudice.

**The sectarian divide is, rather, based upon actual privilege for one section. The Protestant workers thus constitute a sort of aristocracy of labour. Either consciously or instinctively, they tend to react to defend their position. The idea of 'letting the Catholics in' is often seen as a direct and actual threat to their livelihood.**

That explains the curiosity by which even English Catholics, whose 'loyalty' could not be in doubt, are sometimes subject to the full brunt of discrimination. The resulting, deeply ingrained ghetto community sense, aided by political and religious symbolism, and the belief that they have in fact something tangible to defend, also explains the fact that expressions of anti-Catholic bigotry are the most uninhibited and virulent in Protestant working class areas, while middle class Unionists feel free to mouth vague sentiments of a 'loftier' sort.

Within the factories and workshops, this sense of having a special position is expressed politically by Protestant workers who, at certain times of the year and sometimes all year round, decorate walls and workbenches with portraits of the queen and Unionist heroes, Union Jacks and other 'Protestant' symbols of a sectarian nature. This form of demonstration is intended to convey to any Catholics in the place the firm message to remember who is the upper-dog.

Needless to say, if anyone dared to display an Irish flag or any symbol remotely suspect as nationalistic, there would be a riot and skulls would be broken.

Upon the basis of this firmly entrenched sectarianism within industry is founded the 'Loyalist Association of Workers' (with its loaded initials, LAW), which is led by Bill Hull, a shipyard trade union official. LAW has been associated in many activities with the semi-fascist Vanguard movement led by the Unionist lawyer and politician, Bill Craig, whose political programme frankly calls for the 'destruction' and 'elimination' of the 'rebellious minority.' By rebellious minority Vanguard has made it clear it means the Catholic population.

**Hull has boasted that he could stop industry from Derry to Newry any time he wished, just by giving the order. The truth is that he probably could. And the tragedy is that the trade union movement could probably do**

**nothing to prevent it.**

## Permanent disadvantage

The legitimate trade union movement, and any real socialist movement in the six counties, are thus seen to be at a permanent disadvantage in a political situation in which class interests are overridden by sectarianism and the big political issue associated with sectarianism – namely British rule.

Despite the disadvantages, or maybe because of the acute nature of them, the six-county labour movement has, however, produced a greater proportion of individual radicals, both Protestant and Catholic, than is common even in England. In action, on the other hand, they are severely handicapped by the alleged 'need' for the trade unions to remain officially 'above politics' – especially on political questions concerning the effects of British rule.

Leaders of considerable courage have emerged who have spoken out unequivocally on issues of immediate urgency – and survived. Particularly praiseworthy have been efforts of members of Belfast trades council on behalf of the civil rights movement – although other brave men in the leadership of other unions got into very hot water with their members for voting funds to the Civil Rights Association. The former DATA, now a branch of the AUEW, provided an example of this.

It's a lot tougher for the boys on the factory floor – the shop stewards and convenors. High principles won't protect you there. There have been examples of factory convenors who have taken a strong line against sectarianism within the works, and who have opposed Billy Hull's LAW, and who have been promptly deposed and replaced.

The official policy of the northern committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions is strongly anti-sectarian and, in principle, opposed to discrimination. It vigorously promotes the ideal of non-sectarianism in the best trade union tradition – aloof from all political questions which cause sectarianism.

It is interesting to note how two actual actions on the non-sectarian front were effected by the official union leadership. The boast has been that the unions kept bigotry out of the shipyards, or at least prevented the 'interruption of normal working' by riots and pogroms. How did it succeed?

When threats of driving the few hundred Catholic workers out were first heard last year, the union leaders went straight to the management and obtained a pledge that any such activity would mean instant dismissal for the perpetrators.

Again, the unions have been pressing the British regime to institute a court to preside over fair employment practices and guard against religious discrimination. And it looks as if they might get such a court. Fair enough. But in each instance they acted, not by seeking mass support, but by direct approaches to those in power and authority over the workers.

Thus, within the restrictions imposed by Britain's sectarian-orientated political system, the trade union leadership may be said to be doing their best – which is not much. Like the soldiers who the English newspapers say are 'doing a magnificent job in very difficult circumstances,' the union leaders are doing a fairly mediocre job in almost impossible conditions.

There are many silent voices within the movement trying to do good works. Many of the positive things they do, they must do in secret. They are the silent heroes who need the help of the British trade union movement – which should be a far more promising source of authority and power than Tory political rulers and boards of directors.

**It is time to stop listening to what Belfast trade union delegates say at Northern Ireland conferences. They say what they must say, or at least refrain from saying what they know ought to be said. It is time the British unions tackled the problem from the point of advancing both British and Irish democracy.**

## The question of British rule

It should be clearly understood just why, in six-county politics, the reflection of classical class battles (worker versus boss) has been almost non-existent, simply because the predominant issue, which superimposes itself on everything else, is around the question of British rule with its division of the working class on sectarian lines.

Because the predominant question, in fact, is the conflict between imperial British rule on the one hand and the demands of Irish democracy and self-determination on the other, politics will continue to revolve around the problem of achieving a democratic framework within which the more customary forms of class struggle can be more effectively pursued.

While that question remains unsolved, there can be little prospect of the development of a mass socialist consciousness among the workers, since in order to achieve class solidarity itself, all the workers would need to be placed 'in the same boat' – in a situation of political equality and democracy within a normal national framework, rid of the baleful influence of privilege and divisiveness.

That is where the British trade unions must help. Their first loyalty must be to British democracy. The interests of British democracy can no longer be subordinated to reactionary, minority pressures from this 'small corner of the United Kingdom.'

British and Irish democracy should complement each other. Anti-democratic action in Ireland by the British Government, going unchallenged by the British trade union movement, can only be damaging to democracy in both countries. And should British democracy decide that it was its will to grant democracy to Ireland, there is no reason why it should not let its voice be heard in an unequivocal manner. Noises from semi-fascist quarters in Belfast should be no deterrent.

**For the healthy future development of the Irish trade union movement, and to encourage the democratic forces within it, too great stress could not possibly be laid on the value of the British labour movement declaring itself in favour of a democratic settlement of the entire Irish problem on the basis of withdrawing British power and protection from a sectarian and divisive system.**

The Protestant working class, despite its objective position as a sort of aristocracy of labour, does not operate the sectarian system itself. It is operated for them – in order to shackle them politically. And basically they are like workers anywhere else and share the same instinctive beliefs in equality, albeit within distorted limits imposed by the system.

A firm commitment on policy from the British trade union movement would be a first step to assisting them in casting off the shackles of their 'privileges' and to liberating the potentially powerful progressive forces among them.

—from *The Irish Democrat*, September 1972. *The Irish Democrat* is the monthly paper of the Connolly Association, and is available from 283 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1 (15p + 10p p&p).

# Ireland's right to unity

**IN JUNE 1979 Michael Mullen, General Secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, told delegates to the Union's annual conference that the pressure on the British Government to state its intention to withdraw from Ireland should be kept up relentlessly.**

**'Indeed, the labour movement should be to the fore in advocating this stance,' he said, 'because it should be the most prominent in upholding democracy, opposing ascendancy rule and seeking the unity of the Irish working class.'**

**In May 1975 Michael Mullen set out his views in a speech to a conference of British trade unionists. This speech was later published by the British Peace Committee as a pamphlet entitled Ireland's Right to Unity, from which these extracts are taken.**

IT IS IMPORTANT that there should be an active movement in Britain demanding that democracy be established in Northern Ireland and that the right of the Irish people as a whole to national unity and independence be recognised. It is in the interests of the British Labour and Trade Union Movement, and indeed of the great majority of the people of Britain, that the British government should seek to disengage from Ireland and do so in a fashion which will make possible permanent good relations between the people of the two islands. The problem is: how can this be done and how can the British government be induced to adopt a policy which will ensure justice for the people of Ireland, north and south?

## Plea for a New Approach

The Union of which I have the honour to be general secretary, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, is the largest in Ireland and organises workers throughout Ireland, on both sides of the Border.

In recent years I have been in close touch with those in the Labour Movement in both parts of Ireland, and also in Britain, who have been most concerned about the Northern Ireland problem. One year ago, at the time of the fall of the Northern Executive in the so-called 'Workers' Council' strike, I joined with a number of others in organising an open letter to Mr Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister, calling for the adoption of a policy by the British government which would go to the root of the problem in Northern Ireland. This open letter was signed by a significant cross-section of political opinion in the Irish Dail and by eight General Secretaries of Irish Trade Unions and Labour personalities in both parts of Ireland, including the secretaries of the Belfast and

Derry Trades Councils. It represented a call from Irish Labour for the adoption of a new policy by Britain on Northern Ireland. What I want to put before you now are points along the lines of that letter, whose message still remains, in my judgement, entirely relevant and valid.

Essentially, what I am pleading for is the adoption of a policy by the British government which goes to the root of the Northern problem, and such a policy should be urged on the British government by democrats and friends of Ireland in Britain, particularly those within the Labour and Trade Union Movement. Of course short-term measures are necessary and important – and medium-term measures as well. And I do not have any illusion – and think it very dangerous to suggest – that the Northern Ireland problem can be solved overnight or by the application of any simple formula.

At the same time, I do hold that unless the British government adopts a perspective of *working towards ultimate disengagement from Ireland*, and aims in the meanwhile to establish structures and institutions in the north which will encourage Catholics and Protestants to work together, with positive encouragement from the British government to seek an eventual accommodation with one another *outside* the United Kingdom – there will be no permanent stability or peace. In other words, unless this is done violence will continue... historical experience seems to bear out that there will be periodic outbreaks of violence so long as the basic problem remains.

## The Irish Dimension

First of all, some words on the so-called 'Irish Dimension' of the problem. It is important for people in Britain to grasp what this 'Irish Dimension' is, and not to have any illusions about it, for unless this is adequately taken account of, no attempt at a solution can succeed.

The essence of the 'Irish Dimension' is this: the Catholic *minority* in Northern Ireland – some 40% of the population as a whole – form part of the political *majority* of the Irish people. They are so by virtue of the fact that they are mainly nationalist in politics and – other things being equal – would prefer to be ruled by the Irish rather than by the British governments, their predecessors having been incorporated in the United Kingdom against their will in 1920-21. Partition has denied them their rights as a *majority*, therefore, and turned them into a minority within the North and within the United Kingdom. It seems to me that a permanent settlement cannot be achieved unless it recognises the injustice of this fact and comes to terms with it by opening up a way to a situation in which the political rights of the Northern Catholics and nationalists to be part of the political *majority* of the island as a whole can be reasserted. For decades,

the Northern Catholics were denied civil rights and discriminated against in various ways. It is important to recognise, however, *if civil liberties and civil rights are guaranteed* them by the Imperial Parliament, and even if they are treated on a plane of equality with the Unionists in economic and social matters, *the problem of deprivation of political rights would remain.*

This is the heart of the 'Irish Dimension' of the problem.

I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the Conservative Party, or most of its members, will never willingly give assent to a policy which would have the effect of leading to a United Ireland, at whatever date in the future – although traditionally the Labour Party in Britain has favoured such a course, and it has also had the sympathy of many Liberals and Nationalists. In other words, I am implying that the Labour Party can only damage itself and also damage the interests of the British and Irish peoples by pursuing a Tory policy on Northern Ireland.

**That is why those anxious for a democratic solution should urge Labour to lay the axe to the root of the problem by breaking with bipartisanship and openly embarking on a policy of working towards disengagement.**

Not of course a disengagement which would leave civil war and mayhem behind – but rather a political process which would give every encouragement to both Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, and the Irish government, to come together to work out the *Constitution and institutions appropriate to an All-Ireland situation.*

A change in British policy is the essential prerequisite of this.

## A Declaration of Policy by the British Government

In the Sunningdale Communique the British government stated that if the majority of the people of Northern Ireland wished to join a United Ireland, the British government would not stand in their way. But I am of the opinion that this negative formulation of the matter by the British government does not really meet the issue.

**It does not indicate whether the British government itself has any desire or policy of its own on this question of maintaining the Union, although a clarification of this vital point is, I believe, crucial to any realistic attempt to solve the problem.**

And surely the British government, the British people, and the Labour Movement, are entitled to declare whether they wish to maintain the Union with Northern Ireland or not? A union implies the consent of the parties which are united. There is no such thing as a unilateral right to union, though Northern unionists often speak as if there were. Surely the British government and Parliament are wholly within their rights in seeking to dissolve the Union, if that should



be their wish, though obviously they should be crucially concerned about the methods and arrangements whereby it might be dissolved, and with getting the consent of the other party involved to these methods.

It is important to recognise that the Northern Protestants and Unionists are not fools. They traditionally like, and they respect, plain and honest speaking. They do not fear hard truths. What they do fear, however, and what makes them most suspicious, is when they think that things are being done behind their backs and that policies are not clear and open and in the light of day. It would be quite wrong for people in England to think that they could not stand the shock of a British government clearly stating to them that it was its desire to work towards ending the Union... not today and not tomorrow perhaps, but as soon as possible and with the maximum agreement and consent all round as to what arrangements should come after.

That is why, I suggest, the negative formulation hitherto used should be replaced by a positive one – by a statement or formulation in which the British government makes clear that it positively wishes to disengage from Ireland and that it intends to base its policy henceforth on working to establish structures and institutions in Ireland which could command the allegiance of all Irish people and which would help bring Protestants and Catholics together, without sacrifice of the best values of either tradition.

I believe that only such a declaration of policy by the British government could give the mass of Northern Ireland Unionists the necessary impetus to reorient their aspirations towards working with their fellow-countrymen in a United Ireland.

The negative formulation which was embodied in Sunningdale – that the North could remain in the UK as long as the majority wanted it – gives no incentive to Northern Unionists to consider, much less work towards, an arrangement whereby they would share common political structures and a common political allegiance with their Catholic fellow-countrymen. For in effect what it does is to accord to Northern Unionists a unilateral veto on the dissolution of the Union. As long as this remains the case, then that veto will certainly be used, for it will be in the interests of all those politicians who batten on the fears and prejudices of the Northern Protestant population to see that it is used.

What is desirable is that Britain should withdraw that veto from them, while at the same time giving them clear assurances that there is no question of their being forced immediately into a United Ireland against their will, but inviting them to consider and negotiate about those All-Ireland institutions and structures which they would be willing to consider living under.

## Opening the Way to Talks on All-Ireland Institutions

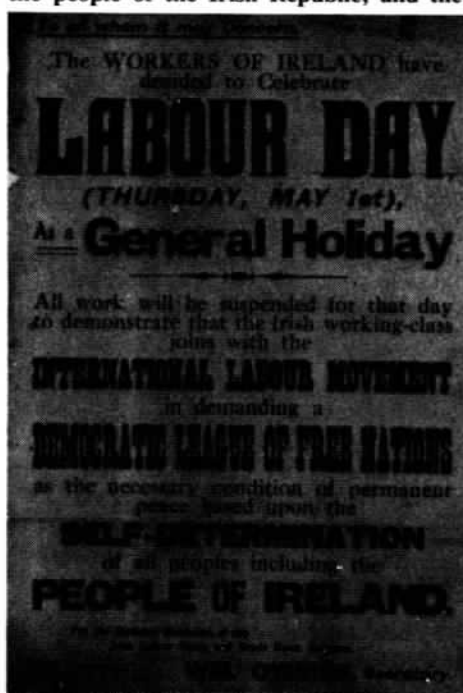
The call for such a change in British policy is frequently misrepresented as being a demand that Britain should put pressure on the Northern Protestants to join the Irish

Republic, with its present Constitution and laws unchanged. In fact, no thoughtful Irish democrat advocates this.

**What is called for is that the government of the Republic and representatives of Catholics and Protestants in the North should be enabled to work out the Constitution of a new All-Ireland state – a Constitution which Northern Protestants could play an essential role in drafting and which would meet all their legitimate needs, claims and aspirations.**

Such a Constitution would obviously have to be devoid of sectarian features. It could provide for a federal state in Ireland, with a powerful political position for Northern Protestants, if this were considered appropriate. It would provide guarantees of civil rights and political institutions in which Irish people, of whatever tradition, could participate and under which the antagonisms of today would in time become a memory.

**People in England should be aware that the people of the Irish Republic, and the**



**Irish government, would certainly be willing to repeal their present Constitution in favour of such a Constitution of an All-Ireland state, federal or otherwise, worked out with Northern Protestants and Catholics and receiving the support of the majority of Northern Protestants.**

It is the belief of the signatories of the 'open letter' to Mr Wilson – a well-founded belief in my view – that the majority of Northern Protestants would in turn be willing to take part in the discussions and negotiations leading to the adoption of such a Constitution if certain conditions were fulfilled.

One condition – easily met with on the nationalist side – would have to be that there was no question of Northern Protestants being dragooned into the present Republic, with its present Constitution and laws unchanged. There would also have to be financial arrangements with the British government in relation to social services and so forth, covering at least the early years of

operation of new All-Ireland institutions. This would, after all, be a small financial price to pay for finally solving the Irish Question!

But most important of all, I suggest – the condition without which no constructive dialogue or stable agreement is likely to take place between Protestants and Catholics – is that orderly and constructive disengagement should become – and be seen to be – the aim of the British government and Parliament in Northern Ireland. In other words, the British government would have to withdraw from the Northern Unionists the unilateral and untenable veto on the dissolution of the Union, which they have been accorded by successive British governments.

A perspective of working towards ultimate disengagement by Britain, over however long a time-scale, would require of course a concerted response by the Irish government which would make an impact on and be attractive to the Northern Unionists – such as a statement of willingness to discuss with them a new All-Ireland Constitution. While this might not be attractive to all Unionists, in the circumstances I have mentioned I believe that it would be attractive to the politically astute and influential amongst them.

As doubtless most (readers) will be aware, both the Trades Union Congress and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions are on record as being in favour of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. The Conservative Party voted down such a Bill when Lord Brockway and Mr Arthur Latham proposed it at Westminster some years ago. A Bill of Rights, passed at Westminster, would strengthen democracy in Northern Ireland and could also – if it were to include a political dimension – make a contribution to the eventual solution of the Constitutional problem. It could be an important part of an interim administrative system in Northern Ireland – pending agreement on appropriate All-Ireland institutions – as well as a guarantee of democratic standards of civil liberty.

I hope that some of these points may be of interest to you as you consider the Northern Ireland problem and the response of the British government and Parliament to the situation there. They come from someone – I hope I may be permitted to say – who is concerned about the future of the Labour Movement in both our countries, and who would like to see harmony and mutual co-operation prevail between the people of Ireland and the people of Britain.

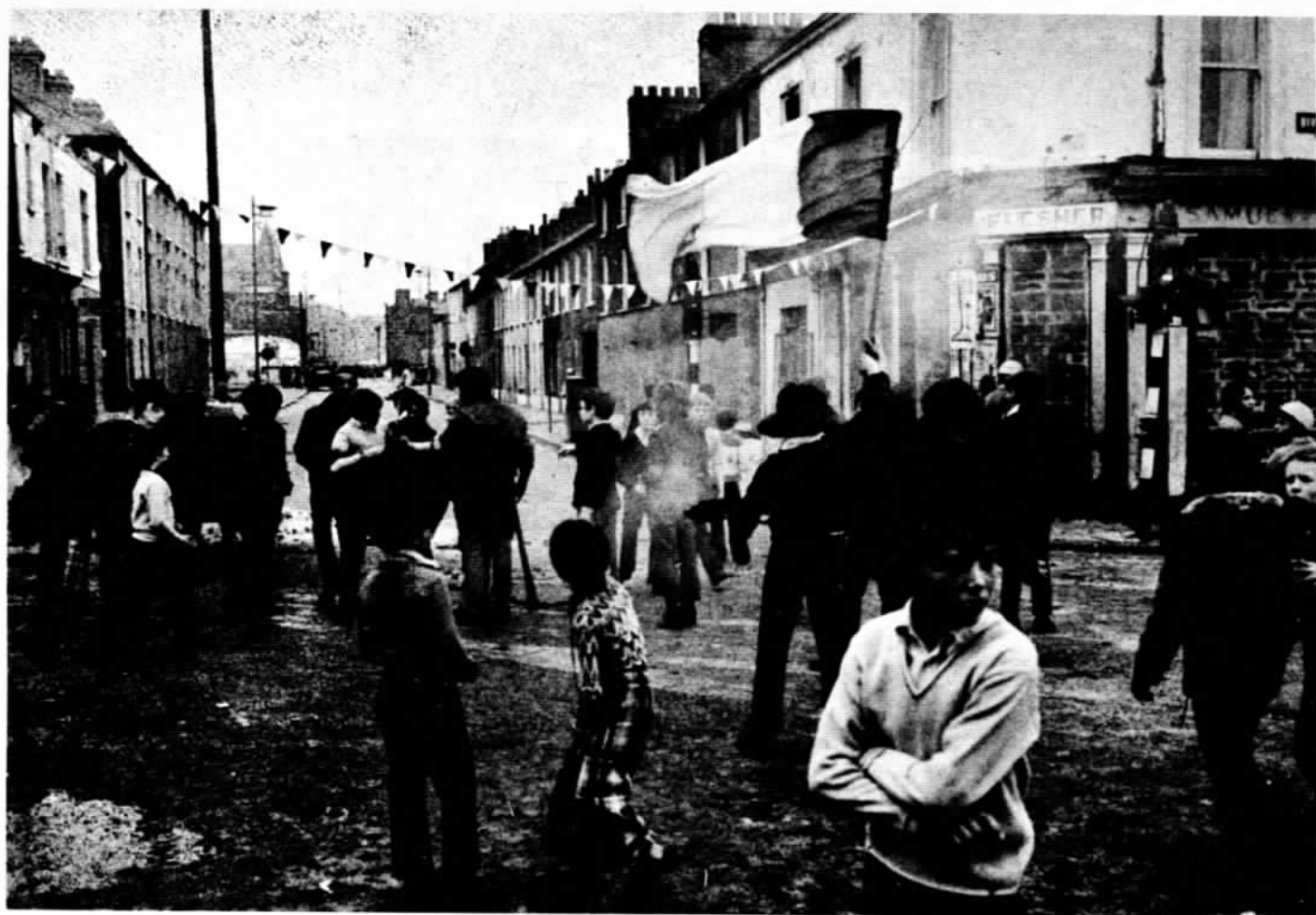
May I be forgiven a word of warning: the Irish problem – which is really an English problem – will not go away until it is solved. While it is unsolved it will serve to diminish good relations between Ireland and Britain – from which Britain stands substantially to lose, both economically and politically – but it also creates a rod with which the British Labour Movement belabours its own back, in the interest of the Conservative Party and of all those who wish to hold back real political progress in both our countries.





## Children of the war













# The Labour Party and Ireland

**JOAN MAYNARD is one of the few Labour MPs who over the years has consistently taken a stand in favour of British withdrawal from Ireland.**

**Q. WHAT DO you consider to be the basic cause of the continuing troubles in Ireland?**

A. I think it's the concentration on the security issue instead of the political issue and the consensus in the House of Commons between Labour and Conservative which has meant that the political issue has never really been tackled.

**Q. What do you think about partition? Do you think it was justified?**

A. I certainly don't. I think that as a result of partition and the way in which the division has been drawn, from that spring all the present problems. Because in drawing the line as we drew it at the time we made certain that the Unionists would have an in-built majority, which they have had ever since. And all the injustice that the minority population has suffered springs from that. Particularly, I think, whatever you did on civil liberties you would still have the fact to face that the Catholics have been made a political minority in Northern Ireland when in the country as a whole they are a political majority. And the only way you could solve that would be by uniting the country. After all Ireland is one country, and we undoubtedly divided it in order to divide and rule as we've done in so many other parts of the world in the past.

**Q. When British politicians talk about the army, they usually talk about it in terms of a peace-keeping force. Do you think the role of the army is actually as a peace-keeping force in Northern Ireland?**

A. I think that when it went in ten years ago the Catholics saw it as that. But I think they've learnt that it no longer — if it ever did — performs that function. I think it now is there really to maintain the British imperialist grip on Northern Ireland. The fact is that we've been there for 800 years, that this is our oldest colony, and so far we've decided that we're not prepared to give it up and we're prepared to spend huge sums of money in retaining the troops there in order to keep our control.

**Q. What do you see as the solution to the present situation?**

A. I think that a solution can only be possible by the British Government setting a date for the withdrawal of British troops and using the intervening period for trying to bring together not only the various parties and groups within Northern Ireland but also the Southern Irish Government, and at the same time making it crystal clear to the Unionists that we are no longer

prepared to underwrite their majority position within Northern Ireland. And equally making it clear to the Southern Irish Government that we could not expect the predominantly Protestant Northern Ireland to go into a united Ireland on the basis of the present southern Irish constitution. And I think we ought to look at a possible solution being a federated Ireland, with one state or county having quite a lot of autonomy, which would help the Protestants, I feel, to accept the united Ireland argument. In other words what I'm saying is that

*In Parliament on 29 March 1920 J.R. Clynes said that he and his fellow Labour MPs opposed the Government of Ireland bill 'because it provides a form of partition founded on a religious basis and recognises neither the historic unity of the province of Ulster nor of Ireland as a whole.'*

there has to be give and take on both sides. I think if we approached it along those lines with a real political will to try and help bring the various political groupings and parties together, I think we'd still have a very difficult task, but I do think it would be possible within the context of the withdrawal of British troops.

**Q. At the present moment the British Government puts forward the argument that there can't be any withdrawal until the majority of people in the north of Ireland agree to this. What do you say to that argument?**

A. Well I think that's an absolutely nonsensical argument. I mean having drawn the boundaries of Northern Ireland in the way that we have, and made certain that there is this inbuilt Unionist, Protestant majority, to then say that we will never unite Ireland until there is a majority for it within Northern Ireland — well it's quite impossible for there ever to be a majority on the basis of the present structure of that state. I think that is absolutely to close the door before the discussion has started.

**Q. It's often suggested by politicians or in the press that there could be a bloodbath following a withdrawal and that therefore people who call for withdrawal are irresponsible. What's your response to that?**

A. I see the present situation and the past ten years as a pretty unpleasant bloodbath in Northern Ireland anyway. We've heard the bloodbath argument in relation to lots of other parts of the world. Obviously there are dangers in that direction, but I do think that if we set a date for with-

drawal and try to use the intervening period to work for a political settlement, then I think we would at least minimise the violence.

**Q. You have held the opinion for some years that withdrawal is the solution, and this is very much a minority view in the Parliamentary Labour Party. What is your opinion of the bipartisan policy?**

A. I am very opposed to the bipartisan policy. I think there has been a real conspiracy, and I think there still is, of silence in relation to the whole question of Ireland. It's extremely difficult to get a political discussion in the House of Commons about it. It's very difficult to get a political discussion in the Labour Movement about it — they don't see what grave dangers there are to the British working class from what's going on in Northern Ireland. They seem to be unaware of the basic principle that you can't deny freedom to others and retain it for yourselves. And of course we now perceive practical demonstrations of that in the Prevention of Terrorism Act which has taken away certain civil liberties in this country. We saw the Special Patrol Group that started in Ireland, then moved into Grunwick, then recently moved into Southall and is very much connected with the death of Blair Peach. So I think that consensus politics on Ireland have been a thoroughly bad thing.

**Q. Do you see a likelihood of a shift on the bipartisan policy now that Labour is in opposition?**

A. I think there is more chance of getting a discussion now in the Labour Movement than there was when we had a Labour Government. And I hope very much that we will be able to get that discussion

**'We are completely against partition. It is an unworkable stupidity as the inner circle of political wire-pullers well know... the interests of the workers of Ireland are politically and economically one'.**

*Manifesto of the three Independent Labour Party candidates, Councillor James Baird, John Hanna and Harry Midgley (all Protestants), for the May 1921 elections for the six county parliament.*

underway. Because it's essential to win the Labour Movement first before we're going to get any real movement in the country. Although I think there is quite a strong feeling in the country for withdrawal and I think that was shown by the support that was given to the very courageous leader in the *Daily Mirror* last year. Six out of seven people who wrote to the *Mirror* were in favour of that

# Peace with Ireland.

## Labour's Proposals for a Settlement by Consent.

The National Executive of the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party have enunciated an alternative policy to that which is being pursued by the present Government to the deep dishonour of the British nation.

On the occasion of the third reading of the Government of Ireland Bill in the House of Commons on November 11, 1920, the Labour Party submitted, in the name of the British Labour Movement, the following proposals for the settlement of the Irish problem by agreement:—

- (a) That the British Army of Occupation be withdrawn.
- (b) That the question of Irish Government be relegated to an Irish Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of proportional representation by free, equal, and secret vote.
- (c) That the Constitution drawn up by the Assembly be accepted, provided—
  - (1) It affords protection to minorities; and
  - (2) Prevents Ireland becoming a military or naval menace to Britain.

## Irish Labour supports British Labour's Peace Policy.

These proposals, which represent the policy of British Labour, have received the approval and endorsement of Irish Labour. On November 16, 1920, a National Conference of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress unanimously adopted a resolution declaring on behalf of the Irish Labour Movement its readiness to advocate the acceptance of this policy as being the fulfilment of Ireland's demand for the right to choose and decide its own form of Government.

The National Conference assured the British workers that the realisation of the policy outlined would lead to goodwill and fraternity between the two peoples.

**THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IS NOT WELCOMED BY A SINGLE SECTION OF THE IRISH PEOPLE.**

**BRITISH LABOUR'S POLICY HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY IRISH LABOUR AND WILL LEAD TO GOODWILL AND FRATERNITY.**

[P.T.O.]

A Labour Party leaflet from 1920

leader. And on a phone-in programme on one of the London radio stations I don't think there was anybody who rang up who wasn't in favour of that kind of approach. The present policy — or lack of it — is just a dead end. It's a policy of despair, really.

**Q. How often have you been to Ireland and what impression did your visits make on you?**

**A.** I've been to Ireland three times and on my first visit I was absolutely horrified when I saw the British troops at the airport with guns at the ready and in the streets in Belfast. And I saw that really there was a war situation there at the

time — I think it was around 1971. I was quite shocked and I think that a lot of British people would be very shocked if they knew what was going on in Ireland in their name. I'm pleased that in recent months there has been an attempt in parts of the media to get across some truths about what is happening in Northern Ireland and what is being done there in our name.

**Q. What are your opinions about the Prevention of Terrorism Act?**

**A.** I hadn't been in this place more than a month when that Bill hit this House following the Birmingham bombings. Nothing could have persuaded me to have

voted for that Bill. I just couldn't have voted, I couldn't have gone through the lobbies in favour of it, and I didn't. That night there were two of us, two Labour MPs, myself and Stan Thorne. I don't want to be critical of others of my comrades who did support it, because it followed so closely on the Birmingham bombings that there was a good deal of emotion about at the time.

I'm glad to say that the number opposing the Prevention of Terrorism Act is growing. I could never support it because I could see that it was a serious erosion of civil liberties in this country and had really nothing to do with preventing

'So far as Ireland itself and Irish affairs are concerned, the Labour Party is unequivocally prepared to allow Ireland to assume whatever form of self-determination the great mass of the Irish people desire, with whatever constitution, under whatever designation and with whatever arrangements for local autonomy, and thereby allow Ireland to face its own difficulties in its own way.'

*From the Labour Commission report on Ireland presented at the Labour Party Special Conference on 29 December 1920 at Central Hall, Westminster.*

terrorism at all. It was just another aid to be given to the police to collect information and harass the Irish population over here and anybody else who sympathised with them. And I think in recent years it's been used to try and deter speakers, particularly trade union speakers, from coming over here to talk about the situation over there. Whenever anybody's come from Northern Ireland, particularly trade unionists, to speak at rallies or meetings over here, they've met harassment at the ports and been arrested on many occasions under this Act. So I've been bitterly opposed to it and still am.

**Q. The question of torture of prisoners has been in the news again lately. What's your reaction to the Amnesty and Bennett Reports?**

**A.** I think that Amnesty International did a wonderful job by going over there because they have a reputation for impartiality in all parts of the world. The Amnesty Report revealed that torture is still going on there, despite the fact that Britain had said when it was before the European Court that torture was no longer taking place. The Amnesty Report proved in fact that torture was still going on, or at the very least created sufficient doubt that the Bennett Report followed. And the Bennett Report I think was a clear exposition of some of the things that are going on over there. If you consider that if anybody in Chile had died the kind of death that Brian Maguire died, there would have been not only an outcry here in Britain but all over the



world. But there was hardly a murmur about Brian Maguire's death in Castle-reagh. So I think that all attempts to uncover what's really going on there are good, and I think that Amnesty International did a good job.

Now I've called in the House for the Labour Government to allow in the British Red Cross into the Maze, where

'There were times . . . especially in the Opposition years from 1970 to 1974, when I believed that the next Labour Government would take its courage to Parliament and announce that an orderly, but irrevocable, withdrawal was to take place. Courage it would certainly have needed, for withdrawal . . . was as unmentionable in Whitehall and Westminster as devaluation had been until it eventually took place in November 1967 (even when we did mention it privately, in the irresponsibility of Opposition, we only did so under the code-name of 'Algeria').'

*Joe Haines, Harold Wilson's former Press Secretary, in The Politics of Power, Coronet 1977*

the present protest is going on, purely on the grounds that if British people and the authorities there are doing what they should be doing then they've nothing to fear. I've asked for an all-party delegation of MPs to be allowed to go, and the only MPs who've been allowed to go have been those who were handpicked by the then establishment of Mason and the Northern Ireland Office. The British Red Cross and the International Red Cross were never allowed to go. Now I think that indicates that they must have something to hide. Because otherwise I don't see why they shouldn't have allowed us to go over and see for ourselves.

**Q.** Recently there's been an increasing build up of people talking about withdrawal and calling for withdrawal, and part of that was the statements made by John Pardoe and Cyril Smith. What's your opinion of that?

**A.** I think that's very good and very helpful, the fact that some Liberals, Pardoe and Smith, and the Young Liberals, have taken up the call. I think the more we can broaden the base of the call for troops out, and a date to be set for the withdrawal of troops, and a political settlement, that can only be for the good.

— This interview took place in the House of Commons, June 1979, and was done by representatives of the August 12th Demonstration Organising Committee

## Labour Committee

The Labour Committee on Ireland can be contacted c/o 5 Stamford Hill, London N19. Its bulletin, *Labour and Ireland*, is available at 10p + 10p p&p.

# The Road to Peace.

## The Cessation of Violence and the Opening up of Negotiations.

The Commission of Inquiry, which visited Ireland on behalf of the British Labour Movement, carried on informal "conversations" with representative leaders of national life with the object of bringing about a cessation of all acts of violence and all provocative acts and the opening up of official negotiations.

The Commission proposed to Cardinal Logue, the Archbishop of Dublin, and representatives of the Executive Committee of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, that it should issue an appeal signed by its members and countersigned by representatives of the Irish Labour Movement and by the Irish Catholic Hierarchy.

It was proposed that the appeal should be directed to the British Government and to the recognised leaders of Sinn Féin, urging the cessation of all acts of violence by both sides, in order to produce a period of quiet in Ireland; that when this unofficial truce had operated for an agreed period, official negotiations should be commenced for an

## Official Truce and Agreed Settlement.

The preliminary truce was to be unofficial and in the nature of an earnest of good intention, but it was to be the first of three related steps to which tentative agreement should be secured in advance from both sides.

This threefold plan was agreed to by the heads of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and by the representatives of Irish Labour.

The British Government, on the other hand, neither definitely rejected nor actually accepted the proposals. Their attitude was non-committal. They have, however, now resorted to official reprisals.

Hence it is that the reign of violence continues unchecked in Ireland. Neither an unofficial nor an official truce has been arranged. Peace in Ireland and with Ireland remains yet to be established.

**THE GOVERNMENT ARE GAMBLING ON A "KNOCK-OUT" BLOW.  
LABOUR STANDS FOR RECONCILIATION AND PEACE BY CONSENT.**

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*In an interview on Irish radio on 21 January 1980, Labour MP Tony Benn said he still held the view, inherited from his father, that partition in Ireland was wrong. He went on, 'Actually what is needed now in Britain is a real debate about the situation in Northern Ireland, and I think that if we achieve little more than to prevent the issue from being kept under the carpet and bringing it out — because it is the single biggest domestic issue in the United Kingdom given the magnitude of what is happening — if it is brought out and discussed I think this may of itself be helpful because violence is a resort of those who see no prospect of change by peaceful means.'*

'No doubt British governments try to keep hold of Northern Ireland for a variety of reasons: anxiety because much of the economy is in British capitalist hands, concern lest a victorious socialist Sinn Féin were to establish some sort of off-shore Cuba, sheer imperialist prestige, reluctance to lose face and suffer ignominious defeat. But history shows that oppressed people determined to be free cannot be held down for ever . . . Vietnam should have taught us this lesson.'

*Pat Arrowsmith, pacifist campaigner, who stood against Prime Minister James Callaghan in the May 1979 General Election on a 'Troops Out' ticket.*

## Spot the spy — an army photographer in Northern Ireland



## London Labour for withdrawal

AT ITS ANNUAL conference on March 1st 1980, the Greater London region of the Labour Party passed the following resolution by 1,012 votes in favour to 101 against.

'This Annual Meeting calls on the Parliamentary Labour Party to commit itself to a policy of withdrawal from Northern Ireland. Annual Meeting dissociates itself from the sterile 'bipartisan' posture which has in fact not led to a negotiated political solution in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, we welcome the decision of the NEC to set up a special sub-committee to review party policy on Ireland.

'In order to involve as many party members as possible in the work of this sub-committee we call on the NEC to ensure that:-

- i) the sub-committee meets frequently (at least once a month)
- ii) it invites CLPs and affiliated organisations to submit evidence and views on party policy on Northern Ireland
- iii) that all such evidence and views submitted are made available to party members on request.'

This composite resolution was moved by the Political Committee of the London Co-operative Society and seconded by Hackney North and Stoke Newington Constituency Labour Party.

This is the text of a letter sent by the London Co-op Political Committee to all

CLPs in their area prior to the conference:

*'The London Co-op Political Committee has chosen as its resolution to the forthcoming Regional Conferences of the Labour Party to support the growing call for British withdrawal from Northern Ireland. This letter is to explain why we ask your organisation to give this its most serious possible consideration, and to cast its vote in favour of the basic principle of British withdrawal.*

*'Our aims are still those of the Better Life For All campaign some years ago - to end the violence, the discrimination, and the deprivation in Northern Ireland. However, the policies of the last ten years have failed, and it is now clear that the aims of A Better Life For All cannot be achieved until there is a commitment to end British rule. This is the only policy which has not been tried, and the only one which deals with the cause as well as the symptoms of the Irish problem.*

*'Like Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Ireland is a country which Britain invaded and conquered, and in which it then installed British settlers among the majority population. Clearly it would be unthinkable for Britain to divide up Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, keeping one part under British rule, with those of the majority who lived there under the permanent domination of the settlers and the British government. Yet that is just what Britain has done in Ireland. The bitter experience of sixty years shows that it can never work, any more than it could in Southern Africa.*

*'The London Co-op Political Committee supports the recent statement by Michael Mullen, General Secretary of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union (the largest in Ireland): "The first principle that needs to be borne in mind is the fundamental responsibility of Britain... for the present situation... Once Britain declares in favour, not of instant withdrawal, but of gradual disengagement, a tremendous impulse will be given to negotiation and reconciliation."*

*'We do so not just in the interests of Ireland but also those of this country. The cost of maintaining British rule is too high, not only in terms of killings and maimings, or the tremendous economic burden, but most of all in the threat to our hard won democratic rights. The British Army's shooting down of demonstrators; the torturing of suspects; the use of wholesale interrogation, searches, and arrests; the adoption of internment without trial and trial without jury - all these bode ill for the British Labour Movement at this time of growing confrontation.*

*'Up to now there has been a "bipartisan" policy on Northern Ireland. We believe Labour can no longer afford to accept Tory policies on this question, and can no longer afford to leave it to the Young Liberals to press for the only lasting solution to the problem of Britain's oldest colony. The time has come for Labour to give a lead on this question.'*

# British politicians and Ireland: an American view

NOW, at last, after 10 years of urban guerilla war, after 2,000 deaths and 20,000 casualties, after the destruction of billions of dollars worth of property, after countless violations of elementary human rights, after all the documented cases of the British Army's use of torture, after all the political weaseling, all the speeches, all the demonstrations: after all those things, something good seems to be happening for the North of Ireland.

"Praise the Lord," said the Rev. Sean McManus, of the Washington-based Irish National Caucus. "Something's happening, and it's about time."

He was talking about the decision of some Irish-American political leaders to come out at last and say strongly what they had never said before: that there is no Irish problem, there is only a British problem. Hugh Carey has reversed his earlier position, and House Speaker Tip O'Neill two weeks ago accurately described the North of Ireland as "a political football" for the British parties, meaning, in part, that no British party leader has ever wanted the responsibility of walking away from the first country ever conquered by England. The result was a case of oratorical rabies in the British jingo press.

"What conceivable right has this garrulous foreign windbag to insist on anything our country does in the United Kingdom?" asked the Sun. The Daily Express, long the voice of aggressive "smack-the-wogs" Colonel Blimp imperialism, called O'Neill "a log-rolling Irish-American politician." There were other equally rabid sounds, and a few milder ones, such as from Labor Party Cabinet Minister Shirley Williams, who said that Irish-Americans had little understanding of what was happening in Ireland.

"Many of them, I believe, still regard the situation in both parts of Ireland as essentially that existing when they first left for the United States in the 19th or early 20th century," she said. This was, of course, the most amazing statement of all, since the usually astute Shirley Williams has never been seen in the Bronx, Queens or Brooklyn, on Long Island or in a lot of other places where the 13.7 million Irish-Americans now live. Does she think all Irish-Americans are now tottering around in their 90s, dreaming of gunmen, or that the airplane has not yet been invented? Millions of Irish-Americans have visited Ireland in the last 10 years, and they weren't all there to kiss the Blarney Stone.

I'm an Irish-American and a reporter. I've lived twice in Ireland for periods of more than six months and have visited Belfast almost 30 times since 1963. I'm certain that

## Toronto Daily Star

A Canadian view of the Wilson Government's policy on Ireland, by 'Toronto Daily Star' Cartoonist Lewis Parker



I've spent more time in Ireland, North and South, than Shirley Williams or the editorial writers of the London newspapers. And what I have seen is very simple: I've seen a state ruled by British arms.

Some American editorial writers are not too much different from their British counterparts; they condemn the IRA, and accuse the Irish-Americans of "sentimentality" if they support the cause of a united Ireland and the necessity of fighting, with

guns, for that goal. Some people think that the Irish have "sentimentality" the way blacks are supposed to have rhythm.

But I've been shot at in Belfast and tear-gassed in Derry. I've talked to the IRA. I've looked at the British concentration camp at Long Kesh (from the outside), seen British soldiers bash kids on the head and fire four-inch hard rubber bullets at crowds of women. I saw the blood on the streets of Derry after British paratroopers fired into a crowd and





killed 13 people. My attitude to the North of Ireland is not sentimental. It's made of sheer cold anger.

"Ireland has not for nearly a thousand years had her house to herself," says the respected Irish Times of Dublin, hardly a radical sheet. "It is time her native genius was allowed to assert itself, her attitudes to life to be given sway... Are we never to have a chance? Are we to be a battlefield forever?"

"The intricacies of international law, under which Britain claims the right to legislate for the North of Ireland, the genuinely argued case of Northern Protestants who may fear—though they should not—Dublin intentions, these are points to be worked on by cool diplomatic and political process: they are not solvable by tribal battle cries.

"Of course: But why, the Irish ask, must every marginal racial, post-colonial question throughout the world be the subject of inter-

national commission and inquiry while the British/Irish question is stubbornly, petulantly, excluded from international scrutiny by the barefaced stare of the former masters of the world?"

"It must be said, again and again, that we here on this island have much to do, and much to reproach ourselves with in the recent past. We have not shown ourselves either wise or long-sighted or even enterprising in our efforts to ameliorate conditions. But the main emphasis has, perforce, to come from Westminster. And Speaker O'Neill and our (Common Market) colleagues must surely see some international virtue in ridding Europe of one of its oldest, one of the bloodiest, and one of its least necessary problems."

The key word is unnecessary. The average Englishman is a decent human being; and when I speak of "the British" I refer only to British leaders, most of who come out of a small coterie of men, largely educated in English public (private) schools and universities to minister to an empire that no longer exists.

•  
Their counterparts in the Unionist party of Northern Ireland are a caricature; a greedy little elite that has divided the Catholic and Protestant working classes for more than a century in order to prevent a true labor movement from coming into existence. Divide and conquer has always been a component of British foreign policy; set Arab against Jew, Indian against Pakistani, one African tribe against another, and then you can set yourself up as the only civilized voice in the room. And you can take home whatever is loose to plunder.

But there is nothing left for the British in the North of Ireland. While the economy of the Republic expands, the North is in depression. While Englishmen travel freely in the South, opening businesses, fishing the streams, settling into farms, the Irish of the North have come to hate the British army. It's the most enduring tragedy in the world today.

"Now it's time to demand, with Gov. Carey, that the British make a declaration of their intention to withdraw," said the Rev. McManus, who last year met in Belfast with some of the hardest leaders of the Protestant paramilitary groups, and who doesn't believe in the "bloodbath" theory at all. "There must be a deadline. And not in 1,000 years. In five years, say. And of course, all the political prisoners must be released."

The British press might thunder and say that this is not the business of America. But if Israel is our business, if Egypt is our business, if South Africa and Rhodesia are our business, if Soviet Jews are our business, if then-Sen. John F. Kennedy thought colonial Algeria was our business in 1956, then Ireland is our business too. Everybody wants the killing to stop. And there is only one way to stop it forever. Get the British out, and make Ireland one country, as it was at the beginning.

—from *New York Daily News*, 27.4.79

# The ordeal of Northern Ireland: a view from the Soviet Union

1,932 killed,  
20,776 wounded,  
26,516 incidents involving the use of fire  
arms,  
6,478 bomb and mine explosions,  
2,736 arsons,  
90,300 destroyed buildings.

Such is the tragic balance sheet of the ten years since the arrival of the British occupation army in Northern Ireland in August 1969. It had been brought in, the British authorities say, to prevent civil war between Catholics and Protestants.

London maintains that violence in Northern Ireland is due entirely to the operations of the Provisional IRA (a splinter group of the Irish Republican Army which places prime emphasis on armed struggle) and not to the repressive measures of the British army and police. But if the outcome of the present struggle depended entirely on bombs and bullets, the IRA groups would have long been suppressed – according to some estimates they number no more than 650 men. No, the drama is not the result of individual terror. It is the result of Britain's refusal to recognize the rights of the Catholic population.

The Catholics, the indigenous inhabitants, are the poorest and most oppressed part of the population of Northern Ireland. The British government refuses to carry out a programme of sorely needed economic and socio-political reforms. Suffice it to say that the level of unemployment in Northern Ireland is twice as high as in the United Kingdom as a whole, and the hardest hit are the Catholics. The Protestants, who are of English and Scottish stock, are the dominant and richest part of the population. They stand for close alliance with Britain, act as colonialists, and have the full support of London. The British troops were dispatched to help the Protestant Unionists to cope with the mass Catholic movement for civil rights and an end to political, economic and social discrimination.

The 'internment' policy introduced in 1971 led to mass arrests and incarceration in jail or concentration camp without trial and even proper investigation. Not a single Protestant was arrested in the ensuing 18 months, despite the violence perpetrated by the ultra-Right loyalists, while thousands of civil rights campaigners were placed behind bars.

Blood is being shed on both sides, the victims are both Catholics and Protestants. But to read the London press one might think that all the violence comes from the IRA Provisionals. Protestant violence is seldom mentioned, and only in exceptional cases.

One such exceptional case – exceptional

indeed in its brutality – was the murder of 19 persons by the 'Shankill butchers'. The name comes from Shankill Road in Belfast where their latest crime was committed. The appellation 'butchers' is no exaggeration – they tortured most of their Catholic victims and then cut their throats with a butcher's knife. All members of the gang belonged to the ultra-Right Ulster Volunteer Force. One of the 'butchers' proved to be a British serviceman.

**I have travelled extensively in Northern Ireland. Everywhere, virtually at every step, the presence of the British army makes itself felt.**

Belfast is filled with British soldiers in camouflage uniform. They man the checkpoints, stand guard at petrol stations, on roads to the airport, at the seaport, in front of the banks and the bigger shops. Stealthily, clinging to house walls, they patrol the streets, keeping an eye on all pedestrians and the upper storeys of apartment buildings. They are always on the alert, with their finger on the trigger. Add to this the constant drone of helicopters patrolling over the city and of the roar of armoured vehicles riding its streets. At every checkpoint one has to stop and be subjected to a humiliating body search.

Northern Ireland is a land of total surveillance. The British army has a computer file on practically every adult, listing facial features, date of birth, occupation, religion, address, licence number, colour and make of car, even type of television and colour of wallpaper in the home. This is complemented by telephone bugging and a network of paid informers. And all to keep the people in a state of constant intimidation, compel them to give up the fight for their vital rights.

Northern Ireland is honeycombed with concentration camps, prisons and police stations with torture chambers run by the army and the Ulster Royal Constabulary.

Trials are held in secret, without jury and with prosecution witnesses heard in the absence of the accused. In many cases the presumption of innocence is violated.

And yet some courts found themselves obliged to acquit the accused for lack of evidence. The authorities then decreed that a confession was sufficient proof of guilt. And confessions can and are being extorted by a variety of police techniques.

The use of physical and psychological pressure has aroused protest in Britain and around the world. In 1977 the European Court of Human Rights pronounced Britain guilty of inhuman and humiliating treatment of prisoners. True, the court did not venture to demand prosecution of army and police officials directly guilty of torture. Apparently it was feared that such court proceedings might involve high-placed personages in

London who sanctioned these 'police techniques'.

The British representative assured the European Court that there was no more torture or humiliating treatment of prisoners. But the facts show that both have remained the basis of British policy in Northern Ireland.

About 90 per cent of all the verdicts handed down by the special tribunals were based on confessions made during long and harassing interrogation sessions. How the 'confessions' were obtained was told recently by Dr Robert Irwin, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Police Surgeons' Association, in a television programme. In his three years of duty at a police station in Castlereagh he witnessed more than 150 cases of torture. Some prisoners had broken eardrums, others mutilated hands. Dr Irwin found more than 40 wounds and bruises on a prisoner who had 'confessed'. In all these cases, Dr Irwin stressed, the police maintained that the wounds had been 'self-inflicted.'

**The drama of Northern Ireland has ceased to be an internal affair of Britain. It is attracting worldwide attention, exposing the hypocrisy of London's 'human rights' talk. British officials and politicians are embarrassed whenever the question of Northern Ireland comes up at international conferences.**

This is beginning to cause concern also among Britain's NATO allies, notably the US Administration, for the military and police terror in Northern Ireland is undermining the myth of Western democracy. A number of US leaders have called on Britain to resolve the Northern Ireland crisis without further delay. The US State Department has suspended the supply of weapons to the Ulster Royal Constabulary. And there is one more weighty factor: the votes of the big Irish community in the United States, with elections due to be held next year.

London is angry at what it describes as American interference in Britain's internal affairs. Lord Hailsham, a prominent Tory, has remarked that the Americans 'should bear in mind that Britain is also an independent country.'

The tenth anniversary of the presence of British troops in Northern Ireland was marked by huge demonstrations in London and Belfast to press the demand for an end to all repressive legislation, for a bill of rights, an end to political, economic and social discrimination and withdrawal of all British forces. That is the only way to bring peace to the much suffering Northern Ireland.

– from *New Times*, a Soviet journal of world affairs, September 1979.





# Anglo-Irish economic relations

**THE REPUBLIC** of Ireland is a firmly established liberal parliamentary democracy, one of the few states to have come into existence this century of which this can be said. Ireland was England's first and oldest colony: the claim of English Government to exercise sovereignty in Ireland goes back to 1172. Sovereignty over Northern Ireland still rests with the Crown in Parliament, but is disputed by the Republic, whose constitution claims the right to jurisdiction over the whole island.

England's strategic, political and economic interests in Ireland have always been inextricably entwined. As a rising and later a dominant world imperial power, with extensive naval and commercial interests, the rulers of England have always been concerned with control of the North Western approaches to Europe. In her rivalry with various continental powers over the centuries, England has sought to ensure that they would not get control of Ireland. Likewise, successive Irish movements for national freedom have sought allies among England's rivals — whether it was 16th century Spain or 17th and 18th century France or 19th century America or 20th century Germany. Today Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom is a component of the NATO alliance against the Warsaw Pact countries. Edward Heath has stated in the House of Commons that the North is important to Britain's defences. Fear that a united Ireland, if militarily non-aligned as the Republic is at present, might weaken NATO's military capacity, is presumably one of the considerations influencing the Foreign Office and the General Staffs in their attitude to the Irish Question.

England's economic relations with Ireland have shifted in line with her own phases of economic development as her society passed through feudalism, early commercial capitalism and the industrial revolution into the present late-capitalist world of the multinational corporations and the EEC. Ireland's economic history in turn has been dominated by England's necessities, or the necessities of her rulers. Some major themes of that history are outlined here.

## Clearing the estate of Ireland

Before the Norman conquest Irish society was clan-based, with some embryonic feudal features, the land being the communal property of the clan. Without English interference during the mediaeval period it is probable that Irish society would in time have developed an indigenous form of feudalism and eventually perhaps a centralised monarchical state as occurred in England itself; but this development was blocked by the pattern imposed from outside.

Ireland's principle source of natural wealth has always been its land, especially its pasture land, which is ideally suited for high quality cattle production. Communal ownership of

pasture land, which characterised clan society, was suited in many ways to maintaining a balance between population growth and food and natural resources. The completion of the English conquest in the Cromwellian and Williamite Wars of the 17th century led to parcelling out the clan lands among private landlords who were English and Scottish by nationality and Protestant in religion. The new principle of private property in pasture land gave rise to conflict between people and cattle which dominated Irish agrarian history for the next few centuries and whose echo is still heard — a conflict summarised in the saying 'the land for the bullock and the people for the road.'

Sir William Petty, one of the fathers of political economy, proposed a plan in the late 17th century that 'the estate of Ireland' be turned into a vast cattle ranch to provide England with meat and that Ireland's 'surplus' population be transported to the colonies. Petty's plan was a given a stay of execution, as it were, during the 18th century, as the Industrial Revolution took off in England and the growing population there required supplies of grain from Ireland.

Corn-growing, unlike cattle-raising, requires lots of labour and in the late 18th and 19th century this provided the basis for a rapid expansion of population in Ireland. The Corn Laws gave the English and Irish landlords a monopoly of grain-growing and the French Wars cut off England from continental corn supplies. Irish farm labourers and cottiers grew potatoes to feed themselves and grew corn to pay the rent to the landlords, who then exported it to England. The growing population in turn stimulated the home market for other products. The Irish Parliament in Dublin won more autonomy. The fine Georgian squares of late 18th century Dublin are one testimony to the relative prosperity of the period.

The Act of Union of 1800 changed the political framework. The Irish landlords were terrified at the spread of democratic ideas in Ireland under the influence of the French Revolution. They savagely suppressed the United Irishmen rebellion, led by Belfast Protestant radicals, consented to Pitt's scheme for the abolition of the Irish Parliament and sought absorption in the landlord-dominated London Parliament. The political conditions were now ready for enforcing Petty's plan.

The 19th century was a disastrous one for Ireland. When Ireland and Britain were united under one parliament their respective populations were around 5 million and 12 million. Today the population ratio is 4½ million to 55 million. Ireland's population rose to 8½ million in the 1840s as the momentum generated by the demand for corn continued. But then the repeal of the Corn Laws and the importation of cheap grain from North America changed things. Cattle prices rose relative to grain prices and

it became more profitable for landlords to replace people with cattle on the land. The Great Famine of the 1840s gave impetus to the process. By the end of the 19th century the population was down to 5 million again. Millions of Irish emigrants helped populate the cities of Britain and the USA (Crotty 1966).

Ireland's population fell continuously from the 1840s to the early 1960s, as emigration rates surpassed national population growth — a demographic pattern unique in the world. The position of 19th century Ireland within the United Kingdom is a classical case study of the adverse effects on a poorer, peripheral politically weak area of union with a developed, more powerful one. The industries of southern Ireland collapsed in face of cheap English manufactures. The country's land resources were shifted by the alien landlord class from labour intensive corn and dairy production to land extensive cattle rearing.

Desire to win the power to counteract these trends was an important motive of the Irish independence movement. The land question dominated 19th century Irish politics. It was solved by the Land Acts of Gladstone and later English Governments, which enabled the better-off tenants to buy-out their land from the landlords with the help of government loans. By the early 20th century a rural society of owner-occupying farmers had replaced that of landlords and rent-paying tenants of the past. (Bew 1979)

## The economic effects of partition

The only part of the country to participate in the 19th century industrial revolution was the north-east corner around Belfast. Here the settlement of English and Scots colonists in the 17th century had been most successful. A system of land tenure more favourable than elsewhere in the country, as well as English Government policy, favoured capital accumulation and the growth of a local textile industry, to which a strong shipbuilding and marine engineering industry was added in the 19th century.

These industries in Northern Ireland were oriented to British and imperial markets. They exported most of their products. They depended heavily on British naval contacts. The skilled Protestant workers of Belfast were a classical labour aristocracy, separated from the Catholic labourers by religion as well as by degree of skill. Moreover, the Protestant bourgeoisie of Belfast, the ship manufacturers and linen mill owners, had little enthusiasm for the tariffs, higher taxes and state interventionist policies which an independent Irish State, bent on industrialising the overwhelmingly agricultural South, would have to use. In addition to political and religious factors, this provided the economic rationale of early 20th century Northern Unionism and the divergent politi-



An eviction scene in County Clare, on the estate of Captain Hector Vandeleur, in 1888.

cal courses followed since by the Northern and Southern bourgeoisies, with the divided Irish Labour movement trailing in their wake.

Most people are aware of the politically damaging effects of the 1920 Partition of Ireland on both parts of the country. It weakened the forces of liberalism North and South and politically divided the nascent Irish Labour Movement. Its damaging economic effects are less often referred to. (Greaves 1972)

Partition deprived the new Irish State of one third of its potential population and half the country's taxable capacity, thus significantly diminishing the home market.

The result was that both North and South leaned separately, as it were, on Britain instead of supporting one another. The South for decades was heavily dependent on the British market for her agricultural exports — which were especially important for Britain during the Second World War — while Northern Ireland's industries have remained heavily dependent on subsidies from the British Government. Despite these handicaps, the progress of the South has been remarkable.

