

AN CAMCHÉACHTA
**THE STARRY
PLOUGH**

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*The Theoretical
Magazine of the
Republican
Struggle*



***THEME:* The Brooke Talks; British Counter Insurgency in Ireland**

RULES

1. The editor reserves the right to amend contributions where space dictates and to make comments.
2. Pen names may be used so that material can be considered on its own merits rather than on the reputation of the writer. The writer's name must be supplied.
3. Material can be in Irish or in English.
4. Letters must not be longer than two pages of type.
5. Articles not to be longer than four pages of type.
6. Material must be relevant to the theme of the magazine.

Material should be sent to the
Education Department,
44 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1.

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AN CAMCHÉACHTA

THE STARRY

PLOUGH

Every struggle needs its forum for discussions and debate. Indeed every collective and progressive human project which seeks to advance based upon an involved support and democratic base, requires such a facility... Revolutionary struggles especially must encourage the development of theory, open debate and discussion, and the development of political consciousness to advance and ultimately succeed.

The Education Department of Sinn Féin, along with the other levels of the party and leadership, has a responsibility to initiate and direct programmes which are designed to develop a common ideology amongst republicans and to equip activists with skills.

As part of the project to develop political consciousness and to present theories about making the struggle relevant to the Irish situation, *An Camchéachta* (The Starry Plough), the theoretical magazine of the republican struggle, has been launched. This is the first issue.

Each magazine will have a particular theme in order to focus discussion and to maximise the educational potential. While, *An Camchéachta* will be aimed at republicans, it is not an internal publication. It will be produced as a quarterly, by an Editorial Board under the general aegis of the Education Department. After this first issue, an open forum will be included in subsequent issues to encourage activists to respond to the themes contained in the previous issue.

The Editorial Board is also keen to get your views on the magazine, and any aspect of its production or content.

Will *The Starry Plough* be a successful project? The Education Department and Editorial Board is certainly determined that it should, but its success or failure really depends upon you, the reader.

Can some of the topics covered here be included in your political discussions? Oh, you don't have political discussions! Well, can they be started? Can comrades in your local organisation, in your prison wing or cell block, in your cumann, can comrades come together around a political agenda? The discussions can be a formal part of your activity or an informal thrash out.

You don't have enough comrades? There aren't enough activists in your area? No one is interested? Well are you interested? Can *The Starry Plough* help you to develop a theory upon which a practical start can be made? It's up to you.

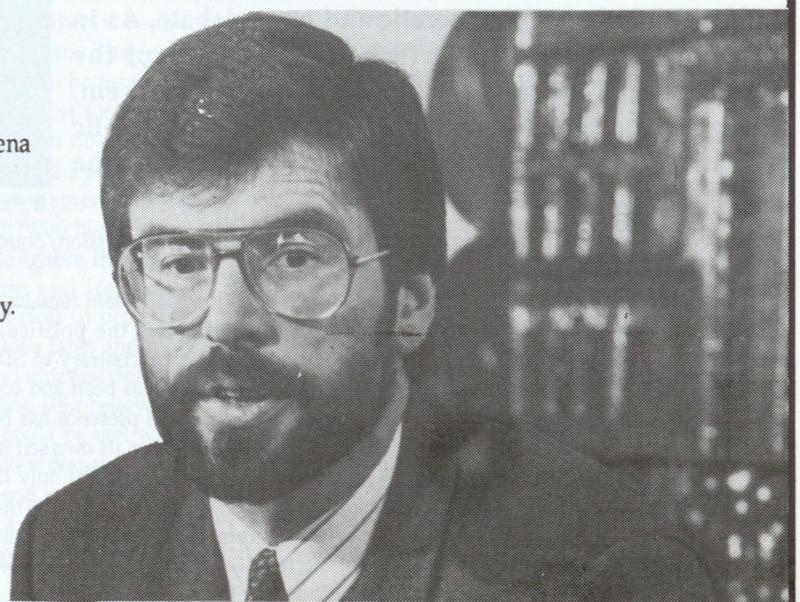
Remember,

It is not the critics who count,
nor those who point where the strong falter
or where the doers of deeds could have done better.
The credit belongs to you who are actually in the arena
Who strive valiantly
Who err and fall short again and again
Who know great enthusiasm
Who, at least, know the triumph of achievement
And who, if you fail, at least fail while daring greatly.
So that your place can never be with
those insignificant, cold and timid souls,
who know neither victory nor defeat.

Let us dare greatly.

Beir Bua,

Gerry Adams



THE BROOKE TALKS

THE POLITICAL REALITIES AND THE REPUBLICAN ANALYSIS



BY
UNA
GILLESPIE

SINN FÉIN REPRESENTS 35% of the nationalist electorate in the Six Counties and is the second largest party in Belfast City council, yet we are being excluded from the Brooke Talks on the pretext that we support violence while at the same time as Gerry Adams stated "*Sinn Féin couldn't get to the table for British guns*". Others have supported this exclusion or acquiesced in it while ignoring the threats of increased loyalist violence and increased British repression to set the pace of the talks. The real reason for the exclusion of Sinn Féin is quite clear- "*The British government... wants a cosy little process where arrangements can be made to govern Ireland in Britain's interests.*" The secret nature of the talks excludes any notion of democratic and open debate. As in Hillsborough the people will be asked to accept the talks on the hype, and leaks which surround them, rather than on their substance. There will be no public debate around a process which is supposed to decide the future of the Irish people.



● PETER BROOKE

The people of Ireland have never been permitted by the British to exercise their right to national self-determination, ie the right of a nation to exercise the political freedom to determine its own economic, social and cultural development. The pretext for partition — the Unionist veto ie the wishes of a national minority to maintain British rule holds no validity against the express wishes of the majority of people on this island. Partition perpetuates the British government's denial of the Irish people's right to self determination and perpetu-

ates the cycle of oppression/domination/resistance/oppression.

For as long as Britain remains in Ireland its presence distorts the political landscape. Britain's presence, contrary to SDLP beliefs in their 'neutrality', has been and continues to be malign because its presence has been and continues to be based on its own self interests.

Sinn Féin believes that only the domiciled people of Ireland can decide the future and government of this island free from external interference. The only solution therefore to the

present political conflict is the ending of partition and a British disengagement from Ireland with the restoration to the Irish people of their right to sovereignty, independence and national self-determination. The fundamental republican position has been to get Britain to abandon its partitionist stance and adopt a policy of withdrawal. Maximum political unity in Ireland based on these principles should be a fundamental part of a nationalist strategy towards peace and justice.

Unionism has historically been politically

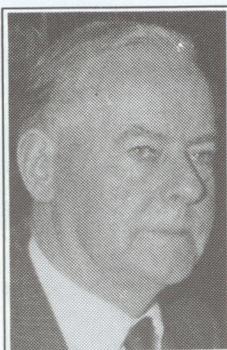
rigid in thought and application with only one aim: the perpetuation of itself through the maintenance of British rule in Ireland. This is maintained on many fronts, from armed militia and a paramilitary police force, gerrymandered electoral boundaries, institutionalised state discrimination in job allocation and housing as well as the provision of services and a range of coercive and repressive legislation. Since 1921 it is apparent that Unionists have consistently sought to destroy any form of political institution that did not reflect their dominance in the Six-County state. They have never conceded anything.

The degree to which nationalists were afforded any rights within this state depended on the degree to which loyalists would tolerate the erosion of their privileged position. Loyalists' tolerance will not permit equality for nationalists. Equality is synonymous with national rights. Partition is in direct contradiction to that.

Since 1973 the British have been attempting to establish an internal governmental structure or arrangements involving unionists and a section of the nationalists, namely the SDLP, who have continually given the British succour through their policy of support for a devolved assembly with conditions of power-sharing. Since the 1970s this strategy has also involved the Dublin government which the British realised was essential in order for both to share the political and military repression of voices of dissent ie Republicans and other anti-imperialists and to allow the SDLP to reassure its nationalist voters that it pursued an all-Ireland objective.

All the political parties on the island of Ireland except the unionists have a united Ireland as a stated policy objective. Having said that Sinn Féin is the only party who have put forward concrete and specific proposals for peace in Ireland. It is also the only party whose proposals do not work to a British agenda. Sinn Féin believes that any solution to the conflict cannot be confined to the Six Counties; there can be no 'internal settlement'.

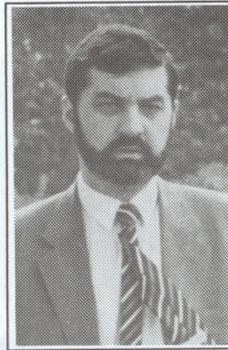
The Brooke talks or any 'initiative' which may emerge from them will eventually flounder precisely on the grounds of the issues which they did not discuss and thus the realities that will not change. There will be no discussion on the relentless repression of nationalists which continues in this state from repressive legislation to torture in interrogation centres and the holding of political hostages to the collective punishment of communities, the seizure of farm lands and closure of border roads, censorship, use of plastic bullets, house raids, strip-searching, refusing nationalists the right to march in Belfast city centre, of job discrimination which still sees



● MOLYNEUX



● PAISLEY



● ALDERDICE



● John Hume (right) with Brit direct ruler Brooke

Catholics being 2¹/₂ times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants, the list is endless.

Most importantly, Sinn Féin believes that the one issue which will not even be mentioned as a serious proposal will be a British disengagement from Ireland and reunification. If the SDLP and the Dublin government have reunification as their stated policy objective they should be using this forum to persuade the British to change their policy position and to try to persuade the unionists that their future lies in the context of a united Ireland in which their full religious and civil liberties will be guaranteed rather than in a state ever-dependent on the British government which will protect them when it suits them and dump them when it becomes politically expedient to do so. They (the SDLP and Dublin) should also be using international forums to win support for Irish demands. It is however, only too obvious that neither of these parties have the political will to push for a permanent settlement nor have they ever made any effort to achieve Irish unity: instead they choose to ignore the majority of people in both Britain and Ireland who favour a British withdrawal in preference to crumbs from the master's table and a maintenance of British rule and unionist domination.

