# British Soldiers Speak Out on IRELAND



'I came to Sweden for asylum because of Northern Ireland. I do not think that what is happening there is very good. As I see it, there must be a simpler way of ending the fight without more people being killed. So I have left rather than fight in something I think is wrong.'

Kevin Cadwallader, Lance Corporal 22nd Royal Engineers Division [Peace News 8 June 1973] I wanted a bit of adventure and travel and I decided I stood a better chance in the commandos. I like the life and I liked being a soldier. But on my last tour of duty in Northern Ireland in 1976 my eyes were opened.

We were supposed to be there to keep the peace, but I found a lot of prejudice in the Marines against ordinary Catholics. They gave people a lot of public abuse on the streets. It was always covert — when there weren't any newspaper reporters about. There was one particular incident, when I was part of a snatch squad sent in to quell a riot. It was in April, 1976, the anniversary of the 1916 uprising.

The attitude was that you went in and hit anyone in sight. A woman was hit over the head by a so-called friend of mine. I know the difference between right and wrong and that was wrong. That shouldn't be part of the job.

I still think I made the right decision. They are being sympathetic to me here. They offered to pay for my hotel accomodation and one Customs officer said I could stay at his home. I am in no way political but I should like to see a united Ireland where people can live in peace.

Brian Moran, A ROYAL MARINE (42nd Commando) Sweden

THE GUARDIAN Tuesday February 28 1978



INFORMATION ON IRELAND No. 1

This pamphlet was written and produced by British ex-soldiers. Edited by Alistair Renwick. The professional British Army of today can be traced back to the 17th Century during the period of the 'Glorious Revolution'. The reasons given for the raising and up-keep of this first regular force were suppression of the Irish people and defence of the Protestant religion.

After the pacification of Ireland came the task of consolidating the whole of the British Isles for the new social order which the Army represented. The last dissenters, the Scottish Clans, were first defeated and then decimated by a period of bloody repression.

Next came the time of seemingly unlimited colonial conquest when the soldiers, including among their ranks many dispossessed Irish and Scottish clansmen, were used in a long series of engagements to extend the boundaries of the Empire. It was during this period that the British Army acquired its, in many ways, unique character among the Armies of the major powers of the World, of being par-excellence a counter-insurgency force.



## V. R.

# 2" BATTALION 13" PRINCE ALBERT'S REGIMENT

## REQUIRED

FOR THE ABOVE BATTALTON, A FEW INTELLIGENT YOUNG MEN OF GOOD APPEARANCE & ACTIVE FIGURE.

A TEN INTELLIGENT TOURS MEN OF GOOD ATTENDANCE & ACTIVE PROPERTY

The history of the 13th Light Infantry is so well known in the annuls of our countrys' glory. That it would be needless to describe at any length, the varied scenes, climes and countries in which, by its gallantry and devoted bruvery, it has added to the stability and welfare of the British Empire, "on which the sum never sets,"

Under the burning Sun, and on the sandy deserts of the Land of the Egyptians, in the tropical climate of the Carribean Nea, where the Emerald waves roll over the golden sands and glittering coral reefs of the Isle of Martinique; in the "Indian Hemistohere," that Koh-l-moor of England's From, in Ava, Afghamistan, Ghuznee, Jellullabad, an Cubnit; in the glorious CRIVELA Campuign; and at a later date serving a second time in India, avenging the fell cruckines of the murderous Sepays; have waved in victorious triumph the Buttle Hags of this Enganded Sections 1999.

HONOURS, PROMOTIONS, REWARDS, & IMMENSE SUMS OF PRIZE MONEY FELL TO THE LOT OF THESE HEROES.

## THE SPHINX !!

Emblem of that land where those wonders of all ages, the stupendous Pyramids, ruise their underlying summits to the

## THE MURAL CROWN!

Awarded was in the days of ancient Bones, for deeds of valour, and nets of undying fame, at the heroic defence of the City of

With other mothers and Badges of victoring combat, and emblazoned on the Banners of the Regiment, sparkling like jewels in the sun as the larger goalty fate the silken folds.

TO PERPETUATE ITS FAME TO FUTURE GENERATIONS, HER MAJESTY, THE QUEEN HAS BEEN PLEASED TO BESTOW ON THE CORPS THE BOOKS THE BOOKS THE DESTRUCTION.

### PRINCE ALRERT'S REGIMENT OF LA LINE

And in the presence of assembled thousands, His Boyal Highness, the Prince Consert presented to the 3nd Buttallon the Colours under which thes have non-the borour to serve, as a mark of the estimation in which the 2nd Battalion 13th Light Infantry is held. Her Majors, during the past mouth, has granted a Commission to the Serjeant Major of the Corps.

is held. Her Majesty, during the past moons, mas granted a commission to me expect it may be to torps.

From the subtrity of the elimate and its even temperature, in addition to the advantages of increased allocances, the Isle of France or Mauritins has been selected as the Station for a few years of the Bathlion. It will be recollected that this Isle of the Eastern Ocean is celebrated as the sevne of the romantic and interesting sarrative of the lives of Paul and Virginie, and their aid and suttimely end.

N.B.—It is advisable that Volunteers for this Battalion should present themselves for Enlistment without delay, as the few present vacancies will be rapidly filled, and thus may be lost an opportunity for travel and observation of the striking scenes of foreign life seldom offered to the aspiring Soldier.

Fermay, March, 1864,

## GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

WILLIAM LINDSEY, ARMY PRINTER, KING STREET, FERMOY,

### Hong Kong Lyrics

I stand and watch the soldiers
Marching up and down,
Above the fresh green Cricket-ground
Just outside the town.

I stand and watch and wonder When in the English land This poor fool Tommy Atkins Will learn and understand?

Zulus, and Boers, and Arabs, All fighting to be free, Men and women and children Maimed and murdered has he.

In India and in Ireland

He's held the people down,

While the robber English Gentleman

Took pound and penny and crown.

To make him false to his Order, What was it that they gave— To make him his brother's oppressor? The clothes and soul of a slave!

O thou poor fool, Tommy Atkins.

Thou wilt be wise that day

When, with eager eyes and clenched teeth,

Thou risest up to say:

'This is our well-loved England, And I'll free it, if I can, From every rotten Shop-keeper, And played-out Gentleman!'

> John Francis Adams 1862-1893

# The British Army in

Fellow soldiers...Oh! the ocean of blood that we are guilty of! Oh! how these deadly sins of ours do torment our consciences!

What have we to do in Ireland, to fight and murder a people and a nation which have done us no harm...? We have waded too far in that crimson stream already of innocent and Christian blood.

from The Soldier's Demand by a trooper in Cromwell's army 1649

England first invaded Ireland in 1169 when Strongbow landed with 200 knights and 1,200 men-at-arms. Beset by large Irish armies, he sent for reinforcements and in 1171 King Henry II brought across a further 500 knights and 4,000 men-at-arms. The Irish continued to fight for independence in a series of bloody and fruitless campaigns.

The invaders soon became assimilated with the native population, so during Mary Tudor's reign (1553-8) the English administration devised the policy of 'plantation' in order to stamp out the characteristics of the native Irish. Soldiers cleared the Irish from their lands in selected areas and English settlers took over. The Irish who resisted

were exterminated

The province of Ulster became the heartland of the resistance and in 1595 a grand alliance of northern Irish clans rose against the English. The Lord Lieutenant Essex with 20,000 troops could not suppress the rising. He was replaced by Lord Mountjoy, who engaged in a policy of frightful devastation, destroying all the food, houses, cattle, men, women and children he could find. The starving Irish submitted in 1603.

A modern army historian, Correlli Barnett, has written, 'The methods employed by Mountjoy have never been bettered; indeed their pattern has been repeated by European troops all over the world to this day.'

### Cromwell

In 1641 the northern Irish rose once more under Phelim O'Neill. At this period the first regular army was raised in England, and two reasons were given: 'suppression of the Irish' and 'defence of the Protestant religion'.

Oliver Cromwell arrived in Ireland in 1649 and in one dreadful campaign crushed the opposition of native Irish and Presbyterian colonists alike.

A number of Cromwell's regiments were influenced by the Levellers who bitterly

opposed the unjust reconquest of Ireland. These regiments mutinied rather than go to Ireland.

During Cromwell's campaign, of a population of just under 1½ million some 616,000 perished by sword, famine and plague, and 40,000 left to enlist in European armies. A further 100,000 Irish were sold as slaves to the West Indies and other colonies.

The situation of Catholics and Presbyterians in Ireland improved when the Catholic Stuart monarchy returned to the throne. When William of Orange took over the kingship, James II fled to Ireland where his government abolished religious discrimination.

William was, ironically, backed by the Pope. His armies invaded Ireland and in a number of battles, including the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, secured Ireland for the English settlers. Both catholics and Presbyterians were then denied religious and civil rights.

The next century saw the situation of the Irish grow increasingly desperate. Thousands died of famine. In the 1760s peasant organisations carried on guerilla warfare against unscrupulous landlords. The Government showed no mercy: hangings, shootings, and transportations were commonplace.

# THE VICTORIAN COLONIAL WARS

During Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 to 1901 the Army carried out the following campaigns:

Anti-colonial Revolt in Canada, 1837, The Capture of Aden and Operations against the Persians, 1838, The First Afghan War, 1838-42. War in the Levant, 1840, War in China 1840-1, The Conquest of Sind, India, 1843, The Gwalior War, India, 1843, The First Sikh War, India, 1845-6, Campaigns against Boers in South Africa, 1838-52, The Second Sikh War, India, 1848-9, North-West Frontier of India, 1847 54, The Second Burmese War, 1852, The Eureka Stockade, Australia, 1854, The War with Persia, 1856-7, The Storming of the Taku Forts, China, 1859-60, The Maori Wars, 1861-4, Operations in Sikkim, India, 1861, Expeditions on the North-West Frontier of India, 1858-67, Japan, 1864, The British Expedition to Abyssinia, 1868, Canada: the Red River Expedition, 1870, The Ashanti War, West Africa, 1874, The Expedition to Perak, Malaya, 1875-6, Campaign against the Galekas and Gaikas, Cape Colony, 1877, North-West Frontièr of India, 1878-9, The Second Afghan War, 1878, The Third Afghan War, 1879, The Zulu War, 1879, Operations on the North-West Frontier of India, 1880-4, The First Boer War, 1881, The Bombardment of Alexandria, 1882, The Expedition to the Sudan, 1884-5, The Third Burmese War, 1885, Battles around Suakin, Sudan, 1885, The End of the Nile Campaign, 1885, Minor Operations on the North-West Frontier of India, 1888-92, Minor Operations in India, 1888-94, The Siege and Relief of Chitral, India, 1895, The Mashonaland Rising, East Africa, 1896, The Re-Conquest of Egypt, 1896-8, The Operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force, India, 1897-8, Operations on the North-West Frontier, 1897-8, The Boxer Rising, China, 1900-1.



# Ireland 1169-1922

### Revolution

In the 1790s, inspired by the American and French revolutions, middle-class Presbyterians joined with Catholics to form the United Irishmen to fight for an independent democratic Ireland. The Government started a reign of terror giving the soldiers, militia and yeomanry a free hand.

When the United Irishmen launched an armed struggle in 1798 they were no match for the British military machine. Nevertheless in the counties of Wicklow and Wexford alone 30,000 soldiers were needed to suppress the insurrection.

Evicted from their lands and starving, the peasants continued to fight in armed bands against landlords and clergy. While huge quantities of grain were exported to England, the Irish suffered repeated famines. During the 'Great Hunger' of 1845-49 in which 1½ million died, military guards were placed on produce leaving Ireland for England.

In 1802 a rising against Dublin Castle organised by Robert Emmet failed. 1848 saw extra troops being poured into Ireland to crush the Young Ireland movement. In 1867 the radical Fenian movement organised an armed rising, but as Engels wrote, they had no hope against England with her naval fleets, her army, her police and spy system.

Agitation for independence continued, and in 1912 it looked like becoming a reality when the first reading of a Home Rule for Ireland Bill passed the House of Commons. There was an immediate outcry from Irish industrial capitalists, mainly concentrated in the north-east of Ulster. They persuaded Protestant workers to launch pogroms against Catholic workers. By 1914 they had armed 100,000 Protestants to fight against the formation of an Irish state.

### **Curragh Mutiny**

The Government ordered the army in March 1914 to raid the headquarters of these 'Ulster volunteers' and arrest the leaders. But the General Officer Commanding telegraphed the Government that his officers, led by Brigadier General Sir Hubert Gough at the Curragh Camp, refused to serve against the Ulster Volunteers. After ministerial conferences, the army officers were given written assurances that Crown forces would not be used against the Unionists.

Nationalists formed the Irish Volunteers, an armed body to defend Home Rule. They made an alliance with the Irish Citizen Army, a workers' militia formed in 1913 to defend striking workers from the police. On Easter Monday 1916 they organised a rising in Dublin and other parts of Ireland. 1,351 people were killed or wounded in the week the fighting lasted.

The behaviour of the British Government and the military during and after the rising led to a wave of revulsion sweeping Ireland. Troops executed a number of prisoners out of hand. Sixteen of the leaders, including Pearse and Connolly, were court-martialled and shot. 1,867 people were deported to England and confined in special prison camps.

In the 1918 General Election Sinn Fein, which stood for an independent Irish Republic, won an overwhelming victory with 73 out of 105 seats. The Sinn Fein members established an Irish Parliament, Dail Eireann.