## The EEC dimension

In the 1930s the nationalist wing of the southern Irish business class, which has held political hegemony in the Irish State since its foundation, embarked on a programme of industrialisation behind protective tariffs. This was inevitable in face of the world slump of the time, but it led to an 'economic war' with Britain in which the British Government imposed penal duties on Irish cattle exports because of Ireland's unwillingness

to continue paying annuities to Britain in respect of the sums that had been used to buy out the landlords. This programme was continued after the War and was supplemented by the establishment of numerous state enterprises in manufacturing, services, power production and transport. These measures boosted manufacturing output and employment in the Republic. Two thirds of Irish trade still remained with the U.K., however.

It was because of this trade dependence that the Republic applied to join the EEC simultaneously with Britain. In the years preceding this decision the Irish Government had shifted to a more conservative foreign policy position. It abandoned its more nationalist economic stance of the previous three decades and sought to accommodate Ireland to the general liberalisation of trade and capital movements then occurring throughout the capitalist world under America's hegemony.

Part of this accommodation was a return to the free trade relations with Britain which had prevailed during the 19th century. The Republic also joined the international bidding for foreign investment capital. British, American, German and Japanese firms were invited to invest in Ireland and offered capital grants and tax-free allowances financed by the Irish taxpayers to encourage them.

Joint membership of the EEC modifies Anglo-Irish economic relations. The Macmillan Government oriented Britain from a world-wide to a European destiny in the aftermath of Suez, which inflicted on the British establishment a humiliation akin to that suffered by the defeated and occupied

continental powers during the war. As a Norwegian writer has put it, one formula for understanding the EEC is: 'Take five broken empires; add a sixth one later, and make one large neocolonial empire out of it all' (Galtung, 1973).

## The future

Britain's economic problems of underinvestment and high unemployment are likely to get worse rather than better within the EEC over the next few years. It is doubtful if she will ever settle happily into an economic alliance dominated by West Germany and France. For Ireland the advantages gained on the agricultural side from high food prices are likely to be eroded as the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy comes under consumer pressure from all over Western Europe. Disillusionment with the EEC is already widespread in both countries.

The interests of the great mass of ordinary people in both Ireland and Britain of course fundamentally coincide. Irish people and English people would benefit from mutually happy relations and the more the two economies can develop, the more trade can take place between the two islands. But the partition problem must be solved. In this writer's judgement this is best done by the British Government recognising and basing its policy upon the rights of the Irish majority and working towards Irish unity on a basis which gives every safeguard to the rights of the unionist minority. The Irish Government has declared itself willing to discuss any constitutional arrangement within Ireland which would facilitate this.

In a united Ireland the Labour Movement would in time be the strongest political force. Complete political disengagement from Ireland would also strengthen the forces making for progressive social change within Britain itself. In that situation both countries would be in a much stronger position to regain the sovereignty and economic planning powers which have been surrendered by membership of the EEC. Having done that they can then tackle the real problems before people today — the necessity for developing a rational economic system in a balanced ecological framework, with maximum involvement and participation by people in running their own lives. True internationalism, which requires the mutual recognition of national independence and mutual economic co-operation — would then govern the relations between Ireland and Britain instead of the antagonisms and wrongs that go back centuries.

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# The Liberal Party and Ireland

**JOHN PARDOE, then a Liberal MP, was interviewed on BBC1's *Tonight* programme on 3 January 1979 by Donald McCormick. These are extracts from that interview.**

**D.M.** John Pardoe, a few days ago Cyril Smith said the date for withdrawal should be set for about two years from now. Is that the kind of time scale you would like to see?

**J.P.** That's what I've been suggesting for the last four years, yes.

**D.M.** What do you say to the official spokesman in your party on Northern Ireland, Clement Freud, who has described Mr. Smith's statement last week as 'exceedingly unhelpful'?

**J.P.** I'm not at all surprised. I know that that is Clement Freud's view. It has been his view for a very long time and there is no point in concealing the fact that we are divided on this issue.

**D.M.** One of Mr. Freud's reasons for saying that Mr. Smith had been exceedingly unhelpful presumably was that it encouraged the men of violence, in this case the Provisional IRA, who also of course are advocating troops out of Northern Ireland.

**J.P.** That of course is one of the problems of advocating sense in the Northern Ireland situation, and it's an accusation that has been levelled at me successively over the last four years.

The fact of the matter is that the thing that caused the violence just before Christmas, and the thing that is most likely to bring about violence again, is the fact that the Government is now seen by middle-class Catholics in Northern Ireland, and by the IRA and their undercover supporters, as being in support of the Protestant dominance in Northern Ireland. And that is as a result of the Government's promise to the Northern Ireland Protestants of increased representation in the House of Commons.

That is a disastrous betrayal of the minority case in Northern Ireland and it is directly responsible for the violence that we've seen.

**D.M.** At the same time, Mr. Pardoe, as Mr. Mason was saying recently in the House of Commons, the number of troops committed to Northern Ireland seems to be decreasing almost automatically, as it were. Why risk provoking Unionist opinion in this very difficult and delicate climate by threatening them with the removal of the army?

**J.P.** Well, it's not me who is provoking opinion in Northern Ireland, of course. It's the Government's actions in siding with Mr. Powell and his Ulster Unionists that's done that - I mean, that's a gauntlet down to the IRA. And they have lost the sympathy of middle-class Catholics as a result. So they are guilty, if anyone is, of stirring up the problems again.

No. 1.

## JUSTICE for IRELAND.

### AN APPEAL.

**BRITONS!** heed not the fallacies of the prejudiced; cast aside the envy grown of past differences; laugh at the fears of the timid; spurn the intolerance of the bigots, and look at this Irish Question from a broad standpoint!

Here is a Nation crying for Justice, and it is said that Britain, the accredited "Fountain of Freedom" will refuse to award it.  
**LET THAT NOT BE SO.**

**BRITONS!** there has never before been such an opportunity for you to show your magnanimity. The day has come for decision upon this most important of all important questions, and it lies in your power to give it.

Give to a people, praying for your generosity and looking to you for Justice, that Freedom which you yourselves enjoy. Give it Gracefully; Give it Ungrudgingly; Give it in the spirit of the great command, "That you should do unto others as you would be done unto."

Do for Ireland what you desired to see done for other oppressed Nationalities; assist the Great Statesman who has devoted his life to such work, by voting at the coming Election for those Candidates who promise to Vote for Home Rule for Ireland.

The case is clear; the issue plain; it is whether WE should continue to govern Ireland with an Iron Hand in a manner contrary to the will of the Irish People under the flag of **TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION**, or whether she should be governed by Irishmen under the **FLAG OF FREEDOM**—whether there should continue that bitterness and hatred between the two peoples which has too long existed, or whether there should be created that bond of mutuality and amity which ought to exist between two peoples whose interests are so largely identical.

**A PATRIOTIC ENGLISHMAN.**

## VOTE LIBERAL.

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But the point I would make to you is this: that we put the troops in for a specific purpose. We put the troops in there in order to buy time to create a political settlement. That was years ago. We are no nearer creating that political settlement today than we were then. And we won't ever be near creating that political settlement as long as

both sides in Northern Ireland believe that Britain's commitment is unlimited.

**D.M.** You've spoken of the betrayal of the British Government siding with Mr. Powell and the Unionists. Do you deny, however, that they represent the majority in Northern Ireland and that that majority wishes to continue to be part of the United Kingdom?



No. 3.

# WHAT IS THE IRISH QUESTION?

"The Irish problem is not a question of Separation between England and Ireland, neither is it a question of hostility between the Irish and English peoples. It is simply whether the Irish people living in Ireland shall, within the shores of their own country, enjoy Political Freedom and be governed as the majority desire, or whether the Constitutional rights which they possess in theory shall be nullified in practice, and themselves kept in subjection to a small and diminishing minority."

## POWER.

The Union between England and Ireland has never been a REAL one—only a Paper Union, not a Union of hearts.

The Act of Union was passed by the most Corrupt and Unconstitutional means—by **TREACHERY** and **BRIBERY**. "Out of the whole 300 members of the Irish Parliament 168 were nominated from rotten boroughs, and the owners were paid **£1,400,000** for the privilege of enslaving their fellow countrymen; that money still remains part of the Irish National Debt, and the people have paid interest on it ever since."

## THOROLD ROGERS.

How can any system thus established be satisfactory?

**ENGLISHMEN!** you are now being asked to determine that Ireland shall be governed in accordance with **IRISH IDEAS BY IRISHMEN**, and not in accordance with **ENGLISH IDEAS BY ENGLISHMEN**.

Our treatment of Ireland has been vile, as Mr. GLADSTONE says:—"Go into the length and breadth of the world; ransack the literature of all Countries; find if you can a single voice, a single book, find, I would almost say as much as a single newspaper article (unless the product of the day), in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated except with profound and bitter condemnation."

## VOTE for the LIBERALS & JUSTICE for IRELAND

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J.P. If one looks back into Irish history one can see that in the early years of this century the British Parliament voted by a very substantial majority for a united Ireland. The Ulster Protestants were then a minority and they threatened civil war in order to get their way. So they are the men of violence, they are the men who brought

about the partition in Ireland as a result of their threat of violence. So I don't have a great deal of sympathy for them. But nevertheless I am not siding with one side or the other. I want a political solution in Northern Ireland and I don't believe we're going to get it as long as Britain's commitment is unlimited.



'We believe that the withdrawal of troops is only the first step in the ending of British involvement in Irish affairs. Conflict in Ireland stems directly, in recent years, from the British government policy of partition and the containment of nationalism by brute force. We affirm the right of all nations to self-determination—the right of all people in Ireland to decide their own destiny.'

John Leston, Chairperson, National League of Young Liberals, 1980-81.

'I do not advocate pulling out troops next week but I do advocate a firm determination to withdraw and to do so in order to achieve settlement.'

'The old stories and the old methods have got us nowhere. Let's have the courage to call for unification, a British withdrawal, and for love instead of hatred.'

Liberal MP Cyril Smith addressing the Liberal Assembly, 27 September 1979

'After ten long and bloody years, the "military solution" as it is called, has simply failed. The slogan at the end of the day should be, "Ireland and the Irish must solve their own problems—nobody else can help".'

Liberal MP David Alton speaking to a rally in Cornwall, 11 September 1979

# Isn't it about time Labour discussed Northern Ireland?

THE Labour Party conference has discussed Ireland once during the last five years, and that was an inconclusive one-hour debate on a Friday, at the end of which no vote was taken. Considering the sheer extent of the death, destruction and cost incurred during that time I think we can safely say that the party has done the issue less than justice.

The last five years in Ireland saw the death of the power-sharing policy and the degeneration of direct rule into something indistinguishable from martial law throughout Northern Ireland. The equivalent of two divisions of infantry now police the province, a military disposition which, if translated into mainland Britain, would involve the commitment of something like 70 divisions of troops to the streets of our cities.

In all the major areas of public expenditure, education, social security, regional aid, health and industry, we have been spending far more, per head, in Ulster than in any other region of the United Kingdom.

Last year the Treasury admitted that the net civil cost of maintaining Northern Ireland now exceeds £1,000 million pounds per year, as much as the net annual cost of our Common Market membership. This estimate did not include the cost of military operations, so it is not unlikely that Northern Ireland is now costing the British taxpayer something like £1,500 million per year.

On every occasion, these heavy financial appropriations have been approved by the House of Commons with no more than token resistance or criticism and, in the case of the military expenditure, none at all, since the Defence Department has never revealed what the military operations in Northern Ireland cost and the defence estimates and expenditure accounts are not presented in a way which would allow anyone to deduce what the true cost is.

## Urgency

But there is a heavier and more dangerous cost which, by itself, would be reason enough for the Labour movement to treat it as an issue of the greatest urgency and importance. I refer to the damage done by the state to the law, the institutions of law enforcement and to our democratic inheritance.

This has been brought about mainly by two statutes, the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. One of these, the Emergency Provisions Act, applies exclusively to Northern Ireland and the other applies to every region of the United Kingdom.

Between them, these acts have given the police and the military authorities virtually unlimited powers of arrest in Northern Ireland. The number of people arrested under these powers is far greater than the official figures reveal, since the Government uses a casuistic



## Prevention of Terrorism Act: statistics

Between the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974 and 1 January 1980, 4,345 people were detained, 205 people were excluded, and 46 people were charged with offences under the Act.

and evasive definition of 'arrest' when answering questions in the House of Commons. Nobody is 'arrested' in Northern Ireland until they have been held by the police or military authorities for more than four hours. An unknown number, but certainly thousands of innocent people, have been arrested, interrogated and released without charge since the Emergency Provisions Act was passed.

This power to hold innocent people without charge, and without access to legal advice for interrogation, has given rise to the outrages described in the Bennett Report and the Amnesty Report and to the judgement by the European court that the British state treats innocent and defenceless prisoners inhumanly.

The abolition of jury trial has given rise to conviction by anonymous denunciation and by confessions extorted by violence. The

recent arrest of Peter Grimes in London under the PTA and his subsequent prolonged interrogation until 'he was prepared to confess anything', is a vivid example of what can be done with such powers, without, apparently using any kind of torture other than preventing the victim from sleeping.

## Deportees

The Prevention of Terrorism Act, passed in the panic-stricken wake of the Birmingham bombings, has extended the power of the police over the citizen throughout Britain. Apart from the power to arrest without charge and hold for interrogation for up to seven days without access to legal advice, this act has given rise to a new class of citizen, the deportee.

More than 150 people, against whom no charge has ever been proved, have already been deported indefinitely without trial from one part of Britain to another. None of them dares break the terms of his or her deportation because to do so would invite instant long-term imprisonment.

So far as I know, of all the countries in the world, only Indonesia, Chile and Britain deport people *sine die* (indefinitely). It is, I think, worth reminding ourselves, that the Labour Party conference has never discussed the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

When the PTA was first brought before Parliament, Roy Jenkins emphasised the 'draconian' character of the measures contained in it and was at pains to assure the House and the people that it was only a temporary measure. We have now had it for more than four years and we can see clearly that it has turned out to be an instrument used for harassing the population; more than 98 per cent of those arrested under the Act were innocent of any offence connected with terrorism; innocent trade unionists in the course of their trade union activities have been arrested and, in some cases, deported; people who had no connection with Ireland at all have been arrested, others have been arrested simply on the basis that they were married to, living with or merely friendly with, Irish people; even babes in arms and toddlers have been arrested, as happened at Heathrow earlier this year.

But far from being temporary, as Roy Jenkins defensively protested and as Lord Shackleton plaintively hoped in his report on the workings of the Act, the police authorities are demanding even greater powers over the people. They clearly do not regard the PTA as a temporary piece of legislation.

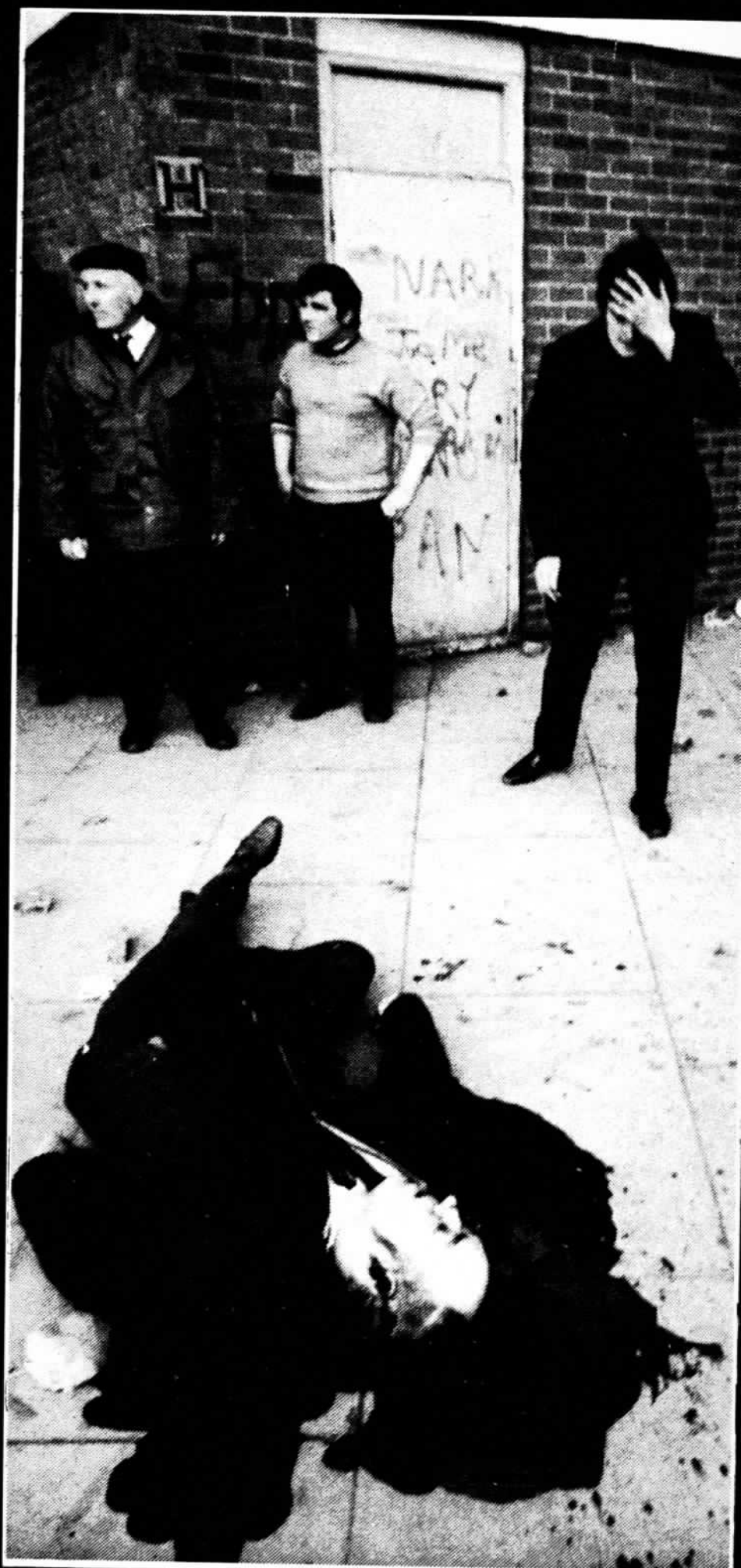
It is time the British Labour movement took a stand on these matters. Do we think the costs, in human, material and political terms, justify the results?

— from Tribune 8.6.79

## Butcher's Dozen: a lesson for the octave of Widgery

*This poem was written after Bloody Sunday, 30 January 1972, when British soldiers shot dead 13 unarmed civil rights demonstrators on the streets of Derry.*

I went with Anger at my heel  
Through Bogside of the bitter zeal  
- Jesus pity! - on a day  
Of cold and drizzle and decay.  
A month had passed. Yet there remained  
A murder smell that stung and stained.  
On flats and alleys - over all -  
It hung: on battered roof and wall.  
On wreck and rubbish scattered thick.  
On sullen steps and pitted brick.  
And when I came where thirteen died  
It shrivelled up my heart. I sighed  
And looked about that brutal place  
Of rage and terror and disgrace.  
Then my moistened lips grew dry.  
I had heard an answering sigh!  
There in a ghostly pool of blood  
A crumpled phantom hugged the mud:  
'Once there lived a hooligan.  
A pig came up, and away he ran.  
Here lies one in blood and bones.  
Who lost his life for throwing stones.'  
More voices rose. I turned and saw  
Three corpses forming, red and raw.  
From dirt and stone. Each upturned face  
Stared unseeing from its place:  
'Behind this barrier, blighters three.  
We scrambled back and made to flee.  
The guns cried *Stop*, and here lie we.'  
Then from left and right they came.  
More mangled corpses, bleeding, lame.  
Holding their wounds. They chose their ground.  
Ghost by ghost, without a sound.  
And one stepped forward, soiled and white:  
'A bomber I. I travelled light  
- Four pounds of nails and gelignite  
About my person, hid so well  
They seemed to vanish where I fell.  
When the bullet stopped my breath  
A doctor sought the cause of death.  
He upped my shirt, undid my fly.  
Twice he moved my limbs awry.  
And noticed nothing. By and by  
A soldier, with his sharper eye,  
Beheld the four elusive rockets  
Stuffed in my coat and trouser pockets.  
Yes, they must be strict with us.  
Even in death so treacherous!  
He faded, and another said:  
'We three met close when we were dead.  
Into an armoured car they piled us  
Where our mingled blood defiled us.  
Certain, if not dead before,  
To suffocate upon the floor.  
Careful bullets in the back  
Stopped our terrorist attack.  
And so three dangerous lives are done  
- Judged, condemned and shamed in one.  
That spectre faded in his turn.  
A harsher stirred, and spoke in scorn:  
'The shame is theirs, in word and deed.  
Who prate of Justice, practise greed.  
And act in ignorant fury - then.





Officers and gentlemen,  
 Send to their Courts for the Most High  
 To tell us did we really die!  
 Does it need recourse to law  
 To tell ten thousand what they saw?  
 Law that lets them, caught red-handed,  
 Halt the game and leave it stranded,  
 Summon up a sworn inquiry  
 And dump their conscience in the diary.  
 During which hiatus, should  
 Their legal basis vanish, good,  
 The thing is rapidly arranged:  
 Where's the law that can't be changed?  
 The news is out. The troops were kind.  
 Impartial justice has to find  
 We'd be alive and well today  
 If we had let them have their way.  
 Yet England, even as you lie,  
 You give the facts that you deny.  
 Spread the lie with all your power  
 - All that's left; it's turning sour.  
 Friend and stranger, bride and brother,  
 Son and sister, father, mother,  
 All not blinded by your smoke,  
 Photographers who caught your stroke,  
 The priests that blessed our bodies, spoke  
 And wagged our blood in the world's face.  
 The truth will out, to your disgrace.  
 He flushed and faded. Pale and grim,  
 A joking spectre followed him:  
 'Take a bunch of stunted shoots,  
 A tangle of transplanted roots,  
 Ropes and rifles, feathered nests,  
 Some dried colonial interests,  
 A hard unnatural union grown  
 In a bed of blood and bone,  
 Tongue of serpent, gut of hog  
 Spiced with spleen of underdog.  
 Stir in, with oaths of loyalty,  
 Sectarian supremacy,  
 And heat, to make a proper botch,  
 In a bouillon of bitter Scotch.  
 Last, the choice ingredient: you.  
 Now, to crown your Irish stew,  
 Boil it over, make a mess.  
 A most imperial success!'

He capered weakly, racked with pain,  
 His dead hair plastered in the rain:  
 The group was silent once again.  
 It seemed the moment to explain  
 That sympathetic politicians  
 Say our violent traditions,  
 Backward looks and bitterness  
 Keep us in this dire distress.  
 We must forget, and look ahead,  
 Nurse the living, not the dead.  
 My words died out. A phantom said:  
 'Here lies one who breathed his last  
 Firmly reminded of the past.  
 A trooper did it, on one knee,  
 In tones of brute authority.'  
 That harsher spirit, who before  
 Had flushed with anger, spoke once more:  
 'Simple lessons cut most deep.  
 This lesson in our hearts we keep:  
 Persuasion, protest, arguments,  
 The milder forms of violence,  
 Earn nothing but polite neglect.  
 England, the way to your respect  
 Is via murderous force, it seems;  
 You push us to your own extremes.  
 You condescend to hear us speak  
 Only when we slap your cheek.





And yet we lack the last technique:  
 We rap for order with a gun,  
 The issues simplify to one  
 – Then your Democracy insists  
 You mustn't talk with terrorists!  
 White and yellow, black and blue,  
 Have learnt their history from you:  
 Divide and ruin, muddle through,  
 Not principled, but politic.  
 – In strength, perfidious; weak, a trick  
 To make good men a trifle sick.  
 We speak in wounds. Behold this mess.  
 My curse upon your politesse.  
 Another ghost stood forth, and wet  
 Dead lips that had not spoken yet:  
 'My curse on the cunning and the bland,  
 On gentlemen who loot a land  
 They do not care to understand;  
 Who keep the natives on their paws  
 With ready lash and rotten laws;  
 Then if the beasts erupt in rage  
 Give them a slightly larger cage  
 And, in scorn and fear combined  
 Turn them against their own kind.  
 The game runs out of room at last,  
 A people rises from its past,  
 The going gets unduly tough  
 And you have (surely . . . ?) had enough.  
 The time has come to yield your place  
 With condescending show of grace  
 – An Empire-builder handing on.  
 We reap the ruin when you've gone,  
 All your errors heaped behind you:  
 Promises that do not bind you,  
 Hopes in conflict, cramped commissions,  
 Faiths exploited, and traditions.  
 Bloody sputum filled his throat.  
 He stopped and coughed to clear it out,  
 And finished, with his eyes a-glow:  
 'You came, you saw, you conquered . . . So.  
 You gorged – and it was time to go.  
 Good riddance. We'd forget – released –  
 But for the rubbish of your feast,  
 The slops and scraps that fell to earth  
 And sprang to arms in dragon birth.  
 Sashed and bowler-hatted, glum  
 Apprentices of fife and drum,  
 High and dry, abandoned guards  
 Of dismal streets and empty yards,  
 Drilled at the codeword 'True Religion'  
 To strut and mutter like a pigeon  
 'Not An Inch – Up The Queen';  
 Who use their walls like a latrine  
 For scribbled magic – at their call,  
 Straight from the nearest music-hall,  
 Pope and Devil intertwine,  
 Two cardboard kings appear, and join  
 In one more battle by the Boyne!  
 Who could love them? God above . . .'  
 'Yet pity is akin to love,'  
 The thirteenth corpse beside him said,  
 Smiling in its bloody head,  
 'And though there's reason for alarm  
 In dourness and a lack of charm  
 Their cursed plight calls out for patience.  
 They, even they, with other nations  
 Have a place, if we can find it.  
 Love our changeling! Guard and mind it.  
 Doomed from birth, a cursed heir,  
 Theirs is the hardest lot to bear,  
 Yet not impossible, I swear.  
 If England would but clear the air  
 And brood at home on her disgrace



- Everything to its own place.  
Face their walls of dole and fear  
And be of reasonable cheer.  
Good men every day inherit  
Father's foulness with the spirit,  
Purge the filth and do not stir it.  
Let them out! At least let in  
A breath or two of oxygen,  
So they may settle down for good  
And mix themselves in the common blood.  
We all are what we are, and that  
Is mongrel pure. What nation's not  
Where any stranger hung his hat  
And seized a lover where she sat?  
He ceased and faded. Zephyr blew  
And all the others faded too.  
I stood like a ghost. My fingers strayed  
Along the fatal barricade.  
The gentle rainfall drifting down  
Over Colmcille's town  
Could not refresh, only distil  
In silent grief from hill to hill.

*Thomas Kinsella*



# Bringing it all back home

**MIKE COOLEY, former president of AUEW TASS, addressed a conference of British trade unionists in May 1975 on the question of the urgent need for the British working class to take up the campaign for withdrawal from Ireland.**

SINCE 1169, when Henry II invaded Ireland, troops have been in that country against the wishes of the majority of the Irish people, as they are there against the wishes of the majority of the Irish people today.

Throughout those 800 years, every generation has produced Irishmen and women who have been prepared to assert the right of their nation to their national freedom.

And every time they have done that they have been met with the brute force of British Imperialism.

The irony is Ireland was Britain's first colony and is Britain's last colony, while the institutions which were built up to hold Ireland in submission were institutions that have been systematically used against the working class of this country.

## Imperial ideology

The reality is the working class of this country can never be free whilst it holds others in subjection. The institutions which were built up to suppress the Irish people, the Indian people and all those in the British colonies have been used systematically against the British people themselves.

The fact is that a system of ideas has been created in Britain which gives large sections of the British working class the conviction that there are people throughout the world who are incapable of looking after themselves, and that this gives the predominant industrialised nations the right to tell them what to do.

That same philosophy is applied at home, too. When it's used here it means that there is a class in Britain which is incapable of looking after itself. That is the working class.

We must free ourselves from this kind of ideology. If we do not, we will not be able to begin to deal with the issues that confront us in this country.

Even more important than the ideas are the physical institutions that were established to be used against us – a standing army, a police force and a secret police force. And let there be no doubt in the mind of anyone in the British trade union movement that the moment we, as a class, stand up in this country and attempt to assert our ownership over all the wealth that we alone create, those forces will be used against us with the same brutality as they have been used in the colonies and in Northern Ireland.

## Divide and rule

They've always asserted, of course, that these are a peace-keeping force, that really

what is going on in Northern Ireland is that you've sort of got a friendly London bobby in a Saracen.

Well, the British troops didn't go to India, they didn't go to Kenya, Malaya, Borneo or Aden to keep the peace. They went there to terrorise and intimidate the populace into accepting British rule. And that is exactly what they're doing in Northern Ireland.

It was in Northern Ireland that our masters devised techniques of 'divide and rule', which subsequently set Muslim against Hindu, Greek against Turk, Jew against Arab.

It was in Northern Ireland that the system of partition, later used in India, Korea and Vietnam, was devised.

Today Northern Ireland is being used for something else. It is being used as a testing ground for the so-called 'urban control' of population.

And, as sure as day follows night, those techniques will be used in Britain. They will be used because the system in this country and beyond is in dire crisis.