In short, Sinn Féin believes that the British government should be met with a firm united and unambiguous demand from the nationalist parties for an end to the unionist veto and for a declaration of a date for withdrawal.

Instead, we are now left with a situation

where the unionists are setting the agenda with demands that the secretariat at Maryfield be closed, constant reaffirmation of the union with Britain and demands that the Dublin government scrap Article 2 and 3 of its constitution as well as demands about symbolic venues for the talks. Without a declaration of British intent to withdraw and reunification of Ireland, unionists will not even consider coming to accommodation with nationalists. The maintenance of partition and the unionist veto leaves unionists with no reason to seek a consensus. Rigid unionist thinking has not changed in 20 years and the SDLP and the Dublin government through their failure to put reunification on the agenda are left with nothing to do but compromise with unionist and British demands all the way.

As Gerry Adams stated: "The path towards a united and independent Ireland is as yet an untrodden one and as such involves risk. But tinkering with the existing structures as did all

previous British 'initiatives' and as the present Brooke talks are preparing to do can only lead to continued economic depression and political conflict, not to mention the loss through emigration of thousands of young people every year.

"A move towards reunification will, on the other hand, generate a new dynamism and optimism, as people begin to envisage a more positive future as the international community backs this new departure with aid and good-will, as the Irish people develop a more positive and confident self-image and as those who at present see no future for themselves in this country return to help build a prosperous, united and independent Irish society.

"Until such courageous steps are taken, all that can be expected is more wasted time, more wasted lives and another addition to a long list of failed British attempts to stabilise the most unjust sectarian and repressive state in Europe."

Sinn Féin seeks to create conditions which will lead to a permanent cessation to hostilities, an end to the long war and the development of a peaceful, united and independent democratic society. The establishment of such a society will see sectarianism shrivel with the emergence of class politics and a realignment of political forces along the lines of left and right. The Irish democracy thus created will usher in the conditions for a permanent peace, a demilitarisation of the situation and the creation of a just society. In order to create these conditions, Sinn Féin has consistently been on record saying that it does not put any preconditions to talking and will talk to anyone at any time about ways of bringing about a just solution.

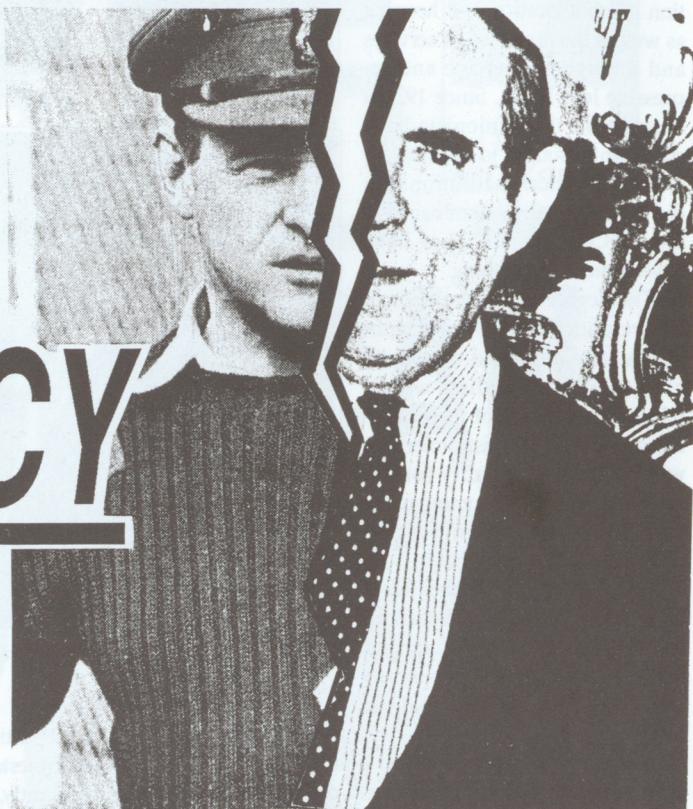
BRITISH

COUNTER

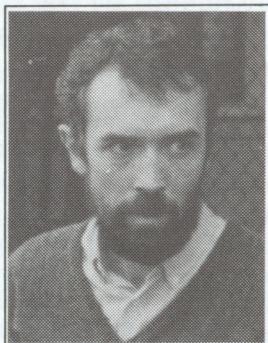
INSURGENCY

STRATEGY

**From Kitson to Brooke.
Basic theory and the
reality of practice.**



**BY
PAT
McGEOWN**



IN ESSENCE Britain's counter insurgency strategy, which at present dates from the arrival of British forces, their generals and experts in 1969 to the present day, is best described as a political/military strategy coordinating governmental, judicial, economic, social and psychological agencies and dimensions, and aimed at containing, isolating and destroying identifiable resistance.

There are some key high points of this strategy, easily identifiable, eg reforms in 1969-'70 the Curfew, Internment, Bloody Sunday, Ceasefire and Motorman in 1972, Sunningdale and the 1975 Truce, Ulsterisation, Criminalisation and Normalisation, Atkins' Talks, Prior's Assembly, Hillsborough and today the Brooke Talks. Each major move designed to have to a particular effect, from the illusion of political moves towards peace, to inflicting costly defeats on the insurgent republicans. It would be impossible to chart all the plans and in-

tentions for each, and it is not the intention of this paper to do so.

However the more latter stages are of particular interest as their effects are still being played out. The final section of this paper will address the central level of current Brit counter-insurgency strategy, the Brooke talks, not in a predictive way but in an analytical overview.

Let's remind ourselves of the five essential elements that compose the substance of British counter-insurgency strategy in Ireland, not only at the high points but on a day to day working basis.

(a). Identify the enemy and its reason for existence.

(b) Co-ordinate the resources and personnel of all sections of the establishment against it.

(c). Contain the enemy and wear it down tactically.

(d). Isolate and frustrate it in every way, politically and militarily.

(e). Destroy it.

This sectionalising of the process should not be taken as meaning that each is separate, or that one follows from the other in clear cut form as there is much overlapping. It is only used as a guide. While the 'counter insurgency' expert starts by 'identifying', he is already 'coordinating' and so on, and while he is 'containing and isolating' he is continually trying to identify new faces and approaches etc. They are continuous processes only finished when he has 'destroyed'.

(A)...Identifying the enemy and it's reasons for existence...

When the British decided to commit armed troops onto the streets of the North in 1969 the situation was already one of open rebellion and their primary aim was to counter this and stabilise the situation through identifying those who were rebelling and their reasons for rebelling. Because there had been a history of armed nationalist opposition to British rule there was also the question whether open spontaneous rebellion would turn into organised armed revolution and, if so, who would initiate that process. Or alternatively, could those leading

the rebellion be bought off through reform and appeasement? (John Hume et al.)

In other words, right from the start their strategy had political and military dimensions.

However, the initial problem that the British government faced was in finding a suitably coordinated and controlled body that could execute its will. Just who exactly was in charge and who ultimately would take decisions was a problem that would restrict the effectiveness of British counter-insurgency for many years. While all the arms of state control, British government, Stormont government, British army, RUC, and of course the unionist/Loyalist populace agreed on the defence of the state as it stood there were different opinions on what tactics should be employed. This is always a problem when putting theory into practice. What is easily planned and coordinated on paper seldom runs so smoothly when it comes to implementation by humans with different experiences and individual interests.

The Labour government of the day appeared to veer on the side of appeasement of the rebellious nationalist population, buying them off with reform in an attempt to control them again. They actively encouraged the setting up of the SDLP in an effort to take politics off the streets, where the constitutionalists had little control, and back into the safe corridors of power in Westminster and Stormont. Also by giving the SDLP their patronage they effectively chose the nationalist leadership that they would deal with and they promoted them in the media and press. These are age-old tactics of counter-insurgents in the broadest sense.

The unionists saw the situation differently. They saw all disorder as resulting from IRA conspiracies. The way to put them down was by force and threat of force. The RUC, the armed militia that simply reflected and defended political unionism supported this view.

The British army at this juncture appear to have been content to just fulfill the first role of counter insurgency strategy, identify your enemy and the possible causes of discontent.

Meetings held between senior British army personnel and IRA leaders at local level were an integral part of this process and also had the primary effect of keeping things quiet without having to actually initiate major political reform that could destabilise unionism. The IRA had of course their own agenda. But again it was an old Brit psychological 'counter insurgency' tactic 'making the opposition feel important, by structuring them into an institution of state' without handing them any real power. This was to be used again with even greater effect in the 1975 IRA cease-fire period.

The experience of 53 counter-revolutionary campaigns* between the end of World War II and January 1969 had taught British counter insurgency experts that there was an intermediate period between open street disorder and full scale warfare which could be used either to defuse the situation or to prepare for the next stage. As always 'containment' was a major cornerstone of their 'counter insurgency' strategy.

With the election of the Conservative government to power in Britain in June 1970, and that party's close ties with unionism, the balance of 'security' or counter insurgency strategy fell very much towards the aim of crushing opposition as opposed to buying it off. The second phase of counter insurgency strategy then began but not without its own problems.

(B)...Coordinate all resources and personnel...

A 'Joint Security Committee' had been established aimed at linking all the machinery of state and its forces together into a powerful 'War Machine' capable of a coordinated and controlled politico/military response.

However, those who sat on it had differing priorities or short-term

* 'British Army Training Manual'

IDENTIFY CONTAIN DESTROY CO-ORDINATE ISOLATE

objectives. The membership in early 1971 was the unionist Prime Minister, two unionist Cabinet ministers, the British army GOC, the RUC Chief, and one British government representative. It's make-up demonstrates a heavy imbalance towards unionist phobias and paranoia. It was to cause much friction between Brit army counter insurgency experts and the Stormont administration and local forces.