Britain moved to check these developments, declaring Dail Eireann illegal and banning national movements. Thousands of troops were poured into Ireland, with tanks, armoured cars, and other weapons.

### Black and Tans

The Irish Volunteers were renamed the Irish Republican Army and the war of Independence began. The British recruited a new force, the 'Black and Tans', in England who are remembered by Irish people in much the same way as the Gestapo are remembered by Europeans.

The English troops pursued a policy of 'indiscriminate reprisals': shootings, burnings, looting, large-scale arrests and widespread destruction.

Meanwhile in the north-east troops were



British troops use a travelling gallows against rebels in 1798

ordered not to interfere as Orange mobs and the Special Constabulary continued their pogroms against the Catholics. In two years from June 1920, 428 were killed, 1,766 wounded, 8,750 Catholics driven from their jobs and 23,000 Catholics made homeless.

Unable to defeat the Irish forces outright, the British Government proposed a treaty under which Ireland would, for the time being, be partitioned. 26 counties would become a 'Free State' with dominion status inside the Commonwealth while the six north-eastern counties would remain part of the UK.

The Irish were bitterly divided over the treaty. In January 1922, 64 members of Dail Eireann voted for it and 57 against. Eleven of the IRA's nineteen divisions refused to accept it.

Winston Churchill threatened war if the Free State did not suppress the section of the IRA which supported the Republic. So on July 28 the Free State forces using borrowed British artillery, shelled the Republican headquarters in Dublin, beginning the civil war that was to end with the surrender of the Republicans a few months

later.



English soldiers in the sixteenth century return triumphant from a skirmish with the Irish, whose cattle and horses they have captured. They bring a prisoner and several heads.



British military in full battledress and supported by a tank and armoured cars barring an approach to Mountjoy Jail, Dublin, during April 1920.

## THE FIRST BARRACKS

Until 1793, soldiers stationed in England were billeted among the people in houses and inns, and the only barracks were in the garrison towns and fortresses. But from 1793, when Britain joined the war against revolutionary France, a network of barracks was quickly established throughout England.

The ruling class feared that the mass of the population was ripe for rebellion. The Industrial Revolution had brought great wealth for a few, but at the expense of the new proletariat. Farmworkers driven from the land by the new capitalist methods of production, handicrafts people who had lost their occupations in the face of the new industry, and Irish emigrants fleeing starvation crowded into the disease-ridden industrial towns. Their hours were long, their wages were pitful, women and children worked from 12 to 20 hours a day in factories and mines.

Food riots, machine-wrecking and strikes became widespread. The French Revolution of 1789 with its slogan 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' inspired a rapid spread of revolutionary ideas throughout Europe.

Up to now the Army had been used for

the defence of Britain's overseas interests. Now it was to be given an internal role. In Parliament in 1793 Tory Prime Minister Pitt argued for the policy of covering the manufacturing districts with barracks: 'The circumstances of the country, coupled with the general state of affairs, rendered it advisable to provide barracks in other parts of the kingdom. A spirit had appeared in some of the manufacturing towns which made it necessary that troops should be kept near them.'

155 barracks had been built by 1815. Troops were distributed all over the country, and the north and Midlands and the manufacturing district in the south-west came to resemble a country under military occupation. Commanding officers reported on the circumstances of their districts, and soldiers were moved in accordance with fluctuations in wages and employment.

Policy

This new use of the troops to suppress the working class was part of a general policy of repression. Public meetings were prohibited, Tom Paine's book The Rights of Man was banned, and laws were passed to ban the early trade unions.

One reason for putting the soldiers in barracks was to isolate them from the people, but this was not very successful. a new body, the yeomanry, was organised. It was drawn from members of the upper and middle classes, and proved much more reliable — the yeomanry was responsible for murdering eleven people and wounding four hundred at the great mass meeting at Peterloo outside Manchester in 1819.

The ordinary soldiers repeatedly sided with the people. In 1795 soldiers were reported to be 'abettors' of food rioters in Devonshire. In 1800 the Oxfordshire Blues were thanked by the people of Nottingham for their sympathy for the rioters. In 1816 a Home Office informant said he had heard a soldier tell his friends in a pub in Rowley about a letter from his unemployed father who was starving with his family 'charging him if any riot took place in this country for want of work not to hurt none of them, but if compelled to fire, either to fire over their heads, or to shoot the Tyger that gave the order, and to persuade all his comrades to do the same.'

In 1811 and 1812 the counties of Nottinghamshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire were in a state of insurrection. Through the Luddite movement, textile workers asserted their grievances against the manufacturers who paid low prices for out-work and whose modern machinery was destroying the hand-workers' livelihood. The Luddites, organised in armed groups, wrecked selected factory machinery.

In the summer of 1812 there were 12,000 troops in the disturbed counties. E.P. Thompson in The Making of the English Working Class, writes, 'For weeks whole districts on the Lancashire-Yorkshire border were virtually under martial law. And one military command, in particular, established a reign of terror, with arbitrary arrests, searches, brutal questionings, and threats, for which we must turn to Irish history in search of a comparison.'

This member of the 15th Hussars, writing in 1847, was not very sympathetic towards the 'lower orders' whom he was required to suppress:

'In the years 1811 and 1812, the regiment had harassing duty to perform in the suppression of Luddism in Nottinghamshire and adjoining counties. Of all the services which a soldier is called upon to perform, there is none so unpalatable to him as that of waging war against a domestic enemy...In putting down a mob or any popular tumult, stern necessity and a strict sense of duty may render it imperative on the soldier to tinge his sword with the blood of his countrymen; but such as imagine he takes pleasure in such feats, and that they are not revolting to his feelings and inclinations do him gross injustice...

When the news of the lamented assassination of Mr. Percival reached Nottingham, inflammatory devices and placards stuck upon poles were paraded through the streets, and a vast multitude congregated in the market place. The nearest and most immediately available military body consisted of a picket of 15th Hussars and myself, stationed at an inn in the town. Out we were turned, and proceeded at a rattling pace towards the scene of uproar. The mere sounds emitted from the clattering of the horses' feet upon the pavement, followed by shouts of 'the Sodgers are coming', caused instant consternation and dispersion. The exception comprised some numbers of the softer sex; who, with arms akimbo and clenched fists stuck upon their hips, faced and dared us to ride 'over women' claiming the privilege of the petticoat to abuse us as libitum.

What jeremiads and lamentations were sung upon the upsetting of the rioters at the celebrated Peterloo affair; when the probability was that those very beings would gladly have lent a hand to the sacking and burning of the town. I was stationed at an out-quarter at the time, but had the information from those present that such a vast assemblage of the lower orders, with neither character nor property to lose, was truly alarming. I was also informed by those who had something to lose that but for the timely interference of the military the consequences to the town might have been frightful...'

CHELSEA PENSIONER



# Fag End of Empire

This article was written by a British officer while he was serving in the north of Ireland. Published under the pseudonym John England, it first appeared in the Irish Press, 24/25 January 1977.

IN MAJOR Gen. Frank Kitson's book, 'Low Intensity Operations' there is one illuminating passage.

When the Regular Army was first raised in the 17th century, "Suppression of the Irish" was coupled with the "Defence of the Protestant Religion" as one of the two main reasons for its existence."

The wheel has come full circle since those observations were officially proclaimed by Cromwell's Parliament. The British Empire has emerged, triumphed and crashed since those first burgeonings of English military power. Trade may well have fallen off of late, but the British army is still there, albeit one step behind the currents of contemporary history.

Today, the momentum of our Imperial conquest is back to its original starting point, Ireland is still there. And the problems of yesteryear are once again being played out in the North against the familiar backdrop of indifference and contempt which has always characterised our handling of Irish affairs.

The big guns are back in force, against a seemingly intractable opponent. Perhaps, after three centuries of colonial experience, throughout which Ireland has remained as a constantly unravelling thread, we can legitimately ask ourselves, 'What have we learnt from it all?'

If General Sir Walter Walker — the doyen of the fighting soldier and late Deputy Commander of NATO — is to be believed, then the answer is depressingly nothing. As he himself said:

'I have engaged in campaigns against blacks, yellow and slant eyes. Why should we have one rule for whites and one for coloureds? We have to decide if Northern Ireland is part of Britain or not — and if so, act accordingly.'

The British army has been directly involved in Nothern Ireland for the past seven years. With the exception of the Malayan Emergency in the Forties and Fifties, it is the longest running campaign we have been concerned with for well over half a century.

### Shadows

In some curious way, it is still a struggle being fought out under the last gleam of an Imperial sun, where the shadows of the past linger across the accents of the officers and dull the sensibilities of the generals.

Might is still right. To the army, the solution of the Irish Problem is the same as it always was. It is identical to the approach we adopted in Cyprus and employed again in Aden.

A man who should know, Lieut. Co. Colin Mitchell, put it very succinctly when he said:

'What I'd like to do is to have a machine gun built into every television camera and then say to the IRA, come out and let's talk...and then shoot the lot.'

For despite all our protests to the contrary, the war we are fighting in the North is essentially a colonial one. Successive army commanders and Secretaries of State have refused to admit this. And yet, the comparison with De Gaulle's Algeria is all too clear: we, have settlers, natives and now of course, the army. Sadly, the campaign in the North is also one which is becoming increasingly more racialist in character, the longer it goes on.

In fairness, this sense of frustration towards an enemy who just won't admit defeat is not confined to the army. For the past few years, the English mainland has been swamped with a deluge of 'Irish' jokes, all of which are designed to show the stupidity of the native. It has been an almost national exercise of mind: a therapuetic attempt to exorcise a bogey-man by yells, book and candle. A 'Swinging Sixties' approach to the interminable Irish Question'.

### Arrogant

How, then, does all this affect the British army in Northern Ireland? In the days



Paratroopers on the streets of Derry during Bloody Sunday, 1972

when we had a proper Empire, the army saw to it that when the lesser breeds were revolting, they were summarily dealt with. The world has changed since then. And yet, after all these years of colonial withdrawal, we don't seem to have learnt anything from the recent past. Our approach is as uncompromisingly arrogant as it ever was.

At this very moment, there are British regiments training in England and in Western Germany: exercising in elaborate 'mock-ups' of Irish ghettoes, complete with custome built houses, pubs and shops.

A local population culled from the ranks of the unit being tested is assumed to be totally hostile, and is instructed to behave accordingly. Even the feminine touch is not forgotten. Girls from the Women's Royal Army Corps are specially imported to hurl abuse at the soldiers, presumably to condition them for life in the raw, Creggan or Turf Lodge fashion.

There is no doubt that from a military standpoint, the training is effective. It does instill alertness and aggression. It also takes little account of the finer points of dealing with the bulk of a terrified population who actually have to live in the ghettos — for real.

Unfortunately, it helps perpetuate the secret belief on our part that the only 'good injun' is a dead one. And in this, lies the basic flaw in the fabric of the military consciousness. We seem incapable of realising that not everyone who opposes us politically is necessarily pro-IRA. As it is, the entire Catholic population is irrespectively lumped together as potentially hostile.

The soldiers of the world's most vaunted democracy are unable to accept that anyone exercising his constitutional rights to disagree can be anything but at best an object of suspicion or, most likely, a subversive. Hence the embarrassing record we have notched up of searching Catholic RUC men's houses and maintaining close surveillance on law-abiding members of the minority community. Catholic priests, in particular, are regarded as not being far short of republican commissars. A unit commander told me recently that he regarded Fr. Denis Faul of Dungannon, as 'an evil man'.

Perhaps Gen. Kitson's observations are more valid than we care to admit.

This attitude of ours is all part of the means to the end, of course. To the achieving of that illusive first-part solution to Northern Ireland's problems — the military victory. That evergreen profession of faith on our part, which is still as fresh in our minds as next year's Christmas tree. A belief clung to with a dogged determination which would shame the sandwich-board men who shuffle round our city centres, reminding us that the end really is at hand.

### Tom & Jerry

Placards which could well read, 'the IRA

are reeling'...'It's only a matter of time'...
and all the world's a stage across which the
generals and English politicians scamper,
never ever muffing their lines. Only by
now, after seven years, it is turning into the
longest running knock about since Tom
and Jerry. And just as predictable.

The longer the whole wretched business goes on in the North, the more ostrich-like becomes the attitude of the military commanders. Senior officers in particular take an even more conscious pride nowadays, in parading statistics of weapons found and terrorists arrested than ever before. They seem deliberately to ignore the fact that their success rate is relative.

As the Americans found in Vietnam, the 'big stick' approach does not work. In 1972, at the recognised height of the IRA campaign, there were 336 civilian murders: at the end of 1976, 244 had been killed in the course of that year.

The body count has decreased, but contrasted with the force levels we have had to maintain, let alone the experience we have gained since the campaign began, it is a very chilly reassurance of our real effectiveness. The danger is that we are rapidly developing a Vietnam mentality to the realities of the Northern Irish war.

### Toothless

ONE OF the privileges of having an Empire is that you can afford to ignore other people's feelings. When it is no longer there, then the rest of the world has an unfortunate habit of answering back.

For us, the experience has been particularly unpleasant. The furore which greeted an African politician's remarks in the early Sixties, that 'Britain was a toothless old bulldog' is a case in point. But it has taken the Irish to really rub home the realities of the immensity of our fall from grace. There was of course, the matter of Irish neutrality in the Second World War: an affair which still makes many English hackles rise. In British army messes, that memory only serves to confirm their belief that the Irish are traitors and not to be trusted.