Our masters will seek to solve the problems of their system – at the expense of the working class. The first thing they will have to do is to smash the mass organisations of the working class, the trade union movement.

So we have the continued frantic campaign against our trade union movement.

And as the judicial means fail to enforce these measures, so they will resort to direct military force as they have always done in their colonies. During the mineworkers' 1972 dispute, there was already the suggestion among leading army officers that the troops should be used against the miners.

Then during the last mineworkers' dispute, the MP for South Oxfordshire, Mr Hurd, said in his view the miners should be treated in the same manner as the IRA. We know that outside Derby there was a special depot set up with elite troops using the kind of equipment they had in Northern Ireland, equipment which would have been used against the miners if it had come to that. Fortunately the miners were not intimidated by this.

All the techniques that were used in Northern Ireland are now being built up for the police forces and the army in this country. We know that CS gas masks have been issued to the territorial army.

## Springboard for repression

Initially, there was an order for 14,000 visors for the troops in Northern Ireland. There has subsequently been an order for 24,000 and this is for metropolitan police forces in this country, and it's not because they're expecting an invasion from Northern Ireland. It's because they know the working class in this country will have no alternative but to stand and fight.

Gradually the public is being conditioned to accept the idea of police activity and army

manoeuvres, and that was the basis of the campaign around London Airport.

And more dangerous still is the activity of the Special Branch. We've seen what they have been doing in the case of Lennon... but what also was Lennon doing among the shop stewards' committee down at Vauxhalls... and what was he doing at the trade union branches where he was in attendance.

What were the Special Branch agents doing at the sit-in at Strachans? The fact is the same methods being used against the IRA are being used against the trade union movement in this country.

In fact, what we see is a complete circle gradually being wound round the working class of this country in a very systematic movement towards the corporate state. Part of the way this is being done is to use Northern Ireland as a springboard for these forces.

For these reasons we all have a profound responsibility to demand the withdrawal of British troops, not in any patronising manner, just along the lines that it would be nice if the Irish people got a fair deal, although it should be that as well.

*We must demand the withdrawal of the troops in the interests of the working class of this country itself.*

There is another important aspect to the situation. Any blow against British imperialism in Ireland is very much greater than in some more distant colony.

A blow delivered against British capitalist rule in Ireland is of a hundred times greater political significance than a blow of equal weight in Asia or in Africa.

Our trade union movement has repeatedly supported the campaign in respect of Vietnam. It has supported the campaign in support of those fighting in Chile, Greece and Mozambique and it's about time that we began to support the campaign against what is going on right here on our own doorstep.

## Troops Out

What is being done in Northern Ireland is being done in the name of the British people, in the name of the millions who go day in, day out, to factories, who create the real wealth that we see about us.

While there are troops in Northern Ireland and while there is a system in this country which supports them there, the working class will never be free.

**The campaign to get the troops out of Ireland is a blow against British imperialism, is a blow against the British ruling class in this country, is a blow for the Irish working class, and their natural ally, the British working class.**



A nation that enslaves another can never itself be free



# Warnings from Northern Ireland

**IN THIS extract from his book *Armies and Politics* (Lawrence and Wishart 1977) Jack Woddiss describes how military techniques developed during Britain's colonial wars, and especially in Northern Ireland, are 'producing an army which could become a serious menace to the British people'.**

EXTRACTS from the Army's training manual, *Land Operations, Volume III - Counter Revolutionary Operations*, published in *Time Out* magazine (10-16 January 1975), provide a most sinister and disturbing picture of the extent to which the army has already been trained and employed as an armed political wing of the Government directed against radical, labour and popular movements.

This is no recent development, although the repression in Northern Ireland and its spill-over into Britain have brought new refinements. The preface to the manual states quite baldly that between the end of the Second World War and 1 January 1969, Britain's armed forces were engaged in no less than 53 'counter-revolutionary actions' in many different parts of the world. These military interventions were mainly to repress social unrest, workers' strikes or national independence movements and struggles, but the manual treats them in the distorted spirit of the cold war, with 'the communists' cast as the enemy and the principal instigators and inspirers of these various popular movements. On the basis of this experience of 53 counter-revolutionary interventions, the manual sets out its approach not only for handling similar situations in other overseas territories but quite obviously - and this should occasion special alarm to the British people - to act in the same way in Britain if the need arose.

The main purpose of the manual is not to analyse the past but to provide guidance for the future. Central to this guidance is the concept that a 'triumvirate' consisting of the civil authorities, the military and the police should work in unison 'as a joint and integrated organisation from the highest to the lowest level of policy making, planning and administration.' To make this 'triumvirate' operative a 'National Plan' is envisaged, along with a Military 'Director of Operations'. A series of six measures are defined as the basis of the counter-revolutionary operations in which the army, together with its other two partners in the holy trinity, will be engaged. It is worth considering these six proposed measures as set out in the manual:

- (a) the passing of emergency regulations to facilitate the conduct of a national campaign;
- (b) various political, social and economic measures designed to gain popular support and counter or surpass anything offered by the insurgents;

- (c) the setting up of an effective organisation for joint civil and military control at all levels;
- (d) the forming of an effective, integrated and nationwide intelligence organisation without which military operations can never be successful;
- (e) the strengthening of indigenous police and armed forces so that their loyalty is beyond question and their work effective. This is often easier said than done;
- (f) control measures designed to isolate the insurgents from popular control.<sup>1</sup>

It will be noted that, although these measures are linked with action to check 'insurgents', it provides a dangerous pattern for military intervention in the field of civilian politics. This danger is underlined by the way the manual slips quite easily into direct intervention against people exercising their democratic rights.<sup>2</sup> Thus among the range of activities which the army would be called upon to undertake as part of its responsibilities in maintaining internal security are

- (1) dealing with civil disturbances resulting from labour disputes, racial and religious antagonism and tension or social unrest;
- (2) dealing with riots and civil disobedience, with or without the political undertones which savour of revolt or even rebellion.

Given that the army is trained into accepting a scenario which, in the manual, depicts a gradual escalation of normal political activity via 'political agitation and manoeuvring propaganda activities, formation of cells and cadres (political, intelligence and military) and civil and industrial unrest... Civil disobedience, disturbances, riots, strikes, lawlessness... Use of propaganda and psychological means to discredit the government' into open revolutionary warfare, it is quite easy to see the calamitous effects such propaganda could have on the mind of the troops. Indoctrinated in this way, it is inevitable that many of them will tend to consider *any* strike, *any* protest march, *any* sit-in or factory occupation, *any* anti-Government speech or publication, and especially those coming from the left and the labour movement, as being caused by 'communists' and as mere preliminaries for a subsequent armed insurrection.

Since the programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain, *The British Road to Socialism*, sets out a prospect of an advance to socialism in Britain *without* an armed insurrection but on the basis of the democratic verdict of the majority of the British people, a verdict that will find its expression in an electoral majority, too, it is clearly in the interests of the British people, and of the armed forces, as well, that the men in uniform should be aware of that perspective, and of the programmes of other sections of the labour and democratic movement. The demand for democratic rights for military personnel is therefore not a mere question

of fairness for the troops. It is vitally in the interests of the civilian population that there should be possibilities for ensuring that the armed forces support the people's democratic aspirations. Otherwise the troops will be left to be brainwashed by the instruction and indoctrination indicated above, with the most dire consequences.

The army manual cited above has been in use for a number of years. Between November 1971 and January 1973 a number of amendments were made to it, embracing new techniques and new technology, much of it based on the experience of the British army in Northern Ireland. These include new methods for controlling and dispersing crowds, including the use of unbreakable plastic riot shields, rubber bullets and guns, CS and CR gas, and water cannon. It will be noticed that such equipment has been much in use in Northern Ireland. As from the end of 1971, the army has also introduced in its manual the employment of photographers to help identify leaders of people's activities, as a preliminary to arresting them. Thus it talks of 'photographing the ringleaders, agitators and others so that they can be identified later as disturbers of the peace... This must be done with discretion, however, as the appearance of a photographer often infuriates the crowd... At night lights will be essential. The arrest of ringleaders could be a major factor in dispersing large crowds.'

In addition to these new techniques for handling crowds, the manual has also added new methods for the general surveillance of civilians, including computerised dossiers<sup>3</sup> and car registration numbers. These are currently in use in Northern Ireland on a really mass scale.

The above is in no sense a complete list of the new technology at the disposal of the army.<sup>4</sup> Apart from new equipment, which is a natural result of scientific and technological developments, 'counter-insurgency' operations of the British army have made use of two tactics in Northern Ireland based on previous experience in colonial repression. One is the use of what Kitson terms 'counter-gangs', a method used against the Kenyan people during the Emergency of the 1950s and being currently employed through the employment of British officers and mercenaries against the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman.<sup>5</sup> In Northern Ireland the SAS (Special Air Service)<sup>6</sup> fulfils this role, operating sometimes in plain clothes. The *Daily Telegraph* described the SAS as an 'anonymous army... based in Belfast and... supplied with a constantly changing fleet of vehicles ranging from tradesmen's vans to taxis and mini-cars, all with 'souped-up' engines... [The soldiers] look more like labourers and layabouts than soldiers.' The activities of such 'counter-gangs' are normally accompanied by 'black propaganda' to confuse the people and discredit the opponents of the government.

Another method taken over from past



experience in the colonies is that of 'mixing up' the army with the police, using them in joint operations, making the public accustomed to seeing military vehicles and uniformed troops on the streets, where they act in normal civilian situations as if it were quite natural for the army to be playing such a role. The joint police/army exercise at Heathrow in 1974 had this as one of its purposes. As one British Brigadier has explained:

Those of us with colonial experience know that it was politically acceptable to hold joint exercises before disorder broke out. We had exercises, joint ad hoc headquarters were formed, we even had professional 'rioters'.... Unless you can carry out exercises of that nature, no amount of talking about it or continuous dialogue across the police/military interface is of any use.<sup>7</sup>

But it is Northern Ireland, above all, which has become the dangerous training ground for all the techniques now associated with the 'counter-insurgency' role of the British armed forces; and just as the former British colonies were schools of reaction, chauvinism, contempt for democracy and for the organised labour movement and the left as far as the serving men were concerned, so Northern Ireland, in addition to providing the technical experience for the British troops, has proved to be a baneful political and ideological influence, producing an army which could become a serious menace to the British people. 'Every regiment of the British Army has now had tours of duty there.'<sup>8</sup>

Among the worst influences at work is not just the involvement of the troops in crowd control, surveillance, military operations, and a general harassment of the civilian population, but their complicity in torture, as alleged for a long time by the progressive movement in Britain and Ireland, now confirmed by the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg, and belatedly and unavoidably admitted by the British Government. Yet, despite this, there are indications that torture is still being employed. All experience from fascist countries confirms that the practice of torture is not only a barbarous outrage to its victims. It is a source of terrible corruption and degeneration for those who carry it out. What should give the British people extra cause for the most serious concern is that the terror and repression carried out against the people of Northern Ireland and which, as a moral duty, they should condemn from the rooftops, is equally a rod for their own backs. For the British people to stop the criminal behaviour of the British troops in Northern Ireland is vital if democracy is to be defended here.

Like a foul flood, the authoritarian and anti-democratic indignities meted out to the people of Northern Ireland are washing over Britain. The repressive emergency laws in Northern Ireland are matched by the Prevention of Terrorism Act in Britain under which no less than 2,433 people have been detained, although 95 per cent of them have been subsequently released without being charged. The armoured cars that roam the streets in Belfast are beginning to be emulated by Heathrow-type exercises in Britain; military cars have even been seen in

London tailing demonstrations. It is significant that at the time of the Heathrow operation the then Home Secretary, Robert Carr, refused to give an undertaking in Parliament that troops and police in Britain would not be employed jointly to break strikes.<sup>9</sup> Computerised information on citizens is now standard practice in Northern Ireland; what is happening in Britain we do not know, but according to the 1972 Computer Survey the United Kingdom Defence Department had 500 computers. It is difficult to credit that they are required solely for strictly internal, military purposes.

All this raises very sharply the need to end the employment of British troops in Northern Ireland as a repressive anti-people's force. This is as much in the interests of the British people as it is in the interests of the sorely tried people in Northern Ireland. Solving the crisis in Northern Ireland poses the question of total withdrawal of British troops. It is understandable that some progressive people, seeing the army is used for repressive purposes in Northern Ireland, should demand its immediate withdrawal. But the army is no isolated institution, nor does it act according to its own judgements. It is part of politics, but it does not direct British political life. It is linked to other political factors, and is only one of the institutions through which British policy is pursued in Northern Ireland.

Analysing this problem, and setting out its views on the way to solve the question of the army in Northern Ireland, the Communist Party of Great Britain has stated:

The question of the withdrawal of British troops cannot be dealt with on its own apart from other factors. The troops are not employed in Northern Ireland for an isolated military purpose. The army is the instrument of an overall repressive policy which is pursued by political, economic, judicial and other means as well. The use of the troops is determined by the total policy the armed forces are directed to pursue by the British Government. This policy is aimed at defeating the movement for democratic demands and maintaining the grip of British imperialism in Northern Ireland. The question of the British troops and their withdrawal is therefore connected with the struggle to compel a change in British Government policy and to secure the adoption of a democratic political solution, which includes the withdrawal of the troops.

That the troops should go is clear. The issue is how to create the political conditions to secure their withdrawal in consultation with the Irish people and their representative bodies and organisations, and under conditions which assist democratic and national progress and do not create new obstacles in the way of those struggling for democracy and against imperialism.

As long as the British Labour Government pursues its present bi-partisan policy of backing reaction in Northern Ireland and maintaining the system of repression, the British troops will continue to be used to implement this reactionary policy. That is why it is decisive to press the government to end its repression, and introduce the necessary democratic reforms, and withdraw the British troops. It is this total policy which is needed.<sup>10</sup>

Exposure of the behaviour of the British troops in Northern Ireland and of the policy they have been instructed to carry out is part of the effort needed to create the political



conditions in which democratic procedures can operate in civilian life, thus making it possible to withdraw the troops.

<sup>1</sup> As quoted in *Time Out*, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Kitson does the same. — Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, London, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> 'Military intelligence has now acquired a comprehensive file on almost everybody' in Northern Ireland, according to Charles Douglas-Home, *The Times*, 16 August 1974.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, *The New Technology of Repression — Lessons from Ireland*, British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, 1974.

<sup>5</sup> A similar force is the Selous Scouts employed by the Smith regime in Rhodesia against the national liberation movement.

<sup>6</sup> SAS and direct mercenaries sometimes merge. SAS personnel have been reported to have taken part in military actions in Malaysia and Thailand, and there is some suspicion that some may be operating in southern Africa, including in Smith's army in Rhodesia (see article by Chris Mullin, *Tribune*, 16 February 1976).

<sup>7</sup> Brigadier Bidwell, Editor of the Royal United Services Institute journal, in a report of the RUSI seminar on 'The Role of the Armed Forces in Peacekeeping in the 1970s', held in April 1973.

<sup>8</sup> *The New Technology of Repression*, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> See *Hansard*, 24 January 1974.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution on 'Britain and Northern Ireland', adopted by the 34th National Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 15-18 November 1975.

# Ex-soldiers against the war

**Supporters of the demonstration on 12th August 1979 for British withdrawal from Ireland approached BRM Radio, a Birmingham local radio station, to suggest they do a phone-in programme featuring former British soldiers who had served in Ireland. Here are extracts from the programme, which was transmitted on 9th August 1979. The presenter/interviewer was Ed Doolan.**

**INTERVIEWER:** Over 1,900 people have been killed in Northern Ireland in the past ten years, many more have been maimed and seriously injured. Thousands have had to uproot their homes and a whole generation has grown up in an atmosphere of violence and tension. The prisons have been filled, the violence on occasion has dramatically and tragically affected not just the people of Northern Ireland but the people of this country as well, and the people of this town as well.

In those ten years since the troops moved in, have we got any nearer to a solution? Tonight on the eighth anniversary of the internment and tenth anniversary of troops moving in, we're going to look at the army's role and the situation as it stands ten years on in Northern Ireland. I am going to be talking to some guests who have served with the army in Northern Ireland and feel that the army shouldn't be there.

Former army captain Mike Biggs caused quite a stir when he wanted to leave the army. I'm going to ask Mike to give us his story. Mike, your army career began when?

**Mike Biggs:** Back in 1970.

**Interviewer:** How old were you?

**Mike Biggs:** I was 19 then.

**Interviewer:** And your reasons for joining the army?

**Mike Biggs:** It was quite an easy shift for me to do because I had come from an army background. I'd been very interested in sporting activities at school, and my careers advice given to me at the time pointed me towards the army or the police or a bank that was playing a lot of sports. And I took that very easy shift or progression into the army.

**Interviewer:** Now where was your first posting?

**Mike Biggs:** Germany. I was the transport officer for a small unit, basically in charge of the transport and the platoon that was designated to looking after that transport. After a year I went on attachment to the infantry, prior to going to Northern Ireland.

**Interviewer:** Had you had any promotion by that time?

**Mike Biggs:** No, I was still a second lieutenant. I did about six weeks pre-Ulster training in Germany. That's a very intensive, strenuous programme that a battalion goes through prior to doing a tour in Northern Ireland. This involves various exercises, which simulate as near as possible the situation out there. We went through model villages, where a patrol would be walking down and simulated fire would be brought down upon the soldiers, or there would be a mob that would be throwing cans at them trying to get the soldiers used to reacting in the right way to a certain situation.

**Interviewer:** Is the training anything like the real thing?

**Mike Biggs:** Not really, no. I don't see how it can be. In many ways I think the training is unrealistic. Certainly where I went, in Newry, it's a place where for weeks at a time you'll have nothing happening, then all of a sudden there'll be a sudden flare-up. And certainly the training that we had before geared soldiers and officers up to expecting perhaps more than they actually experienced once they were out there.

**Interviewer:** Now you went over to Ireland when?

**Mike Biggs:** Back in June 1973 and I stayed until September 1973.

**Interviewer:** Take me through those months and what happened to you as a person and what you decided to do.

**Mike Biggs:** Perhaps I should say that I went out there feeling that I was a peace-keeper, I was part of a peace-keeping force. And that was certainly something that was instilled into us by the people that were training us. Through my own experience, through the patrolling on the streets, I suddenly realised that I couldn't see myself as a peace-keeper – just through the reaction from the community and the way we were patrolling a certain area.

**Interviewer:** Now you'd better expand on that reaction from the community.

**Mike Biggs:** I said I thought I was a peace-keeper and I approached members of the community – basically people of my own age, who I thought might have a similar interest – and the suspicion and antagonism with which they greeted me, because I was there in army uniform and with a weapon... there was no way that they could believe me when I said 'Look, I really do want to know what you're at'. The uniform and the weapon told them something otherwise.

**Interviewer:** Is this irrespective of the religion and background of the people you were talking to?

**Mike Biggs:** Well, in Newry where I was, it's a predominantly Roman Catholic area, so you have to say that most of the people I came into contact with would have been Roman Catholic.

In Newry I also saw that rather than peace-keeping between the Roman Catholics and the small Protestant community, we were pushing a wedge through which was furthering the split, the division between the two communities. I could see that we were actually polarising them.

**Interviewer:** How were you doing that?

**Mike Biggs:** The Protestants certainly associated strongly with the army. They gave us all the goodies, they came to us, they saw us quite often. A patrol in a Protestant estate was always a vehicle one and was always considered an easy ride. Whereas in the Roman Catholic estates, in particular in Derrybeg – we were there very frequently on foot and on patrol, and certainly the attitude adopted by the patrol was a far more no-nonsense attitude, a very hard-line one, which reflected once again the attitude that was instilled into us – to be more suspicious of the Roman Catholics because they are the people who are likely to harbour IRA people, and they are the people that are going to give you the trouble. I went out to Northern Ireland thinking that would be the case. What I gained from my experience there was that I questioned whether their antagonism was because we were patrolling their areas so frequently, because we certainly were. We were there day and night incessantly.

**Interviewer:** What about the attitude of you and your mates when you were patrolling? You are quoted as saying that you didn't think that you as the army behaved particularly well towards the population.

**Mike Biggs:** Once again it's this peace-keeping myth. I saw us as occupying an area and I think our presence there, without naming specific incidents, was a harassing one. Because the local populace could be searched, they could have their house searched any time. And so there was the physical presence of us being there, being occupied physically, and also psychologically, so that people wouldn't do certain things because of the army's presence there. Quite often there was no real concrete evidence that the houses we searched, or the people we searched, were harbourers of IRA people or were harbourers of any kind of information. We were seeking out information on anybody. We were trying to get information on as many people as possible.

**Interviewer:** At random?

**Mike Biggs:** No systematically. Going through streets so that we'd know which houses we'd checked recently, the details of the people, how many people there were in the family, where they worked, what they were doing.

**Interviewer:** Was this sort of security work necessary?

**Mike Biggs:** As peace-keepers, I don't think it was, but it does happen, and it still does happen, and each battalion that goes out there builds up a very systematic checkout on all the people.

**Interviewer:** I'm trying to pin you down – not in any aggressive way. Would you say that the peace-keeping force was in fact not so much peace-keeping as an army of occupation or an army of security?

**Mike Biggs:** That's what I was saying, yes. Let's not forget that an army is an instrument of a government, and I see the army going back into Northern Ireland, and its presence there



for the past ten years, as allaying a political embarrassment for successive governments in this country. Northern Ireland is a problem, a problem that we started, and a problem that we'd like to go away, but it's not going away. And the idea of having the troops out there to allay that problem hasn't worked, because in 1979 we've come no further towards any kind of peaceful solution.

**Interviewer:** So obviously, Mike, you'd like to see the troops out.

**Mike Biggs:** Certainly. I'd like to see the British Government involvement out, which means not only the troops out but also...

**Interviewer:** So you want a Republican Ireland?

**Mike Biggs:** I want the Irish to sort out their problems - which we caused!

**Interviewer:** But what moved you to actually say, 'I want out'? Was it that there was a threat of you going back, or you just disagreed with the army's policies on principle?

**Mike Biggs:** I didn't want any brook with the army. Not only because of its involvement with Northern Ireland, but because of the army full stop. I went out on grounds of conscience, and it wasn't just because of the army's involvement with Northern Ireland - it would go the same with so-called peace-keeping troops in Cyprus.

**Interviewer:** Is it easy to get out?

**Mike Biggs:** No, it's not. Because there is a means whereby you can get out of the army on grounds of conscience, but the army doesn't go parading that around. They never told me that I could get out on grounds of conscience, even though I was asking to go out because of Northern Ireland and because of my values. And it was only by going to an external source that I found out that the army had a means whereby conscientious objectors could go out. And that took me two and a half years to find out.

**Interviewer:** And once you found out, how long did it take?

**Mike Biggs:** It took six months.

**Interviewer:** So you were messed around for two years?

**Mike Biggs:** Right. And during that six months I was charged for refusing to do my work on grounds of conscience. They delayed a decision on my case. They employed all the normal psychological things that they do employ when someone tries to go out on grounds of conscience. Obviously it's not very good publicity for a soldier or officer to go out on grounds of conscience. Far better if he buys himself out, or he goes out because he goes AWOL, or deserts.

**Interviewer:** Let me throw something at you that's been thrown at you before I'm sure. You served with the army for a number of years before your discontentment came to the surface. Did it take you that long to realise you disagreed with the army's policy? And why did you accept the commissions you did accept in an army with whom you were disillusioned?

**Mike Biggs:** Well, accepting the commission takes me back to 1972 when I was commissioned. At that time, even when I was training at Sandhurst, I had doubts, but they certainly weren't

strong enough to preclude me from getting my commission. When I took my commission I thought there was still something to make a go of. My year in Germany, given the way the army operates on a hierarchical system, started doubts, inasmuch as I didn't like the officer-soldier relationship. Then my experience in Northern Ireland as an operational tour furthered these doubts. And then three years at university gave me the time to think about what I was at, what I was doing in the army. So it was a very slow but progressive move away from being in the army.

**Interviewer:** You obviously regret you ever joined the army.

**Mike Biggs:** Yes, right. It's always easy to be wise in hindsight and it's something I found out the painful way.

**Interviewer:** What do you see yourself as?

**Mike Biggs:** I think this came with my moving away from the army, that basically I saw myself as a humanist, as a pacifist, and here I was in the army. And ultimately, however much you want to dress it up, the army is ultimately trained to kill people.

**Interviewer:** Do you see yourself actively against this, as almost a political mission?

**Mike Biggs:** No, I don't have any strong identity with any political movement or ideology. I think first and foremost I'm a pacifist and because of that I believe that it's wrong to impose any belief or any action upon anyone else by use of force, whether it's implicit or explicit.

**Interviewer:** Let's move to another soldier, Brian Ashton. Brian, your service record, if we could have it.

**Brian Ashton:** Well I joined in February 1967, and I stayed in until September 1970.

**Interviewer:** What did you go in as?

**Brian Ashton:** I went in, or thought I went in, as a surveyor. The army said they were going to train me as a surveyor. But after getting in I found that what they meant was a battery surveyor, which is not the same as a surveyor in a civilian street. A battery surveyor is a person who actually sets up a bomb position so the artillery can fire onto its target correctly. I was led to understand that I was going in as a surveyor, as a trade which would be useful to me when I came out of the army. Unfortunately there's not many vacancies for battery surveyors in civilian life, in fact the job was no use to me at all when I came out of the army. And that was the beginning of my dissatisfaction with the army when I realised that, in a way, I had been conned.

**Interviewer:** Now when did you first find yourself involved in Northern Ireland?

**Brian Ashton:** Northern Ireland was my last posting. I went over at the end of April, beginning of May 1970. My posting was Derry and I remained there until September when I was sent back home with the rest of the regiment and discharged the day I got back.

**Interviewer:** And what have you been doing ever since?

**Brian Ashton:** I started work almost straight away at Fords in Liverpool. I was working at Fords

for seven years on the production lines. After I left Fords I moved down to London, and at the moment I'm working as a schoolkeeper in London.

**Interviewer:** What's your attitude as someone who has been in Northern Ireland, what's your attitude to the army?

**Brian Ashton:** Well, I'm firmly convinced the army should be out of Northern Ireland. I base that on my experiences over there. I was unhappy with the army, as I said, before Ireland. I was trying to buy myself out. In fact I had the money and I applied for my discharge but the army insisted that I went to Northern Ireland, although I didn't want to go.

We went as an infantry regiment to Northern Ireland, we didn't go as artillery, and the training that I experienced created an impression that the Catholic minority were in fact the violent section in Northern Ireland. I'll quote one instance. We were told to become a funeral march, a Protestant funeral march, and the rest of the troops were told to be Catholics and attack us, and steal the coffin, and we were led to believe this was common practice, and this sort of thing created in people's minds an idea of what the Catholics were like.

When we went over there it was fairly quiet, it was just patrols down the streets, mainly in the Catholic areas - we very seldom went into the Protestant areas of Derry. And then an incident happened which really confirmed for me that I shouldn't be there, and the troops shouldn't be there. Bernadette Devlin was arrested on the way to Derry to speak at a meeting. The news had obviously reached the Bogside, and there was a riot on Free Derry Corner of about 200 people. Some of our battery went in there to disperse the riot, and a sergeant major was badly injured with a fractured skull. The next day, the officers were very angry about this situation, and said we had to prove to Derry that we were in charge. So we were instructed to go out onto the streets of Derry and to keep people on the move. And if anybody was stood still and refused to move they were to be arrested. And people were giving explanations that they were waiting for their girlfriends, or waiting for a bus, but if they didn't move they were arrested. Then the next day they were taken to court. Now two or three soldiers were told to get together and get the evidence sorted out. Not necessarily the soldiers that arrested them, but soldiers picked at random. And the people that were arrested got sentenced to six months in jail, and the only thing they were guilty of was standing on corners and refusing to move.

That hit me like a sledge-hammer, and I realised that what we were doing was wrong. And from that moment I tried to get out of Northern Ireland.

**Interviewer:** Let's move to Lloyd Hayes. Lloyd Hayes, what's your army service record?

**Lloyd Hayes:** I joined in March 1968, and I bought myself out in October 1973. I joined as a junior musician and for the greater part of my army service I was a military bandsman. For the last year or eighteen months of my service I transferred from the band to the corps of drums, which also does infantry work to a certain extent, perhaps not to the same extent as the rank and file soldier, but it plays a dual role in that it has a musical side and also an infantry side to it.

**Interviewer:** What service did you see in Northern Ireland?



**Lloyd Hayes:** My first trip to Northern Ireland was immediately after Bloody Sunday in 1972. This was when there was a major mobilisation of the army. If I remember rightly there is at present something like 25,000 including RUC and UDR personnel actually active in Northern Ireland. Immediately after Bloody Sunday, in anticipation of reaction from the Republican Movement, the figure was similar to what it is today. And after that tour, which only lasted for six weeks, my first full tour was in about May 1972, and that was a normal four month tour.

**Interviewer:** Now I think we can share with our listeners, and it's important that we do for the next part of your story, that you are black and your colour was used in the sort of work you were given to do.

**Lloyd Hayes:** Yes. A very small proportion of guys in the army are black, smaller than in any section of civilian life. And on active service in Northern Ireland the chauvinism and subtle racism that exists in the army is such that for black guys in the army to prove that they're just as equal as their white buddies, they were expected to be even more brutal, even more hard and tough than ordinary squaddies.