As British military 'counter insurgency' experts like Brigadier

Frank Kitson began to arrive in the North carrying with them the experience of British counter-insurgency campaigns in Malaya, Kenya, Muscat, Oman and Cyprus, that tension would increase. Kitson at this time was at Oxford University, writing the British Army's 'counter insurgency' bible, *Low Intensity Operations*.

He was undoubtedly brought to the North in 1970 with the dual brief; to attempt to structure a 'counter insurgency' response and to gain experience of what was a relatively new 'counter insurgency' situation. There were things that could be done in the far off obscure ends of the 'Empire', which could not be done under the watchful eye of the mass media, in a so called liberal democratic society so close to Britain and Western Europe. The 'counter insurgency' strategy for Ireland in the '70s would require a degree of sophistication and subtlety that the unionists were certainly showing themselves incapable of.



● KITSON

It would have more to do with propaganda images than physical show of strength. This is reflected in the Brit understanding that right from the start they needed to dictate how others saw the essence of the problem in the North. Their first propaganda victory was in getting acceptance for the explanation that the North's 'troubles' had sectarian roots and that British soldiers were the 'peace-keepers'.

Although this is not to say that Kitson advocated a 'softly softly' approach, and his use of a 'curfew' on the Falls Road in his first days here adequately demonstrates this. Rather, what Kitson seen as important was that all the institutions of state be coordinated to provide a disciplined and controlled politico/military response. While the curfew was essentially the result of unionist political control of day to day 'security-counter insurgency' policy it also suited Kitson's purpose of showing the full extent of state power to intimidate those who may consider opposing it. State terror is an essential part of 'counter insurgency' strategy.

Also inherent in the curfew situation was that it would draw the growing 'new IRA' of post '69 days out into an open battle with the Brit army allowing them to inflict casualties, and identify the new operational leaders and faces. In the former aim it was not successful in that only innocent civilians were killed while in the latter it was only marginally successful.

The main disagreement between British army 'counter insurgency' experts and the unionist leaders and forces was on the timing of internment in 1971. Whilst there was no disagreement around the use of special laws to contain the insurgent threat Kitson et al disagreed with in-

ternment at this juncture because it had lacked the intelligence preparation that would allow it to seriously disrupt the IRA. Most of the intelligence relied on in the initial internment swoop was outdated, probably due to the fact that the RUC Special Branch tasked with putting the lists together had been generally isolated from the nationalist community since 1969.

Furthermore the rapid growth of the IRA made it almost impossible to keep track of new talent and future leaders. It is also said that because of fundamental disagreements between the Brits and everyone else on the 'Joint Security Committee' what little up to date intelligence that they possessed was not handed over to the RUC. But lack of 'hard intelligence' is given as Kitson's reason for opposing internment at that time. He devotes much of his book *Low Intensity Operations* to intelligence gathering, categorisation, and the coordination of its operational use.

Internment accelerated the whole process into a state of open warfare and near complete alienation of the whole nationalist community. For this reason, and the ensuing activities of the Brit forces in the months afterwards 'Bloody Sunday' etc, it is now seen by 'counter insurgency' experts as one of the biggest and most costly mistakes of the Brit campaign.

Certainly in terms of intelligence gathering and 'counter insurgency' strategy the lesson learned was that the alienation of a community from the state means that little intelligence will flow from that community.

(C)...Contain the enemy: Wear it down tactically...

By 1972 nationalist Ireland was almost completely alienated from the British and it was recognised that — as opposed to 'containing' the situation, and allowing it to evolve towards a climate in which a political settlement could be initiated to 'isolate' the insurgents — another cornerstone of 'counter insurgency' strategy, the opposite was happening. Even with the mass internment arrests the IRA had no shortage of recruits and apparently unlimited support and sympathy within the nationalist community, while the possible 'appeasement nationalists', the SDLP had been forced almost completely out of the system through which reform could be initiated. There was a serious imbalance in the politico/military strategy towards the military solution.

Through the suspension of Stormont, the institution of direct British government rule and the short-lived IRA truce the British initiated a new political climate which would allow them to rebalance their strategy towards bringing in the reformers (SDLP) and 'isolating' the revolutionaries (IRA). Or at least ensure that the situation didn't deteriorate further, beyond 'an acceptable level of violence'.

The climax of this phase of Brit 'counter insurgency' strategy would be the attempted political settlement, and subsequent failure, of Sunningdale in 1974.



● The facade of normality does not hold up here or internationally

Meanwhile the day to day 'counter insurgency' tactics to 'contain' the IRA politically and militarily would evolve along the basic lines laid out by Kitson. Psychological warfare, use of special laws and powers, harmonisation of all the institutions involved in the battle.

And as a second arm of this process daily life was to made 'reasonably uncomfortable' (Kitson's term) for the nationalist population in the ghettos and villages where IRA support was strong — to wear them out.

This meant at least increased searches and harassment and at worst, sectarian murder carried out by 'pseudo-gangs' (Kitson's appropriate categorisation of the UDA/UVF/and Brit army/agent squads; MRF etc). The methods and the theory were simple. Use loyalist death squads and 'special forces', with their almost racist hatred of nationalists to kill and often gruesomely mutilate generally innocent nationalists. Then keep pumping out the propaganda line that if the IRA weren't fighting there would be no killings. It was and remains ultimate 'state terrorism'.

As for Special laws and powers they were progressively introduced; the Emergency Provisions Act, (a refined version of the Special Powers Act), — reforms are often little more than refined versions of repressive methods — the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the introduction of Juriesless Diplock courts.

A further important tactic in use during this phase, and with lasting effects, was the use of Brit 'counter insurgency' operatives in the 26 Counties to attempt to isolate Republicans and allow more pro-Brit elements in the government there to have their way. The planting of bombs in Dublin on the eve of a parliamentary debate on special legislation was an example.

The whole concept of psychological warfare was something that Kitson pioneered and later went on to teach to all British officers during training as 'psych-ops'.

The full extent of 'psych-ops' is infinite and revolutionary, in other words it is continually updated. However, we do know the basic principles — 'discredit, demoralise and intimidate' — some examples of their practical use have been made public in the revelations of ex-British army personnel and agents. It ranges from the most basic black propaganda to murder.

Kitson accepted the Mao analysis of what makes guerrillas/insurgents tick, when he wrote: "*It is in men's minds that wars of subversion have to be fought and decided*". Following on this the psychological state of the collective and individual insurgent's mind becomes a target. As indeed does the hearts and minds of the people who support and shelter them.

One technique that became very much a fixation with the Kitsonian 'counter insurgency' strategists and is still in use today was the attempt to create a 'split' in Republican ranks. The 'hawks and doves' stories that continue to appear are an important part of this process. As are the 'going political' stories and their sensationalist 'touts and traitors' line. A brief look at the background of the type of publications and journalists who produce such drivel should demonstrate to anyone where their sympathy lies. A former Brit member of the 'black propaganda unit', Colin Wallace, had much to say about the uses of these types of stories and what their aim was.

While there are many other examples of how the technique worked in the early years the best years for a practical study of the battle for hearts and minds is post 1976, when the processes of Normalisation, Ulsterisation and Criminalisation were introduced.

(D)...Isolate and frustrate the enemy in every way politically and militarily...

The further development and refinement of Brit 'counter insurgency' strategy began in 1975. In 1976 a strategy paper *The Way Ahead* was produced after consultation between politi-

cal and military 'counter insurgency' strategists. It laid out a process that would become known as the three pronged strategy of 'Ulsterisation, Criminalisation and Normalisation'. Although in effect the preparation and initiation of this strategy had already begun in 1975.

For a range of tactical reasons, the British administration had decided to enter into open talks with the IRA in late 1974 early '75. Not least amongst those reasons was that a 'breathing space' would give them time to prepare the ground for their new policies.

They believed that after an initial cooling off period the 'new RUC' could be made if not more acceptable to nationalists then at least more apt when linked with the UDR at military type patrolling and containment in nationalist areas. This would have the primary effect of reducing the level of mainstream British army commitment in the North, thereby reducing any pressure at home over casualties. Then, years later the real effects of this could be seen when it was disclosed that the RUC/UDR had responsibility for patrolling 80% of territory in the Six Counties. The British army's task had been reduced to just four 'hard green areas', West Belfast, Derry, South Armagh and part of the Fermanagh/Tyrone border.

Also, by using a 'police force' as the frontline defence against insurgency it may be possible to de-politicise the situation and portray it as something less than a war; a battle between 'police and criminal gangs'. And a reduction in the level of actual British troops could be portrayed as a first step on the road to 'normality'. Internment was ended as part of this cosmetic exercise.

The implications at home and abroad for Republican insurgents were not initially clear but they would become so in the days ahead.

Central to the whole process was the 'psych-ops' tactic and the primary aim was to isolate and frustrate Republicans.

Ulsterisation...

To effect Ulsterisation the RUC had to be restructured and remoulded in the image of a professional, non-sectarian police force. That this is still being attempted 15 years later says a lot. To this end the leadership of the force was placed under a 'non-sectarian' English cop, Kenneth Newman. Major publicity and propaganda offensives were launched through a generally compliant press and media, and the process of taking people of the streets was 'professionalised'.

They were now 'impartial, normal policemen' keeping 'law and order' in a society divided on 'religious' lines, until such times as the politicians could come up with an 'internal political solution'. Proof of this was their arrest and conviction of such Loyalist killers as the 'Shankill Butchers'. The role of Britain would effectively be wiped clean.

In effect, it was an attempt to totally internalise the problem and hopefully to distract international opinion away from Britain's real position as part of the problem. The struggle, which in the early 1970s had come to be seen as essentially a 'national liberation war' against the Brits, was re-defined as one of communities divided on 'fundamentalist religious' divisions because the basis of politics in the democratic sense is an element of compromise. By portraying this situation Britain could get off the hook but continue to control.

Defining what problems are is an important part of 'counter insurgency' strategy, because not only does it dictate how people see each side of the conflict, but also it sets the agenda on which a 'solution' will be based.