Today, that opinion is worked into the tapestry of the psychosis surrounding our involvement in the current events in Northern Ireland. It is also an interpretation of fact which would do credit to an Orwellian 'Big Brother' manipulation of history. It stems from our previous ability to ignore the under-dog. It is a racialist concept which cannot conceive of there being either the right to dissent, let alone the power to disagree.

The recent findings of the European Commission of Human Rights into the allegations of torture on the part of Britain provoked just this traditional response. Having suffered the humiliations of the last Cod War with Iceland, when the effective power of the British Navy was seen for what it had become, the Irish, with their long record of military and national insignificance, suddenly confronted us on the world stage, like some demon king in a pantomine. The homespun faces of Jack Lynch and Liam Cosgrave were seen to be only tragic masks concealing a Mephistophelean disregard for appearance. Britan-

nia swooned and the British Press reacted furiously:

'The fatal flaw of the Irish' screamed the first leader of September 3's Daily Mail. And the London Times commented sourly:

'It suits the political purposes of any Dublin Government to get the latest abuses surrounding the British presence in Ireland onto the international record.'

In the army, the response was even more strong. It ranged from one of straightforward disbelief at the apparent duplicity of the Irish Government to a bitter hostility towards all Irishmen. For once, Merlyn Rees touched a sympathetic chord and spoke with the Army's full approval.

'We regret the Irish Government's persistence in raking over the events of five years ago...I can see no justification for (their) persistence in pressing it.'

It was a good line to bow out with and it brought a smattering of applause from the military pit. Mafeking had not quite been relieved but it was a pleasant experience for one and all to close ranks.

The findings of the European Commission have now passed into recent hitory and the subject is no longer raised in polite military circles. But the sense of frustration at the findings still remains.

Journalists often poke fun at the army by writing about it in 'stage Irish' terms. It is always good for a laugh and in any case, it is what the British public expects. Whilst ordinary men and women realise that it has progressed beyond the 'Dad's Army' caricature, they still expect it to be officered by Terry Thomases and staffed by dutifully respectful lower orders. In reality, more State-educated boys than ever before are being commissioned — though still not into the smartest of regiments, of course.

What is so disturbing however, is the way in which all this new blood is so quickly tainted with the social mores and opinions of the past. Like Rhodesian immigrants, most of the new entry take to the rigid distinctions that are left like a duck to water.

We may not be producing much effective propaganda in the North: 'Seven years is enough.' So is seven hundred.

Our psychological operations campaign was lost years ago. But what we have succeeded in doing is to brainwash almost the entire officer class in their attitude to the Irish.

As in years gone by, 'Taffy was a Welshman...Taffy was a thief' could have been a possible cri de coeur for the army of Edward I, so, today 'Paddy or Mick or Bogwog' has become synonomous with things which are loathesome, evil, stupid or more simply, 'typical'. We have resurrected our oldest scapegoat and like some battered golliwog we have dragged him out of the cupboard, to villify him all over again.

There is a cartoon strip entitled 'Seamus' in the army magazine 'Visor' — a weekly publication for troops serving in the North. 'Seamus' is an IRA-man and, as you'd expect, a pretty stupid one at that. He is continually blowing himself up on his own bombs, or else being shot or arrested by soldiers. In many ways, he is an exact crib from the 'Bill and Ben — the IRA men'

comic feature of a well-known UDA broad-

He's a figure of fun. And yet, despite all his weekly disasters, he still re-appears with monotonous insistence. Beneath the superficial humour lies the reality of our current situation. Stupid and idiotic the enemy may be, but if he is irrepressible, how long will it be before some of his foolishness rubs off on us? Perhaps it already has to an outside observer. As Bishop Daly remarked:

'One has repeatedly denounced the IRA for mindless militarism...But official policy in the North begins itself to look more and more like a replica of this'.

The campaign in the North must be one of the few we have fought in which there has been no grudging admiration given to our opponent. After all, we've paid tribute to the Pathan, the Sikhs; Fuzzy Wuzzy of the Sudan and latterly, even Jerry — now that he's so obviously one of us. But Paddy remains obstinately beyond the Pale.

It can't be that the weapons he chooses to fight with are all that repugnant to us. Didn't we train and subsequently glory in the guerrilla tactics of the Chindits: didn't we help the French Maquis, who were none too scrupulous in the methods they used? Isn't the SAS trained for equally ruthless work? No! It goes much deeper than this. It is a dark animal hatred within us, nurtured over hundreds of years of fear, superiority and contempt towards the race across the water.

We appear to have had few feelings of guilt, let alone moral doubts, over the role we played in the events which caused the Irish Government to proscribe Britain over the 'torture' incident.

The Daily Telegraph blandly dismissed the findings of the European Commission as 'torture misnamed.' Even though the Sun admitted...'The twelve...were selected for in-depth interrogation out of 324 Catholics arrested in dawn swoops on internment day, August 9, 1971.'

For their part, the army couldn't understand what all the fuss was about. It was merely a means to an end

Their philosophy was and still is, that anyone who belongs to the minority community in the North has to be a potential subversive, until proved innocent.

Has British fair play really come to this? It certainly appears so. How else do we explain away our genuine 'low profile' in hard-line Protestant areas? Why didn't we act decisively at the outset of the loyalist workers strike in 1975, when the Protestant paramilitaries demonstrated their contempt for Westminster and were allowed to get away with it?

Why did we fail to react to the wave of hooliganism on the Shankill in August 1976, when loyalist gangs roamed the streets burning buses at will?

We compain about the obsession the Irish have with history, forgetting that in 1912 our own army threatened mutiny at the Curragh. And all the time, the loyalist hero, Sir Edward Carson, flagrantly brought in German guns and munitions as physical proof of Protestant Ulster's determination to stay 'loyal.'

For that matter, why didn't Mr. Mason be more specific when he declared on December 21 last year that:

'More than 700 people from the Provisional IRA have been charged and more than 400 more from other terrorist groups.'

Other? Whatever the reason, the army and the Westminster politicians have stood by and

done nothing, almost as if they were condoning an OAS type situation within their ranks. And like the ghost of Hamlet's father, the words of Maj. Gen. Kitson drift through at each twist of the plot:

'When the Regular Army was first raised in the 17th century, "Suppression of the Irish" was coupled with the "Defence of the Protestant Religion" as one of the two

main reasons for its existence.'

Isn't it about time that we ended this play within a play? As a British soldier told me earlier last year:

'We're the people we are. They're the people they are. So why don't we just let them get on with it?'





I have spent the greater part of my working life watching British troops being pulled out of places they were never going to leave. The process started in the 1940's, when Mr Churchill insisted that the British could never leave India, and of course they did. A wide variety of Colonial Secretaries in the years to come made it abundantly clear that their forces would never leave Malaya, or Kenya, or Cyprus, or Aden. All these places were integrally part of an imperial system that could not be undermined and must be protected, and one by one all these places were abandoned, generally with the blessing of some minor royalty and much champagne.

In most cases some rebellious nationalist was released from gaol, or its equivalent — Nehru, Nkrumah, Kenyatta, Makarios — given the ritual cup of tea at Windsor and turned into a President. The thing in the end became a formula, though the process wasted a great many lives and much time and money, and as far as I know on every occasion the formula followed the one before it: We shall not leave; we have to leave; we have left. At no time in our colonial history did one occasion leave any precedent for the next one, except for the statement that we would never pull out, which was always one thing before the last.

journalist James Cameron in the Guardian June 2nd 1975



A British soldier in Aden

## **BRITISH ARMY OPERATIONS SINCE 1944**

### Counter-insurgency:

Greece 1944-7, Palestine 1945-8, Vietnam 1945, Indonesia (Java) 1945-6, Aden 1947, Ethiopia (eritrea) 1948-51, Malaya 1948-60, Kenya 1952-6, Cyprus 1954-9, Aden (border) 1955-60, Togoland 1957, Muscat & Oman 1957-9, Malaysia 1962-6, Brunei 1962, Aden 1963-8, Oman (Dhofar) 1965-present, Northern Ireland 1969-present.

### Internal security:

India 1945-7, British Honduras 1948, Gold Coast (Ghana) 1948, Singapore 1950, Aqaba 1951, British Guiana 1953, Oman (Buraimi) 1955, Bahrein 1956, Hong Kong 1956, British Honduras 1957, Nassau 1958, Jordan 1958, Gan 1959, Jamaica 1960, Cameroons 1960-2, British Honduras 1961-present, Zanzibar 1961, British Guiana 1962-4, Hong Kong 1962, Zanzibar 1963-4, Swaziland (Lesotho) 1963, Cyprus 1963-present, Uganda 1964, Tanganyika 1964, Kenya 1964, Mauritius 1965-6, Das Island 1966, Hong Kong 1966-7, Bermuda 1968, Mauritius 1968, Anguilla 1969, Britain (Heathrow) 1974-present, Bermuda 1977.

### Limited war:

Korea 1950-5, Suez 1956, Kuwait 1961

### Strike-breaking:

British Guiana 1948, Britain (dockers) 1948, Nigeria 1949, Britain (dockers) 1949, Tanganyika 1950, Kenya 1950, Britain (Shell-Mex) 1953, Britain (railmen) 1955, Britain (dockers) 1970, Britain (electrical) 1970, Britain (Tower Hamlets dustmen) 1970, Britain (miners) 1972, Britain (dockers) 1972, Britain (miners) 1973, Britain (Glasgow firemen) 1973, Britain (Glasgow dustmen) 1975, Britain (firemen) 1977-8

TOWARDS the end of Britain's corrupt rule in Aden, a colony in the Persian Gulf, I got off the aircraft at RAF Khormaxer. A miner's son, an ex-miner myself, I had crossed a gulf to become an NCO in one of Britain's crack units.

The previous weeks had been taken up in a propaganda blitz on us, as we were indoctrinated into a racist frame of mind in order to be able to put down a nation of 'ungrateful wogs' who were biting the hand that fed them.

I am ashamed that the lot of us fell for it.

After a week of acclimatisation work, consisting of running up and down jebels (hills) and kicking around the Arab camp employees as practice, we were ready to be turned loose against an unsuspecting population.

The form of deployment at that time was six weeks of internal security duties in Aden Town, followed by a 12-week tour upcountry in the Rad-fan Mountains containing the confederate

The first thing we were thrown into was the introduction of complete British control when it was discovered that the people of Aden actually wanted an end to the rule by the State Emirs and a start to democracy. The government was deposed and the rule of force began.

### AS AN NCO I was given my section of men, a landrover for patrol and an 007 licence.

Arabs were to be roughed up when searched at roadblocks so they could be shown who was boss. 'It's the only method they understand,' we were told.

The natives naturally enough resented this and demonstrated. The 'bloody wogs' actually had a trade union and started a dock strike.

So now we became strike-breakers, protecting the troops and scab Arabs who were drafted in to break the strike.

After the people had been starved and threatened, after the leaders of the strike had been arrested and lodged at Al Mansura, the political prison, the workers reluctantly returned to work.

Our unit was praised for the tough no-nonesense stand it had taken. This included the arrest of one of the instigators, who must have been an 'extremist' as he was a militant trade union leader.

We took him at a reasonable time — about two in the morning — as I kicked the door down and dashed into the hovel to be met by the sight of about 12 people sleeping in a room that measured about 12 feet by 20.

Oh, you could see by this luxury that he was financed by 'Chinese Gold'. After all, he had an orange box for a bedside locker.

He actually had the gall to draw himself up to his full height of 5 feet 2 inches and demand to know what right 1 as a British soldier had to break his door down.

However, dragging him downstairs so that his head bounced on every step soon quietened him.

### AFTER these heroic deeds we were posted up-country for a rest, which consisted of keeping the Arabs there in line.

The first sight at Dhala for many soldiers was an Arab helping to unload the aircraft. His hands and legs were shackled and both sets of shackles were joined by a chain which allowed him to shuffle round the aircraft helping out.

A few weeks later we tried to help him by sawing through the chains which bound him. We were stopped by his screams and by an Arab officer who told us that he would be executed by nightfall by the Emir if the chains were taken off.

## ADEN: A miner's experience



We're soldiers of the army Earning our measly pay Guarding the profits of millionaires For four lousy shillings a day.

- song of soldiers during the Korean War

The crime he had committed was the killing of his mother-in-law in a fight and his sentence was to be chained for life.

There were two camps at Dhala. One was the British camp, about a mile from the town on the slopes of Jebel Jihaff, and about 400 yards away was the Arab camp, manned by the Federal Army. There was a permanent curfew from dusk to dawn.

### Mortars

After 6pm there was a fireworks display from the machine guns, mortars and cannon in the British camp and the artillery in the Arab camp.

This was supposedly to register the bearings for recorded night targets but was more in fact to 'show the flag'. Quite a number of shots strayed into the town in order to reinforce this.

However all this never seemed to deter the 'terrorists'. In fact most nights, even though we sent out ambush patrols, they usually reminded us that they were still around by firing Swedish rockets and British 84mm mortars at us.

The armaments firms recognise both sides when the price is right.

Our tactics were to send sweep patrols up the wadis (valleys) to flush out the terrorists during the daylight hours. This was not very successful, since most of the local population were anti-British.

## IT WAS on one of these patrols that the truth of what we were doing started to come through.

We had marched through the night to occupy a high Jebel ready for a sweep the next morning. As we were a small party of around six men, being unobserved was the main task.

Just before daylight we turned a corner and came face to face with an early rising local Arab camel dealer out to check his herd.

We grabbed him and then started to debate what to do with him. I was the most adamant of the party, wanting to cut his throat. My men agreed with me and I volunteered to do it.