**Interviewer:** Well it wasn't so much discrimination but patronisation, is that it?

**Lloyd Hayes:** Well in a way yes. There were also cases - I've spoken to guys who actually had this done to them - where basically... The army operates on a day to day basis at two levels: there are ordinary foot patrols and also vehicle patrols in Landrovers. You'd have a situation where for instance there are a group of black guys who stick together, and those black guys would be put on mainly foot patrols, which are naturally more dangerous because you are walking, you can easily get hit by a stone or a brick that much easier than if you are driving along in a landrover.

**Interviewer:** Is this something real, or is this something that black guys might have imagined?

**Lloyd Hayes:** It actually happened, yes. And what started to make me think that the whole structure of the army was wrong was the subtle racist attitudes from the low ranks, corporals and upwards, that I personally experienced.

**Interviewer:** Let's get the calls in now on 359-4011. Hello, Phil.

**Caller:** You was talking on the radio about Northern Ireland. I've done six months there, near enough, in Belfast, and some of the things I saw there was bloody atrocious. I was with the Royal Corps of Transport in Woodside, which is in the north of Belfast. One night we went out - we'd heard about some arms being moved about - and we went to this bloke's house and we dug up his back garden and whatnot. And this was the very night the town got blew up with the bombs in Birmingham and we was all bloody upset. We pulled this one bloke and took him to Fort Monagh, which is not far from Turf Lodge. And the things we were doing to that bloke in there... I felt really degraded. There was an SAS bloke in there, and two intelligence officers, and when we took this bloke in there, they were hitting him with all sorts of things. I was wondering if any of the other blokes had seen this sort of thing going on.

**Interviewer:** Let me ask Brian Ashton. Brian?

**Brian Ashton:** In 1970, when I was there, the SAS weren't involved to my knowledge, but abuse of people arrested was going on. I've already mentioned earlier the jailings of innocent people, but also people were arrested after a demonstration or a riot in Derry, and quite often they'd be taken into one of the army camps around the area and someone would pour a hot cup of tea over them, or they'd be offered a cigarette and the cigarette would be given to them with the lighted end first and be jabbed into their hand. And quite often they were beaten up and knocked around unnecessarily.

**Interviewer:** Phil, when did you leave the army?

**Caller:** I left in 1976.

**Interviewer:** Why?

**Caller:** Well, to tell you the honest truth I signed on for nine years and after I'd done about six or eight months, I'd gone through all my basic training, and I went out to Germany. I don't know if you remember but about three years ago I phoned you up just after I came out of the army. I signed on in 1972 and I came out in 1976. I had just really had enough of it. I really wanted to make a go of things and yet when you get out to your working unit in Germany you get so bored, just painting the wagons all the time, and this sort of thing.

**Interviewer:** So it was more boredom with BAOR than Northern Ireland for you, was it?

**Caller:** Yes. Actually I enjoyed Northern Ireland more because we had more of a job to do there.

**Interviewer:** So you wouldn't go along all the way with the condemnation of our guests here, or would you?

**Caller:** Well, it's up to them if they condemn themselves. I got a clean sheet from when I was in Northern Ireland.

**Interviewer:** No, I meant the condemnation of the lads in the studio of the army. Would you go along with what they're saying or not?

**Caller:** To an extent, yes. I mean there's some times I really despise Her Majesty's Services in a big way. The things I used to plot in my mind to get out... it cost me £250 to get out after three and a half years. The lads themselves know the tricks to get out of the army... go on drugs and this sort of rubbish... But I just thought, knickers to it, and I saved up my money for two or three months and put it straight over the table. I'd just had enough.

**Interviewer:** OK Phil, can I thank you for your call? Let's go on to John. Hello John.

**Caller:** Hello, Ed. Good evening to you. I was listening to your programme almost from the start, particularly Captain Biggs' part of the interview, and I can wholeheartedly agree with everything he said. Because although I didn't leave the army as a conscientious objector, I left the army with an objection in conscience. To explain myself, I did serve my time - I served 12 years in all. I joined the army in 1961, and left in 1973. And from the latter part of 1969 until I left, the majority of those years was spent over in Northern Ireland, both in Belfast and in Derry and my last tour was down on the border in South Armagh. So I think I can fairly say that I saw a fair bit of service over there and the different theatres of service there.

**Interviewer:** You've heard what people on the

programme have said up till now. Do you go along with that?

**Caller:** I do endorse what Captain Biggs said. As an officer, perhaps he was in a better position to have his position highlighted more than the ordinary soldiers had. From my own experience, in my own regiment - I was in the Parachute Regiment - there were damned good soldiers in my regiment to say the least - and when we went over to Ireland in the last part of 1969, early 1970, I was in the 2nd Battalion, we took over from the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, we were welcomed, we were wholeheartedly welcomed in Catholic areas.

With the General Election of 1970 coming up we had our tour extended, and the Labour Government was ousted and the Conservatives won control. And as soon as the Labour Government ceded government, plans had obviously already been drawn up, because no sooner had the Conservatives taken over, our roles were reversed in patrolling. And hell of almighty riots took place and that was the start of the hatred of the British Army. Shortly after that we returned to Aldershot, but I did a further three or four tours over there before I left the army. We lost an awful lot of good men, to say the least.

**Interviewer:** John, one last question to you. As an ex-army man, who has seen the situation on the ground, should the troops be there or not?

**Caller:** Well. I can say for my own part, No. If I can qualify that and say, No, because. Because I personally believe that the IRA is the lesser of the two evils over there, if there are only two evils. The greater I would say is the Protestant set in the form of the UDA and the UVF, and I say that with no bias at all.

**Interviewer:** Let's see what Bill has to say. Hello Bill.

**Caller:** Hello, Ed. I done two years in Northern Ireland, that was in Londonderry. If you've got to go to Northern Ireland you've got to go. It's no case of not knowing what you're letting yourself in for.

**Interviewer:** Mike Biggs, you joined the army as a career soldier. Now Bill says, if you're in the army you're there to do your stint, and if you don't like it, tough.

**Mike Biggs:** I can understand that viewpoint. I let myself into the army and I've had to pay the cost. But what I will say, and I think it's a very important issue, is the way the army recruits. There's no two ways about it, you don't see any recruitment office anywhere in this country that goes into any great detail into what you can expect in Northern Ireland. There's no way that you can prepare anyone for an experience in Northern Ireland.

**Caller:** I agree, you don't know what you're letting yourself in for. We had good and bad times. I lost a lot of mates out there, I had a lot of mates killed.

**Interviewer:** The feeling that has come from our callers has been that perhaps the troops shouldn't be there at all. One or two callers feel that they have a place there, but nobody has actually said they should actually be there, nor has given us a strong reason. Which is an interesting balance on the calls, because every single caller has in some way expressed doubts about the troops' presence there.

# The UDR: killings and controversies

*People in Britain hear very little about the Ulster Defence Regiment: yet this is a major component of the British army in Northern Ireland. This article appeared in Hibernia, an Irish weekly review, on 29 March 1979.*

THE CLAIM two weeks ago by the Lisburn HQ of the Ulster Defence Regiment that only 36 of its soldiers had committed serious crimes while serving as members of the regiment has spotlighted once again a particular security problem that has faced successive Secretaries of State in the North. Whoever takes over the reins of power from Roy Mason after the forthcoming British general election will find it no less easy to persuade the Catholic population that the UDR, nine years old on 1 April, is not just a Protestant private army or the detestable 'B' Specials dressed in khaki.

In its nine-year history the UDR has been transformed from a part-time back up for the British Army and the RUC to a more professional and integral unit of the British Army, sharing increasingly more of the front line security burden. Under the policy of 'Ulsterisation', a word uncomfortably reminiscent to Northern Protestants of the US government's similar policy in Vietnam, the UDR is now as common a sight patrolling the central streets of Belfast as is the British Army.

But the soothing statement from UDR HQ has done little to assuage Catholic fears that those crime statistics are only the tip of the iceberg. The disclosure, after his trial, that one of the notorious Shankill Butchers, Eddie McIlwaine, had served in the regiment from 1974 to 1977, while the murder gang was particularly active, was for many Catholics positive proof that at best the UDR provides a useful base for paramilitary training and at worst that the regiment is inherently sectarian and, like the State, irreformable.

The apparent unwillingness of the authorities to institute drastic internal reforms and the confusion surrounding the vetting procedure for applicants, has, if anything, inflamed fears that an official blind eye has been turned to the regiment's excesses.

## Replacement for 'Specials'

The idea of the UDR was first contained in the Hunt Advisory Committee's report on the police of October 1969. Hunt advised the disbanding of the Ulster Special Constabulary and its replacement with what was hoped would be a non-sectarian, part-time, 'third force'. The night that Hunt's recommendations became public, loyalist anger at what was regarded as a betrayal of fundamental unionism boiled over in an orgy of rioting and shooting, and on the Shankill

Road the North suffered its first RUC fatality when Constable William Arbuckle was shot dead. The UDR had a difficult and painful birth that augured much for the following nine years of its existence.

The dilemma facing the authorities then was a familiar one that despite the passing of time seems no nearer resolution. On the one hand Protestant fears of a sell-out were strong and if, as was threatened at the time, members of the old 'B' Specials boycotted the regiment the UDR would be starved of essential political support as well as the trained and experienced manpower of the Specials. On the other hand the UDR needed Catholic recruits if it was to have any credibility as a non-sectarian force.

Despite attempts by SDLP politicians, notably John Hume and Austin Currie, to cajole Catholics into the UDR, the thrust of official efforts was directed at overcoming the former obstacle. The Prime Minister of the day, Major James Chichester-Clark, issued a special appeal at a farewell ceremony for the 'B' Specials for members to join up, and the then GOC, General Sir Ian Freeland, lauded the Specials and also urged them to enlist.

Nevertheless, initial attempts to recruit Catholics were successful. In the early days Catholics represented nearly 18% of the force but inevitably that proportion has dwindled over the years. Now Catholics account for a mere 2% of the regiment or a derisory 158 out of the UDR's total strength of 7,900. The reasons for that dramatic decline are not difficult to establish. Since 1971 the Provisional IRA has regarded the mainly part-time force as a particularly soft and easy target. 89 UDR men have been killed since Private Winston Donnell fell victim to an IRA ambush on the Tyrone/Donegal border on Internment Day 1971. The vast majority, 75 in all, have died in booby-trap explosions and ambushes while off duty and in the early days a number of those victims were Catholic recruits.

**As important a factor in the decline of Catholic support for the UDR has been, over the years, the use of the regiment by loyalist paramilitary groups as a base for training and operations. There is not, and never has been, an automatic bar on dual membership.**

Indeed the first Commander of the Ulster Defence Regiment, Brigadier Denis Omerod, went on television in October 1972 to say that as far as he was concerned the UDR was open to members of the UDA. A few months later in January 1973 the Conservative Under Secretary for the Army, Peter Balker, stated in Parliament that 'there is no obligation on a UDR member to tell us if he belongs to the UDA or not, since this is not an illegal organisation'. Although the UDR, unlike the old 'B' Specials, is not

under local control and officially is answerable to the GOC in the North, it would appear that this attempt to divorce the UDR from sectarian influence has been a notable failure.

## Murders and bombings

The fruits of that failure have been disastrous both for the image of the UDR and the British Government's attempts to push the regiment into the security forefront. While the UDR has now admitted that members of the regiment have been involved in murders, bombings and armed robberies as well as a whole host of other serious crimes, the records are confined to those actually serving at the time of the offence.

The UDR also admits that many members of the regiment who are charged with offences disobey regulations and fail, for one reason or another, to report their changed circumstances to their local Commanding Officer. As well the UDR concedes that charged soldiers often fail to inform the RUC that they are members of the regiment. The result is that the recent UDR statement has been regarded by many, including SDLP spokesman on law and order, Michael Canavan, with a great deal of scepticism and as a deliberate understatement of the UDR's real involvement in political crime.

Since the first part-time soldiers of the UDR went out on patrol on the night of 1 April 1970, literally scores of members and former members of the regiment's 11 battalions have appeared in court on serious charges.

**Some incidents, like the murder of the Miami showband in July 1975 and the death by premature explosion at the same time of two UDR/UVF men, stand out in horrific prominence; likewise the murder in August 1975 of two Catholics stopped and abducted at a UDR checkpoint near Armagh.**

Since 1972 over 500 UDR weapons have been stolen either in well planned raids on UDR armouries, (operations that clearly required inside knowledge and assistance) or with remarkable ease from mobile UDR patrols in loyalist areas of Belfast. Some of those guns recovered since are known to have been used in murders and attacks on Catholics.

The revelations last year (see *Hibernia*, 29 June 1978) that the 5th Battalion of the UDR, based in mid-Derry, had been involved in a bizarre series of murders, bombings, shootings and armed robberies between 1975 and 1976 confirmed the UDR in Catholic eyes, at least, as the old 'B' Specials in a different uniform.

While events like these are dramatic enough to capture the headlines, it is the almost continuous procession of UDR men



## The UDR and the Miami Showband massacre

On the night of Thursday 31 July 1975, a van carrying the Miami Showband, a famous Irish band, was stopped just outside Newry by men wearing full UDR uniform. The Showband were ordered to leave their van and stand facing a ditch.



Two of the 'UDR' men attempted to hide a bomb in the van when it suddenly exploded, killing them and wrecking the van. The other 'UDR' men then fired at the Showband members, killing three of them. Those killed were Brian McCoy (third from the left), Tony Garrity (fourth from the left), and Fran O'Toole (first right).

Subsequently a memorial notice (reproduced right) for the two killed planting the bomb appeared in the UVF magazine 'Combat'. Afterwards it was established that all except one of the murder gang were past or serving members of the UDR.



The loyalist members of 'A' Company 9 UDR (Co. Antrim) wish to convey their deepest heartfelt sympathies to the families and friends of Harris Boyle and Wesley Somerville (Mid Ulster UVF) who were killed in action on Thursday, 31st July, 1975.

through the courts on a variety of less serious but equally sectarian offences that is as damning. Two weeks before the UDR issued its statement, three former members of the regiment admitted that while on patrol they had broken into a Catholic church and defecated on the altar. The suspended sentence that they received did nothing to assure Catholics that officialdom viewed their offence with much gravity.

### Failure of authorities

Not all crimes committed by members of and former members of the UDR are politically motivated. Like any army the UDR has its fair share of bad apples who are not beyond the occasional robbery and burglary. Similarly the vast majority of the UDR have joined either because the pay (£7.62 for a private and £11.11 for a corporal) provides a modest supplement for the weekly household budget, or in a genuine belief that they can help restore normality. Nevertheless, the failure or unwillingness of the authorities to weed out sectarian militants taints the whole regiment with the same brush.

Following the Miami killings the UDR announced an overhaul of its vetting procedures, but, whatever changes were introduced, they weren't enough to satisfy Justice Turlough O'Donnell who, in 1977, when sentencing a UDR private to life imprison-

ment for conspiracy to murder, expressed his amazement that the man had been allowed into the UDR.

**Last week the UDR announced for the first time that vetting is in the hands of the RUC Special Branch - a disclosure that was unfortunately timed to coincide with the release of the Bennett report and that did little to satisfy doubts.**

With the 'Ulsterisation' process now in top gear the UDR is carrying an increasingly heavier security responsibility. Today 30% of the UDR is full-time compared to 20% at the beginning of 1977. With part-time turnover now estimated at 18 per week, it is clear that if the UDR is to play a greater security role more of the regiment's members will have to be enrolled in a full-time capacity. It was perhaps this that was behind the recent announcement that senior ranks in the UDR, from Major up to Commanding Officer, previously confined in true colonial, Gurkha-type, fashion to regular officers in the British Army, will soon be open to locals.

It is also evident that the UDR's general role has expanded, especially over the last year. While the UDR is still forbidden to engage in riot control duties it has a much more active part in city centre patrolling. Indeed in recent months patrols have been seen mounting roadblocks in republican areas like Andersonstown and in 11 areas,

mainly rural, the UDR has replaced the British Army as the RUC's main back-up force. In November last year plans to streamline the UDR to make it 'a more effective fighting force' were announced together with a scheme to reduce the average age of soldiers down to 30.

This expansion and professionalisation of the UDR followed the appointment in February 1978 of Brigadier David Miller as the new Commander of the regiment. Miller has had plenty of active service experience commanding indigenous armies in the Middle East and Africa, and under his command the UDR is likely to lose once and for all the tag 'Dad's Army'.

Nevertheless the UDR will find it more difficult to lose its sectarian label. Although the British Government has never said as much, any hope and prospect of restoring the UDR to the sort of non-sectarian force envisaged by Hunt in the Hunt report has been all but abandoned. Whoever succeeds Roy Mason will be faced with the problem of what to do with a force that is regarded by one section of the community as Unionism's last 'thin red line' but is rejected by the rest of the North as a pack of bigots and sectarian killers.

**Hibernia** is available from 4 Beresford Place, Dublin 1.



# The obscenity of the H Blocks

**Claud Gordon is a well-known Irish journalist. This article appeared in the Sunday Press on 9 March 1980.**

**WHEN Bishop Cahal Daly recently described the British Government's treatment of H-Block prisoners as 'foolish', he was putting it mildly.**

As the facts about the punishment regime being inflicted on a selected group of men in Long Kesh prison become more widely known, the policy behind it is likely to prove a miscalculation as damaging to Britain's international reputation as was Bloody Sunday in Derry – not to mention the repeated scandals over the police torture of political suspects.

Quite apart from the merit or otherwise of the demand by 'men on the blanket' for special status, or for political status, one aspect of the story which must eventually stand to Britain's disgrace in the eyes of Europe and America is the apparently vindictive and retaliatory cruelty with which the prison authorities, acting under the political guidance of the government, responded to a protest which began simply as a refusal to wear prison clothes and do prison chores.

## Questions

Questions will inevitably be asked.

Why does Britain appear incapable of asserting her authority over the six-county area without persistent and repeated violations of ordinary, accepted rules against the ill-treatment of prisoners and suspects?

**Is Britain's claim to the area, therefore, not just as spurious as her claims were to former colonial territories, which she attempted to hold on to by the practice of other barbarities?**

So while the immediate issue is unquestionably a humanitarian one, the political factors are also inescapable. It is doubtful if the H-Block prisoners can count on humanitarian support alone in their campaign to resist 'criminalisation' by Westminster edict.

Far more effective will be the growth of a clearer public appreciation of the nature and origins of the prolonged conflict in a small corner of Ireland, where the majority of the prison population is there as a direct result of the political mess Britain has made of the place, and where the building of new prison

camps is now the only booming industry amid general economic stagnation.

A better political understanding among people generally, and among other governments, should lead to insistent and unrelenting pressure on Britain, pending a proper political settlement, to alleviate the H-Block agony by concessions more consistent with both political justice and ordinary standards of humanity.

## Testimonials

The facts are now filtering out. Despite the rigid refusal of British authorities to allow any independent inspection of the H-Block regime, and despite some panic and repressive measures to prevent information emerging, many personal testimonies are now available to describe conditions in what more than the prisoners themselves have called the 'Hell-hole of Long Kesh'.

Until recently, however, while politicians and publicists have waxed eloquent and indignant over the treatment of dissidents in far-off places, certain inhibiting factors appear to have denied a comparable measure of publicity to more than 350 Irish prisoners enduring incomparably worse punishments than some individuals who have hit the headlines.

The inhibiting factors may have been lack of information, now being corrected, combined with bias on political grounds and a tendency to accept at face value a number of falsehoods and fallacies about the H-Blocks spread by the British authorities at Stormont and at Westminster.

## Fallacies

The main fallacies, briefly, are:-  
**First-** Suddenly, at some phase of the moon on March 1st 1976, IRA captives were no longer 'political prisoners' or even 'political offenders'. They had become common 'criminals' and were to be treated as such.

**Second-** All the subsequent humiliation, deprivation and degradation imposed on the prisoners to force them to accept this decree was somehow a suffering voluntarily undertaken and self-imposed on themselves by choice.

**Third-** The H-Block prisoners anyway are somehow collectively responsible for all the death, suffering and destruction that has attended the collapse of Britain's old Unionist regime, so they deserve all they get. This is the 'Think of the 2,000 dead' sort of argument.

**Fourth-** Anyone who objects to the ill-treatment of prisoners when the prisoners are Provos must therefore be in favour of everything the IRA has been up to.

The last point, which contains the implicit and inhuman corollary that if you are against the Provos you must approve of torturing the ones you catch, has been effectively demolished in public long ago.

## Awakening

The only really high and influential voices that have so far spoken out loudly about the shame of the H-Blocks are voices that are also repeatedly heard in vigorous condemnation of the IRA campaign – the voices of the clergy, high and low.

Cardinal O Fiaich, Bishop Daly himself, Father Denis Faul. They are never done denouncing the Provos. And for too long they have been in the lonely forefront of whatever public outcry there has been against the calculated cruelties of Britain's political prisons.

**More lately, however, there have been signs of a wider awakening of the public conscience. A crammed meeting in Dublin's Mansion House last December drew support from a wide spectrum of public opinion – including well-known lawyers, trade unionists, journalists, sportsmen, theatre people and others.**

Many unlikely 'Provo supporters' were present, such as Una O'Higgins O'Malley, for instance, who had the courage to speak out in support of the anti H-Block protest specifically on the grounds that this should not impute support for IRA aims or methods.

This gathering represented those people whose deeper political understanding brought a more intelligent compassion to bear on a tragic situation, few of whose victims can be said to be the authors of their own misfortunes, and the ultimate responsibility for which lies in the higher regions of political power.

By contrast, however, the editor-in-chief of the Sunday *Observer* Conor Cruise O'Brien, who sacked his Irish correspondent Mary Holland because of the way she wrote up an interview with the mother of an H-Block prisoner, made it quite clear that he objected to anything that might argue sympathy for the H-Block prisoners. His own peculiar political bias sets the cold seal of approval on cruelty, so that even the faintest suggestion of liberal humanitarianism on the issue is, ipse dixit, taboo.

The third point above about the prisoners being to blame for all the North's troubles is self-evidently absurd, even if it could be proved that every one was an active Provo.

**The idea that 'sympathisers' may be punished for the alleged misdeeds of others is legal heresy as well as intolerable tyranny. And moreover, it is by no means a legal certainty that all or even most of them are in**

**fact guilty of the particular offences for which they were 'convicted'.**

All are the 'end-products' of the notorious 'conveyor belt' system designed by Britain to replace internment and in fact continuing a form of internment under a facade of 'legal' process, arrest and detention incommunicado; torture to extract confessions in RUC interrogation centres; prolonged remands of up to two years as part of the softening-up process; arraignment before sentencing tribunals which replaced trial by jury under the Diplock system; and finally, in more than 80 per cent of the cases, 'conviction' on the sole basis of extracted confessions.

The horror of the H-Blocks is then before them, in the knowledge that other men of violence and of potential violence, whose political views are more in conformity with current British political policy, and whose share of responsibility for the North's horrors may be apportioned differently by those with different political views, walk free and unmolested.

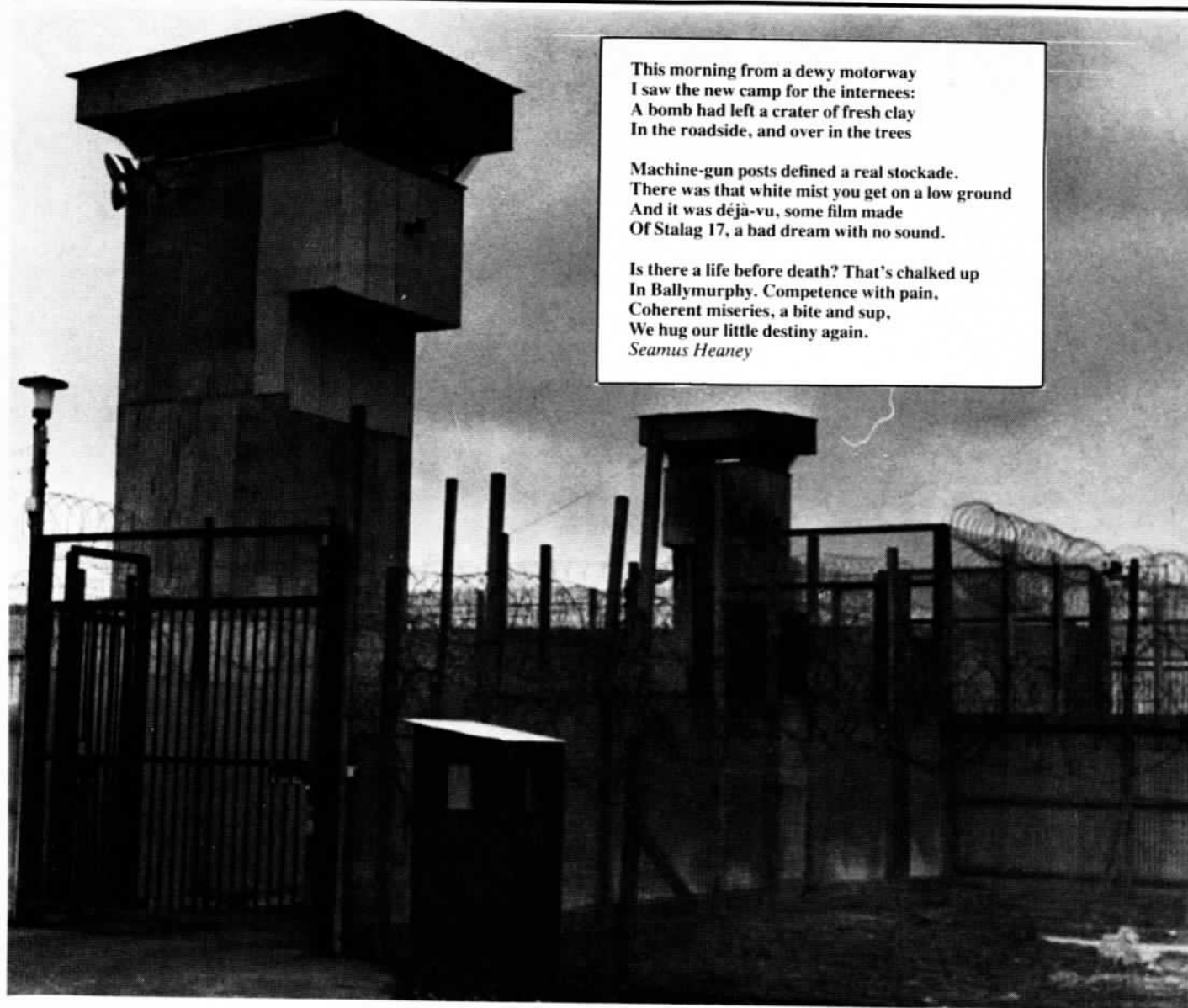
## Biggest lie

The most persistent falsehood about the H-Block prisoners is also the biggest lie – the one in the second point about them being responsible for the treatment being meted out to them. The facts now confirmed by numerous testimonies are these:-

In an effort to bully, beat and terrorise the selected victims of the Diplock show trials into accepting that they are 'criminals', the prison authorities are operating a non-stop punishment system of a severity far in excess of any reported from any source in Europe today, and one which by any standards constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment contrary to Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Permanent 24-hour lock-up in cells, month in and month out, year in and year out; no physical or mental exercise permitted; no newspapers, no books, no bibles even; no writing materials; no free association with other cell inmates, conversation being forbidden; no radio, no TV, no music; virtual denial of all contact with the outside world; denied food parcels and given fouled and adulterated food.

And on top of that – denied access to the toilets except on terms calculated to degrade the prisoner's humanity; fouling up of cells, not by themselves but by warders 'spilling' pots or refusing to empty them; hosing of the contents back into the cells during attempts to empty them out of the window; repeated and unnecessary 'body probes' of the most humiliating, and frequently violent sort, on 'security' pretexts; frequent beatings and



This morning from a dewy motorway  
I saw the new camp for the internees:  
A bomb had left a crater of fresh clay  
In the roadside, and over in the trees

Machine-gun posts defined a real stockade.  
There was that white mist you get on a low ground  
And it was déjà-vu, some film made  
Of Stalag 17, a bad dream with no sound.

Is there a life before death? That's chalked up  
In Ballymurphy. Competence with pain,  
Coherent miseries, a bite and sup,  
We hug our little destiny again.  
*Seamus Heaney*

assaults, both bodily and by high-pressure cold water hoses, followed by dousings with buckets of scalding water...

All in an effort to force the prisoners to don the criminal's uniform. The very resistance of the prisoners, however, is producing a damning indictment of Britain instead.

## Hypocrisy

By any test of logic, it is a gross and transparent hypocrisy to pretend that the republican prisoners 'on the blanket' in Long Kesh are not political.

**They are political for reasons too numerous to list, but primarily because they are there as a direct result of the inevitable conflict and turmoil accompanying the breakdown of Britain's old, rotten political system in the six counties.**

They have proven that they are political by their own extraordinary prison protest, by their endurance of suffering and by their determination. At the Mansion House conference, the writer Ulick O'Connor called them 'saintly men' on that account.

Few, perhaps, would go along

with that, but certainly they have shown a moral calibre above the ordinary - and far above anything likely or possible from a bunch of criminals imprisoned for deeds of selfishness, greed, lust or even vain-glory.

They are political because the very legislators who decided to tag them 'criminal' acknowledged that they thought it a good political idea. The relevant Acts themselves, as well as the Diplock and Gardiner reports under which the prisoners were 'criminalised', define terrorism as the use of violence for 'political ends'.