Psychology would play a central part in the process. In part, it has been a successful policy in that over the last 15 years the level of British troop commitment has been reduced, and the British analysis of the problem is generally the accepted one internationally.

Normalisation...

If Ulsterisation was in essence a military strategy with political and psychological dimensions, Normalisation was essentially the political, social and economic prong. Its central plank was to convince people that normality or peace was returning and that there was no need for war. The 'terrorists' were the only ones who didn't want peace. If they could turn the nationalist community against the insurgents, or make them think they had turned them they could isolate the insurgent.

Thousands of millions of pounds were pumped in during this period to give the impression of growing prosperity and fairness. New housing went up wholesale particularly in nationalist areas. Estates were specifically designed by 'counter insurgency' specialists, so that they could be easily sealed off in the event of an incident.

Factories and industry appeared to be booming, again with particular direction towards nationalist areas. Leisure centres grew out of nowhere.

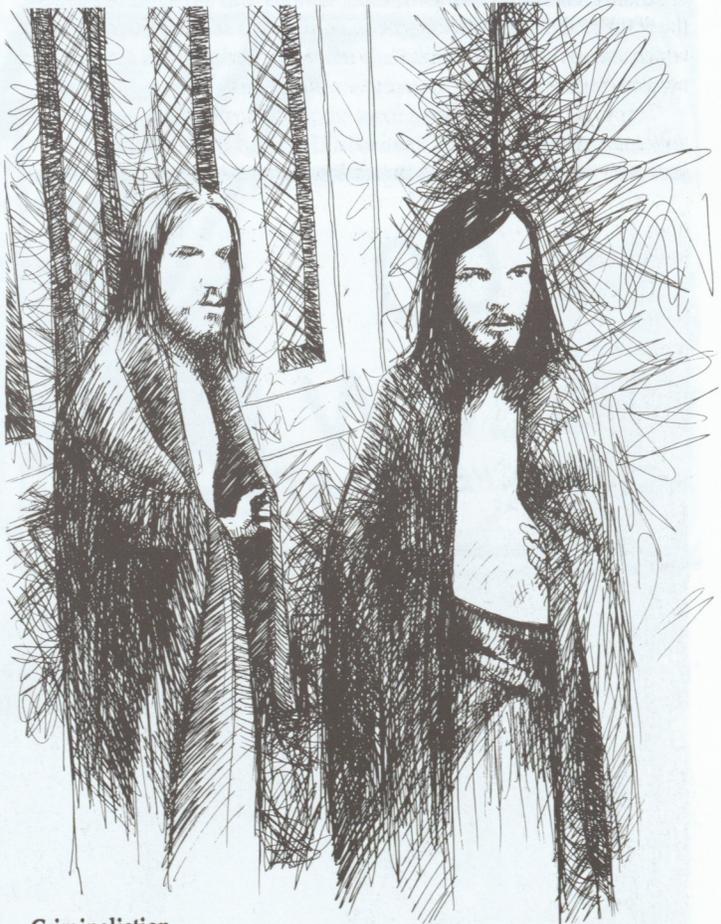
Everywhere things appeared to be getting better. "If only the terrorists would stop all could be rosy". "and anyway the terrorists were being defeated" ...". They were less effective than they had been, the arrest and conviction rates were up and the nationalist community were informing on them". These were all common propaganda lines of the day and statistics were produced to back up their image.

The opportunist use by Brit Propaganda Units of an incident involving IRA Volunteers when three children were killed and the subsequent 'gut-reaction' peace movement, to give the impression that the nationalist community were rejecting the IRA is another example of the tactic. Psychological warfare in action.

This period also saw the increased and more refined co-ordination of all sections of state control, (control in the ideological sense as much as physical). Business leaders met with Generals and RUC chiefs, NIO officials met with church leaders at local level, and with press and media people on a regular basis to ensure that their line and explanations were carried.

While within the state forces the fight against insurgents became more refined. Targeting of individual Republicans as opposed to the community became the order of the day.

The policy of normalisation is an ongoing one so it would be wrong to attempt to judge its real success or failure yet. But what is clear, is that primarily the reason that it has not brought the Brit the success they planned for is because of their inability to get an internal political settlement. Without that the facade of normality doesn't hold up here or internationally.



Criminalisation...

This was to become the most controversial and least secure part of the 'counter insurgency' strategy. It began with the announcement in 1975 that no one arrested after March 76 would be entitled to political



● The use of Loyalist death squads with their almost racist hatred of nationalists has for long been an important element in the Brit 'counter insurgency' strategy

status in the prisons, but its scope went far wider than prison policy.

The Brit propaganda line through which they hoped to influence 'hearts and minds' here and abroad was that as things were returning to normal those who continued to resist were going against the better interests of the community, therefore they should be treated as common criminals.

As it was essentially a 'law and order problem' the way to deal with them was investigation, arrest, conviction, and sentencing to a normal prison with no privileges under the due process of law. And anyway, they were "*Mafia-like led by Godfathers only interested in personal gain*".

What the psychologically orientated propaganda line hid was special laws, special 'no-jury' courts, presided over by unionist judges who happily accepted co-ordination into the war machine, and ignored torture and ill-treatment as a way of getting convictions which are usually the result of community co-operation in a normal society.

Over 80% of people convicted in this period were imprisoned on the basis of 'self-incriminating' statements signed under physical pressure and threat in purpose-built interrogation centres. The onus of proof of guilt, normal principle of law, was shifted so that the accused had to prove they were innocent.

Essentially in Kitson's own words, the law became "*...just another weapon in the government's arsenal...*" which "*...becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public...*".

Resistance to criminalisation particularly within the prisons, and ultimately with the hunger-strike deaths in 1981 effectively limited the success of this policy. However, it did play an important role in 'counter insurgency' strategy during the late '70s.

While the policies of Ulsterisation, Normalisation and Criminalisation didn't succeed in either isolating or wearing down Republican resistance they provide much of the foundations on which current Brit 'counter insurgency' strategy is based and they continue in so far as what is happening today is their extension.

(E)...Destroy the Enemy...?

This last section asks the question... how effective is Brit counter insurgency strategy today considering its practical evolution and its theoretical background. Has it the potential to counter Republican insurgency to the point of destroying it?

Present Brit counter insurgency strategy centres around the Hillsborough Treaty, aimed at nationalists and the Brooke talks aimed at unionists. It is based on a "*balancing act*", an attempt to balance all anti revolutionary forces in Ireland, be they British orientated, or "*constitu-*

tionalist nationalist", ie "*threat*" in a unified structure of sorts which can then be co-ordinated into the British counter insurgency forces and used to isolate and crush Republican opposition.

The Hillsborough Treaty was the start of this process. And it's worth remembering it is a "*revolutionary process*." That is, the plans have not been laid out, just the principles, so that adjustments can be made. The common principle of all involved is to destroy Republican resistance and the potential revolutionary alternative that it may offer to the Irish people.

Hillsborough was aimed, firstly, to bring the nationalist community, in all Ireland, the natural insurgent base for revolutionaries fighting against British rule and attempting to initiate radical social and economic revolution in all Ireland, into a common perspective and alliance with Britain.

It has an Irish dimension only in so far that 26-County politicians now see it in their interests too that the forces of revolution be crushed before they threaten their power and privilege. In this, they have become effective open allies of the Brits and turned their backs completely on national liberation for their own personal interests.

The Hillsborough strategy had to undergo changes because of loyalist misunderstanding and intransigence. The Brooke talks are about balancing Hillsborough's illusion of an Irish dimension, and stabilising unionists through the demand for the amendment or dropping of Articles 2 and 3. But in essence the process begun at Hillsborough in 1985 will remain, although its mutual slope and title may change. It marked the first total co-ordination of all counter revolutionary forces in Ireland and Britain.

Like all phases of 'counter insurgency' strategy already used it will be evolved and refined in the days ahead and it is important to remember this when dealing with counter-insurgency/revolutionary strategy. It mirrors revolutionary strategy in that it too has to be progressive. Albeit only in so far that it brings about limited reforms as those who hold power attempt to hold onto it. The prize that is being played for, is who holds power. It can't be static.

The failure of the Brit 'counter insurgency' strategy to date has been its inability to stabilise the political situation within the North and take politics back off the streets and into the hands of the safe 'constitutionalists'. Hillsborough and Brooke are attempts by them to do this firstly with the nationalist community, the insurgents' base.

Because in the main, the Hillsborough process is the current Brit counter insurgency strategy directed against Republicans we look at it more closely here.



● The common principle of all involved in the Hillsborough Treaty is to destroy Republican resistance and the potential revolutionary alternative it may offer to the Irish people



● The Hillsborough Treaty has an Irish dimension only in so far that 26-County politicians now see it in their interests that the forces of revolution be crushed before they threaten their power and privilege

It is worthwhile remembering the climate in which Hillsborough was conceived and initiated in. There had long been an acceptance amongst military strategists that the IRA could not be defeated militarily. In the period after the hunger strikes and with Sinn Féin's move to radical revolutionary politics and into the public electoral process and their apparent success there, it was felt by the nationalist 'constitutionalists' that unless the Brit government moved there was a danger that the situation would no longer be containable.

The Brits saw an opener in the nationalist community in that if the SDLP could be brought in to an internal settlement then the nationalist community could be divided with a significant section siding with British interests. In such a situation it may be possible to mop up the IRA and, through isolating the political force of Sinn Féin, to render it impotent.

It required the creating of a basic illusion to end deep nationalist alienation, and some very subtle management to increase the prestige of the SDLP and church, (the main anti-revolutionary parties in the national community) to do so. Funding of community-based ACE schemes under church and SDLP patronage and the putting down of others and the careful management of international funding are ways of doing this.

Hillsborough was all about providing the illusion, of an Irish Dimension, whereby basic nationalist rights could be protected by the Dublin government in consultation with London and where it was possible that sometime in the future a United Ireland, the basic ideological target that supports Republicanism, could be negotiated.