The one voice against, fortunately, was a young officer, just out from Britain who was along for the ride. But new or not, he had a pip on his shoulder that made him superior to me.

### Camel

The lucky camel dealer had a day's outing with the British Raj instead.

Back at base, with the pressure off me, I started to think about the incident.

I, an ex-miner, the son of a miner, had actually had a knife out and was going to cut an innocent man's throat just because he had seen us.

I had shot men in ambush, but this was different. I was becoming as corrupt as the fat Emir we were keeping in power.

Just around the corner the artillery were firing white phosphorus shells. In normal circumstances these are used to provide smoke for cover, but phosphorus burns when exposed to air and when any gets on to human flesh it continues to burn unless the flesh is kept under running water.

These shells were fired as an airburst so that it descended like rain on anybody below. And there is not much water in the desert.

### BACK in Aden itself things were hotting up and the dirty tricks department were in the thick of it.

Although the Al Mansura district was sewn up tight, one night a bomb exploded at the house of a local political leader who was against the British troops. His wife, son and three local policemen were killed in the blast.

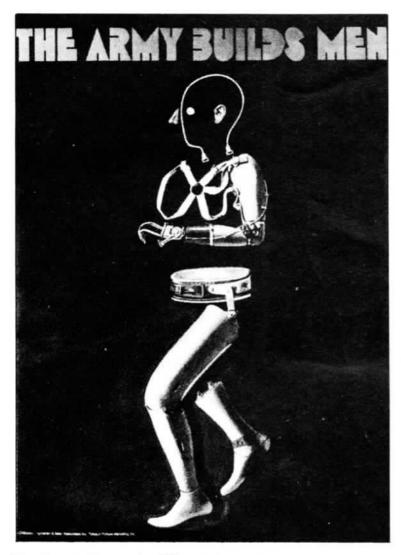
The only vehicle reported as being in the area that night by the soldiers was a Landrover carrying men from the SAS and the Army Special Branch.

A few nights later, when four Arabs were spotted carrying weapons, a gun battle lasting 15 minutes occurred — until a message came over the radio to cease firing as they were friendly troops. When the smoke cleared it was discovered that they were SAS men dressed as Arabs.

I wasn't sorry to leave Aden as my attitude was coming to question with the ruling caste of the Army. Nor was I alone, for when the BBC came round and asked the soldiers, 'If you were killed while serving in Aden what would you have died for?' only the few bucking for promotion said we were protecting the locals from 'terrorists'.

The great majority had a simple but honest answer: £10 a week.

by a Yorkshire miner who served in Aden from Socialist Worker 17.12.77



IT IS getting along to 30 years since I first signed on as a regular. I was out of work, and in trouble with the police.

The army was much bigger in those days. Once in it I was convinced there was no way they would get me back to the slums of Glasgow.

My own bed and locker. Good clean clothes. Plenty of good grub. Great comradeship from the men in the billet. What more could a young man ask?

### Commies

I had known poverty and hunger all my boyhood days. The army was a great life for me. It is hard for young working-class men to realise the attractions of such a life, unless they have known similar poverty and hunger.

In those days the army fought 'the dirty commie'

We shot 'the yellow slant-eyed bastards' in the hills of Korea, chasing them back to the Yalu River, where 'some bastard politician' stopped us going over and finishing them off for good.

We went into the jungles of Malaya, and 'routed them out'. It cut us to the quick to see 'that evil bastard' Chin Peng get all that cash for surrendering.

He and his will-o-the-wishps had given us a lot of trouble and sweat. Now the government was giving him a load of cash.

It was crazy. If they'd turned him over to us we would have chopped him into cubes and fed him to the dogs that ran around in packs in Kuala Lumpur.

Out in Kenya we hated that 'black cannibal' Jomo Kenyatta. The officer from Intelligence who gave us our political lectures (did you know they gave such things in the British army?) told us Jomo wrote for the Commie paper, the Daily Worker.

If we'd caught him in the forests of the Aberdares we would have chopped him up with blunt pangas.

In Cyprus we fought that 'little murdering bastard' Grivas. It was strange how nobody would turn the 'little wall-eyed bastard' in. It did not matter how much we kicked and beat them. The Greek Cypriots would never divulge his hiding place.

CAME the day when I copped a packet. It was not pleasant. They took me on a stretcher, all strapped down, and flew me back for medical attention.

I was paralysed from the waist down. Every jolt I got caused racking pains to tear through my body.

In different hospitals in various countries, experts prodded and poked me. They caused me a lot of pain. But months later I was still affected with terrific pain if I got any sudden movements.

### I WENT back to civvy street like an old man — shuffle-shuffle.

It was in the Union Jack Club opposite Waterloo Station that my position was brought home to me. A young soldier like myself was lying dead drunk. His documents had fallen out of his jacket.

I saw he had been in places out East that I had just been in. He was discharged just like me. But he could get no work.

I felt a wave of despair wash over me. How could I survive?

Back in Glasgow I went to sign on at the Labour Exchange. They had no work for ex-killers.

'So what if you do have ribbons from half a dozen campaigns? We need men who can work all day and every day. You can hardly walk!'

These clerks were all throw-backs to the means test days. They could not even manage a look of pity for a young man with a pale face, all complete with dark rings under the eyes for added effect.

How I hated mankind. Here I was, reduced from being a hard soldier, six feet tall, twelve and a half stone in weight, down to nine stone something. Yet nobody gave a damn about it.

### Problems

I MADE IT. No thanks to the bastards who run the country. They took my youth and young manhood.

Today I still suffer pain. But my muscles have toughened up a lot. As of now, they are able to bear me up.

But what will happen when I get old and they become less strong? I just don't fancy the idea of sitting out the remainder of my days in some establishment for infirm soldiers, raving away about the days when we were young.

Oh! I forgot to tell you. I could not find a wife. You see, I am rendered impotent.

Yip Ming was my last bed-mate. She was a Chinese prostitute I lived with, out in the Far East. She bore me two sons.

But I could not marry her. The army would not permit it. She went back to China and I have lost touch with her.

My sons will be in their twenties now. Probably they read the thoughts of Chairman Mao and curse their white-skinned father.

by a Scottish ex-soldier, disabled in Cyprus



# ADEN-CARBON COPY OF IRELAND

by George Lennox, who was a corporal in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps stationed in Aden in 1964.

Most soldiers when they are involved in direct action campaigns such as Aden or what is taking place in Ireland never stop to think why they're doing it, and I think if they did there would be trouble.

Soldiers in Ireland today don't stop to ask why are they in uniform? why are they shooting against the Irish? why are they going into Irish houses? It's the same as in Aden when I was there. Most of the soldiers who went into the Adenis houses, who arrested them, shot them, who even tortured them, never asked the question, Why am I doing it?

This is not part of your thinking while you're in the Army. You haven't got the experience to think for yourself which is one of the reasons why you join the Army, and if you did you'd probably come up with a lot of unsatisfactory answers and I think you would question your role.

So it's very easy for the politicians to use a military force, those in uniform, to perform tasks such as the Army was doing inside Aden and that was to crush any political opposition. Because the people who are performing that task, who themselves are the people who are being killed and injured, don't ever question why they're doing it. That's always been a fact.

I know that when I was in Aden we never talked about the political situation there. Our level of consciousness or our level of conversation of talking about Adenis was, 'Oh these fucking wogs' etc. which was essentially I think to be expected of any army or military personnel under active service. We were conditioned to think in terms of, 'That is the enemy, this is who we're fighting', and never question it.

### Strategy

The military strategists inside Aden were taken by surprise by the armed struggle, like they were taken by surprise by the Mau Mau struggle inside Kenya, and by the struggle in Cyprus. They always adopted the same strategy: that is, crush any opposing element, and crush it by any means.

For example inside Aden, I know that the Special Air Service were called into Aden, to act as an undercover, covertly to act in an overtly provocative role. The SAS and other volunteers who were stationed inside Aden and who could speak the language were dressed up as Adenis, with chocolate colour on their faces. They went out into the streets and they had names of suspected so-called terrorists and those who were heading the then-illegal political opposition groups and they had instructions to search them out and to assassinate them, kill them.

Inside Aden you had two main political opposition groups, one was the NLF and the other was the Front for the Liberation of South Yemen. The two had different political approaches, political interests which they were representing. The NLF was essentially a Marxist group or it developed into a very strong Marxist group, who saw the future of Aden as lying in a socialist country. Whereas the FLOSY group weren't so actively involved in the armed struggle and they were more a nationalist group who saw the future of Aden as aligned to Egypt.

The SAS's role inside Aden was to create confusion within both political organisations. They would go out and bump off a couple of the FLOSY guys and in turn this would be put out by the Army press as being an inter-group fight. And of course this would make the FLOSY group take on a retaliatory role and go and seek out the NLF and take revenge and bump off a couple of these people.

of course this escalated, and when Britain announced that they were going to withdraw from Aden some time in 1968, this pattern escalated to the point where in 1967 there was 297 people killed within FLOSY and NLF.

Popular

Now this whole strategy was thought and planned by the military strategists inside HQ Middle East Command together with the High Commissioner's Secretariat. The High Commissioner's Secretariat was Where the British Intelligence people were affiliated to. They were attempting to create a military solution where you could wipe out the NLF and when Britain did withdraw they could have a sort of puppet regime inside Aden which Britain could relate to. This didn't succeed because the NLF had much more popular support; it was more representative of the people inside the ghetto areas of Aden state and it was more successful even in the hinterland or the outskirts of Aden.

So the Army's role as a counter insurgency operation inside Aden can be clearly seen as being used by the politicians inside Britain who wanted to secure a political situation which was suitable to Britain. They used the Army directly as an offensive force to crush political opposition...

I think if you compare the Aden situation with what is now taking place in Ireland, you will see a sort of carbon copy of how the British troops are being used inside Ireland. The British troops are there to police Ireland, to destroy and to crush any political opposition, or those representative of any political opposition which is not in the interests of the British state, and certainly this is how they were used inside Aden.

But they weren't successful in Aden, as history has shown. Britain did withdraw, leaving a victorious NLF to represent the new socialist South Yemen. In Ireland I would think that Britain will have to withdraw, and I think that probably the IRA will win. But it will take much longer because of the other more right-wing elements inside Ireland. But the role of the Army as a counter-insurgency force is still there and is still there to be used inside Britain.



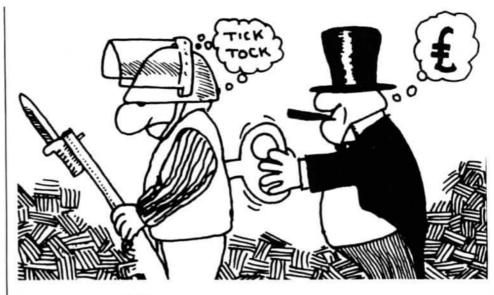
Up until 1957, all men in this country had to do two years' National Service, in the Army, Navy or Air force. But now conscription has ended and the army is made up of 'professionals'; people who join up voluntarily, with only the gentle persuasion of 11/2 million unemployed. Conscript armies are dangerous for the Army bosses, because they are full of young people who don't want to be there. That means the danger of indiscipline, a lack of commitment and skill, and the possibility of 'agitators' stirring things up. As it is, dissatisfaction within the Army is rife. In 1974, the last year for which figures are available, 137 soldiers deserted, 2,000 went absent without leave, and 1,800 bought themselves out within six months of joining. No wonder the Ministry of Defence have stopped issuing the figures.

Despite the dissatisfaction the British Army has avoided the problems faced by the bosses of conscript armies, such as in France, where rank and file soldiers are frequently in some sort of dispute with authority. Beneath the propaganda, there is some truth in the Ministry of Defence claim that 'Britain has proved the value of volunteer soldiers who are happy, and proud, too, to be 'Professionals.'

However, without conscription the Army has had to take expensive steps to attract recruits. This is done not only through offering seemingly attractive wages and conditions, but also by carrying out massive advertising campaigns (which cost £2.9 million in 1972-3).

An indication of how the cost of forces recruitment is rising comes from the following quote from Hansard, 2.5.77: '£26 million was spent on recruitment last year; during this period there were 40,243 recruits — an average of £654 per recruit was thus spent (ranging from £570 per Navy recruit to £818 in the RAF). Of this £1,050,000 was spent on press ads for officers; 2,135 were recruited in this period, an average of £500 per recruit.'







Work was just so monotonous. I was sick of everything and the army seemed like a way out.

'Once you're in the army everything is designed to isolate you as a group from the rest of society, like for example having very short hair. You're made to feel so self-conscious that you don't break away from the group.

'In Germany I did completely unheard-of things, like making friends with the Germans and telling other soldiers that they didn't have to accept a system that was working behind their backs. It was then that I was packed off to Northern Ireland.

'The situation there was disgusting. It was turning ordinary kids into animals. So I tried to explain to them what was creating the situation and just how wrong it was to go out and kill people indiscriminately.

'I started refusing to go out with a loaded weapon but I was sent to Germany and questioned by the Intelligence Corps about my subversive activities. I was made to spend four months in Colchester "corrective centre" and then discharged.

'When I got out it was a terrible shock — all those kids at the Labour Exchange.

'No wonder the army can recruit them. We've got to do something.

We've got to make sure all those kids fight the real enemy — the capitalist system.

Ex-soldier Chris Dunn

At 15 it seemed to appeal to me — it seemed to offer more and regular pocket-money for me and when I rejoined in 1968 for a further six years I was still hung up on money and I hadn't given any serious thought to whether the army was the right place for me.