They are political because the ultra-loyalist sectarian Orange tribe are openly delighted with the gift of being able officially to call the other sort 'criminals'.

It may be a comforting thing to some members of the British Parliament to call their political enemies criminals, especially when a minority of those enemies give them an excuse by using violent methods, but in the long run it is more likely that the H-Block prisoners will be seen as hostages held to Britain's own guilty role and frequent criminal culpability in Irish affairs.

For above all, the blanket men are political prisoners because of British political policy. If British policy were to change in favour of withdrawal from involvement in Irish affairs, republican terrorists would cease to exist.

On the other hand, we have often repeated public assurances from Unionist political leaders that, in such an event, they themselves would become the generals and godfathers of a massive loyalist-terrorist campaign of violence.

**Thus it is that the direction taken by British policy is itself the main factor which determines who is and who shall be deemed to be either 'political terrorists' or 'terrorist criminals' in the context of any six-county solution.**

The republican prisoners may represent a minority which is prepared to pursue its aims by violent means, but a decision by Britain to move towards disengagement would be welcomed by the non-violent majority of the Irish people as well.

Therefore it would be fatuous to hold that such a decision would be 'capitulating' to terrorism and violence. It would be doubly fatuous in view of the repeated

capitulation by the British Government to terrorism and violence in the Unionist camp - and the continuing capitulation represented by its present policy in the area.

## Demands

Since all these factors clearly make the blanket men 'political' in the six-county context, their demands are, in themselves, moderate and reasonable: the right not to wear prison uniform and not to do prison work; freedom of association and the right to organise educational and recreational facilities; to have one weekly visit, to receive and send one letter per week, and to receive one parcel per week.

It is little to ask to put an end to the continuing obscenity of the Long Kesh hell-hole. To deny it indeed would be more than 'foolish'. It would be to confirm a malevolent appetite on the part of the British Government for continual human sacrifice to justify its own political bankruptcy.

*The Sunday Press and the daily Irish Press are available in Britain through newsgagents.*



# Britain out – now!

**IN JUNE 1940 British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain made an offer to Irish Premier Eamon de Valera.**

Britain, said Chamberlain, would make an immediate declaration in favour of Irish unity if de Valera's government would allow British troops and ships to have access to Irish ports in return.

The offer was made with the full knowledge and approval of the British Cabinet. It was made because Britain was facing military defeat by Hitler's Germany.

The Cabinet felt that the occupation by Britain of Irish ports would help to check any German invasion of Britain's west coast. British intelligence, de Valera was told, was also suggesting that Germany was about to invade Ireland.

The British proposals were accompanied by a promise that a working party would be set up immediately to work out a new constitution for the 'united Ireland'.

De Valera turned down the offer. At the time a German victory in the war seemed imminent, and perhaps the Irish Premier felt that Britain was in no position to make promises.

But apparently the most influential factor in de Valera's rejection was his assumption that Britain couldn't be trusted.

It was an understandable assumption. When negotiating the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, the British Cabinet had offered the Irish side a Boundary Commission to settle the border between North and South.

## Assurance

Britain had promised that the Commission would assure that the boundary between the two states would 'conform as closely as possible to the wishes of the population'.

It was this assurance which finally persuaded the Irish side to sign the treaty, for only two counties at the most of the six northern counties had a Unionist majority.

But once the treaty was signed the Boundary Commission was delayed, and when it finally did report four years later it confirmed the existing six county frontier.

The British promises had been nothing more than a manoeuvre; the wishes of the population of four and a half of the six counties were ignored.

The Irish negotiators who signed the 1921 treaty should have known better than to take promises from the British government seriously.

After all, in 1912 the House of Commons had passed the Home Rule Bill which gave a limited independence to all of Ireland and promised one parliament for the 32 counties.

The Bill was delayed by its rejection in the House of Lords, but was nevertheless due to come into force in 1914. But in 1914 Britain used the excuse of the war with Germany to delay it again.

Even without the outbreak of war, the signs were that an amendment to the Bill



would have allowed the six north-eastern counties of Ireland to opt out of the arrangement.

The period from 1912-14 is not just an example that a British promise to withdraw from Ireland is not worth the paper it is written on: it also indicated what happens in Ireland itself when such a time scale is designated.

Once the Bill promising Home Rule had been passed in 1912, the Ulster Loyalists began immediate preparations to defeat the measure by any means they could.

Arms were openly imported and paraded by the Loyalists, they promised civil war, and the leader of the revolt, Edward Carson, even threatened to appeal to Germany for help if Home Rule went through.

It was such threats which by 1914 were persuading a not unwilling British government to partition Ireland.

The obvious conclusion of the period 1912-14 is that the longer the promise to withdraw by Britain was delayed, the surer it became that the promise would never be kept.

It is not difficult to imagine a similar situation arising if a Westminster government were today to make a 'declaration of intent' to withdraw from the North in, say, two years time.

The Loyalists would immediately begin to re-arm. The present disunity in their camp would in all probability be quickly healed and, as happened in 1912, elements in the British Army would threaten mutiny.

The opponents of withdrawal would have

two years in which to ensure that such a withdrawal never happened. And, if past experience is anything to go by, they would succeed.

By contrast an immediate withdrawal by Britain from Ireland would leave the Loyalists in disarray.

Even if some 'military campaign' was launched by the Loyalists its chances of success would be minimal, for clearly it would be much more difficult to force Britain to return than it is to persuade Britain to stay.

From a socialist point of view the demand for an immediate British withdrawal is the only political attitude which can be adopted.

Quite simply, if Britain has no right to be in Ireland 50 years from now, it has no right to be there two years, one year, or two weeks from now.

But besides this principle, the practical arguments in favour of immediate withdrawal are obvious.

## Out Now!

Not only would an immediate withdrawal mean that the promise to quit would be fulfilled. It would also mean that in all probability the promise would be fulfilled with less violent consequences than would be entailed in any long protracted disengagement.

Three words say it all: troops out now!

*—from Socialist Challenge, 18.1.79. Geoff Bell is the author of The Protestants of Ulster, Pluto Press 1976.*



# Barriers to peace

Britain's  
Gulag  
Archipelago



**Father Wilson is a community worker in West Belfast. This is an extract from a speech he made to a delegation of British trade unionists visiting Belfast in September 1976.**

I STARTED out a number of years ago with the idea basically that those who looked after our affairs were trustworthy or at least to be negotiated with. But over the years my opinion has changed.

I came to understand that such negotiation was practically impossible, and that what was happening was that police, and later troops, were being used to prevent any negotiation between the people at large and those who control their resources.

And so I came to the complete certainty of the need for the removal of the troops from the area altogether.

The things that I have seen that have been committed by the troops have been quite appalling.

I am being very simple when I say that the poor in the north of Ireland need help and they need protection. They are not getting that protection from the troops and in my opinion they never will.

## No Civil War

One of the big questions you will have to face when you go back to Britain is, 'Would it not be likely that a civil war would erupt if the troops were withdrawn?'

I would like you to analyse just where exactly that idea comes from. It seems to me that as we try to trace it back, we come again and again to a government source.

In other words there are many people who are saying this today because they've been told this is the way it will be, and this notion does not necessarily rest upon a strict analysis of the situation.

I do not believe that we can afford to keep a military movement here on the grounds that if they are taken away worse things will happen.

I always remember the words of Hilaire Belloc: 'Always keep a hold of nurse for fear of catching something worse.' We just cannot allow the lives of people to be fooled with in that way.

So please examine that, and please examine also the concept that we cannot live together.

We know perfectly well how to live together, but we have always been prevented

by various institutions from so doing.

## Innocent people jailed

I met recently a number of barristers and we discussed a number of problems. They told me quite dispassionately that, 'Yes, we know there are innocent people imprisoned,' and when I said, 'Can you do anything about it?' they said, 'No, we can do nothing.'

They were twiddling their wine glasses and reminiscing, and at that moment I came as near to despair as ever I came, because the professional classes in this country have accepted that it is necessary to put innocent people in prison for the common good. If you accept that, well and good - but I don't believe you will.

What we are fighting also is that people in Britain and the rest of Ireland are saying, 'But the things you say that the troops and the police are doing could not happen - our people are too decent.'

We found that looking back the same thing exactly was said by the French people with regard to Algeria.

I want you to go back to Britain and to show people that it *has happened*, therefore it can happen again and again and again.

There is suffering which must be relieved. It cannot be relieved by troops.

It can only be relieved on the basis of an analysis of the situation which is ruthless and which is repeated over and over again to the people, who at first will refuse to listen to you.

But I have enough confidence in the British people to believe that if they are presented with the facts they will make the right decision.

## Obstructing the poor

All I can say is that I have been horrified by the excesses of those who are supposed to keep the peace.

And I have come to the conclusion that one of their functions is not only to impose a political solution which will be decided in some high place in Westminster, but also to prevent the organisation of poor people so that they themselves can negotiate with those who hold their resources, to prevent them even negotiating with each other.

So not only will the terrible destruction of their organisations and associations prevent the Catholics negotiating with the Protestants, but will prevent Catholics and Protestants negotiating among themselves.

And at the end of the day, the people who are living within a quarter of a mile of where I live are going to have no more say in their affairs than ever they had.

I cannot find this situation tolerable. What I can find is that every day that a military solution is imposed upon people, it becomes more and more difficult for people who have adopted a pacifist policy and philosophy to hold their position.

Don't, for God's sake, allow these poor people to be driven too far.



# the mailed fist

A RECORD OF ARMY & POLICE BRUTALITY FROM AUG. 9 - NOV. 9, 1971  
With a foreword by TONY SAWTIE,  
Secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties, London



PRICE 35p  
PROD BY THE CAMPAIGN FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND  
IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE ASSOCIATION FOR LEGAL JUSTICE

## APARTHEID IN BRITAIN - an analysis of the Prevention of Terrorism Act



PRODUCED BY: People Against the Prevention of Terrorism (P.A.P.T.)  
SPONSORED BY: Towards Truth Centre, 14001 (1980) 1000 Downing Street, London W1C 1LH; 1000 Downing Street, London W1C 1LH; 1000 Downing Street, London W1C 1LH

# VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND 1968-1978



BY FR. DENIS FAUL

## THE RULE OF THE BULLY

Repression of Catholics in Northern Ireland  
PLEASE SEND AHEAD TO YOUR RELATIVES AND THE MEDIA  
THE HARASSMENT OF THE MULGREW FAMILY  
June to October 1976

## Internment



## The Birmingham Framework



# H BLOCK

THE PRISONERS' STATEMENT  
1. The prisoners' statement is a document which is the basis of all negotiations.  
2. It is the only document which is binding on the British Government.  
3. It is the only document which is binding on the British Government.  
4. It is the only document which is binding on the British Government.  
5. It is the only document which is binding on the British Government.

These are just a few of the many publications produced over the past decade to highlight instances of British murder and repression in Northern Ireland that the media ignored

## The Hooded Men

British Torture in Ireland  
August, October 1971  
BY: Denis Faul, Dungeness, 10, Raymond Murray, Avenue



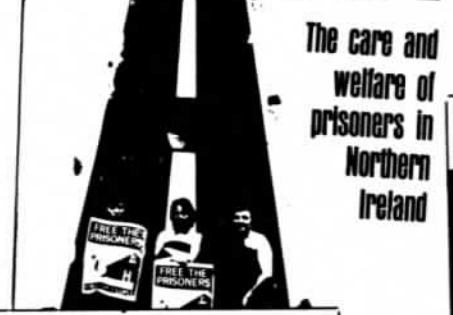
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## SAS TERRORISM - THE ASSASSIN'S GLOVE



BY: FR. DENIS FAUL, FR. RAYMOND MURRAY

# H BLOCK



The care and welfare of prisoners in Northern Ireland

## BEATING WOMEN IN PRISON

The Flames of Long Kesh



The Murder of Hugh Gero Coney, Internee

## H-BLOCKS PROTEST

The No Washing, Non-Co-operation Phase  
IN INTERMENT AND IN ASSASSINATION

THE H-BLOCKS PROTEST IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE BRITISH ARMY'S ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE A NO-WASHING, NON-CO-OPERATION PHASE ON THE PRISONERS OF LONG KESH. THE PRISONERS HAVE REFUSED TO ACCEPT THIS ATTEMPT AND HAVE BEEN MET WITH BRUTALITY BY THE BRITISH ARMY. THE PRISONERS HAVE BEEN BEATEN, TORTURED AND KILLED BY THE BRITISH ARMY. THE PRISONERS HAVE BEEN KEPT IN ISOLATION AND HAVE BEEN DENIED VISITS FROM THEIR FAMILIES. THE PRISONERS HAVE BEEN DENIED THE RIGHT TO WORK AND TO STUDY. THE PRISONERS HAVE BEEN DENIED THE RIGHT TO SUE FOR DAMAGES. THE PRISONERS HAVE BEEN DENIED THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN FREEDOM.

## MAJELLA O'HARE

Shot Dead by the British Army 14 August 1976  
BY: Denis Faul, Dungeness, 10, Raymond Murray, Avenue



## TERROR TACTICS OF THE BRITISH ARMY

ROYAL MARINE COMMANDOS AT CROSSMAGLEN



## MASSACRE at DERRY



## BRITISH ARMY TERROR

WEST BELFAST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER 1976  
BY: Denis Faul, Dungeness, 10, Raymond Murray, Avenue



## THE CASTLEREAUGH FILE



## H BLOCK







In 1972 the British Government conceded that prisoners convicted of political offences in the north of Ireland were political prisoners by granting them 'special category' status. But on March 1st 1976, as part of the government's propaganda campaign to misrepresent the war in the north of Ireland as a 'war against crime', this status was removed.

But such prisoners are still convicted under special legislation, in special non-jury courts, and frequently on the basis of 'confessions' obtained under torture. They refuse to be classified as criminals, and for more than three years they have been refusing to wear prison clothes or do prison work. The British Government has responded by denying them basic human rights.

Today some 360 Republican 'blanket men' in the H Blocks of Long Kesh are locked up 24 hours a day in inhuman conditions, denied physical exercise, fresh air, recreational facilities and association with other prisoners, and subjected to constant humiliation and brutality. Both the 'blanket men' and the 40 women engaged in a similar protest in Armagh jail are refusing to wash or slop out in protest at the severe punishment they receive.

## A Prisoner of the Queen

Anus bared  
to the searching goad  
bent like a beast  
for the dealer's probe,  
feet awash  
in the stool glazed slime,  
mute to the taunt  
from the batoned line,  
'we'll break you yet  
you fenian swine,  
we'll have your balls  
when you walk the line',  
then boot to heel,  
and sniggered feel,  
the prisoner weeps,

a smothered scream,  
and weeps again  
for days unseen,  
a naked guest  
of a Gracious Queen.

\* \* \*

A world away,  
on the Ormeau Road,  
a barrister  
without his robe,  
sinks a spade  
in garden mould,  
and buries deep  
his Diplock gold,  
(dark and safe  
from taxing eyes),  
for plying law  
from tortured lies,  
while justice trails

a broken wing,  
to ignominy's debasing sting,  
he leaves to bear  
a nightmare dream,  
the naked guest  
of a Gracious Queen.

\* \* \*

And further still,  
(from Pluto's core?)  
a cleric  
sees an open door,  
and jets  
in grief  
to Salvador,  
to lay at rest  
Romero's soul,  
who died  
to fill  
the peasant's bowl,

and ready tears  
this cleric shed,  
for peons  
tortured,  
burnt  
and bled,  
and safely home,  
he shouts  
'Disarm,  
no guns for troops,  
who wreak such harm',  
but ne'er a cry  
to troops unseen  
(the Maze is not where he has been),  
who wreak  
a cold unhuman spleen,  
on naked guests  
of a Gracious Queen.

Brian Ua Baoill



# DEMAND POLITICAL STATUS - SMASH H. BLOCK.

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND, THIS LETTER COMES TO YOU FROM THE H. BLOCKS OF LONG KESH IF YOU ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH THAT NAME THEN THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE ADDRESS THIS LETTER TO YOU. LONG KESH IS BUT ONE OF THE REASONS CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN IRELAND. WHERE IN ARE SITUATED THE MODERN DAY TORTURE CENTRES OF H. BLOCK. H. BLOCK HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED TO ISOLATE AND CONTAIN ITS POPULATION OF 'SPECIAL PRISONERS' WHO HAVE MADE THEIR WAY ALONG A 'SPECIAL' REPRESSIVE CONVEYOR BELT OF 'SPECIAL' ARRESTS, 'SPECIAL' INTERVIEW CENTRES, 'SPECIAL' REMAND JURIES, 'SPECIAL' COURTS TO ARRIVE AT A 'SPECIAL' CONCENTRATION CAMP, H. BLOCK.

AT PRESENT THERE ARE FOUR H. BLOCKS WHICH HOUSE OVER 200 REPUBLICAN POWS. EACH ONE OF US ARE HELD NAKED IN TOTAL SOLITARY CONFINEMENT BECAUSE WE HAVE REFUSED TO ALLOW THE BRITISH GOVT. TO PRETEND OR TO TREAT US AS CRIMINALS. WE ARE CAPTURED FREEDOM FIGHTERS, IRISHMEN + WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN ENJOINED IN A TEN YEAR LIAR AGAINST THE BRITISH FOREIGN FORCES WHO OCCUPY + OPPRESS OUR COUNTRY. IS IT CRIMINAL TO FIGHT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ONE'S OWN OPPRESSED NATION?

BECAUSE WE HAVE REFUSED TO BE DEHUMANISED OUR CLOTHES HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM US + WE HAVE BEEN ALREADY NAKED IN AN EMPTY CELL CONTAINING ONLY 3 TORN RAGS FOR BLANKETS, A CHAIR, A POT + A PIECE OF FILTHY DAMP FOAM FOR A BED. WE SEE NO ONE, RECEIVE NO EXERCISE OR FRESH AIR WHAT SO EVER. NEITHER DO WE RECEIVE NEWSPAPERS, BOOKS, CIGARETTES, OR HAVE RADIOS OR WATCH. IT IS NOW 3 YEARS SINCE WE HAVE SEEN ANY OF THESE THINGS. WE ARE SUBJECTED TO TOTAL DEPRIVATION + THIS INCLUDES MANY BASIC HUMAN NECESSITIES SUCH AS EXERCISE, PROPER + ADEQUATE FOOD + MEDICAL ATTENTION. WE ARE HELD IN A CONCRETE LIKE TOMB THE WINDOWS OF WHICH HAS BEEN LONG AGO BUCKED UP, STEALING THE FLOW OF AIR TO A DRIBBLE AND CUTTING OFF ANY OF THE LITTLE VIEWS WE HAD OF AN OUTSIDE WORLD.

OVER ONE YEAR AGO WE WERE FORCED THROUGH SHEER NECESSITY TO EMBARK UPON A DIRT STRIKE IN A DRASTIC ATTEMPT NOT ONLY TO HIGHLIGHT OUR PLIGHT, BUT TO SAVE OUR SANITY. AT PRESENT WE LIE IN FILTHY DAMP DRAINAGE CELLS WHICH ARE INFESTED WITH MAGGOTS + FLIES THAT THRIVE UPON THE EVER ACCUMULATING PILES OF PUTRIFYING + DECAYING RUBBISH WHICH LITTER THE FLOOR ASIDE THE PILES OF REEKING + DECAYING RUBBISH WHICH LITTER EVERYWHERE. THE STENCH IS ALMOST OVERWHELMING. WE SLEEP UPON DAMP + MOKE OFTEN THAN NOT SATURATED FOAM MATTRESSES, CAUSED BY THE NIGHTLY WASHING'S DOWN THAT WE RECEIVE AT THE HANDS OF THE PRISON WARDERS. THE FLOOR IS BOTH OUR TOILET + DINING TABLE. SICKNESSES, RASHES + SORES ARE RAMPANT. OUR GHOSTLY NAKED WHITE BODIES WITH LONG Matted HAIR + RABBIT EARS, PIERCING EYES + SUNKEN FACES MAKE UP THE SKELETAL FIGURES CALLED THE BLANKET MEN OF H. BLOCK.

THESE ARE THE CONDITIONS THAT CONVINCE EACH COMPARED TO THE SEVER PAIN DWELLING OF CALCIUM. THESE ARE THE H. BLOCKS IN WHICH THE 300 NAKED IRISHMEN + ALONG WITH OUR COMPANIES IN OTHER H. BLOCKS ARE DEMANDING THE RIGHT TO BE RECOGNISED AS THE POLITICAL PRISONERS THAT WE ARE + TO BE GRANTED THAT STATUS. THESE ARE THE H. BLOCKS IN WHICH WE ARE BEING BEATEN TO PULP, SHOWERED OF OUR HAIR + BEARDS + FORCIBLY BATHED IN STINKING DISINFECTANT + OUR OWN BLOOD. THE SAME PEOPLE WHO ALSO TRIED IN THE SAME BRUTAL MANNER TO CRIMINALISE THE GREATEST FENIAN OF ALL THOMAS CLARK.

IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SOME REPUBLICAN POW WILL OR IS BEATEN TO DEATH HERE ALREADY THERE HAVE BEEN RASES OF INSANITY. THIS IS BRITISH DELOCALITY IN IRELAND. THIS IS WHAT WE POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE FOUGHT TO BRING INTO. H. BLOCK IS THE EPITOME OF BRITISH HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRELAND. WE IRISH REPUBLICAN POWS IN H. BLOCK + ELSEWHERE CALL UPON YOU THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND FOR YOUR HELP PLEASE ADD YOUR FULL WEIGHT IN WHAT EVER WAY YOU CAN TO HELP SMASH H. BLOCK. EVEN A LITTLE WEIGHT HELP NO MATTER HOW SMALL COULD HELP SAVE THE LIFE OF AN IRISH POLITICAL PRISONER. WE ARE DYING HERE, PLEASE HELP US!

SMASH H. BLOCK. LONG KESH CONCENTRATION CAMP, IRELAND

The blanket men in Long Kesh and the women in Armagh are demanding:

1. The right for the men to wear their own clothes
2. The right to refrain from prison work
3. The right to free association amongst political prisoners
4. The right to organise their own recreational and educational facilities and receive one visit, letter and parcel per week
5. Restoration of full remission of sentences.

This letter to the people of England from Irish Republican prisoners was smuggled out of the H Blocks

# The army's secret opinion

**'THE CAMPAIGN of violence is likely to continue while the British remain in Northern Ireland'. There is 'no prospect in the next five years of any political change' which would remove the *raison d'être* of the Provisional IRA. With these conclusions the secret military intelligence appreciation of Northern Ireland, *Future Terrorist Trends* wraps up and buries a thousand speeches of politicians who have promised that the army will wipe out the gunmen.**

*Northern Ireland, Future Terrorist Trends* is a study prepared by the most senior army officer on the Defence Intelligence Staff, Brigadier J.M. Glover. The report was written early last November, and subsequently fell into the hands of the IRA. Since then the report has received some publicity in Irish Republican circles but has been ignored by the British media. It was circulated to army commands in December after clearance and approval at the highest level. Glover himself, now promoted to Major General, recently became Commander of Land Forces in Northern Ireland – a clear indication that his report must broadly represent the view of Northern Ireland held inside the Ministry of Defence. Nevertheless, many in authority did not see the paper – not because of its secret classification but because it belongs to the army spheres of preparation and action and was not intended for policymakers and politicians. The distribution shows that not one copy was sent to Ministers, either in the Northern Ireland Office or the Defence Ministry.

The single most notable conclusion is that there is no sign of any end of the war. Brigadier Glover confined his study to a forecast of the next five years and excluded consideration of IRA activities on the UK mainland or the loyalist paramilitary groups. His report is intensely cynical about the chances of restoring peace.

The intelligence specialists have not substantially altered their view since the previous study which noted:

The Provisional IRA (PIRA) has the dedication and the sinews of war to raise violence intermittently to at least the level of early 1978, certainly for the foreseeable future. Even if 'peace' is restored, the motivation for politically inspired violence will remain. Arms will be readily available and there will be many who are able and willing to use them. Any peace will be superficial and brittle. A new campaign may well erupt in the years ahead.

The paper rejects any future political development – save the continuation of direct rule from Westminster – as offering any hope of a diminution in the scale of violence. There are five options – the continuation of direct rule; the addition of a new constituent assembly within the direct rule framework; the unlikely restoration of the Stormont or other parliament; and a move towards independence which might take firmer root. But the fifth option was

more exciting.

A new party based on socialist policies transcending sectarian barriers may emerge. But similar attempts since 1922 have always ended in failure. In Ireland the appeal of sectarianism and nationalistic sentiment has always been stronger than that of left wing ideology. The continuing polarisation of the population on sectarian lines only emphasises the improbability of such an initiative.

Despite a muted reference to 'independence', the sixth option – British withdrawal – is not mentioned. It remains a subversive heresy within the army. Of the five listed options the army has its favourite – continued direct rule. The other policies would give more support to the Provisionals through nurturing fears in the Catholic community of a re-established Protestant ascendancy. But even this offers no guarantee of a more peaceful future.

Only... continued direct rule offers any real prospect of political calm and hence a waning support for the terrorist during the next five years. Under any other scenario Republican fears of a Protestant ascendancy being re-established would enable PIRA to pose as the defenders of the minority interest. Even if the present system of government is maintained the current muted support for the forces of law and order will remain delicately balanced and susceptible to any controversial government decision or Security Forces action. We can see no prospect in the next five years of any political change which would remove the PIRA's *raison d'être*.

**The Army's analysts are well aware that they have provided with this option no scope for politicians to do anything more than bluster. No real solution is foreseen or attempted: 'Government policy would be principally one of containment and the underlying problems would remain the same.'**

While these problems remain unsolved the military organisation of the IRA will continue to find a ready pool of young aspirants who, the army somewhat whimsically suggests, are 'eagerly seeking promotion to full gun-carrying terrorist status'. Although the organisation is now smaller and its public support diminished since the early 1970s, it still can tap a rich vein of recruits. The report admits that the Provisionals are essentially a working class organisation, based in the ghetto areas of the city and in the poorer rural areas. Middle class members and graduates exist, even though they have to forfeit their normal life style. The Army thinks that some of these potential middle class recruits are deterred by the Provisional's 'muddled political thinking'.

The report suggests that only middle class members can provide the 'intelligent astute and experienced terrorists who provide the backbone of the organisation'. But it does make clear that PIRA has adequate resources to continue providing explosives and bombs for its needs, including small workshops and laboratories. The terrorists' abilities, their professionalism, and their

expertise are all on the increase, the army believe. Indeed, substitute 'soldier' for 'terrorist' in the study and the report might almost be a careful appreciative analysis of an allied army.

## Ten years' experience

This comes out most clearly in the army's portrait of the rank and file terrorist:

Our evidence of the calibre of rank and file terrorists does not support the view that they are merely mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable. PIRA now trains and uses its members with some care. The Active Service Units (ASUs) are for the most part manned by terrorists tempered by up to ten years of operational experience.

The mature terrorists, including for instance the leading bomb makers, are usually sufficiently cunning to avoid arrest. They are continually learning from mistakes and developing their expertise. We can therefore expect to see increasing professionalism and the greater exploitation of modern technology for terrorist purposes.

From a high ranking and highly qualified officer in the British Army, the Provisional IRA could hardly have had a greater compliment. It is an attitude in complete contrast to that of Roy Mason who continually characterises the IRA as hoodlums and thugs.

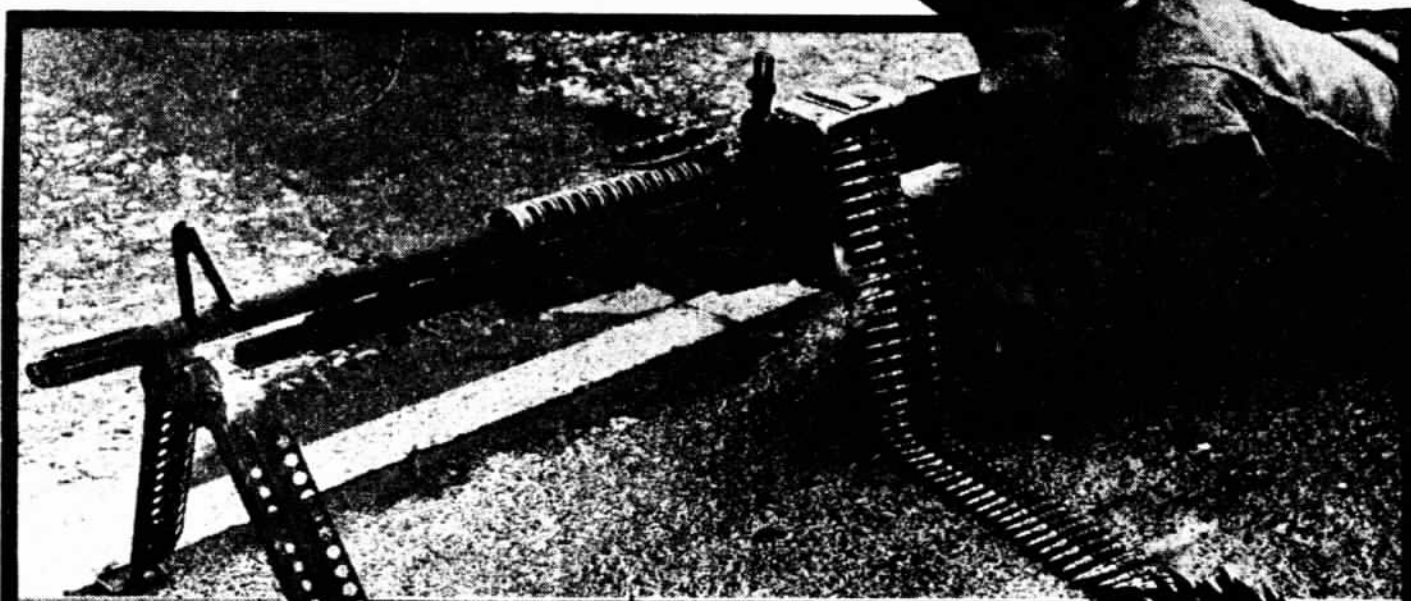
Much of the report consists of careful analysis of the types of weapons and munitions available to the IRA together with their effectiveness, availability and price. They estimate that some 1700 PIRA members and activists may have available some 4000 handguns, machine guns and rifles. The army only knows of stocks of 800 such weapons but their estimate is that the IRA's 'actual holdings are probably five times larger'.