The practical implementation of this strategy, designed to split and recruit a section of the nationalist community, required a re-identification of who actually was the enemy, as some old enemies may now be allies, a re-look at co-ordination as there was now the extra dimension of cross-border co-operation, a limited open co-operation of the SDLP and church, and a refinement of containment and isolation in the light of the above.

The full effectiveness of the Hillsborough process as a 'counter insurgency' strategy with the potential for destroying Republican resistance remains to be seen. However, one can already see the cracks appearing as the perfect theory is tested against day to day practical implementation. Also the obvious weakness in the Hillsborough/Brooke balancing act is precisely this. It is a balancing act in theory. Too much emphasis or weight to either side and it can tilt out of balance, causing fragmentation. Republicans attempt to influence this by making it difficult for "constitutional nationalists" to go further into this alliance through conceding Articles 2 and 3, and completely surrendering to Brit/Loyalist. But the internal contradictions of the "balancing act" are its biggest obstacle.

Has it the potential for destroying Republican resistance?

There are two answers to this, a simple basic no, or a more complex analytical response. The basic Republican prediction is that it will fail to bring peace, in the same way that other phases have failed simply because armed and political resistance are a 'response' to British rule and all the tinkering and illusion making in the world does not change that reality.

Nor does it change the fact that to maintain British rule in the North the British have to rely on a 'divided community', not one necessarily divided on sectarian lines, but divided on the lines of power and privilege. Those who fall on the wrong side of the line in the frustrating position of no power or privilege have only one means of asserting their voice, through political conflict and armed struggle. These of course will always be the people who are either less supportive of, or don't support British rule at all.

The more complex reasons are best understood by going through the many analytical pieces presented throughout the current education programme.

Summary...

There may appear to be an over reliance on the directives of Kitson throughout this paper. It must be pointed out that Kitson is not the sole 'counter insurgency' brain behind 'counter insurgency' strategy. He is just one of many.

Others whose material should be read are; Professor Paul Wilkinson, International Relations Studies, University of Aberdeen: Dr. Peter Jancke, Institute for the Study of Conflict: Col. Robin Eveleigh, (retired Greenjacket): Maurice Tugwell and Edward Moxon-Browne, both writers for the Institute for the Study of Conflict, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Much of their writings and thoughts are contained in quarterly papers published by the above institutes and available through reference libraries.

It is hoped that this paper will provide just an initial flavour of the taste of 'counter insurgency' strategy which has come a long way from Robert Taber wrote in the *War of the Flea* in the late '60s that the "counter-insurgents could not match the insurgents tactics." Today they not only try to match but sometimes they succeed in being more progressive in their use of methods than the insurgents.

Their apparent primary aim now in the North remains; — to under cut support for the revolutionary by appearing, through psychopops illusions, structural realignment, (a reformed Stormont), to be capable of radical change without revolution, while making the revolutionary appear impotent and inconsistent through isolating and containing them.

Articles 2 and 3: sovereignty, consent, revisionism, and all that...

BY
HILDA
MacTHOMAS

IT IS DOUBTFUL if many northern nationalists have ever glanced at the South's Constitution. Up to 1989 the only impact of this document on their consciousness was the anti-abortion amendment in 1983 (won) and the divorce amendment in 1986 (lost). The latter was an attempt by the then FitzGerald government to liberalise the South's family laws and make the South more palatable to unionists in the wake of the Hillsborough Agreement: a failed attempt to do the right thing for the wrong reasons, and the death knell of Fitzgerald's 'Constitutional Crusade'!

Yet in the last year at least two Articles of that Constitution have become the subject of so much controversy that few could now claim to be unaware of 'Articles 2 and 3'. For the record, here they are, as de Valera framed them in the 1937 document. Article One having affirmed the "inalienable right" of the "Irish nation" to govern itself, the

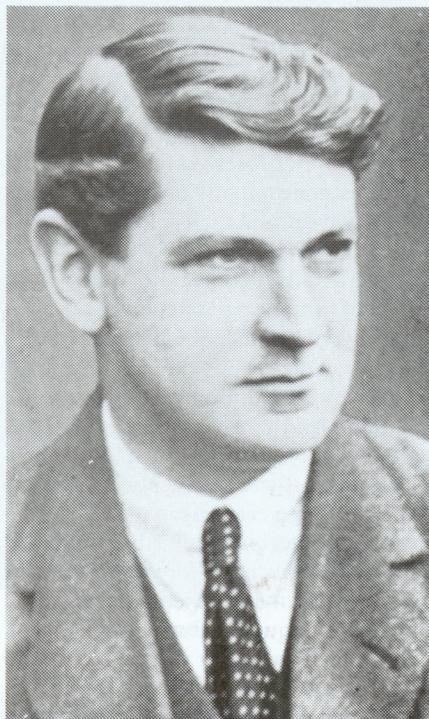
Constitution further states:

"Article 2: The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas.

"Article 3: Pending the re-integration of the national territory, and without prejudice to the right of the Parliament and Government established by this Constitution to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of that territory, the laws enacted by that Parliament shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws of Saorstát Éireann and the like territorial effect."

What did these Articles mean in

1937, 27 years after the Government of Ireland Act which provided for two states North and South, 25 years after the Treaty which partitioned Ireland, and 12 years after the Tripartite Agreement North-South-London which recognised the Border, neither of which were ever put to the Irish people? These Articles affirmed the right of the Irish people as a whole to territorial integrity, and their right to govern themselves as one entity, both rights violated by Partition. They also accepted that until these rights were restored the 26 Counties would operate as a state, a sort of state-in-waiting for the "Irish nation"



● MICHAEL COLLINS

mentioned in Article One. A later Article, no. 29 paragraph 2, was obviously designed to reassure anyone that might have assumed from the opening Articles that de Valera was about to despatch the Free State Army to the Border to effect this "re-integration of the national territory". It states that "Ireland affirms its adherence to the principle of pacific settlement of international disputes by international arbitration or judicial determination."

And so the 'Irish state-in-waiting', having given itself a Constitution (approved in a low poll by a mere 39% of all voters) went about its business of being a state. Northern nationalists know well how this type of situation, like the 1921 Treaty which Michael Collins had assured would be but a "stepping stone to a United Ireland", tends to become, to all intents and purposes, permanent. Did de Valera or any Dublin government then or later ever make any official declarations to settle this "international dispute" with the neighbouring island and defend their nation's right to territorial integrity and self-determination? Of course, they did. Twice, actually: in 1949 and 1969. Twice in 54 years: this dismal record somehow jars with the principled tone of Article Two, and suggests Article Three was indeed meant to be read, not ironically, matter-of-factly or threateningly, but with a huge sigh of relief.

Partition was the device used by the British to retain control over Ireland. The Government of Ireland Act 1920 was their constitutional instrument. It provided for two legislatures in Dublin

and Belfast, both subordinate to Westminster, with a Council of Ireland as a mechanism for the two legislatures to co-operate, under British control of course. Ulster unionists reluctantly complied with the British plan in order to protect their link with them. Northern nationalists, hitherto part of the majority of pro-independence Irish people, found themselves cornered in the new statelet, a permanent and terrorised minority. Fighting continued in the South, and in the ensuing negotiations, 'Southern Ireland' became the 'Irish Free State', with Dominion status, a compromise position accepted under threat of "total war within three days" by the Irish side who had neither the acumen, the nerve or the required degree of political discipline to push for the preferred option of an Irish republic. British politicians then and now hypocritically defended Partition as the only way to keep the peace and also divided factions to come together gradually. Nothing of the sort ever happened. At the Dáil debate which followed the signing of the Treaty, a Belfast delegate, Sean McEntee, declared with great foresight: "The provisions of this Treaty means this: that in the North certain people differing from us somewhat in tradition, and differing in religion are going to be driven, in order to maintain their separate identity, to demarcate themselves from us, while we, in order to preserve ourselves against the encroachment of English culture, are going to be driven to demarcate ourselves so far as ever we can from them." (in Munck)

The Border was another illustration of Britain's real motives. Historian J J Lee writes: "The border was not devised to keep two warring groups apart. The Catholic minority in the North was proportionately larger than the unionist minority in Ireland as a whole. This brought the warring groups together more than it separated them. The border was chosen explicitly to provide unionists with as much territory as they could safely control. Its objective was not to separate unionists and nationalists in order to enable them to live peaceably apart. It was instead to ensure Protestant supremacy over Catholics even in predominantly Catholic areas." A Boundary commission was set up in 1923 and met between 1924 and 1925 ostensibly with the brief to draw a border "in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographic conditions." But the border was already a *fait accompli*, and at the end of 1925 the representatives of the



● De Valera on the occasion of the enactment of the 1937 Constitution

new southern state finally signed with Belfast and London a tripartite agreement which recognised the border. The agreement also disposed of the 'Council of Ireland' and transferred back to Belfast the powers which were meant to be devolved to it. The tripartite agreement of December 1925 was lodged in February 1926 with the League of Nations, and amounted to a recognition by Dublin of the northern state - and the abandonment of northern nationalists to their fate.

The South's own constitutional position was guided by an amendment to the Government of Ireland Act 1920, the Free State Agreement Act 1922, which states among other things that nothing in the Free State Constitution must be repugnant to the 1921 Treaty. (An interesting point was that British legislation described the 'Irish Free State' as all of Ireland, from which the North could secede if they wished, and return to the Government of Ireland Act set-up, while the South functioned to all intents and purposes within the 26 Counties: conceptually not a million miles away from Article 3.) While the Constitution which the Free State government drafted in 1922 was a model of formal parliamentary democracy, the turmoil which followed the Treaty and Partition quickly led to emergency legislation being introduced north and south. Neither of the two states has actually ever functioned without an arsenal of exceptional legal measures, from censorship to special courts and internment. Furthermore, the dynamics of Partition, foreseen by Connolly and many others, such as the Dáil delegate quoted above, worked to shape a political entity where conservative forces alternated at the helm, where there was no room for Left

or progressive or liberal forces to breathe and develop. The North, of course, was from the outset an antithesis of democracy, the undemocratic border being mirrored many times between constituencies and wards, with institutionalised discrimination, and the systematic terrorising of the nationalist minority, its unionist population kept together by the enemy within and without.