Since I deserted I've been worried and depressed because the army gets you into their routine, so you don't have to think for yourself. I'm used to having things done for me that's why I find it hard to do anything for myself at the moment. I'm used to walking into the mess hall, for example, getting a meal eating it and leaving the plates and cutlery for someone to wash. The army tells you to stop thinking for yourself. They don't like people thinking for themselves — that's why they lay everything on for you. The only thing a soldier does for himself is once a month wash his civvies at the launderette.

In the army 1 was trained to kill and to cope with riots. About 8 or 9 weeks into your training you're shown human targets on the rifle range and you're told to shoot for the centre to achieve maximum damage. You're not taught to injure someone so they can't escape arrest — you're just taught to kill. To tell you the sort of weapons the army has at its disposal about a month before we were due to go to Ulster we were rebriefed for a week on the SLR rifle. Now that has a target range of 600 yeards and if you line 7 men up shoulder to shoulder, put the barrel on the first man and fire, the bullet will go through six men and lodge itself in the seventh.

We've all been through riot training as part of our normal training — it was a bit of fun at the time. One half of us pretended to be Irish or the miners — or whoever was on strike at the time — and the other half would just charge into them. We'd think 'today we'll really get those strikers, or those Irish' we really though like

You see basically I believe now that the army are just professional killers. Any non-essential violence I disagree with completely and I call the army's violence in Ireland non-essential.

I want to say the best of British luck to any army deserter who may read this. Second, to those people thinking of joining — don't do it.

My message to anyone already a soldier is that I am a lot happier out of it.

Terry — a deserter from the Royal Artillery From Time Out 7-13 April 1972

## The IO most asked questions about the Army.

### What's it like in Northern Ireland?

Tough, tiring and often dangerous. And that's just for civilians. However, the training you get beforehand is so thorough that we will ensure that you are fully signed up before you're

sent over there.

Teamwork of course is vital. And there's the satisfaction of knowing that you're doing an important and worthwhile job as a Professional target. The usual

tour is four months with three days home leave in the middle to help you stop shaking.



### What about bull?

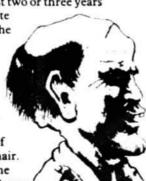
There is now very little bull in the Army. In fact this advert is about the biggest bull you'll get.

Rubbing the fear off your trousers takes about seven or eight minutes a day, and the only other thing that needs washing is your brain, and we'll do that for you.

### And haircuts?

Over the past two or three years the more desperate we get the more the rules have been relaxed, to the point where your ears no longer stick out

like sore thumbs. But you can forget any ideas of shoulder length hair. Unless you join the Women's Royal Army





### How tough is Basic Training?

Again, very tough, especially the first six weeks. But at least nobody's shooting at you.

If you can't take it, or you're not good enough, you can always run away.

### How strict is the Army?

There is discipline, there is drill. But it's all designed to help you stop thinking.

When you're relying on your mates, and they're relying on you there is no room for philosophy, or books, or leading a decent life.

If you're not prepared to accept the rules, you're better off where you are. Or where we are. In a nice warm office writing recruiting ads.

### Do I commit myself by going to an Army Careers Information Office?

No. You only commit yourself by going to a hospital ARMY and become a CAREERS voluntary mental PORMATION

OFFICE

In fact you might consider

patient.

doing that rather than joining the Army. Some of the wards are as tough, but on the whole you'll meet a gentler and saner class of person.

### Why is the Army still recruiting when soldiers are being made redundant?

The Army is an organisation that needs a continual flow of fit, young men to turn into fine young stiffs.

To achieve this some older men will write almost anything in the adverts for a good compensation and a chance to leave early.

### Can I choose any Army job?

Yes, you can choose any job you like. Chances are you won't get it, but you have an absolutely free choice.

What we like to do is show you all our careers at a Selection Centre. Then sign you up and send you to Northern Ireland.

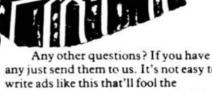
### Is there still much travel?

You'll get to see some of the most exciting places in the world, providing you keep your head down.

Norway, France, Denmark and Canada are all on the map. Why don't you go there instead?

### What's it like to get killed in the Army?

Much better than simply being wounded, which can hurt like hell. Plus you get a decent military burial and a chance to appear on your local war memorial.



any just send them to us. It's not easy to unemployed school leaver. Just look in at your nearest Army Careers Information Office and look out. Or post the coupon to

### The Professional Advertisers.

For a free copy of the fe with lots of pictures po Army Careers PO Box	st the coupon to
Name	
Address	
Town	
County	
Age next birthday	BARMY



During my six years in the Army 18 months of my service was spent in Northern Ireland; from February 1971 until July 1972.

One of the first things I remember is when the present troubles first began, and British troops were sent over to Northern Ireland. I was placed on a standby list ready to fly there from Germany at 72 hours' notice. Then, without reason, I was taken off this list, and upon enquiring why was told that due to my parents coming from the South of Ireland and myself being a Catholic, it would be better if I was not sent.

Then, after a while, when the troubles escalated I was sent over there in February, 1971. Obviously the army, being pushed for man-power, were not particular this time.

Once over there we were given a half hour lecture to try to understand what had been going on for 800 years, so you can work out your own conclusions from this.

Whilst there I saw a lot of what was going on, and after a few months I realised the pointless efforts of the British Army. What popularity they had had in Catholic areas, if they had any at all, slowly deteriorated, and the biggest crunch to show whose side the Army was on came when internment was introduced. Hundreds of men interned for their beliefs and opinions, homes wrecked and innocent people shot dead.

I saw plenty of deaths, but none struck me more than the body of a young girl shot dead in a gun-battle, and knowing that if the Army wasn't there this girl would most probably be alive today.

One must understand the average soldier in an infantry battallion who is sent to Ireland. The large majority of them do not realise that they are there to carry out a peace-keeping role; they think that the Catholic community is the enemy and should be treated as such. How often I heard the remarks from Troops 'Fenian B's' and 'Papist B's', never would one hear anything about 'Prod B's'.

### Ordered

Same as if there was any trouble in the Catholic areas. I know from experience that I have been ordered to go in there and see how the local population react to our presence — it amazes me that Higher Command should have to ask, but

British soldiers on the streets of Belfast

on another occasion when there was a small barricade on the Shankhill Road I was ordered not to drive through it as it may antagonise the local population. Where is there justice in this?

Part of my duties consisted of being at the Reception Centres at Holywood and Curdwood barracks. Here I saw many young men brought in by the Army, frightened and bewildered, and as far as I could see, their only crime being that they were males aged between 15 and 50, lived in a certain area and were of a certain religion.

I saw a lot of injustice and discrimination, but I was unable to do anything about it. I could only help where it wasn't noticed and eventually, as a submission to my feelings, I went absent to Dublin for several days and returned on my own accord.

I was posted immediately to England to finish my remaining year off there, and I have waited over a year to be where I am now — on a platform speaking for removal of troops out of Ireland.

from a speech by an ex-soldier at a public meeting in Fulham Town Hall, London, in October 1974. For a full-page account of the meeting see the West London Observer 2.11.73 'The Army rapidly produced a booklet, called "Notes on Northern Ireland", with the praiseworthy aim of giving its men some idea what the trouble was all about.

But the booklet printed in full what purported to be the oath of the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein. As a case-study in psychosis, it deserves reprinting:

'I swear by Almighty God...by the Blessed Virgin Mary...by her tears and wailings...by the Blessed Rosary and Holy Beads...to fight until we die, wading in the fields of Red Gore of the Saxon Tyrants and Murderers of the Glorious Cause of Nationality, and if spared, to fight until there is not a single vestige and a space for a footpath left to tell that the Holy Soil of Ireland was trodden on by the Saxon Tyrants and the murderers, and moreover, when the English Protestant Robbers and Beasts in Ireland shall be driven into the sea like the swine that Jesus Christ caused to be drowned, we shall embark for, and take, England, root out every vestige of the accursed Blood of the Heretics, Adulterers and Murderers of Henry VIII and possess ourselves of the treasures of the Beasts that have so long kept our Beloved Isle of Saints...in bondage...and we shall not give up the conquest until we have our Holy Father complete ruler of the British Isles...so help me God.

The interesting point is that this oath was never taken by members of Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein,

indeed, had no oath of any kind. The version the Army got dated from 1918, when it was forged by a group of over-heated Unionists. It has since appeared regularly in Loyalist Ulster newsheets, most recently in Paisley's *Protestant Telegraph*. It bears exactly the same relation to reality as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion — indeed, in its constant dwelling on blood, it has much in common with the Protocols. As a document, therefore, it tells one nothing about Sinn Fein, though quite a lot about the impulses to violence in Unionism.'

from Ulster by the Sunday Times Insight Team (Penguine Special 1972, pp 152-3)

The obvious question which the Insight team ignored is how did the Army come by this piece of Unionist propaganda and why was it printed in an Army booklet for soldiers going to Ireland for the first time.

The answer is simple, if unpalatable to many people in Britain. The Army chiefs support the Protestant/Unionist sector of the Northern Ireland population and see the enemy as the Republicans/Catholics especially those in working class areas and they want to ensure that the ordinary soldiers will have the same attitude.

Another example of the Army's attitude is taken from the official Army magazine Soldier of April 1977 in an article on a unit on duty in Belfast:

'The grey of the high corrugated iron which fences in Support Company of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, is only marginally lighter in shade than the grey of the rendered walls of the houses outside in the dank gloom of a winter Sunday morning on Belfast's outskirts.

'The modern counterpart of a Wild West stockade, the "wriggly tin" fortress is surrounded by the "Indian country" of the notorious Ballymurphy estate with its fervent Republican sympathies.'

The magazine of the 1st Battalion of the Staffordshire Regiment, The Stafford Knot, published in October 1976 after a 4 month period in Belfast (the first time the regiment had been garrisoned in Belfast since 1876) contains a more blatant example of the Army attitude:

'Our ''patch'' in Belfast comprised, in the north, the hard Republican area of Divis flats, traditionally a trouble spot through the present emergency and sandwiched between the Lower Falls and the city centre. This eerie, huge, concrete ''terrorist paradise'' (as it has been described) dominates the local skyline and is filled with a generally unpleasant, mainly evil and hostile population of approximately 7,000...

'South of the city centre was the Protestant working-class area of Sandy Row. Here a maze of small terraced houses and a generally more friendly atmosphere greeted the patrolling Stafford soldier...'



Padre Bolton blesses the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers before a Civil Rights Association march in 1972



EARLIER this year (April 5th) over £200 millions worth of defence communications equipment was sold by British firms to Saudi Arabia. The systems will be mainly for use in internal security and the installation will be monitored by the British Ministry of Defence. The system absorbs refinements developed 'on the ground' in Northern Ireland.

During May of last year the British Ministry of Defence sold equipment and services to the Shah of Iran to the value of £200 millions. And a proportion of that sum was for anti-terrorist and counter-terrorist expertise and equipment.

The personnel of half-a-dozen anti-terrorist agencies have been on liaison or 'secondment' tours of duty in the North, as have the boffins and the product-testers of a wide range of espionage equipment. When we read of Britain's Special Air Service involvement in the rescue of hostages at Mogadishu, that is but an accidental glimpse of the spin-off which Britain's anti-terrorist industry has been quietly garnishing for years.

What, specifically, have been the military advantages to Britain of the Northern situation? Primarily, an actual role for an Army which at 172,000 (land forces of 1970) was being drastically run down until the IRA revived it during the 1970s. Subsidiary benefits included an accelerated development of materials and equipment during the '70s, geared specifically to urban disturbances, street surveillance, limited local response in riot control - the hardware and software of reaction, from nightsights to miniature, unmanned helicopters for street and area surveillance. Add computer storage of intelligence input and you are naming the kind of industrial expertise most countries of the world now have a use for.

From Irish Times 27th April 1978

# Join the Army; travel to exotic, distant lands; meet exciting, unusual people and kill them.

In 1971 I was posted with my unit, the first battalion Royal Greenjackets, to Belfast Mulhouse barracks.

My first encounter with army brutality was when a mobile patrol came under nail bomb attack, and the patrol lifted a man who they thought might have been the thrower.

### Stomach

I was watching the company TV when he was dragged into the camp. He was shown to all the others in the TV room.

He was then taken into the passageway and was repeatedly hit in the stomach and balls with rifle butts. Then the rest of the soldiers joined in with their fists and boots.

He then had his fingers broken by a corporal who jumped on them while two others held his arms out. All this happened within about ten minutes of him being dragged in.

Another instance was while I was on a foot patrol in the Catholic area of Belfast. We encountered a small group of kids who began to throw bottles and so on at their oppressors, and as usual the army over-reacted. Before long there was a rather larger crowd.

After awhile there were a few shots fired at the army and I was ordered to search, with two others, some back alleyways. I then witnessed my second helping of oppression.

A boy of about 16 was stopped in an alleyway by an NCO who was pointing his rifle at him and telling the boy that he was going to kill him. He kept asking the boy — who by this time had a dark patch down his jeans and was shaking a lot — what it felt like to know that you're going to die any moment.

### Officer

The NCO kept this up for about five minutes, then told the boy to go away (in different words, of course).

The boy went to his father, who went to the commanding officer that same day — who instantly denied everything.

If only the British public, especially the parents of soldiers serving over the water, realised that their sons do terrorise the local people.

### Brainwashed

They do shoot innocent people.

They do smash up homes at 4 o'clock in the morning, simply because they are bored with the foot patrol, or they just want to pass the time.