The IRA's operations are increasingly designed to be 'safe' so that the attacker has a high probability of escaping. The main types of weapons used are available in sufficient quantity, although there is a search for 'prestige' weapons which attract publicity even if they are militarily ineffective – mortars, anti-aircraft guns, and missiles. The increasing skill of the bomb constructors is noted with care – the PIRA Mark 9 Mortar, for example, is 'effective and simple to make'.

The IRA are not expected to become involved with attempts to create nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, although these activities now seem to form a standard part of any popular appreciation of the 'terrorist threat'.

The great myth of modern terrorism, is that of the 'terrorist internationale', characterised as a multinational threat to western democratic society, with numerous insinuations of connections between the IRA, the PLO, the Japanese Red Army and West German terrorists. Familiar *bêtes noires* appear – Soviet Gold, Colonel Gaddafi of





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### NORTHERN IRELAND FUTURE TERRORIST TRENDS

1. An earlier study dealing with the future organisation of military intelligence in Northern Ireland, the circulation of which was very limited, identified the need for the study of likely future trends in terrorist tactics and weaponry which it has

Libya, all orchestrated by a convenient Godfather - currently Carlos, and formerly Yasser Arafat. Newspapers report terrorist summit conferences. It is all nonsense.

It is however, profitable nonsense. Take for example, *The Weapons of Terror*, a recent money-spinner from the stable of *Sunday Telegraph* reporters Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne, self styled as 'internationally known specialists', who baldly assert that there are 'contacts with Breton and Basque separatists, and some link with Palestinians, particularly the PFLP... Colonel Gaddafi has given them financial support and a small amount of arms.'

The army intelligence report is clear on these points: 'we doubt whether the PIRA receives financial aid from Libya or any other overseas government'. It also dismisses the Soviet gold story: 'There are no indications of any substantial link between the Soviet Union and either wing of the IRA, nor do we expect any links developing in the next five years'.

Although Soviet arms have reached the province, and have been intercepted *en route*, such shipments 'did not implicate the Soviet authorities'. As for the Middle East

connection, although arms had been bought there and it remained a 'valuable source' of weapons, the PIRA feared that 'that close association with other political ideologies would tarnish the essential Irishness of their movement'. They would be unlikely to accept any help that came with political strings attached - if for no better reason than that they are already adequately well off for arms and resources.

The only links considered of significance by the army are with the United States and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where supporters may provide up to £120,000 a year. The rest of a guesstimated £950,000 annual PIRA budget comes mostly from thefts. The most active terrorists are believed to receive about £20 a week for their work.

### **War cannot be won**

The leaking of this document may have left the army dismayed and the IRA delighted. But its real significance for the future of the province lies with the wider public from whom it was intended that such honest thinking should be kept away. The military head of the Defence Intelligence Staff says here that the present war in Ireland

cannot be won. The IRA will continue, for the foreseeable future, to wage continuous attrition against the British presence.

The politicians may now deny that things are quite so gloomy, or that the army intelligence specialists are right to dismiss the political options so readily. But the army have the advantage both of history and operational experience; Whitehall's tinkering around with a little bit more government or a little bit less government has never been a substitute for tackling a problem at its roots. Politicians may speak of 'overcoming' the gunmen and terrorists, but the army knows it cannot be done.

The only strategy the army does not evaluate is the strategy of withdrawal - which is tantamount to military defeat - because British withdrawal has always been the first objective of the IRA. But between the lines the Intelligence Staff infer that the only peaceful future for Northern Ireland may lie in a radical change of policy. If the army has been right in their analysis of their own position then withdrawal is the only option which should now be canvassed.

- from the *New Statesman*, 13.7.79

# How to restore power to the people

*Ruairi O Bradaigh is the President of Sinn Fein. This article appeared in the Guardian, 18.2.80, as part of their 'Ulster 80' week of coverage.*

LAST MONTH Sinn Fein held its 75th Ard Fheis or annual conference. The organisation is the traditional Irish independence movement which opposed the alleged settlement of 1921 on which the present constitutional set-up in Ireland is based.

The Irish people had met foreign invasion and colonisation over centuries with sustained resistance. The English ruling classes' alternative to the national demand for complete independence for the whole of Ireland was the Anglo-Irish 'treaty' in 1921.

This imposed an old-style colony in the north-east with the retention of the British armed presence and a neo-colony in the rest of Ireland, involving withdrawal of physical presence but continuation of economic, social and cultural domination.

In the north-east religion was used in a policy of 'divide and conquer' just as colour, tribe and religion are used elsewhere in the world. The position of the Catholic working class, who are generally nationalist, approaches that of the blacks – in another context – while that of the Protestant working class, who are usually Unionist, is analagous to that of the poor whites.

## All-Ireland organisation

Sinn Fein was founded early in this century before the border was established, and continues to be an all-Ireland organisation, while the establishment political parties, north and south, are confined either to a 26-county or a six-county organisational basis.

Sinn Fein seeks British disengagement from Ireland so that both states erected here in 1921-22 can be dis-established and an entirely new Ireland built in their place. It wants the complete separation of Church and State with a civil constitution and the building of a pluralist society.

This new Ireland would be a community of communities with power and decision-making exercised at the base – at the lowest possible level.

Voluntary local community councils, strong statutory district councils and administrative regional bodies grouped into the four historic provinces of Ulster (nine counties), Munster, Leinster and Connacht, would make up a new all-Ireland federation with maximum decentralisation of power.

Such a system would benefit the Irish people in at least three ways: it would provide a political solution to the Ulster situation; it would correct the east-west economic imbalance; and above all else it would restore power to the people.

## A democratic socialist republic

Further, Sinn Fein wishes to make this new Ireland a democratic socialist republic, in keeping with its anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist aims. In the 26 counties 5 per

cent of the population own 71 per cent of the wealth, and the economies north and south are dominated by multi-national companies.

Sinn Fein would nationalise the key industries such as banking, finance, insurance, mining, energy etc. Beneath this, there would be a wide range of cooperatives in agriculture, industry and the distributive



trades on the basis of workers' ownership and control.

Building land would be brought under local authority control and there would be an upper limit on the amount of land owned by any one individual. Private enterprise would have no place in the key industries, and the worker-owned cooperatives would receive state encouragement as the most socially desirable. Small private enterprises, including family business and farms, would have workers' participation.

The federal Democratic Socialist Republic envisaged by Sinn Fein would be neutral and non-aligned. It would reject the imperialisms of both West and East and, with them, their political military power

blocks such as NATO and the Warsaw pact, the EEC and Comecon. A special trading relationship with the EEC would be favoured instead of full membership, and ultimately Sinn Fein seeks a Europe of peoples rather than states.

Thus the struggles of the oppressed nations, the victims of colonialism within Europe, are supported and a special relationship is visualised between the free and independent peoples of the Celtic Nations, including Scotland and Wales, in an arrangement like the Nordic Council or the Arab League.

Sinn Fein feels that the Irish people, oppressed and colonised for over eight centuries, now have more in common with

the newly emerging peoples of the Third World in Asia, Africa and Latin America than with the power blocs. Accordingly, it sees the 'group of 77' at the United Nations and the conference of non-aligned nations as progressive forces on the world stage.

### Three aims

The current war of national liberation being waged against British imperialism in the six counties of north-east Ireland is but the current phase of the continuing centuries-old anti-colonialist struggle of the Irish people.

The Irish Republican Army, which has spearheaded that fight in the 20th century, has said that the war will end on the attainment of its three aims: a British declaration of intent to leave Ireland forever; an acknowledgement of the right of the whole people of Ireland to decide their own future; a general amnesty for all political prisoners in England and Ireland.

Sinn Fein believes that the current 'constitutional conference' in Belfast will fail, just as did the old Stormont parliament, the Sunningdale executive and the 1975-76 convention. It cannot succeed in the middle or long term because it seeks an artificial means to administer an artificially carved out sectarian state which has survived so far only by means of special powers.

British policy and British rule in Ireland are bankrupt, as are both government and opposition in the 26 counties. British withdrawal, in a planned, phased and orderly manner, and the liberation of the entire Irish people out of the colonial and neo-colonial strait jackets north and south, and into a completely new Ireland which they themselves would build, is the realistic alternative.

It will provide the stability the suffering people of our country want, and break the recurring cycle of repression and violence. Meanwhile, Sinn Fein is organising the people in a campaign of economic resistance to exploitation by participating in local issues and agitations.

In the last 10 years, the whole republican movement has matured not only in its policy-making but also in its contacts and meetings, both formally and informally, with Loyalist people and organisations. This has deepened its understanding of the diversity of tradition which enriches our heritage on this island.

Similarly, the many and prolonged contacts, meetings and negotiations between the accredited representatives of the movement and the representatives of the British government have given insight and valuable experience which will be particularly useful in the years to come.

Above all, in rejecting imperialism, east and west, and in seeking a third way, Irish Republicans are in the broad stream of the worldwide movement of progressive forces for the achievement of the rights of man. Here the dispossessed and economically exploited peoples of the former colonies of the Third World stand with us on the world stage in our struggle for peace with justice.

*The weekly paper of Sinn Fein is An Phoblacht/Republican News, which is available from 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland.*





# Why we call for troops out now

The demand for Troops Out Now has been called simplistic and misguided. Many people who would like to see peace in Northern Ireland and full civil rights for the Catholic minority do not see why a well-intentioned British government should not bring that about. Other objections include 'what about the bloodbath?' and 'why can't the Protestant and Catholic workers just get together and forget all this sectarianism?'

Most British people think of Northern Ireland as a real state, with a minority problem. We'd like to explain why we think this is not true and why the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland cannot be solved in isolation from the rest of Ireland.

## Origins of the problem

When a part of Ireland gained independence from Britain in 1921 six counties in the North were kept within the United Kingdom. This new artificial state was carved out in such a way that although four and a half of its counties had Catholic majorities there was an overall Protestant majority of about two to one.

This area included most of the industry and a lot of the wealth of Ireland—almost all in the hands of the Irish Protestant and British businessmen and landowners. This division of the wealth along religious lines was the result of Britain's deliberate policy, several centuries before, of settling Protestant farmers from England and Scotland on the land taken from the native Catholic Irish. These settlers, and their descendants, were then rewarded with small but important economic and civil privileges in return for maintaining the province of Ulster for the Crown.

This identification of Protestantism and privilege bound the Protestant workers firmly to their leaders and employers with disastrous consequences for any hope of working class solidarity. Protestant employers broke strikes by appeals to religion, and the Catholic church hierarchy also found religion useful in sabotaging joint workers actions. (They were not above implying that the Irish Catholic socialist, James Connolly, was a Protestant when it suited them).

## Ulster kith and kin

From the 1880s to 1920, Protestant business interests organised in the Unionist Party, mobilised their followers, based in northeast Ulster, to resist the demand of the great majority of Irish first for Home Rule, and by 1916, for independence from Britain. They were actively supported by Tory interests in Britain. This armed threat to Irish independence was presented to the people of Britain as the touching desire of their kith and kin to remain loyal to the Empire (a line now used by the National Front in support of the Loyalists). In fact it was the fear that Belfast-based industry would suffer under



protective tariffs designed to allow the growth of domestic Irish industry which was the major cause of this mobilization. Land-owning interests in Britain also feared confiscation of property, while the Protestant workers were told they would be swallowed up in a Papist state. (It needs saying that what economic privileges the working class Protestants did have only looked good in comparison to the position of Catholics, and

their reaction to the threat of independence was similar to the reactions of the poor whites in the American South to black demands for civil rights).

## Beginnings of 'Ulster'

Britain partitioned Ireland in the midst of the Irish war of independence. The Unionists had to settle for the largest area they thought

might be economically and geographically viable, but which still contained a Protestant majority. The leaders of the new Irish Free State in the south essentially agreed to partition, while paying lip service to the ideal of a United Ireland. But the Irish people as a whole never had a chance to give their opinion of partition – because there was no question but that it would have been rejected.

## Police state

The Loyalists never felt safe in their new state. They set up a structure, with the help of the British Government, which denied the Catholic Nationalist third of the population equal civil rights, and access to jobs and housing. A repressive police force and civil service, almost entirely Protestant, kept them in their place, backed up by reserve 'Specials' recruited from the Orange Lodges – the most bigoted Protestant organisations. For much of the history of the state, Catholics could be interned without trial under various Emergency Powers Acts. They were often the victims of sectarian pogroms, and when they fought back, it was billed as 'sectarian riots'. Unemployment was often double in the Catholic areas, while the skilled jobs in the engineering and shipbuilding industries were Protestant preserves.

## The facade cracks

Nobody in Britain, least of all the government, gave a damn about the undemocratic nature of the Northern Ireland state until the 1960's. Then, civil reform became necessary because Britain, which wanted closer ties with the Irish Republic, which was now one of its biggest markets, couldn't risk the embarrassment of Irish reaction to oppression of fellow Irish people in the North.

The government began putting pressure on Stormont (the N.I. parliament) for mild reforms, and Stormont leaders began to respond cautiously. The Catholics, encouraged by civil rights agitation in America and elsewhere, began peacefully demonstrating for their rights. But these two forms of pressure on the Loyalists cracked the state wide open. The sight of ghetto Catholics on the march, the fear of being 'sold out' by their leaders, provoked such brutal Loyalist reaction that the world was shocked... and even more shocked to see the attacks on the Catholics led by the state police force!

## 'Our boys' go in

The Orange monster, deliberately created and manipulated by Britain, could not be killed off so easily when no longer required. A wave of violence verging on civil war swept the North. There were demands from the British public for the government to 'do something'.

The incident which 'justified' sending in British troops was a two-day siege of the Catholic Bogside area of Derry by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (the police force) in August 1969. Only when the Catholic defenders had beaten off the RUC, who were forced to retreat to barracks, were troops sent in – at the request of the Northern

Ireland administration – to 'restore law and order'. Callaghan's book *A House Divided* reveals that what the N.I. administration feared was that the Catholics would come out of their ghettos and take over the city.

## The welcome wears out

Because the troops replaced the hated RUC and B Specials in the Catholic ghettos, they were welcomed at first. But as the Catholic militancy for civil rights continued, and began to change into a demand for an end to the state, the real role of the army – the maintaining of Loyalist law and order – became apparent. The troops constantly harassed Catholic civil rights marches, and later began trying to suppress the re-armed Irish Republican Army, which had come to life again in the ghettos, after a long period of inactivity, as a defence force against Loyalist paramilitary attacks.

By mid-1970, the army was openly at war with the IRA, and soon after that internment without trial was introduced once again. In reaction the Catholic population of the ghettos set up no-go areas, in Derry and Belfast, where neither the RUC nor the army could enter.

## Eight years of misrule

Since then, there have been twists and turns in British policy, and in the situation. The government, in its attempts to bring order within the confines of the present state, has alternately tried wooing the Loyalists, splitting the old Unionist alliance, promising concessions to the Catholic middle class SDLP, and even negotiations with the IRA. Meanwhile, apart from short truces, the guerrilla war waged by the Provisional IRA and other republican and socialist forces, has continued, while the government has found no way of reforming the structure of the state which is acceptable to the hard line Loyalists.

## Repression – the only policy

Britain now rules Northern Ireland directly, and seems to have no policy, other than a commitment to maintain the state. But there is one policy which has remained consistent throughout the whole period. That is to respond to Loyalist pressure by using the army and other security forces to terrorise the Catholic communities which are the heart of nationalist resistance. The excuse used is the necessity, in Kitson's charming phrase, to 'squeeze the population until it vomits up the terrorists'.

In the eyes of the Loyalists, and of the British Government, all the people in the working class Catholic areas are potential 'terrorists' – because most of them want the British out. So it is necessary for the troops to break the spirit of the whole nationalist population.

How else do you explain the regular beatings, the raids on hundreds of houses they know are not occupied by IRA members, the rape and deliberate humiliation of women, the threats and bullying, the surveillance and general harassment? (An American psychologist who had studied the

situation has recently described this policy as 'psychological genocide' – Rona Fields, *Society Under Siege U.S.A. 1977*) The intended effect is to stop mass involvement in the struggle against British rule, and to destroy the capacity of the working class Catholic areas to organise.

We do not call for troops out just because of the atrocities they commit (although that is reason enough). The way the troops are used is part of the argument for their withdrawal. They are an army of occupation with orders to put down a risen people. We want them out because they are shoring up a state which has no right to continue – a state founded on prejudice, and which can only be held together by terror.

## What about the bloodbath?

The government hardly pretends any longer that the army is in Northern Ireland to prevent a bloodbath. But the best answer we can give to people who genuinely fear for the Catholic minority after a troop withdrawal is the answer that comes from the ghettos: they would rather face the Loyalists alone, than the Loyalists backed up by the British Army. Father Des Wilson, a Catholic priest from Ballymurphy, puts it simply: 'If we could get rid of the army, I'd take my chances with my Catholic and Protestant fellow citizens' (*Hibernia*, Nov. 4).

We do not imagine that troop withdrawal on its own is an instant solution. But so long as the Britain keeps the troops there, the Loyalists will not give up their hopes of domination. In this situation there can never be reconciliation between the two communities. A British withdrawal is the first condition for bringing about a change of attitude on the part of the Protestants toward their Catholic neighbours, and thus the first condition for bringing about a solution acceptable to all the people of Ireland as a whole.

## A liberation struggle

There is no chance of working class unity in Ireland, let alone socialism, until the Northern Ireland situation is solved. We think that the struggle to get rid of the British presence and interference in Irish affairs is a liberation struggle. If you support such struggles in Africa and other parts of the world, you should support the struggle in Ireland.

Unfortunately, the response of the English socialist groups and of the English workers on Ireland has been terrible. It is our responsibility not to keep our eyes closed any longer to the continued occupation of a part of Ireland by our government's troops. Mass support in Britain for bringing the troops out would put very heavy pressure on the British government. It would focus world opinion on the struggle going on in the North. Far from being unrealisable, the demand for Troops Out is a demand which we can all help to make a reality.

– from *Troops Out*, paper of the Troops Out Movement, Dec/Jan 1977-8. *Troops Out* is available from TOM (Literature Committee), Box 10, 2a St Paul's Road, London N1 (10p + 10p p&p).



# Ireland: the way to working class unity

**THIS paper was presented at Easter 1976 in Liberty Hall, Dublin, at a seminar called 'The Relevance of 1916'. The references to the Dublin Government refer to the previous Coalition Government, not to the present Government.**

IT'S FAIR ENOUGH to say that a general state of revolt has prevailed in the North for several years past. The seemingly endless turmoil points to the breakdown of authority. The average person's comment is 'When will it ever end?' Or, as the man said, 'The country's not near settled yet.'

When will it end? How will it be settled? It should be obvious by now, from all experience and from all the evidence, that it's never going to end, and will never be settled, exclusively within the framework of the six counties themselves.

If this is *not* yet obvious to some people, it should be worth examining this virtually permanent state of revolt in the North to produce the proof that the six-county problem is, indeed insoluble in the six-county context — and to show that to say so is not just merely a political opinion, but an objective observation of the stark realities of Irish affairs.

And if this seminar is to have some positive and practical results, it ought to be directed towards helping those leaders of opinion, whether in the trade union sphere or academic and political life, to recognise and fix their attention upon this central fact, and to arm them against diversionary irrelevancies, and to enable them to combat some of the commonplace, fashionable banalities which are current about six-county and Irish affairs in general.

Now, if it is true, as we maintain, that the six-county problem is such that it cannot produce its own solution, it follows that the most dangerous course that could possibly be taken at this stage is to try and sustain the now ludicrous pretence that the six-counties are, in fact, a viable political unit within which the people and their politicians are capable of finding a stable and lasting settlement.

But that is precisely the dangerous course on which the British and Irish Governments are now quite obviously set.

If the evidence can be shown to be overwhelming that there is no possibility of a peaceful solution within the six-counties area alone, it will follow that the present joint efforts by the British and Irish Governments to confine the problem to the six-counties, to contain it within those fixed territorial limits, thereby trying to get rid of it by pretending that it is not really their problem

but a matter for the unfortunate population of the six-counties to resolve on their own — if that is the approach, it is quite clearly an approach diametrically in opposition to the actual needs of the situation, and can lead to nothing but a worsening of the situation.

It should be obvious, furthermore, that all those general condemnations of violence which attempt to explain the troubles in terms of the wilful wickedness of individuals, or individual groups (usually described as being 'a tiny minority') are worse than worthless. They do nothing but work to conceal the deep-seated and fundamental nature of the political crisis we are going through in the North. They work to blind people to the actual nature of the crisis and thereby, in fact, impede its eventual solution.

In the same way, all those appeals for peace couched in vague and general terms are equally harmful. Although sometimes presented as a 'positive' approach in phrases like 'Why not live for Ireland instead of dying for Ireland', all these clichés are in fact a negative contribution to the debate in so far as they are usually couched in terms which ignore the real causes.

Above all, the present efforts by the British and Irish authorities to treat the problem purely as a security problem, as a matter of catching criminals and locking them up, and their implicit refusal even to look at the underlying political causes let alone trying to tackle them realistically — this constitutes nothing but a running away from the reality, with a guarantee that things will certainly get worse.

The warning should go out from all who can make their voices heard that the security problem fixation, the Criminal Jurisdiction Acts and all the rest — will not contribute to attaining peace in Ireland, neither today, tomorrow nor in the long term.

The very most we might expect from these measures in the short term is the peace of the jackboot, the jail and the concentration camp — and the laying of the basis for an eventual further explosion.

Treating it as a simple security problem will ensure only one thing — that conditions will be created in the North which will ensure that the situation will get uglier and uglier. Indeed, we see it getting uglier and uglier every day.

## The chief ingredients

So let us make a careful examination of this northern crisis and analyse the chief ingredients of the prevailing state of revolt — with a view to unveiling the evidence to show that its roots do indeed lie in the origin and nature of the established political framework itself and it cannot therefore be resolved within this framework.

It may be observed that we have a state of revolt which is characterised by a general up-

heaval, a general state of political chaos, a state of total ungovernability. And it has many different facets, and has taken many different forms.

It is certainly not just a matter of rebels trying to upset the tranquillity of a formerly ideal constitutional arrangement. The campaign of the Provisional IRA is far from being even the chief ingredient, although it is undoubtedly one of the more influential facets.

We have also seen the establishment of widespread power bases by quite naked violence in loyalist areas. There is a smouldering state of revolt and resentment among the ranks of those traditionally attached to the Unionist and loyalist camp. There is the sectarian savagery of the fringe bigot element of the Orange loyalist movement, which knows only one automatic reflex when it feels frustrated — and that is to launch blind and murderous assaults against innocent Catholics.

But most noticeable of all, there is a state of total disarray and confusion throughout the Unionist political movement, which is united today on one thing only — and that is a vague and general sense of being in revolt against the existing scheme of things.

So throughout the northern community, on all sides, there may be said to be a state of public hostility to the powers-that-be, a definite feeling of being governed by strangers, of being ordered about by Englishmen. There is an acute awareness of the absence of democracy, and a realisation also now of the charades which were involved in all those nominally democratic exercises like referendums and elections to conventions and assemblies and executives and what-not.

It is, however, in the disintegration of the Unionist political monolith that we may find the clue to recognising the primary ingredient of the northern crisis. Here, indeed, we have the very key to understanding how the deep-seated and fundamental nature of that crisis lies in the Unionist-sectarian partition system itself.

Long before the present great upheaval broke through to the surface — even before the civil rights movement 'started the trouble' as some loyalists are fond of saying — that is, well before 1968, the germs of the trouble were to be seen and the deep-seated rumblings which heralded the disintegration of the system were already perceptible.

At the time when Terence O'Neill became Prime Minister at Stormont, it was already becoming evident that if the British-Unionist-sectarian set-up was to survive at all, a certain amount of cosmetic surgery would have to be performed on its ugly face to make it more acceptable.

And that is all O'Neill set out to do. But even his parading and posturing in the name of religious tolerance was too much, because that was a stance which did in fact fly in the face of the sectarian fundamentals essential to the preservation of the six counties as a British-Unionist province.

So that is when we saw the first manifestations of open revolt in the North — in the form of an extreme sectarian backlash. That is when we had our first sectarian killings — long before the Provisional IRA was heard of — the first shootings and the first explosions.

That is when those who had eyes to see could recognise the spores germinating on a dung heap,





the emergence of what is, in fact, the primary ingredient of the present crisis — the corrosion and collapse of the British-Unionist-sectarian system as a result of its own internal and irreconcilable contradictions.

At this point in the argument it is extremely important to understand exactly what happened to O'Neill and why.

O'Neill presided over a local political system whose actual excuse for existence lay in the exploitation and inflaming of religious bigotry, whose intrinsic *raison d'être* was founded on a frank and exuberant sort of no-popery, on a semi-racialist doctrine of six-county separatism that kept the Irish people apart on religious grounds — a siege system which for its very survival demanded the constant renewal of sectarian animosity and the perpetual menace of the mythical fenian enemy.

So when O'Neill attempted to endow the system with a slightly respectable veneer by being photographed with nuns and talking to Dublin politicians, he was attempting the impossible. He was attempting to accommodate two irreconcilables — that is, to maintain the Big Lie of a united six-county Ulsterism, which is itself a figment of the sectarian myth-makers' imagination, while at the same time trying to smooth out its uglier features — the very features which express and reflect the true, fundamental and underlying character of the system.

Those people and politicians who eventually toppled O'Neill for his efforts to make *their* system look somewhat less disreputable, those who were brought up in the true Unionist school, those who felt politically and socially dependent on the preservation of the six-county siege-sectarian system, recognised that even those minor gestures by O'Neill threatened to erode and undermine their actual supremacy and advantages within the Orange-Protestant ascendancy system.

And from their own point of view, they were, instinctively quite right.

For, without the essential ingredient of bigotry the six-county political set-up would be impossible to maintain. If it were possible, within the six-county context, to do away with all vestiges of sectarianism in all its forms, and all its poisonous aspects, if it were possible even to initiate some significant advance within the six-county context toward eliminating sectarianism — then the logical, inevitable and ultimate result would be to put an

end to the very 'reason' for the existence of the six counties themselves as a separate entity.

But right now there appears to be a rather widespread acceptance of the rather glib thesis — by people who do not do much thinking or much remembering — that loyalist violence is indisputably and quite obviously the natural reaction to Provo violence. So, in order to prod memories a bit, it would be worthwhile here to point to a fairly consistent pattern in all the major outbreaks of loyalist violence since the troubles began.

The loyalist backlash began with O'Neill. All the significant phases in the loyalist backlash — all the major revolts and upheavals — have occurred as a reaction, not so much to IRA violence as to the policies adopted, pursued or imposed by the British authorities at Stormont or at Westminster, that is, authorities in whom the loyalists were accustomed to place their trust and by whom they now felt themselves to be 'betrayed'.

First there was the revolt which toppled O'Neill because he 'talked to Taigs'; then the revolt which toppled his successor Chichester-Clarke because he would not, or could not, unleash unbridled loyalist forces against republican areas; the two or three nights of rioting on the Shankill Road that greeted the Hunt report which abolished the B Specials and led to the death of the first RUC man in the present phase of troubles; the UWC stoppage which was directed against a Stormont executive system initiated by Westminster and which involved the dangerous sacrilege of co-operating with Catholics.

Now we have the latest exercise involving 'vigilante patrols' throughout the North. Although it has been given the immediate, added excuse of being the reaction to the shooting of policemen, it was in fact announced and planned some time before the recent incidents — and was proclaimed from the start as a political protest against Britain, against the British government's imposition of direct rule and the British refusal to hand the bigots back their position of political power and privilege.

So, to repeat the point. All the major instances of loyalist revolt have occurred, not so much as a reaction to IRA violence as to anger and frustration at being 'let down' by their own rulers — rulers whom they have long been conditioned to regard as being on their 'side'.

This point serves to underline the main point that the primary ingredient of the present northern

crisis lies in the disintegration and collapse of the local basis of British political power in the area. Britain's former political servants are utterly confused and fragmented, and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot put a workable British system together again.

## Irreparable breakdown

And that brings us to another nitty-gritty — to the conclusive, or definitive, definition of the character of the six-county crisis.

Fundamentally, the present six-county crisis is a crisis of Unionism, a crisis of the Union, a crisis of the British link — a total and irreparable breakdown of the former system of British rule through the agency of outdated Unionist Party politicians.