Fianna Fáil, de Valera's weapon for re-entering politics, gained power in 1932. The new party capitalised on a mix of popular nationalist sentiment and discontent of sections of the bourgeoisie at the failure of Cumann na nGaedheal to foster a home-grown economy through its strict obedience to the clauses of the Treaty. In opposition de Valera had made many a resounding speech about Irish sovereignty, and focused its attacks on the Oath of Allegiance to the British Crown, which Leinster House deputies, just like their Westminster counterparts, had to swear before taking their seats. In 1933, de Valera's government pushed through a number of constitutional amendments abolishing the Oath, the power of the British Governor-General, the right of appeal to the British Privy Council, and the provision that legislation which was "repugnant to the Treaty" could be struck down by the courts. Half of the land annuities owed Britain were withheld, causing Britain to retaliate with "economic war" and raised tariffs, one effect of which was to keep Free State goods out of the north and start the decaying process for many border market towns. Democratic rights and economic freedom could not be built by dismantling symbols. There was a lot of posturing in de Valera's policy moves. In 1935 the Aliens Act and the Irish

Nationality and Citizenship Act theoretically made British citizens foreigners in the Free State and Free State citizens foreigners in Britain and the Commonwealth, yet de Valera allowed his government to make exemptions to these laws, including for Britain...

All these amendments paved the way for de Valera's major project: the 1937 Constitution. That Constitution aimed much further than setting down guidelines for the government of the 26 Counties. It provided a frame for the ideology of a conservative Catholic Irish state, by including an article on the privileged position of the Catholic Church and a ban on divorce. Of the Articles relating to sovereignty de Valera said in his broadcast speech to the 'nation': **"There are many injustices in the existing political situation which this Constitution cannot directly remove:- the partition of our country, the occupation by Great Britain of positions on our ports, the exaction by Britain of money which we hold not to be due... The aim in drafting this Constitution has been so to design it that all these controversies will be outside the Constitution, so that the Constitution itself will not stand in the way of any remedies that may be proposed."** Articles 2 and 3, among others, were therefore meant as symbols, just like Article 8 on Irish as the *"first official language"*. Like slogans in an election manifesto, they would not be followed by serious action. Yet their

presence would allow de Valera and other Fianna Fáil leaders to verbalise about the north while effectively doing nothing to end partition.

De Valera's priority was clearly to increase the 26 Counties' independence from Britain, and maintain its ideological homogeneity. Ending partition came a poor third. When asked by Chamberlain in 1940 to trade neutrality in the war for British support for a united Ireland - the only time the British named their price for accepting to persuade the unionists to rejoin with their southern neighbour - de Valera refused. When northern nationalists approached Fianna Fáil to organise in the Six Counties, although himself an MP for South Down (abstentionist), he refused. In a famous speech, referring to the 'first official language' he declared: *"I would not tomorrow, for the sake of a united Ireland, give up the policy of trying to make this a really Irish Ireland."* Yet on the Irish language Dublin was at most clumsy, at worst tokenist. De Valera had made a clear choice. As he explained candidly in 1963: *"Ireland is Ireland without the North."* Yet as historian Paul Power writes: *"Articles 2 and 3 ideologically override the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty and the tripartite 1925 accord" in that they clearly state that "all-Ireland majority opinion desiring unity constitutes the only legitimate expression of self-determination."*

In 1948 the South's first inter-party government, headed by Fine Gael's John A Costello, soon announced legislation

which would dispose of the last legal links with Britain and the Commonwealth and make the South an 'Irish Republic' — and, Costello explained, take the gun out of politics. Pre-empting republican arguments by appropriating the symbols, if not the substance, of national sovereignty, had always been a major motivation for de Valera. So for John Costello. Once the Republic of Ireland Act passed, the Dublin government mounted an anti-Partition campaign, by launching an anti-partition fund in the Mansion House in Dublin in January 1949. This fund aimed to subsidise the northern Nationalist Party and run a publicity campaign on partition. The drive petered out a few years later. Meanwhile the British responded to the Republic of Ireland Act by an Act of their own, the Ireland Act 1949, which not only acknowledged the South as a foreign country outside the Commonwealth, but included the following paragraph, in response to expressed unionist fears: **"It is hereby declared that Northern Ireland remains part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom and it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland."** This clause provided 20% of the Irish people and under 2% of the UK electorate with an effective veto over any British move towards Irish reunification. It further

gave a "retroactive, democratic gloss over the 1920 gerrymandering of Ireland to allow unionists to remain within the UK, and a self-determination formula to bolster unionists and to repulse 32 county nationalist claims as anti-democratic", Paul Power writes. The Ireland Act effectively provided partition with a double lock: to end it would require not only a plebiscite in Northern Ireland but also a vote in Westminster. Unionist consent was necessary, but not sufficient. For privately, what were the British really saying? British Cabinet minutes from 1949, released recently, stated that "so far as can be foreseen, it will never be to Great Britain's advantage that Northern Ireland should form part of a territory outside His Majesty's jurisdiction. Indeed it seems unlikely that Great Britain would ever be able to agree to this even if the people of Northern Ireland desired it." A



● John A Costello — his Fine Gael government passed the Republic of Ireland Act

few days after the publication of the Ireland Act, Costello proposed to Leinster House a resolution, passed unanimously, which repudiated "the claim of the British Parliament to enact legislation affecting Ireland's territorial integrity" and called upon the British to "end the present occupation of our Six North Eastern Counties".

The freezing of the national aspiration into Articles of the Constitution, coupled with changing economic circumstances, not to mention decades of partition which made the plight of northern nationalists seem more and more remote, brought about in the South a reassessment of nationalist ideology, and its effect on history and politics. In the '60s Fianna Fáil leader and Prime Minister Sean Lemass held that the best way to end partition was to make the southern state attractive to northern unionists. For a while, with moderniser Terence O'Neill in charge in Belfast, Southern politicians believed the approach could work. One year after the 1965 Lemass-O'Neill meeting, Lemass set up an informal all-party committee in Leinster House to suggest amendments to the Constitution with a view to make it more acceptable to northern unionists. Apart from the divorce ban (Article 41.3) and the position of the Catholic Church (Article 44.1) the committee recommended the amendment of Article 3 (2 was left untouched) to: "3.1. **The Irish nation hereby proclaims its firm will that its territory be reunited in harmony and brotherly affection between all Irishmen...**" Part 3.2 restates the scope of application of the state's laws. The '60s spawned an intellectual current, now commonly labelled 'revisionist', which drew on growing historical research to try and justify northern unionists' right to veto Irish unity. Another popular target was to be the 1916 Rising and its leaders: Pearse was the subject of a famous hatchet job of an article, written in 1966 by Francis Shaw SJ and withheld until 1972. In 1969 however, for reasons which boiled down to the undemocratic and rigid nature of the Six County state, the Troubles erupted, the Leinster House report was shelved.

Southern political reaction to the Troubles was one of surprise: — at the extent of northern nationalist disaffection from the northern state — and of fear; that the cosy stability of the state and its economic regeneration would be threatened by the upheaval across the border. The Dublin government attempted once to place the question of the North and of Britain's role on the agenda of the United



● (Left to right) Jack Lynch, Terence O'Neill, Frank Aiken and Sean Lemass at the 1965 meeting

Nations. In August 1969, Patrick Hillery, then Minister for External Affairs, requested on behalf of his government an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council and the sending of UN troops, or at least joint Irish-British contingents to the North to deal with the emergency. As Britain argued that Article 2(7) of the UN Charter (non-intervention in domestic affairs of states) prohibited discussion of the North, Hillery reminded the Council of the history of partition, and that his government did not "in any way concede [to the British] the right to exercise jurisdiction [in the North]" — a statement based on Articles 2 and 3. However, further consideration of the question was suspended. So ended the first and last attempt by Dublin to have partition discussed at the UN.

In 1972, revisionists came back on the offensive. Garret FitzGerald in his book *Towards a New Ireland*, and Conor Cruise O'Brien in his *States of Ireland* both argued that the republican view was a minority view imposed by force, that most people would prefer a measure of Home Rule under the British crown à la Daniel O'Connell, and that Ireland had two nations, one Catholic, Gaelic and nationalist, and the other, English-speaking, Protestant and unionist. Two-nationism was essentially about unionists being the victims of an imperialist claim by a priest-ridden South, and trying to maintain their integrity and their identity, not to mention their love of liberty, behind the Border. This struck a chord with unionists, who like all colonists suffer from a serious identity problem. In the same way as the consent clause in the 1949 Ireland Act retroactively recognised unionists some right of self-determination, two-nation theories retroactively justified partition on the

grounds that the border simply validated a pre-existing national frontier. Right-wing 'historian' Ian Adamson's 'Cruthin' theory makes free with existing research on the Picts and the Celts, and alleges that Ulster Protestants are really descended from the original inhabitants of the island of Ireland, the Cruthin, whom the Gaels would have driven across to Scotland, and who came back in the 17th century Ulster Plantations... Such theories unfortunately hold currency in unionist circles today, and receive funding from the Northern Ireland Office. Ian Adamson, incidentally, is on the board of the NIO-funded Irish language body, the *Ultach* Trust.