And, last but not least, they do terrorise the Catholic community because they are methodically brainwashed with propaganda of all types, before they do their four-month duty over there, into believing that all Catholics are Provos. I am Church of England, by the way.

I only wish that I had realised how wrong it all is, and that the people of Ireland are sick and tired of British oppression in their own country...But I'm afraid I was just another brainwashed soldier like the rest of them.

by W. Sellick, formerly of the Royal Greenjackets from Socialist Worker 14.8.76



This cover of **Soldier** magazine of April 1977 shows a paratrooper in full combat kit being kissed by a bikini-clad model. It is just one small example of how the Army encourages sexist views among soldiers.

Because of the indoctrination which they undergo and especially because of the repressive measures they are ordered to carry out in Ireland, soldiers are becoming increasingly brutalised. Increasing numbers are carrying out serious crimes during their tour of duty and when they return to Britain.

The Dublin review Hibernia reported on April 1, 1977: 'five soldiers from the 1st Batt. Queen's Regiment all pleaded guilty in a Derry court recently to a total of 12 charges of theft, burglary and receiving, involving items like tape-recorders, cassettes, perfume

and tools which were taken from houses in the city last year...

'Another soldier from the same regiment was charged with assaulting a Derry youth but the DPP (NI) dropped the charge when he heard the squaddie would, when he finished his tour of duty, be starting a five year jail stretch, courtesy of the Old Bailey, for raping and assaulting a fifteen-year-old girl in England. Derry City Council marked the news of the dropping of the assault charge by passing Cllr. Pat Devine's resolution deploring the presence on the street of soldiers remanded on bail for serious offences."

On January 24, 1977, as the Irish Press reported the following day, another rape case involving a soldier had come up. Private Roger Surch of the King's Regiment admitted raping a woman while on patrol in Strabane the previous summer. He was given a two year suspended sentence and allowed to return to his regiment, along with two other privates who admitted indecently assaulting the same woman and who received 9-month suspended sentences.

The leniency of the court in this case was matched by the Appeal Court in London which in June 1977 revoked the jail sentence of Guardsman Thomas Holdsworth who had viciously raped 18-year-old Carol Maggs. Holdsworth, who has spent six months in Northern Ireland during his 2 1/2 years in the Army, was said by one of his officers to have 'an excellent record'.

### THE ALDERGROVE PLANE

(air: The Kerry Recruit)

I stood in the dole queue in dear old England With a couple of quid and my cards in my hand, I thought of the army and the dole clerk I asked Never thinking I'd end up in bloody Belfast.

### Chorus

With me tur-um-em-ya, we're winning again, As the corpses fly out on the Aldergrove plane.

Well, I went to the office, the sergeant, says he, 'There's a place in the army for fellas like ye, There'll be sport, there'll be travel if only you'll join,' But there's no bloody sport in the place called Ardoyne.

Well, the first thing they gave me they called it a gun, Saying shooting down Paddies was bloody great fun. They had cardboard targets all hung round the walls, But there's no carboard Paddies about in the Falls.

The next thing they gave me they taught me to stick In big bales of straw that hung up on a stick. I bayoneted up and I bayoneted down But there's no men of straw around Andersonstown.

Well, they showed me their armour and said, 'never fear, No Paddy'll get at you while you're safe in here' We went to the border and hadn't gone far When a bloody great mine went off under me car.

I've been shot in the arms, I've been shot in the legs, I've been blown to pieces and blown back again, They've burned me with petrol and filled me with lead — But the papers won't even admit that I'm dead.

Now all you young fellas who are on the dole, Don't change your life for an Irish patrol; Just stay there in Manchester, Bristol or Crewe — If you don't bother Paddy, sure he won't bother you.



Off duty soldiers in 'Silver City' outpost, Andersonstown, Belfast

## A Welsh Officer's View

by a Welsh ex-officer who served in the security forces in the north of Ireland

There are many misconceptions about Ulster, and one of them is that the public on this side of the Irish Sea has even the faintest idea of what is really going on.

The war in Ireland is at once the best—and the worst—reported war there has ever been. It is impossible to move 5 yards without tripping over an aspiring journalist, and far more shots are taken with cameras than with guns. But the method in which this vast quantity of material is fed into the Fleet St machine and churned out the other end is blatantly distorting. The world is treated to a diet of 'Isn't-the-British-tommy-wonderful-the-Irish-are-barbarians' fodder which is marvellous for the ego of the Establishment but fatal to the prospects of a lasting and just settlement of the problem.

Many of us who have served in the security forces in Northern Ireland during the present troubles are deeply disturbed at the misrepresentation of information which is occurring. An atmosphere has been created in which the merits of the different causes are forgotten, the continuing injustices of Ulster political and social systems are perpetuated, and the atrocities of one competing army are magnified whilst those of the other are ignored.

For the truth is that the English Army (or perhaps it really is British, for Scots and Welsh soldiers jump into this bloody cesspit with just as much gusto as their English counterparts) practises a degree of brutality at least equal to that of the other side. The experience of a dozen sordid little wars in recent years has given the British soldier an edge in thuggery and viciousness which must be the envy of sadists everywhere.

### Tea and Biscuits

When the English Army first took a hand in the present troubles in August 1969 it is estimated that the IRA could muster no more than 40 men under arms in the whole of Northern Ireland. Their active, non-violent support probably numbered no more than 5000 other people. At the same time the arrival of British troops was greeted with open-hearted joy by most of the Catholic population. Tea was brewed for the troops in huge quantities by ordinary people delighted that we were there. A patrol of the Catholic markets of Belfast inevitably meant half a dozen stops for a drink and a chat, and several more for the loo. 'Community Relations' became the big Army occupation - organising trips to the sea for the kids, dances for teenagers or soccer matches with the local lads.

And we all felt what a jolly good job we were doing.

But we lived in a fool's paradise. Now, despite the imprisonment of all their early leaders and thousands of volunteers, the two wings of the IRA can muster hundreds if not thousands of armed men. Virtually the entire Catholic working class population offers its passive or active support. The British soldier is hated.

One reason for this is that IRA tactics have

brought a fair degree of success. Sadly for the advocates of peaceful action, the history of modern Ireland is a history in which only violence has brought radical change. For 50 years until the present troubles started the ordinary Northern Ireland Catholic had no political power, a poor job (if he had a job at all), slave wages and abysmal housing. Now, the oppression of the Protestant Stormont government and its B Specials has disappeared, housing and job discrimination is less blatant, and a degree of civil rights is a fact instead of a dream.

During this process of change the English Army has, in the eyes of many Irishman and in the eyes of some of its own members, stood in the way of progress.

We were told, 'go to Northern Ireland and keep the peace'. A fine theory, but keeping the peace in a situation where the status quo was being challenged by violent means meant siding with the status quo. And the status quo was, and still is to a great extent, one of Protestant privilege and Catholic subjection.

In these circumstances, it was inevitable that the honeymoon period between the English Army and the Catholic population should draw to a rapid close. By mid-1970 the reality of the situation had become a contest between the Protestant, Unionist population and the English Army on the one hand, and the Irish Republican Army on the other.

Small wonder that in those everyday situations where British troops are sent in to separate warring Protestant and Catholic crowds they do so by taking a heavy hand to the Catholics. Senior officers see their job as subduing the Catholic population, not necessarily because they are anti-Catholic (indeed I suppose some of them are Catholic themselves) but because this is the way to 'keep the peace'.

### **British Brutality**

At lower levels of the military hierarchy this semi-official attitude is often translated into sheer brutality. Although many men join the Army for defensible aims, such as the preservation of one version of civilisation, or the defence of our society against attack, many others join to obtain a legal licence for thuggery. These people, in Northern Ireland, take a delight in 'Paddybashing'.

It is the simple things that upset people most. Like the landrover patrol that takes an air rifle and fires pellets at people in Catholic areas deliberately to provoke an angry response. Or the house search where furniture is deliberately wrecked, 'to teach these micks a lesson', the householder being forced to sign a disclaimer saying that the troops have been courteous and polite - on pain of his home being wrecked again. Or the spot vehicle search, in which a car's tyres are let down miles from anywhere in the dead of night with the owner left to cope as best he can. These things have been happening now for six years, and few Catholics are left without personal experience of the operating methods of the English Army.

The major brutalities are virtually unknown to people in the other countries of the British Isles. To date, 12 soldiers have been charged by the Royal Ulster Constabulary with the murder of Catholics. Eleven were acquitted, and the twelfth freed on appeal. When you remember that the



RUC is extremely reluctant to charge anyone with the murder of a Catholic, and would not charge a soldier unless the evidence was really incontrovertible, it is not difficult to see that these twelve cases are merely the tip of the iceberg. That all twelve should be freed, when any Catholic suspected of violence against a Protestant is convicted at the drop of a hat, merely serves to inflame public opinion further.

'Bloody Sunday', that day in January 1972 in Derry, was perhaps the first indication to the world that righteousness was not the exclusive property of the security forces, nor that evil was confined to the other side.

To paper over the cracks that Bloody Sunday made in the authorities' mask of perfection, the English government was forced to instigate an 'inquiry'. The result of this publicity exercise was a foregone conclusion, but even so the Chairman (Lord Widgery) was compelled to remark that the shooting by the English Army had 'bordered on the reckless'.

By bordering on the reckless the troops had left thirteen unarmed Catholics dead and fourteen wounded.

In the early days junior officers like myself believed that humanity was a major factor in army tactics. Before arrival in Northern Ireland every soldier was issued with a 'Yellow Card' which gave strict instructions when he could open fire. The first Yellow Card laid down that fire could only be opened against someone who was actually using a firearm against a member of the security forces or a civilian, or after a gun battle it was possible to shoot someone running away carrying a gun — but only if he was first given fair warning that you were about to fire.

The next edition of the card removed the need to give a warning in many cases, and included petrol bombers as legitimate targets. Further editions lightened the restrictions further and further, until now any active soldier with his wits about him can use the yellow card to defend firing his rifle at a Catholic in virtually any situation.

About the only thing he cannot yet do is to empty a machine gun belt indiscriminately into a crowd.

### Keeping the Peace?

More and more members of the security forces are coming to the conclusion that they should not be in Ireland. Colonial wars were fought in Kenya, Aden and Cyprus and many other places. In each case the troops were told they were keeping the peace, and in each case their presence was disastrous. The English Army shot Kenyans because they wanted to be Kenyans, Adenese because they wanted to be Adenese, and Cypriots because they wanted to be Cypriots.

Now the same army is shooting Irishmen because they want to be Irishmen.

The difference is that this war is much closer to home. The people are white, and cannot be dismissed in the shameful way we dismissed our other victims as coons, ayrabs or wogs. Their towns look just like Cardiff or Glasgow, not some pathetic collection of shanty huts that we could arrogantly despise. Their language is the same as ours, and they can tell us exactly what they think of us instead of babbling away in some incomprehensible native lingo while they lined up like sheep for the slaughter.

It is impossible for a Welshman to serve much time in Northern Ireland without drawing the fateful comparison: what if this were Wales? Would this same army, that we joined to help defend our families and our society, be shooting Welshmen because they wanted to be Welshmen? Would this army take the side of the Establishment against those who seek the survival of their nation, as it has done in Ireland? And if we do not believe that this army has a right to interfere in Wales's problems, what right has it to do so in Ireland.

Many soldiers are asking these questions and not liking the answers they produce. They are coming to the conclusion that the army should not be in Ireland, and willing to back their conclusion by resigning or deserting. None of us know what the outcome will be if the English army does pull out. It could be horrific.

What we do know is that the longer the

army stays there the more difficult will Ireland's solution be. As we should have learnt from the long and painful process of losing an empire, the solution to a country's problems lies firmly in the hands of the people of that country, and no force of arms or political or economic blackmail from any other society can do more than delay the day when the people themselves decide their own fate.

from Y Saeth, Spring 1977



Produced in the early 70s, this was the American anti-Vietnam war movement's ironic comment on Britain's war in Ireland





# Death of a soldier

by a Republican prisoner of war in Long Kesh camp

'A soldier died today after being shot in Belfast,' said the newscaster in a slightly bored voice — after all, so many soldiers had been shot it was no longer 'big news'.

The 'big news' was the reduction of Minimum Lending Rate by 2 per cent, which no doubt cheered the bankers and building societies but was little consolation to the dead man, his family, wife, kids, mother.

But sure, isn't that the way of it. No one cares about a dead British soldier.

By the following newscast it wasn't even mentioned. He, Private X, had ceased to exist.

One moment a living being, loved by his wife, adored by his kids, probably putting a brave face on being over in Belfast 'keeping the peace' yet not really believing it, not understanding it. Then, nothing.

Coughing out his life on a dirty street corner, a late news item on the TV news between the latest strike and the weather. What a way to die. Why?

### 'IT'LL MAKE A MAN OF YOU'

PRIVATE X was born in Glasgow, one of a family of seven. He went to the local school where he was in a class of 40. The harassed teacher didn't care if he did any work or even if he was there, so Private X left school at 15 with a good British education. So he could write in a fashion and his favourite reading was comics.

So, semi-literate, he went in search of a job in a city of high unemployment. Thousands like him, all on the same quest, which ended in the dole queue. A statistic on a punched card spewed out by some computer.

Dole to pub and — as for most in that poor city — to petty crime. He falls foul of the police — who see in this weak, silly youth a source of amusement, someone they can abuse, intimidate and convict without fear of reprisal.