Britain's trouble — and Ireland's hope — lies in the fact that there is no prospect, even with the SDLP waiting in the wings, of finding any new form of administration to replace the old one. There is no way, within the six-county framework, of promoting new, non-sectarian forms, shapes or alliances to run the sectarian framework in a non-sectarian way. There is no hope of doing anything to fix up the irreparable breakdown of the former system of sectarian British rule.

All the experience to date hammers home the lesson that it is fruitless — for Britain — to seek such solutions. The loyalists — Britain's former, dependable basis of political support — will have nothing to do with new-fangled schemes that would open the doors and let the Catholics in. After all, the only sound reason they had to cling to the British connection was that it would guarantee them the continuing power to keep the Catholics out.

All the bombs, all the explosions, all the assassinations and, indeed, all the frightful atrocities of recent times are no more than the tangible and bloody expression of, and evidence of, the disintegration of British authority and the collapse and failure of the former means of British rule — a collapse that has opened the floodgates for the unbridled release of the sectarian passions upon which the six-county political system was founded, upon which it maintained its existence and which is, indeed, its chief and intrinsic political character.

Take one illustration to reinforce the point and make it politically clear.

It is generally agreed, and it is accepted by all

reasonable people, and by all those 'right-thinking' and respectable people to whom Conor Cruise O'Brien is constantly appealing, that the only way to end the interminable troubles is for all people to learn to live together, work together and co-operate for the common good, irrespective of religion.

Very good. But when it is suggested that this co-operation and living together might take place within an all-Ireland context, some of those right-thinking people take brain seizures and scream that 'one million people' in the North 'do not want' any such thing.

What does that 'one million' really want? In the answer to that you get the proof of the pudding.

For the telling point is that *even within* 'their own' little six-county area, the political representatives of that 'one million' have consistently and stubbornly demonstrated that they want nothing to do with that sort of co-operation.

The sectarian divisions which they uphold to justify the separation of the six counties from the rest of Ireland are the same sectarian divisions which they thrive on *within* their own area.

You can't have one without the other. And despite the nonsense some people talk about 'curing' the divisions within the six counties 'first', the plain truth is that you can't cure one without the other. It is inconceivable that the sectarian divisions within the six counties should disappear without the simultaneous disappearance of the major sectarian division which keeps Ireland divided.

It should follow, therefore, that those who seek after 'togetherness' will seek in vain for it to develop in a quarantined six-county area alone.

## Self-defeating government policies

In view of the plain and obvious collapse in the old system of British rule, and in view of the irreparable crisis within Unionism which makes it politically unfit to act ever again as the agent of British administration, the present policies of both the British and Irish governments towards the six-county problem can lead only to the compounding of that problem.

Both sets of ruling politicians in London and Dublin are wilfully refusing to acknowledge the deep-seated and underlying political nature of the crisis, and seek to depict it almost entirely as a security problem. Their determination to 'defeat terrorism' — of one sort only — suggests a more dubious intent to attempt the impossible, namely, the restoration of a patched-up form of the old system.

The policies of both the British and Irish governments are therefore self-defeating. That is, they are self-defeating at least of the proclaimed aims of those governments to achieve a local settlement under a locally acceptable government. Because they will not accept that the fundamental trouble lies in the existence of the six-county sectarian framework itself, their efforts are doomed to fail.

The British government is pursuing an intensive programme aimed at the so-called 'ulsterisation' of the six-county crisis. That is, it is trying to contain it and isolate it within that area as if it was nobody else's business, while at the same time trying to impose 'non-sectarian' forms on the essentially sectarian set-up. Thus, it is making the same mistake that O'Neill made. It is flying in the face of experience, and is rapidly running into the same difficulties.

And that is where the contradictory aspect of London-Dublin policies is most plainly to be seen.

Their fixation with the 'security' diversion at the expense of ignoring the political realities of the crisis, taken in conjunction with the oft-repeated commitments to maintain the status quo

and with the almost blanket approval for the Unionist-loyalist position disguised as 'respect for the will of the majority' — all this does nothing but enhance the political strength, the political authority and the political standing of those very loyalist politicians *who are the chief saboteurs of even that limited solution that the two governments themselves say they wish to see within the six counties.*

Under the protection of the 'ulsterisation' policy, the loyalist politicians are growing in truculence. They have repeatedly made it clear that they have no intention of even thinking about trying to find that sort of acceptable solution which the British government insists they must do.

It is obvious, therefore, that any attempt to shore up the wreckage of the six-county sectarian partition cannot succeed. It is also obvious that the divisions within the six-county community, and the conflict in the six-county area, cannot be settled exclusively within a six-county context.

That is what we set out to prove, and that has been amply demonstrated by all the history and experience of the now bankrupt and broken six-county 'settlement'.

It follows that if we are to achieve that desirable state of 'togetherness' which so many say they long for, if there is to be an end to the interminable six-county conflict, if there is to be a lasting peace based on mutual trust and co-operation, it can only come about through a move towards dismantling that sectarian framework which keeps the divisions going.

That means that the ending of violence and a stable settlement depends upon securing a change in British policy towards a British disengagement from Irish affairs and the granting of full democracy and self-determination to the Irish people.

That today must be the main, overriding political demand advanced by all who wish to see a democratic settlement of the present conflict. That must be the main demand particularly for those who talk about working class unity, for there is no other way to working class unity — no way apart from securing political change which will take the ground from under the feet of those loyalist politicians who batten on sectarian divisions.

## Fashionable falsehoods

When the real nature of the political crisis in the North is clearly understood, it is also easier to understand some of the misconceptions that arose around it in its earlier and later phases, and to recognise some of the banalities and downright falsehoods still fashionable concerning it.

Take a couple of points concerning working class unity. It is fair to say that long before 1968, before the civil rights movement got really going, many people who watched O'Neill attempting to put a false face over the fossilised fraud of Ulster Unionism felt quite justifiably that the time for a major revolt was long overdue.

But when the actual revolt did break out on a large scale in the wake of the civil rights agitation, when widespread violence occurred and Paisleyite bigotry began to raise its ugly head as a significant political force, the revolt did not take on the ideal forms that might have been hoped for.

It did not take on the character of a growing working class unity to sweep away the old reactionary politicians. The pre-conceived, ideal line-up of battle ranks just did not occur. The six-county set-up, with its own historical peculiarities, produced its own characteristic forms — forms which reflected the actual peculiarities of the six-county situation.

Another point sometimes made is that there was, in the first phases of the civil rights struggle, some substantial evidence of a growing non-sectarian unity among the northern working class, but that this was shattered and reversed by the campaign launched by the Provisional IRA.

This is a very dubious thesis. If it was contrived out of some feeling of necessity to invent a doctrinaire stick to knock the Provos, it does not say much for the thoughtfulness of the authors. There is little evidence to sustain it.

True, in the early stages, there were some outward signs of a broad unity of action which could lay claim to a degree of support from Protestant workers. Not from the Protestant workers, however. Due tribute must be paid to the courageous part played by a few trade union leaders — something which ought not only to be acknowledged but justifiably exaggerated a little in order to encourage the development of a spirit of unity which it represented.

But those Belfast trade union leaders were, as always, well in advance of the workers they represented, and in the civil rights campaign they were increasingly swimming against the tide. The truth is that there is not one significant instance of the involvement of rank-and-file trade unionists as a body in the civil rights agitation.

Indeed, the famous hardening of attitudes, the so-called polarisation of the working class, began to take place early in the civil rights struggle and was firmly entrenched before the IRA came on the scene.

And that again was the result of, and the expression of, the well-entrenched sectarianism that is part of the six-county system.

Of all the banalities and shibboleths in popular currency concerning the revolt in the North, there are none more plentiful than those about the alleged 'will' of that 'million' of a 'majority' within the six-county area. We cannot force, or bomb, that 'majority' into any arrangement they don't want, we are told.

We have already seen, however, that the political representatives of that majority will not agree to certain other arrangements either which everybody insists they *must* agree to. The fact is that while the sectarian six-county framework continues, voting patterns will inevitably follow the old sectarian lines. But if the framework were to be changed, and the sectarian politicians thereby made irrelevant, we might reasonably expect a considerable change in those 'attitudes' which are today held to be so rigid and so important.

A British politician on a visit to Dublin the other day went on about the theme: 'You can't force people to agree... You can't force people to be friendly.' And that seemed to him a perfectly sensible and logical thing to say.

He is, however, quite wrong. There are, in fact, ways and means of persuading people to be friendly, even if they don't want to be at the outset. There are ways to make bullyboys amenable, too. If you place them in a situation where they have no other choice but to be friendly, a change in attitudes may be confidently expected.

It was political blackmail and pressure on this question of the 'will of the northern majority' that trapped the SDLP into making a grave theoretical mistake in its early days by agreeing to 'respect the wishes of the majority' on the matter of constitutional change — thereby endorsing the loyalist politicians' veto and trump card against any sort of change.

As a result of that commitment, we heard a leader of the SDLP, John Hume, the other day throwing out another of those old shibboleths about a 'union of hearts being more important than territorial unity', and stating explicitly that reconciliation must come inside the North before any moves towards territorial unity.

Since all experience points to the conclusion that there is little possibility of reconciliation developing within the six-county political context, John Hume is in effect placing his seal of approval on permanent territorial division.

The truth is that neither of these questions can





be separated artificially in that way. Any movement towards reconciliation would be meaningless if it did not involve a movement towards a broader Irish reconciliation. The questions of territorial unity and reconciliation of hearts are questions which must move together — and can only move in the direction of territorial unity to express the reconciliation in tangible political structures.

Much too much nonsense is continually being spewed out by academics, politicians and others about alleged 'attitudes' which are said to prevail and which, by mere reason of their existence, are held to preclude change. But it may be remarked that nothing changes attitudes more than change, and few will disagree that what Ireland needs

most today is radical change — both in attitudes and structure.

Cruise O'Brien is especially fond of trotting out that famous discovery about the population of the 26 counties and its 'attitudes'. They are not 'clamouring for unity', he says. And British politicians, with delight, take up the theme.

They need not gloat about it. It will not help them solve the six-county crisis at all. And whatever the 'attitudes' — at the moment — of the 26-county population, there is no way that they can entirely escape the existing reality and the facts of Irish political life.

The northern conflict has made itself felt in more ways than one throughout Ireland. In the

sphere of civil liberties alone, it has poisoned the political life of the rest of Ireland — and, indeed, of Britain itself. Never outside wartime has there been such an extensive curtailment of civil liberties as you find today in Britain and Ireland — and all because of the unsettled trouble in the north-east corner of Ireland.

There is no way that either the London or Dublin governments can successfully pretend that it has nothing to do with them.

— Jack Bennett is an influential commentator on Northern Ireland. Both the Connolly Association and the Irish Sovereignty Movement have published booklets by him.



# Our struggle is your struggle

*IN September 1976 Phil Flynn, Deputy General Secretary of the Local Government and Public Services Union, addressed a delegation of British trade unionists who were visiting Dublin.*

**WE MEET** at what I feel is a natural breaking point in the affairs of British imperialism in Ireland. Power-sharing is dead and buried. The British Government is faced with a limited range of options: first, to hand over power to the fascist UUUC, second, to continue direct rule with its inevitable military repression, or third – to withdraw.

To deal with the first two options first: either simply continues the agony and the bloodshed and neither holds out any hope of a lasting settlement.

If the past seven years has taught the world anything about Ireland, it is that legislative and/or military repression will not work.

One hopes that the next few days will satisfy you that the way forward is through the third option, withdrawal.

That is, by the British Government publicly recognising and acknowledging that the people of Ireland as a whole, and they alone, must decide their own future; that there are no British solutions to the Irish question; that the logic of recognising Ireland's right to self-determination is an end to the military occupation of a part of our country.

## Way to class unity

We are all familiar with the origins of the imperialistically imposed border which divides this country. We understand the origins of the two states in Ireland.

You will appreciate that the maintenance of the artificially created six-county Orange state necessitated and necessitates the repression of the nationalist minority.

The way forward clearly lies in united working class struggle. But that kind of unity of action cannot be built on a situation where a whole layer of the working class is given certain privileges – the best jobs, education and homes – and where that privilege is backed up by the forces of the sectarian statelet.

A united struggle of the working class can only develop when that situation is no longer possible. When the Orange state is dismantled, then and only then can a realistic dialogue leading to united class action develop.

The propping up of this artificial state by the troops serves to reinforce the idea that loyalist workers can best resolve their problems at the expense of the catholic workers.

In a sentence, the presence of the troops perpetuates the divisions of the Irish working class.

## False Belief

One is conscious that there exists in the

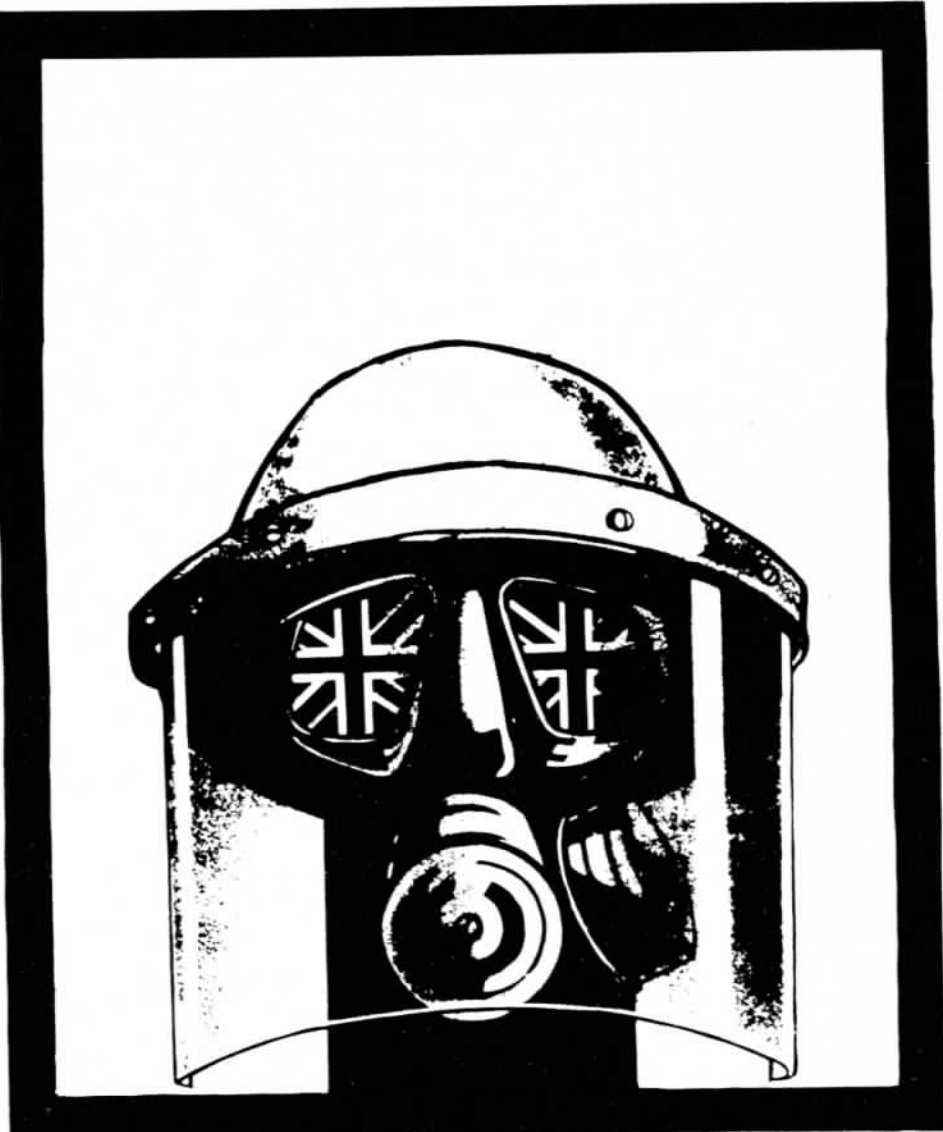
British labour movement a considerable element of genuine and humane reservation brought about by the belief that to withdraw the troops would be to leave the nationalists to the mercy of the loyalists.

This of course is to ascribe to the troops an impartiality which the nationalist people do not concede. With the exception of a brief honeymoon period, they have never accepted the 'peace-keeping', 'keep the Irish from each other' role of the army.

From South Armagh to North Antrim the nationalist people know better. Unpalatable though it may be, the evidence exists of Army involvement in murder, torture and the fomenting of sectarian strife.

The loyalists of course fanatically support the imperialist presence. Their privileges, small though they may be, depend on the imperialist link, and the psychology of supremacy is deeply ingrained.

But the problem of a loyalist backlash is something which is always in the background. The vicious circle must be broken out of.



What we expect from our comrades in the British labour movement is an understanding of the nature and dynamics of the anti-imperialist struggle.

It was James Connolly who said: "Understanding is better than sympathy. Sympathy without understanding is false and insubstantial and often misleading."

**You must seek out the truth. The capitalist pro-imperialist wall must be penetrated. The truth must be exposed to the British working class.**

**Remember –**

**A victory for fascism in the six counties would considerably strengthen the forces of the Right in Britain. It would give a great boost to the fascist organisations and to the reactionary sections of the British Army.**

**On the other hand, a victory over imperialism is a weakening of British capitalism and therefore a victory for the British working class.**

**OUR STRUGGLE —  
IS YOUR STRUGGLE!**



AUGUST 12TH DEMONSTRATION 1979 : SPONSORS

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ACTSS Central London Branch 1/524  
ASTMS Central Manchester Branch  
ASTMS Coventry No. 1 Branch  
ASTMS West End Branch  
AUEW Ealing Branch  
NUJ Book Branch  
TGWU Automation 1909/08  
London School of Economics Students Union  
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### TRADES UNIONISTS

Bob Wright, Asst. Gen. Sec. AUEW  
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Ron Knowles, NUJ, Editor of The Journalist  
Michael Knowles, Sec. Hackney Trades Council 1973-78  
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### PAPERS

Ireland Socialist Review  
Liberator Collective  
Peace News  
Radical Bulletin  
Spare Rib Collective

### JOURNALISTS

Vincent Browne, editor, Magill  
Richard Gott, The Guardian  
John Coleman, New Statesman  
Paul Foot, New Statesman  
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John Rossington, former Chairperson, Liverpool Liberal Party  
Tony Smythe  
Ann Speed  
Anthony Wilson  
(all signatories in a personal capacity)

# Books, films and video tapes

## Books

Carol Ackroyd, Karen Margolis, Jonathan Rosenhead, Tim Shallice, **The Technology of Political Control**, Penguin 1977, Pluto 1980  
Geoffrey Bell, **The Protestants of Ulster**, Pluto 1976/80  
P. Berresford Ellis, **A History of the Irish Working Class**, Gollancz 1972  
ed. P. Berresford Ellis, **James Connolly: Selected Writings**, Penguin 1973  
D.G. Boyce, **Englishmen and Irish Troubles 1918-22**, Cape 1972  
Andrew Boyd, **The Rise of the Irish Trade Unions**, Anvil, Ireland 1972  
Lewis P. Curtis Jr., **Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature**, David & Charles 1971  
George Dangerfield, **The Damnable Question**, Quartet 1980  
Margaretta D'Arcy and John Arden, **The Non Stop Connolly Show**, a dramatic cycle in five volumes, Pluto 1978-9  
Liam de Paor, **Divided Ulster**, Pelican 1970  
Michael Farrell, **Northern Ireland: The Orange State**, Pluto 1976/80  
Robert Fisk, **The Point of No Return**, story of the 1974 UWC strike, Deutsch 1975  
C.D. Greaves, **The Life and Times of James Connolly**, Lawrence & Wishart 1961  
**Irish Voices from English Jails**, Prisoners Aid Committee 1979  
T.A. Jackson, **Ireland Her Own**, Lawrence & Wishart 1976  
**Marx and Engels on Ireland**, Progress, Moscow 1971  
Eamonn McCann, **War and an Irish Town**, Pluto 1980  
John McGuffin, **Internment**, Anvil, Ireland 1973  
John McGuffin, **The Guineapigs**, Penguin 1974  
Ernie O'Malley, **On Another Man's Wound**, Anvil, Ireland, 1979  
Ernie O'Malley, **The Singing Flame**, Anvil, Ireland 1978  
Sunday Times Insight Team, **Ulster**, Penguin 1972

## Pamphlets

**Belfast Bulletin**, No. 5 Women in N. Ireland, No. 6 Trade Unions in N. Ireland. 60p + 20p p&p each from Workers' Research Unit, 52 Broadway, Belfast 12.  
Geoff Bell, **British Labour and Ireland: 1969-79**, 40p + 10p p&p from IMG Publications, PO Box 50, London N1.  
**Camerawork 14: Reporting on Northern Ireland**, 60p + 20p p&p from HMPW, 119 Roman Road, London E2  
Flann Campbell, **The Orange Card: Racism, Religion & Politics in Northern Ireland**, 40p + 10p p&p from Connolly Publications, 283 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.  
**Cork Workers' Club historical reprints**, details from 9 St. Nicholas Church Place, Cork, Ireland.  
Fr. Denis Faul and Fr. Raymond Murray, **H Blocks and The Castlereagh File**, £2 + 50p p&p each from Ard Scoil, Divis Street, Belfast 12. Make cheques/POs payable to Association for Legal Justice.  
Hemel Hempstead Constituency Labour Party, **Ireland: an alternative**, 45p from David Moss, 372 High St., Berkhamstead, Herts.  
**Ireland Socialist Review**, quarterly, £2 for 3 issues from 60 Loughborough Rd., London SW9.  
Newcastle on Tyne Trades Council, **Five Days in Ireland**, £1 + 20p p&p from 199 Hugh Gardens, Benwell, Newcastle 4.  
**Why Britain should leave Ireland**, 30p from the Connolly Association, 283 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.  
*More publications are referred to in footnotes to articles.*

## Films

**Patriot Game**, Arthur Mac Caig, 1979, 93 mins, 16mm b/w  
**Home Soldier Home**, Chris Reeves, 1978, 40 minutes, 16mm b/w  
**Ireland Behind the Wire**, Berwick St. Collective, 1974, 100 mins, 16mm b/w  
**A Place Called Ardoyne**, Philip Thompson, 1972-3, 43 mins, 16mm colour  
The above films are available from The Other Cinema, 12/13 Little Newport St., London WC2H 7JJ. Tel. 01-734 8508/9. **Patriot Game** is also available from the Troops Out Movement, Box 10, 2a St. Paul's Road, London N1.  
**Prisoners of War**, Prisoners Aid Committee, 1978, 20 mins, 16mm colour. Available from PAC, Box 9, 2a St. Paul's Road, London N1.  
**People of Ireland**, Cinema Action, 1973, 95 mins, 16mm b/w. Available from Cinema Action, 27 Winchester Road, London NW3. Tel. 01-586 2762.

**A Sense of Loss**, Marcel Ophuls, 1972, 2hr 15 mins, 16mm colour. Available from Contemporary Films, 55 Greek St., London W1. Tel. 01-734 4901.

**Mau Mau**, Derek Knight, 1973, 52 mins, 16mm colour. (There are many parallels between British strategy in Kenya, shown in this film, and the Northern Ireland situation.) Available from Film Forum, 56 Brewer Street, London W1. Tel. 01-437 6487.

## Video tapes

A series of video tapes on repression in Northern Ireland is available from Just Books, 7 Winetavern St., Belfast BT1 1JQ. Tel. 0232-25426. Tapes last 30 mins and are V6OH high density Sony.

## Photo exhibition

**Bringing it all back home: an exhibition about Northern Ireland**. Half Moon Photography Workshop, Tel. 01-980 8798.

## Information on Ireland publications & badges

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**The British Media and Ireland: Truth the First Casualty**, edited by the Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland. Articles by people working in the media. 56 pages, 2nd printing. Single copies 50p + 20p p&p. 10 copies £3.40 + £1 p&p.  
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**British Soldiers Speak Out on Ireland**, produced by British ex-soldiers. 32 pages. 3rd printing.

Single copies 30p + 15p p&p. 10 copies £2 + 90p p&p.  
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**The H Blocks: the New Internment**, a magazine-poster by the Troops Out Movement (Central London Branch). Information on the protests in the H Blocks and Armagh, and the political background to them. Folds out to A1 size poster.

Single copies 10p + 10p p&p. 15 copies £1 + 50p p&p.  
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## Bomb Disposal

I watched you  
the other night  
on the Tele

- Frightened  
uncomprehending  
huddles of boy soldiers  
with raw scrubbed necks  
and ashen cheeks

- determined  
anxious expressions  
across the faces  
of officers

I watched you  
crammed into doorways  
or prostrate behind sandbags  
as the experts from the squad  
attempted by robot  
to defuse it.

I read in your faces  
the fear  
the unknowing

saw  
the look of men  
with so many questions unanswered  
that they no longer ask why.

Robert Emmet warned you  
but you hanged him

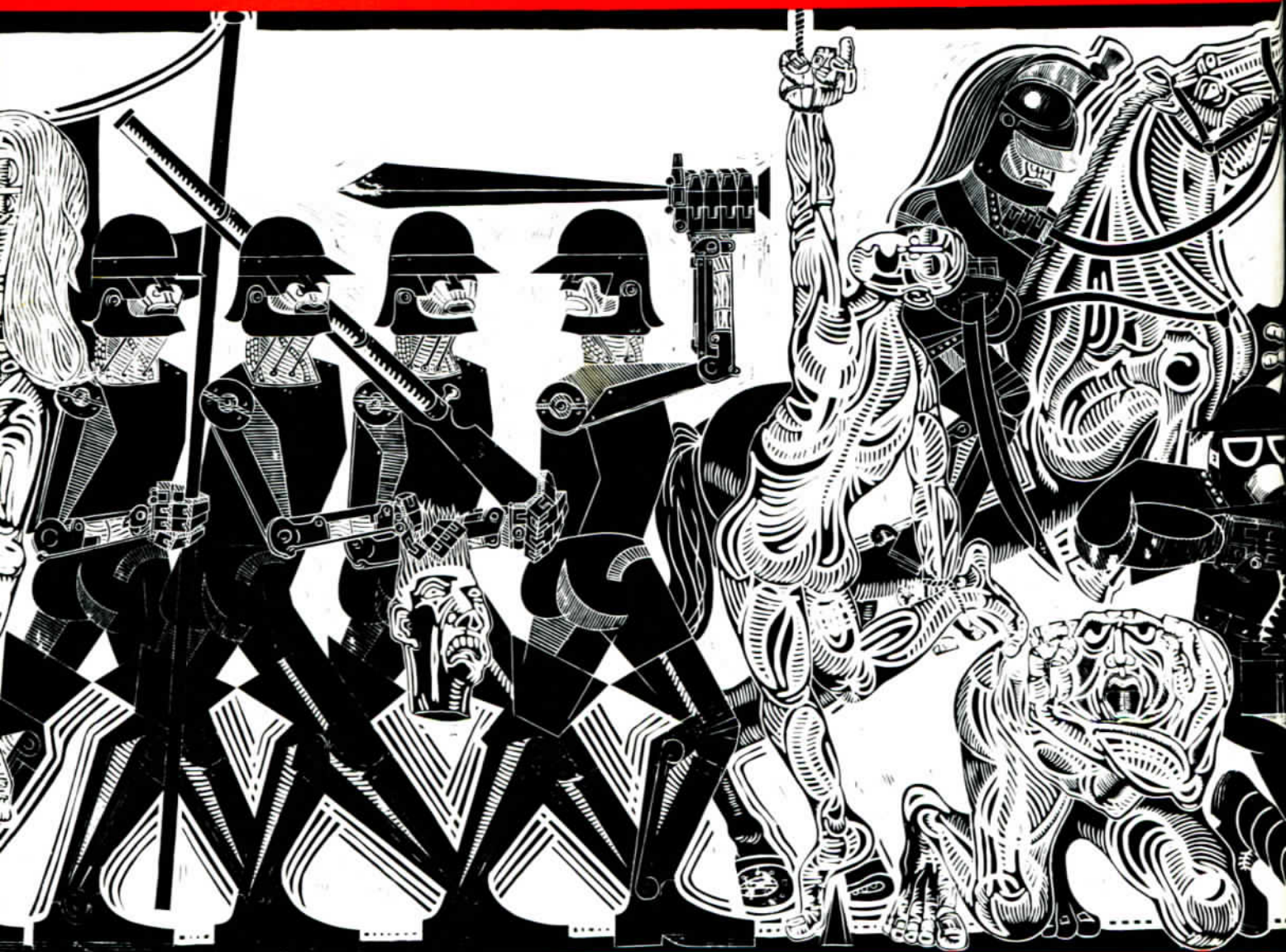
James Connolly told you what would happen  
but you shot him  
A million and a half peasants screamed out to you  
but you let them starve.

So still you cannot see  
that sooner or later  
it's going to explode  
in your faces.

*Phil Boyd*  
from *Voices 19*, Spring 1979

**'One day the British Army is going  
to be used against us in Britain,  
when we declare war on racism,  
unemployment and police  
harassment. So brothers and sisters  
don't help them win that war'**

Lloyd Hayes 1979, former black soldier in Belfast



Cover design, front and back: *The Training Ground*, 1979. Linocut 21' x 6', Jeff Perks, *In a Rear-View Mirror* Exhibition at the Battersea Arts Centre, 14 Nov. to 1 Dec. 1979.