In 1973 the British, having superseded the Stormont parliament the year before, produced a Northern Ireland Constitution Bill. The Bill, and later versions, the Northern Ireland Acts 1974 and 1982, supersede and rescind to a large extent the Government of Ireland Act 1920. The Act states the need for "wide community support" for any administrative arrangement if power is to be devolved to the new administration. A clause provides for "agreements or arrangements with any authority of the Republic of Ireland" on devolved matters. And the Act's first clause reaffirms the status of Northern Ireland, that is, the British sovereignty claim over the Six Counties, as well as the necessity of "the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland" to effect constitutional change in the North, in other words, the unionist veto. Consent, as ever, was necessary but not sufficient. It was to be tested by referendum. The only one took place in March 1973. The Border poll was boycotted by most nationalists and produced the expected result. The

'consent' principle was accepted later that year by the Dublin government headed by Fine Gael leader Liam Cosgrave at Sunningdale. The Sunningdale Agreement is in fact the first official acceptance by a Dublin government of the unionist veto. The Irish communiqué states: **"The Irish Government fully accepted and solemnly declared that there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of its people desired a change."** The Sunningdale Agreement however was never lodged with the UN: a loyalist strike in 1974 ended the power-sharing executive and the agreement fell.

Fianna Fáil's pragmatism was learned at de Valera's knee. Hardly any objections were raised by Fianna Fáil when the Agreement was signed. A slight change occurred in 1979 when Charles Haughey succeeded Lynch as party leader and Prime Minister. Haughey's political past, the Arms Trial in 1971, and his support base in the party led him to adopt a more nationalistic, public stance. Yet in the communiqué that followed Haughey's summit meeting with Thatcher in May 1980 — the famous 'silver teapot' meeting — Haughey said that change in the North would only *"come about with the consent of a majority of the entity's people"*. At a second meeting in December 1980, as political prisoners were in the middle of a hunger strike in the H-Blocks, Haughey and Thatcher agreed to set up joint study groups to

examine legal, political and economic problems between Ireland and Britain. The communiqué also said that future discussions would encompass **"the totality of relationships within these islands"**, a phrase which Brian Lenihan later hinted meant everything was on the table. Unionists objected. Paisley led 500 men onto an Antrim hillside, brandishing gun permits. Thatcher rebuked the Dublin government, and reiterated Britain's claim over the North. When Fine Gael leader Garret FitzGerald became Prime Minister later that year, and announced his 'Constitutional Crusade', a campaign aimed at bringing about reforms of the South's Constitution to make it more palatable to unionists, Haughey described it as *"self-abasement"*. Defending Articles 2 and 3 in particular, he criticised **"this suggestion that we in the Republic have something to be ashamed of because of partition."** Other Haughey pronouncements include describing the North as a *"failed political entity"*. Yet more recently Haughey tempered his hostility to devolution and the unionist guarantee, as he prepares to meet those same unionists in the context of the Brooke talks — if they get that far. Haughey argues that the concept of *"totality of relationships"*, which has now entered even the unionists' glossary, somehow dilutes the guarantee. Northern nationalists, still cornered in the most repressive state in Europe, beg to differ.

In 1984 the 'New Ireland Forum', a

gathering of nationalist parties of which Sinn Féin was excluded, reported that the *"best and most durable basis for peace and stability"* was *"a united Ireland in the form of a sovereign independent Irish state to be achieved peacefully and by consent."* The other two options were a confederal state and joint authority over the North. Thatcher rejected all three options in her famous *"Out, out, out"* sortie, as impinging on Britain's sovereignty over the North. What remained of the Forum report was its revisionist thrust, the fact that while critical of partition and of unionism, the report did not ask for an end to the guarantee, and some spurious notion of 'equality of the two traditions' (nationalist and unionist), which was later to be reshaped by the British in their Anglo-Irish Agreement. FitzGerald and Hume were now ready to consider just about any offer which the British might make. The Treaty which ensued from the negotiations was signed in Hillsborough in November 1985. Its first Article contained the guarantee, and more:

"The two governments a) affirm that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland; b) recognise that the present wish of the people of Northern Ireland is for no change in the status of Northern Ireland; c) declare that, if in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a



● Thatcher dismissed the 'New Ireland Forum' report with her infamous *"Out, out, out"* sortie

united Ireland, they will introduce and support in the respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to the wish."

Part 1(b) was an affirmation of the unionist majority. Part 1(c) was portrayed as a major nationalist advance, especially by John Hume, in that consent had become sufficient. Britain is now neutral, Hume claimed. However the circumstances which would bring that consent about, namely pressure applied by the British as they prepare to leave, as opposed to any constitutional reform which some Southern politicians believe might attract unionists, were clearly not about to arise, as British politicians were at pains to point out. 1(c) was therefore nothing more than a gloss on the unionist veto. The then Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King said that by signing the Treaty FitzGerald had now agreed that "for all practical purposes and into perpetuity there will not be a united Ireland, because he has accepted the principle of consent that the will of the majority in Northern Ireland must predominate and that Northern Ireland, which is our fervent wish, remains part of the United Kingdom."

Hume's claim that Britain was neutral in Northern Ireland seemed to get some credibility in a speech made by the current Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Brooke last November in which he said that Britain had "no selfish or strategic interest in Northern Ireland", but in an interview with author Padraig O'Malley for his recent book *Questions of Nuance* Brooke clearly stated that the British government was "not politically neutral on Northern Ireland", and that Article 1(c) only stated Britain's desire

to participate in negotiations should the need arise. Brooke's view was that this was no different from "the position of the British government all the way down to 1920." This was the position of the Conservative and Unionist party in government. Mr Hume, he added, "would have a fairly large task if he was seeking to move the [Conservative] party to change this position." In spite of the guarantee however unionists refused to have anything to do with the Hillsborough Agreement, because of the right of inspection over northern affairs which it gave Dublin. And in 1988 two unionists, the McGimpsey brothers, challenged the Hillsborough Treaty through the Southern courts. A strange case, in which unionists challenged the validity of a British Treaty according to the South's Constitution... in particular Articles 2 and 3. This suit was reminiscent of an earlier case, this time brought by former Fianna Fáil Minister Kevin Boland in 1974.

The Boland case was based on a clause in the Sunningdale agreement in which it seemed that Liam Cosgrave had agreed to withdraw the South's claim over the North. When Cosgrave announced that there would be no referendum on the issue, Kevin Boland took him and the agreement to court. The court found that an agreement by Cosgrave that Northern Ireland was part of the 'United Kingdom' was a matter of policy and not a formal recognition which would affect the *de jure* sovereignty of the South over the North according to the Constitution. Some judges pointed out however that a formal recognition would have been anti-constitutional. In the McGimpsey case, which they lost on appeal, the

Supreme Court found in particular that Article 1 of the Hillsborough Treaty did not contradict Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution as it merely expressed "a political judgement about likely future events". The Court reiterated that Irish unity was a "constitutional imperative", that is that Article 3 obliged Leinster House and the Dublin government to work towards Irish unity, a ruling which the Dublin Supreme Court had already made in two extradition cases, McGlinchey and Russell. Yet, and in spite of unionist attacks on the Court decision which they described as "harsh, uncompromising and strictly nationalistic", unionists missed the crucial point, that is that Dublin has now signed an international agreement in which the unionist veto is guaranteed.

A consensus has been built in the past 20 years in the South's political and media establishment, in favour of a formal recognition of the British claim on the North. This consensus expresses itself in two ways:

By pushing forward the 'consent' doctrine, which has been successfully sold as simple democracy in action — although it gives a 20% minority a veto over political progress, against the wishes of a large majority in Ireland, and indeed probably a majority in Britain as well;

From time to time by advocating constitutional reform of Articles 2 and 3, especially when the politicians doing the advocating are in opposition.

It is worth remembering that when FitzGerald was in power from 1981 to 1987 he never mentioned a referendum on Articles 2 and 3, and during the 1985 London-Dublin talks, the British broached the subject of constitutional changes without result. In July 1987, on the fiftieth anniversary of de Valera's Constitution, the *Irish Press* ran a series of articles, one of which, signed by Garret FitzGerald, then in opposition, while recognising Articles 2 and 3 had some value in international law, "they have had a negative effect on unionists' attitudes to a future relationship with the rest of Ireland" and "encouraged the use of unconstitutional methods". Those are, by and large the two arguments given by all revisionists, or more properly perhaps, all neo-unionists: Articles 2 and 3 antagonise the unionists and encourage the IRA. Both arguments can be swiftly discounted. While it is true that unionists have expressed anger at these Articles, their amendment or removal will not bring unionists any closer to Irish unity. Unionists have said as much. What an amendment may achieve however, is an even greater feeling of abandonment and despair in northern nationalists. In the *Irish Press*



● One of the unionist McGimpsey brothers who challenged the Hillsborough Treaty in the Southern courts

series of 1987, Progressive Democrat leader Desmond O'Malley advocated amending Article 3 as recommended by the 1967 Leinster House committee. More recently, in November 1990, the Workers' Party proposed a motion in Leinster House, in which Article 3 was amended to include the 'consent' clause. The motion was lost through arguments that such move was untimely — a fairly typical excuse made by southern parties when they are afraid of the electoral consequences of a move — given the ongoing 'talks about talks' between Peter Brooke and northern parties. Yet all parties in the South, except Sinn Fein, support amending the Articles. The difference between Fianna Fáil and the others is that Fianna Fáil sets as a precondition that unionists accept some form of all-Ireland arrangement.

Last year the Articles became bargaining counters in the Brooke talks (along with British guns, an Irish dimension, the IRA and loyalist groups). They appeared in the Summer in a statement by Official Unionist leader James Molyneux. Peter Brooke then confirmed that Articles 2 and 3 would be on the talks agenda. However, he never mentioned that the Northern Ireland Act of 1974 would be there too. How is that for neutral? Unionists then raised the stakes by issuing statements about the 'hostile claims' and the blackmail exercised by the South's Constitution and the South's Supreme Court, after which southern neo-unionists fell over themselves trying to apologise. The Workers' Party motion was the tail end of that scramble. Meanwhile unionists assured the press that Articles 2 and 3 were not a precondition for talks. What they had achieved however was a successful sounding out of the southern political establishment: they had plenty of support there. They started suggesting that opposition parties should be involved in the talks along with the Dublin government. But as this was contrary to custom and might have ended with requests for the British Labour Party to join in as well, this one was a dead duck. Still, the *craic* was ninety, as Sammy Wilson might have said if he had any *Gaeilge*. Unionists had started negotiating ahead of the talks, and they were doing it fairly cleverly through the media.