Then to the courts. X is put through the mill by the hacks of the system. He is humiliated, as is his family, and broken in spirit.

Was it the magistrate who suggested he join the army? '...make a man out of you...teach you a trade...see the world...'

The sentence: 'Bound over to keep the peace for two years, and a £20 fine.'

At home X is in trouble. His family can ill afford to pay the £20. It makes X feel his helplessness at the hands of the establishment — police, courts, solicitors. But he hasn't the education to think it out and fight back, he is 'apolitical'.

### SEEING THE WORLD

SO THE scene is set for him to join forces with the establishment he inwardly hates but fears, by enlisting in the British Army.

He joins a Scottish regiment. His parents have to fill in forms, for he's too young to enlist without their consent. But they, like him, are conditioned to believe the lie that a spell in the army will 'straighten him out, give him a trade.'

Did they not see the ad on TV about soldiers in Canada, climbing, going to the rodeo, enjoying themselves? They signed the forms — his death certificate.

Then the camp. Dressed all the same, learning to drill and learning to kill. But it's all good fun, the comradeship, weekends to the local village pub, money in his pockets for the first time, courting the local girls.

No danger. Indeed this is the good life. Obey the orders, let the officers decide, they know best after all. A pleasant six months, then to Germany.

Imagine, seeing the world at no expense
— and getting paid for it! Wasn't this the
truth of it; serve the establishment and you
will be well looked after? What job could
give you more?

How was he to know that a decent education would have given him any financial reward he wanted — more, it might have given him political awareness, an insight into what the establishment was doing to his class. He might have been a socialist. Who knows?

But now, in the way of all soldiers, in peace time there's little work to do, few complaints except the odd route march and exercise.

Of course he's heard of Northern Ireland, but in Germany it's just a pleasant blur. Nobody asks why it's going on in Northern Ireland. Just stupid phrases copied from the junior officers: 'Irish wogs ...paddies...go in and fix them.'

Anyway his regiment wasn't going there. Barrack gossip was next stop 'Sunny Cyprus'. No terrorists there. A bit of Turk trouble but we're not involved, so what the hell?

### TALK WAS OF 'BELFAST'

A YEAR and a half and back to Britain. A soldier, 19 years old. The regiment is going to Kent for special training, then homeleave.

With his thoughts full of going home he paid little attention to the lectures and learning to be a 'snatch squad' was just a bit of fun.

But playing the part of a crowd being snatched was somehow disturbing, bringing memories of Glasgow and police charges after football matches. He pushed it to the back of his mind.

The talk in the tents at night, was all 'Belfast', but he'd heard it before and anyway just three days and he'd be home. Seeing mum and dad again, sisters and brothers — he'd presents for them from all the places he'd been.

He'd imagined his welcome a hundred

times in daydreams. He wasn't disappointed. His family was overjoyed to see him and he was indeed a returning hero.

His parents must have thought how right they were to have encouraged him to join up. Wasn't he the big man now, so neat and tidy. Not at all like the 'scruffs' hanging about the pub he used to mate about with.

Six weeks passed quickly and he's saying farewell to his family. He doesn't know it's his last. Then base camp...'It's Northern Ireland.'

### THE ANGER AND THE FEAR

PRIVATE X isn't sure of his feelings. Was he afraid? A little, but a brave face to his mates...mustn't let the side down...

Anyway with the rush and bustle, the embarkation, getting berths on the boat, swapping yarns and supping beer, there's no time to think about it.

Then the briefing from an officer: 'You are going there to keep the peace...paddies ...bad lot the IRA...Protestants fairly friendly but not to be trusted fully...keep your end up...beat the Yaboos...'

Then standing on a rainy, windswept dockside, trying to shelter from the cold. Tortoise-like, head withdrawn into your collar, wishing you were at home, anywhere but that bloody dockside.

After what seems like hours you arrive at your new home, a Wild West type fort with high fences and guard posts. A few jokes about the cowboys, but little laughter.

When you're settled in the leg-pulling starts. The 'old hands' going out give the new boys stick. Lurid tales of snipers at every corner. 'Watch out for the sniper in The Murph

— he never misses.' The laughter is a bit
strained.

In the next few days he got to know the score in the district, the houses where the inhabitants were suspects. He went on raids at night — the frightened kids in bed not much different from his own family.

He was confused by that — he didn't like the thought.

It was, after all, the fault of these people. They sheltered the gunmen. Hell, they were the gunmen.

His first riot was frightening. A child was killed by a baton-round. Private X wrote to his mother he'd be glad to be out of here.

The next day a rocket was fired at a Saracen armoured car. Two soldiers were killed and some injured. Private X was angry and afraid. On patrol that evening he was under fire, a soldier was shot beside him.

Day follows night and for the first time he gets a glimpse of the establishment's double-dealing. But there wasn't time to think. It was forgotten in the race to stay alive.

Would this nightmare ever end? Would he ever return to the safety of Glasgow?

Three weeks after he'd arrived in Belfast Private X died. Nearby the glassless holes of a burnt-out bus gaped at him as his life force made rivulets in the dirt of last night's riot.

'The General Officer Commanding, Northern Ireland, General King regrets to inform you of the death of your son, Private X. He was an exemplary soldier, a credit to his regiment and to the British Army.



# A SOLDIER'S LIFE

by Ian Phillips, who served 31/2 years in the Royal Marine Commandos, including 4 months in Belfast in 1973.

ACCUSATIONS OF systematic brutality and oppression by the securityforces on the catholic population in the North of Ireland are trenchantly denied by the Army and the Government. Those cases where brutality has been proved are usually treated by the press as having been isolated aberrations that are understandable given the difficult circumstances soldiers have to work in.

Thus they effectively condone these actions but at the same time deny that they are a natural consequence of the official policy and tactics of the Army's operations in Northern Ireland. However, my own experiences of Northern Ireland and the training we were given prior to our tour in 1973 led me to quite different conclusions.

### Recruitment

I joined up because I had no education or qualifications, and where I lived in Essex there wasn't much work available. I knew others who had joined up, so I decided to follow them. I joined up as a Junior Marine when I was 16. I wanted a bit of excitement, a bit of travel, to be tough, to be something rather than just be nothing outside.

The image of the services, disciplined, tough and professional, was very attractive. I didn't take the discharge options at 3 months and 6 months in training, because I hoped things would be great later. It's a very masculine atmosphere, and when the options come up they line you up and you get a lot of crap about how they are going to separate the men from the boys who want out. The pressure is on you to stick it out and get through the training because you want to prove yourself to your mates.

### Training

I was sent to a Commando Unit in Plymouth. After training on NATO exercises and in America we started Pre-Northern Ireland Training in May 1973.

The prospect of going to Northern Ireland is very much in soldiers' heads all the time. Before you go you do 3 months non-stop training for it, then you do a 4 month tour in the North, and when you come back you do a further one month de-brief.

So out of every 14 months you are doing 8 months of 'Internal Security' training. This training is quite different from the usual NATO training. It's a whole new ball game. It's urban warfare for a start.

Most of my 'IS' training was done in the barracks. Each Company (there were four) took it in turns to be 'rioters' and 'terrorists' one day and the security forces the next. About a month before the actual tour we had to spend two weeks at a barracks in

Lydd (Kent). It is here that the 'IS' training becomes more realistic.

### Realistic

Within the barracks there is a mock town consisting of several streets, alleyways and generally resembling any ordinary working class district. Practical training is given in riot control, house searching, interrogation techniques, sniper positioning, setting up secret observation posts etc, etc. The training is so realistic that every day people were injured. I used to wonder that if this is what happened during training God only knows what'll happen when we get out there.

Training also covers intelligence and interrogation. In one exercise, on Dartmoor, you are captured and interrogated. It's very tough and realistic. You are beaten up, sometimes quite badly and they give you the roughest treatment they can actually give you short of putting you in hospital—though that has been known. They believe that you've got to know exactly what you've got to dish out and the best way to know is by receiving it yourself. You learn how to do these things by being a victim.

### Interrogation techniques

When you are captured on this exercise, you are slung into the back of a dustcart in pitch darkness, driven around for 1-1/2 hours then dragged out into spotlights, beaten up, stripped or lined up against a wall. Someone was stood in a stream, in the middle of the night: freezing cold water is thrown over you, some were hooded or really badly done in. My section had to escape and go back and rescue others. When we got them they were badly shocked.

In another exercise we had to interrogate RAF officers as part of their officer training. We were to give them a real kicking to make it realistic. Many blokes really enjoyed this and no-one held back too much. We stripped them, gave them a hiding, hooded them and all the rest of it. That was in 1973. We were told in early 1972 that they were no longer going to train soldiers in techniques of interrogation where physical force or violence was used. This was because the press had discovered about the ill-treatment of internees. But the training still went on well after that. As far as I know from other soldiers, it was still going on in 1975.

### Indoctrination

We were also given lectures on the situation out there at the time. Even though we were going to be deployed in a part of Belfast that consisted of mostly Protestants with one small Catholic area the enemy was firmly defined as being the IRA, and their sympathisers (which meant all catholics). The Republican political arguments were dismissed as being Communist, and we were given a lecture on the 'Russian threat'. This kind of indoctrination was obviously aimed at instilling the belief that repression of the catholic minority was 'right' and 'justified'.

When we eventually went out there one of the first things I noticed was that nearly all the soldiers were concentrated in the Catholic areas. In fact day and night these areas were saturated with troops. The logic behind this was of course that the catholics caused most trouble.

### Belfast

I was sent to the North the day after my 18th birthday. We were stationed in North Belfast. At this time the Protestant paramilitaries were at the peak of their sectarian assassination and bombing campaign. Nevertheless all our activity was directed against the Republicans. Local Catholic pubs were being bombed frequently, and yet in the week following four attacks not one Protestant suspect was brought in. But all the time we were picking up Catholics.

I was stationed in Tactical HQ as an orderly for a period. Anyone arrested and all suspects were brought in there for screening. My room where I slept was right next door to the interrogation room and every night you'd hear people coming in and getting roughed up, their heads being banged against the walls, screaming and everything. I was more annoyed at losing my sleep than anything else at the time.

On one occasion I was told to guard 3 prisoners. They were told to lean up against the wall, fingers on the wall, feet apart. I was told to keep watch on them. One had a gunshot wound in his leg from a few days earlier and couldn't stand up properly. I let him sit. The corporal came in, screamed at and threatened me and made the bloke get up. Then he took me off the job. Two hours later I saw that they were still stood there in really bad pain.

### 'The Box'

I saw lots of blokes who had been given a real hammering. One of the first things I saw when I arrived there was a little room called 'The Box'. It was about 10' by 10' with a table and chair in it — and it was covered in blood. Other blokes said: 'it's just from blokes who get a working over'. There were pictures in the Intelligence Room of blokes propped up between two marines, really smashed to pulp.

There wasn't a day went by when you didn't witness some incident of brutality, whether it was someone getting dragged through the corridor by his hair or some woman who was smashed in the gob by the biggest guy in our unit once, just for screaming. At the time, though, as a serviceman you are used to a certain amount of toughness and brutality as a way of life, and it doesn't hit you so hard. Now, looking back, as a civilian I think just how

brutal it was. So your training actually achieves something. You become hardened.

The worst incidents of brutality that I witnessed were in the Crumlin Rd. Prison during searches we did there. When we searched the Republican wing, the blokes from my unit went round to certain cells looking for certain individuals who had been convicted of shooting marines. There was one guy in particular, everyone made a bee-line for his cell. He was stripped and given a hiding. You could hear the bloody screams all over the prison. Of course there are no press cameras that can go in there an take pictures.

### **Army Snipers**

As well as interrogating prisoners the main job of the Intelligence Section was to liaise with the RUC, Special Branch and the SAS. They kept tabs on all movement in the area and produced a weekly 'INTSUM' (Intelligence Summary) which was sent back to England for use by the Intelligence Section of the unit who would relieve us. The sophistication of their techniques was on a par with '1984'.

In the Orderly Room of Tac HQ was kept all day by day records of the unit's operations in the area. Whilst working as a general dogsbody in there I was able to take in the full extent of official repression of the catholics in Northern Ireland.

I remember in particular the Sniper files which documented the hits and misses of the unit snipers. The shooting of unarmed suspects by Army snipers was carried out with the full knowledge of Commanding Officers. And even in those cases where the sniper claimed the man was armed the secret positioning of the sniper and his likely distance from the target preclude the possibility of giving any effective warning which is what is required by the Yellow and Blue card regulations.

It would not be difficult to fill this article with particular brutal incidents which I personally experienced whilst serving in Northern Ireland. However, the most important message that must be got across is that such brutality is part of the operational methods of the 'Security Forces'. From their point of view it is the only way to successfully suppress the Republican movement.

### The Soldiers

In conclusion I think a few words should be said on the changing attitudes of soldiers to Northern Ireland. Years ago when the 'trouble' first started soldiers viewed the conflict in Northern Ireland as an opportunity to get in some active service. To many young soldiers who had not served in Aden and Malaya, despite the dangers, Northern Ireland seemed very exciting, it was the real thing, something to boast about back home.

However, after ten years the novelty has worn off. By 1975 when I was discharged a tour of Northern Ireland was the worst thing that could happen. The number of soldiers deserting or going AWOL would increase, alcoholism and violence was prevalent, and the cost to family relationships was immeasurable. Apart from very new recruits who had never been there the attit-

ude of most ordinary soldiers is that we should get out-though it usually expressed by saying that we should let them fight it out. When I was there Ididn't understand the situation, but I tried to keep my mind open. I was willing to listen. I used to read the Irish News. I was one of the few people who read it. Then the CO banned it because it started reporting incidents of my unit beating up people. I complained and then people began to accuse me of being a sympathiser, in a joking way, but on occasions people got a bit serious. At times I was threatened physically by people who were frustrated with it all and saw me as a bit sympathetic to the other side. But I was n't-I was just against killing from any

### Getting Out

After Northern Ireland I was beginning to develop pacifist and anti-military views and my tour in Cyprus when I saw that we were not there to protect human lives but only British military interests and NATO missiles trained on Russia strengthened this.I finally decided I had to get out. I went home to London without leave to think things out and when I was picked up and charged with being AWOL I was slung in jail and court martialled for desertion.

### Colchester

I spent three and a half months in Colchester prison and it was an interesting experience looking back on it. The type of people I met in Colchester were, much to my surprise, mostly people who were not in fact criminals, and the reasons why they were in Colchester were things that in civilian terms were not criminal offences: absences, refusing to obey certain orders and things like that. One of the surprising

things was the amount of people actually in Colchester for desertions and absences and the way the population of the prison had increased over the period that the British Army had been in Northern Ireland. I conclude from that that sending soldiers continually back to Northern Ireland to serve there has obviously some effect on this and I think that a lot of dissatisfaction with service in Northern Ireland is manifested by drunkeness, petty offences, absences and desertions and things like that and I think this is one of the reasons why the prison population has gone up.

I don't have the figures but I know that Colchester, judging by the strength of the staff at Colchester, weren't able to deal with the amount of people coming in over the period and they were always understaffed and always moaning about the hours they were having to do and of course that rubbed off on the prisoners. Especially on the most ridiculous things like not being able to get baths, which was a constant complaint, and being locked in your cells longer than was really allowed at certain times.

In April 1975 I was finally discharged as a Conscientious Objector. You can only be a CO on pacifist grounds, you can't object purely on political grounds. But you couldn't convince them that you were a CO unless you'd been through the sort of thing I went through. Above all you can't apply to be a CO unless you know that the status exists and most soldiers don't; if outsiders tell them they get nicked under the Incitement to Disaffection Act. The way most soldiers go about it is just by going AWOL.

The amount of desertion is incredible, the numbers applying for discharges is increasing and this is very much connected with Northern Ireland as well as with pay and conditions.



Not long ago we ruled the world With cane and bowler hat Now all we've left is Ulster And we've trouble holding that. The public school taught us to rule — We'll keep those natives down So don't call US tyrannical — We're loyal to the Crown.

### CHORUS

Upper class pukka class officers' mess We've walked on the Irish Since Good Queen Bess, A kick in the knackers will make 'em confess, Upper class, pukka class, born to oppress....

They say Strasbourg may condemn US— How dare THEY interfere? You take Sir Edward Compton's word— It never happened here. It's all right to kick an Irishman, We say it without shame. It's just part of our tradition— Play the Man, and Play the Game.

### NO RECRUITING SONG [to 'Galway Bay']

Please don't go across the sea to Ireland, Please don't go down Ballymurphy way, Don't listen to the bullets flying madly For British soldiers go where bosses say.

The Ulster lads who walk the streets of Belfast Come from the same world you know every day, They're working class and struggling out of school-chains, And looking hard for jobs to get their pay. Why go and fight them when they live as you do? Why go and fight your brothers from the Falls? Why go and fight the boys who are your comrades Around the bombed-out bricks of Belfast walls.

For Alex, Kevin, Seamus are your schoolmates, And they've got troops against them night and day, So give them your support and free the people And get the soldiers out their country's way.

Chris Searle



A sniper's view — an army rifleman surveys a Belfast street

### LETTER TO A BRITISH SOLDIER ON IRISH SOIL Tired of the bombs exploding in our homes Tired of the rubble growing in the streets Soldier Tired of the deaths of old friends You did not ask to come Tired of the tears and the funerals -We know that. Those endless endless funerals. You obey orders Soldier We know that. When you came to this land You have a wife You said you came to understand. A sweetheart Is this your understanding? A mother We know th We dream here. And you b We dream that this land Is our land. That one day Where you stand Catholic and Protestant There is death. Believer and Non-believer Where you walk Will stand here There is a burning wound. And dream Where you sleep As Irishmen. There is no peace And the earth heaves We dream Through a nightmare of blood. Of a green land Without death. Soldier A new silence descending When you die A silence of peace. The dogs will bury you. And this dream Ш We dream, Soldier When you came to this land Without you. You said you came to understand. Soldier, we are tired of your understanding. That is our understanding. IV Tired of your kno Go home, Soldier. Tired of the rifle-butt Your presence here Tired of the jails, the Destroys the air In dark corners. Your smile disfigures us. Soldier Go home, Soldier We are tired of the peace you bring Before we send you h To Irish bones. Patrick Galvin

# Ours not to reason why

Lloyd Hayes former black soldier tells it like it really is.

A black teacher in South West London told me that out of every ten youngsters that signed up to join the British Army in his school, four were black. This, even though only about three out of ten of the pupils in the school were black.

A social worker in South East London told me of the case of two black youths who had to join the Army to escape from going to

This is the situation that now faces the

black communities of this country...more and more of our youth are joining up to become cannon fodder for the same people who are beating on our heads every day everywhere. These people are the British government, the police and the bosses who own them all.

### Boy soldier

More and more youths are joining up because there are fewer and fewer jobs for them, and even fewer good jobs for them to

Well, how do blacks in the army get on. Unfortunately but predictably they don't get on any better than they do in civvy street.

So as an ex-soldier myself, I would like to take this opportunity to give a brief outline of my own experience in the army.

I joined as a boy soldier at the age of 16. I joined because my father had been unemployed for 18 months and really he could no longer afford to support me. I wanted to learn a profession, to learn music. So in April 1968 I joined the Queens Junior Soldiers Regiment, as a drummer.

The first thing I noticed was that there were so few other black soldiers, about six or seven out of the company of three

We were always on show, on camp open days and when civilian and military personnel from Black African countries visited.

By the time I completed my training as a junior soldier at the end of 1970 there were about 16 black junior soldiers nearly all of whom were in the rifle platoon (the infan-

In 1971 I joined a battalion in West Germany. This unit was completely different. There were far more black soldiers, there were much more and frequent and open conflicts between the black and white soldiers. But even worse, the NCO (noncommissioned officers) always seemed biased against us, we were always more severely punished than the others.

It was at the beginning of 1972 that things started to get worse. We were preparing for our first tour of duty in Northern Ireland, which only lasted for 6 weeks

The NCOs started getting heavy. A couple of us were talking quite a lot of politics, we met with a few socialist groups in Germany, we were beginning to think.

For the first time a couple of us were being outrightly harassed, which ended in me being charged on three different charges. I got twenty days inside. At the same time the race problem was getting

This was so, especially in the battalions that had just done a few tours of duty in Northern Ireland.

It was during this period that I spent most of my spare time reading about the black struggle. The American, the African and the West Indian struggles. I went to a lot of meetings as well.

In June 1972 the battalions started preparing for a four month tour in Ireland. But unlike the previous tour this promised to be a whole new ball game.



A black soldier in Northern Ireland

### Do and Die

We had lectures on urban guerrilla warfare and the army's version of the background to the war in Northern Ireland. The rifle companies went away to a special camp for two weeks practising things like: house to house searches, foot patrolling in urban areas, interrogation techniques (torture).

Most of the soldiers had the following attitude to killing Irish people: 'Ours is not to reason why, ours is to do and die'...and many did die!

On several occasions myself and a few others would try to get an explanation as to why the IRA were always 'terrorists' and the Protestants para-military groups were never mentioned.

Why the Protestants were always implied to be on the side of law and order? We were always ignored...

At the end of 1972 we finally arrived in Derry where I spent most of the four months that we were in Ireland. One of the things that surprised me most on arrival was the total change in discipline. Things that usually carried harsh punishment were being ignored. Incidents began happening every day. Platoons and sections would refuse to go out on patrol because they hadn't had any sleep or food.

Black soldiers refused to go out on patrols because we were being used for night foot patrols while the whites would do the cushy vehicle patrols.

Some soldiers committed suicide because they were sick and tired of being in Ireland.

The thing that really got to me was the hatred which the Catholics looked upon us...the blacks in the British Army.

### Black power

We an exploited and oppressed minority like themselves were helping our own oppressors to oppress them.

The British have been exploiting the Irish for close on 400 years. The British have been beating and whipping black people for close on 400 years!

It was only those of us into Black Power who understood that although we were on the other side of the wire, both black and Catholics faced the same enemy...the Brits.

One of the most vivid things I remember about Northern Ireland was a chat I had with a couple of other black soldiers who had just returned from a house search... They had felt so ashamed and disgusted with the whole thing in Ireland that they felt like leaving their rifles in the house they had just smashed up.

### Brutalised

They had gone to this house bust down the front door of the house, waking up the mother and the father and the five kids living there (including a one year old baby) they had ripped up all the mattresses on the beds, they had ripped up the floor boards, smashed the cistern in the toilet, flooded the bathroom and after all this all that they found was a kids catapult and a rubber



British soldiers in Aden

bullet that was fired through the front room window by a soldier...

This is the sort of thing that goes on all the time, and no black person, no working class person should be part of it.

We must no longer be part of a murdering army of Britain, that itself has brutalised our race and plundered Afrika and the West Indies.

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.

From Flame 6-5-77





Another thing that I think is important for those people who are politically aware, and especially people in the labour movement. because it affects them, is the amount of time that the army spends on internal security. The internal security training that we did involved things like house to house searches, riot training, surveillance. public surveillance of civilians, intelligence work, compiling dossiers and records of individuals, - all this type of internal security training is given in the services. And the amount of time spent on it is now really tremendous.

- Ian Phillips

The Heathrow internal security exercise

## If I Was Not a Soldier

If I wasn't a soldier, a soldier said, What would I be? — I wouldn't be, It's hardly likely it seems to me, A money lord or armament maker, Territorial magnate or business chief. I'd probably be just a working man, The slave of a licensed thief, — One of the criminals I'm shielding now!

If I wasn't a soldier, a soldier said,
I'd be down and out as likely as not
And suffering the horrible starving lot
Of hundreds of thousands of my kind
And that would make me a Red as well
Till I rose with the rest and was batoned or shot
By some cowardly brute — such as I am now!

### HUGH MACDIARMID



Manned by Army personnel, an underground control centre in Holborn, central London, being used as the strike-breaking HQ against the firemen.

### INFORMATION ON IRELAND

If you like this pamphlet you can help by taking a number of copies and selling them. We give 1/3 discount to orders of 10 or more copies. Single copies cost 30p plus 15p p&p. 10 copies for £2 plus 30p p&p.

We would like to produce other pamphlets taking up specific themes concerning Britain's war in Ireland. We would appreciate any help: financial contributions would be especially welcome.

Orders, enquiries and donations to: Information on Ireland, 1 North End Road, London W 14.

### HOME SOLDIER HOME

The new film Home Soldier Home is a 40 minute black and white documentary which uses interviews with ex-soldiers as a major element to show the anti-working class and partisan nature of the British Army. Ex-soldiers describe their experiences of the authoritarian class-based army structure, the real conditions of life that lie behind the phoney recruitment propaganda, and the crushing of their illusions. The film includes footage of the Army in action in Ireland and in other colonial wars.

To book the film write to 'Home Soldier Home', Information on Ireland, 1 North End Road, London W 14.



### DIVIDE AND RULE FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN

Trade Unionists march through the Square Towards the City Chambers.

Police. Police. Police.

And in the streets leading off the Square -Scottish soldiers with rifles. Live ammunition.

They may be ordered to shoot into the crowd.

And behind the Scottish soldiers -English soldiers with rifles. Live ammunition. If the Scottish soldiers refuse to shoot into the crowd The English soldiers will be ordered To shoot the Scottish soldiers

Oh, but that was long ago. That was in the future.



# Sergeant Where's Mine?



I wrote this song a wee while ago after seeing a documentary on television. It was about Ulster and the children in Ulster, being in a terrible state with the war being on, and the soldiers in Ulster, being in a terrible state trying to cope with the kids and fight a war that they don't know what it's all about. And after I saw it, about a fortnight later I was walking along Sauchiehall Street and I came to the Army Information place. I was looking in the window — you know, where all these young guys join the Army — and there was all these pictures of computers and discoteques and things, and soldiers enjoying themselves, but there was nae deed bodies in the window. And I thought, O Aye. So this is a wee song I wrote after seeing these things.

I'm lying in bed, I'm in room twenty-six
And I'm thinking of things that I've done
Like drinking with squaddies and bulling my boots
And counting the medals I've won.
These hospital wards are all drab looking joints
But the ceiling's as much as I see
It could dae with a wee touch of paper or paint
But them again mebbe that's me.

### Chorus:

Oh Sergeant is this the adventure you meant When I put my name doon on the line Oh you talk of computers and sunshine and skis Oh I'm asking you sergeant where's mine?

I've a brother in Partick with long curly hair
When I joined up he said I was daft
He said shooting strangers just wasnae his game
That brother of mine isnae saft.
But I can put up with most things I've done in my time
I can even put up with the pain
But what dae ye dae with a gun in your hand
When you're facing a hundred odd wains?

Billy Connolly

Typeset by F.I. Litho Ltd., 328/9 Upper Street, London N1. Printed by the Russell Press Ltd., 45 Gamble Street, Nottingham NG7 4ET.