The debate is essentially about the right of the Irish people as a whole to self-determination, as against the right of unionists to secession or self-determination. The question of whether unionists have that right has been discussed from the standpoint of international law, in particular by



● GARRET FITZGERALD

Richard Harvey and Michael Gallagher. The historical argument put forward by the proponents of the Cruthin undoubtedly deserves space in the same bin as French historian Faurisson's thesis that German concentration camps did not exist. As a contribution to the ongoing theoretical argument as to what constitutes a nation, an interesting contribution comes from Ronnie Munck's *Ireland, Nation, State and Class Struggle*: "The central fact which prevents the Ulster Protestants from being a nation is that whereas the communal nature of the nation develops in stability, their sense of community grew out of the opposite. In short, the unity of Ulster Protestants in distinction to Irish Catholics is based on instability: when the community was at its most stable, its Presbyterian elements were in fact in the vanguard of the Irish national revolution. The distinctiveness of a unified Protestant community thrived on instability and discrimination, consolidated artificially in a six-county Ulster state." The debate must surely continue, as it is central to convincing the international community of the validity of the Irish claim. As for the Irish public, it may not need so much convincing, if recent opinion polls can be trusted — and when they seem to go against the media tide, they can be deemed fairly trustworthy. In a recent ESRI poll 82% of people in the South wished for Irish unity, about 50% believed it would happen within 25 years, and 56% opposed changing Articles 2 and 3. In all cases this marked an increase on similar polls carried out in 1983 and 1987. Articles 2 and 3 are, for the Southern political establishment, a very hot potato.

22. Articles 2 and 3 are a public statement that Irish people do not accept the British claim to sovereignty over the North. While they are not

enforceable in international law, and while in terms of real politics, they have not made much difference to successive Dublin governments, however if they go, the only claim to the validity of the concept of an Irish nation-state will rest with the northern nationalists. Abandoned by 'nationalist' parties north and south, they will have to face a future of continued second-class citizenship while looking back on a past which has been declared worthless.

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● Present British strategy is not a simple matter of piecemeal Tory policies putting the squeeze on working-class communities

Altering the sea we swim in

**— British government
attempts to change and
control the community**

REPUBLICANS recognise the vital support we receive from our communities. Without them we cannot survive. The Brits recognise the same thing and have adopted a number of ways of dealing with that support over the years. For 15 years the most common tactic was to beat people off the streets, intern, arrest, assassinate.

While this has been an ongoing tactic throughout the last 20 years, we must now recognise that after the Hunger Strike period of 1980-'81, the Brits began to put together a coherent and more subtle strategy aimed not just at controlling the community but also at altering its relationship with us and with them.

The Brits have been putting into action a coherent policy of isolation, censorship and criminalisation of all aspects of Republican work.

Internationally, they aim to create the impression that our own communities are resisting us and that the Brits are not only peacekeepers, but the positive element in community and economic development. Locally, they aim to draw our people into a dependant relationship with them through a 'carrot and stick' approach, silence Republicans and any other radical voices and replace them with their own 'community' representatives. What we see currently in operation then is not a simple matter of piecemeal Tory policies putting the squeeze on working-class communities. And we must realise that we cannot tackle it as if it were. We must realise that if this strategy succeeds it will have enormous implications for all aspects of the republican struggle.

What is the Strategy?

There is not time here to go into every aspect of this strategy. The following however, are some elements in it which may help focus discussion:

- The creation of a "programme" of economic intervention spearheaded by high profile British ministers (This covers everything from major schemes like Laganside aimed to change international perceptions, to the official openings of everything from playschemes to job clubs);
- The establishment of high-profile funding agencies like the Action Teams and Making Belfast Work and the International Fund. All these bodies have been set up to make a show about British government-controlled money being "given to the community". They are part of a massive propaganda exercise geared both towards the directing of funds in a particular direction — the one the Brits want, and at international publicity.

In fact, all of these funding bodies are totally unaccountable. The Action Teams are run by civil servants seconded from their usual work and given the purse strings for an area (usually £1/2 million a year) for a period of three or more years. It does not appear to be a requirement that they should know anything at all about community development. Experience shows that the bulk of Action Team leaders, good, bad or indifferent, practice a form of unspoken political vetting against groups which they consider to be "unsuitable", or who have already been singled out by use of Hurd's statement. Some of them carry out this task with enormous enthusiasm. Groups in difficulties with an Action Team's decisions have literally no independent body to which they can turn to put their case. Action Team leaders do not have to account for the way in which they spend money, and in fact for a number of years the Action Teams just refused to provide a full list of the projects they had funded to anyone at all, including Belfast City Council.

The Brits exaggerate the amount of money available through these

bodies, some of which has simply been taken away from less publicity-worthy bodies (eg cuts to City Council community services budget) so that they are robbing Peter to pay Paul. In other cases, funding is given over to projects which are being created to take on what used to be statutory responsibility.. eg environmental groups which now clean up areas in the wake of cuts of cleansing department budget, schemes to provide "community care" for those who have been kicked out of hospitals etc. The same services are being provided by different people, eating away at the idea of statutory responsibility and letting the Brits claim they are funding "new" jobs and "new" services.

*** Direct vetting of some groups by the British government.**

The bad publicity which this has caused in some cases has led to the Brits developing a more subtle approach which will enable them to exert the same kind of control without attracting so much attention to their own role. The latest part of this approach includes:

— setting up two new agencies, the Community Development Review Board and the Community Relations Board, whose job will be to say what is and isn't real community work. In future, it seems that groups looking for money from any source controlled by the British government will have to fit its work into one of two definitions, either community development as the Brits see it, or else cross community work. Increasingly groups will have to conform with the priorities set by the British government through these bodies. Local paid community workers and community sector organisations have already been roped in to administer this system. Large organisations are being put in a position where they must employ 'Community Relations Officers' who will train workers etc through discussions on sectarianism according to the British analysis... ie that "if only everybody just got together and stopped all the fighting"... if only the IRA would stop killing people, etc etc. While many will find these notions laughable, the Brits are in effect creating another buffer zone, and again institutionalising their own version of reality.

In future funding — or lack of it — will be said to be in accordance with an 'independent' set of principles — the "importance of being 'non-sectarian' ", of being 'positive' and so on — rather than seen as at the whim of British ministers.

*** A concerted propaganda onslaught portraying the Brits as the positive force in community economic development through:**

— the building up of buffer zones and safe agents to distribute resources (the Churches, individual 'community' groups etc)

— the creation of 'schemes' aimed to distract international media attention eg Laganside, Castle Court, Ewart Co, the development of Mackies site in West Belfast etc.

— the replacement of genuine community initiatives with those controlled by the Brits eg Whiterock FE College had £1 million spent on it in the hope that it would draw support away from education classes at Conway Mill, and that it would defuse the long-standing demand for fourth college for Belfast to be sited in the west of the city. Similarly, the Ultach Trust was given funds to direct towards Irish language projects which do not rock the boat, and to undermine organisations like Glór na nGael, who have of course now been publicly vetted.

By destroying independent action and mirroring local demands in this way, the Brits make local people go without or use the facility provided by the Brits. In this way, they involved local people as a buffer zone to deflect criticism from Sinn Féin, and other radical groupings.

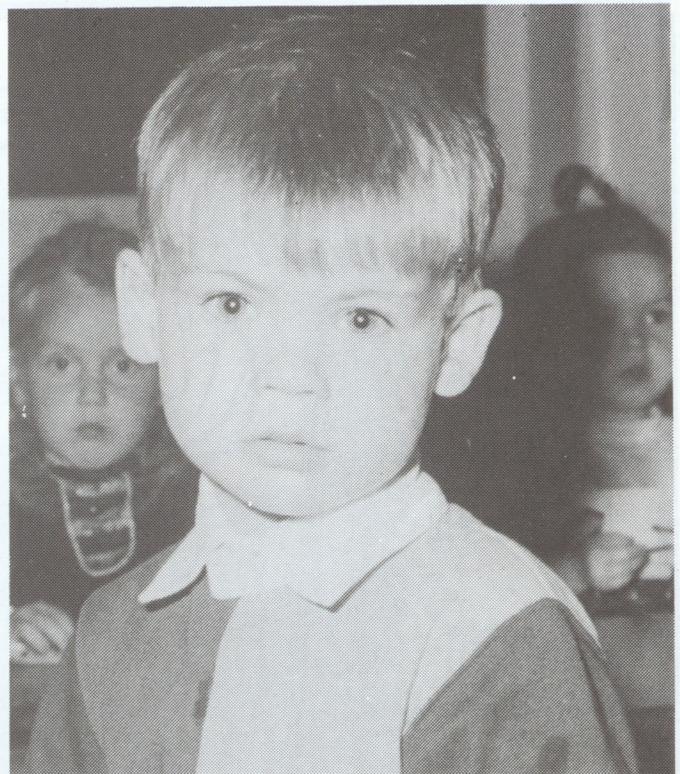
— the constant portrayal of Republicans, as "negative", "destructive" and unable to deliver.

So, is the British strategy working?

Every aspect of this strategy will not always be successful. Like all elements of British policy it is prone to occasional inconsistency, inefficiency etc. Neither are our community easily duped or unaware of some elements of Brit activity. Republicans themselves tend to shrug and say but our people know all this is hype and we have good reason to say so:

— We know for instance that any attempt by communities to organise to improve their lives or encourage people to take control is in direct conflict with British rule.

— We know that any meagre response in terms of funding of im-



● (Above) Children in a Glór na nGael run Irish language playschool (below) The Conway Mill — both projects were targets of British government political vetting



provements has always been because of community pressure and geared towards "keeping the lid on".

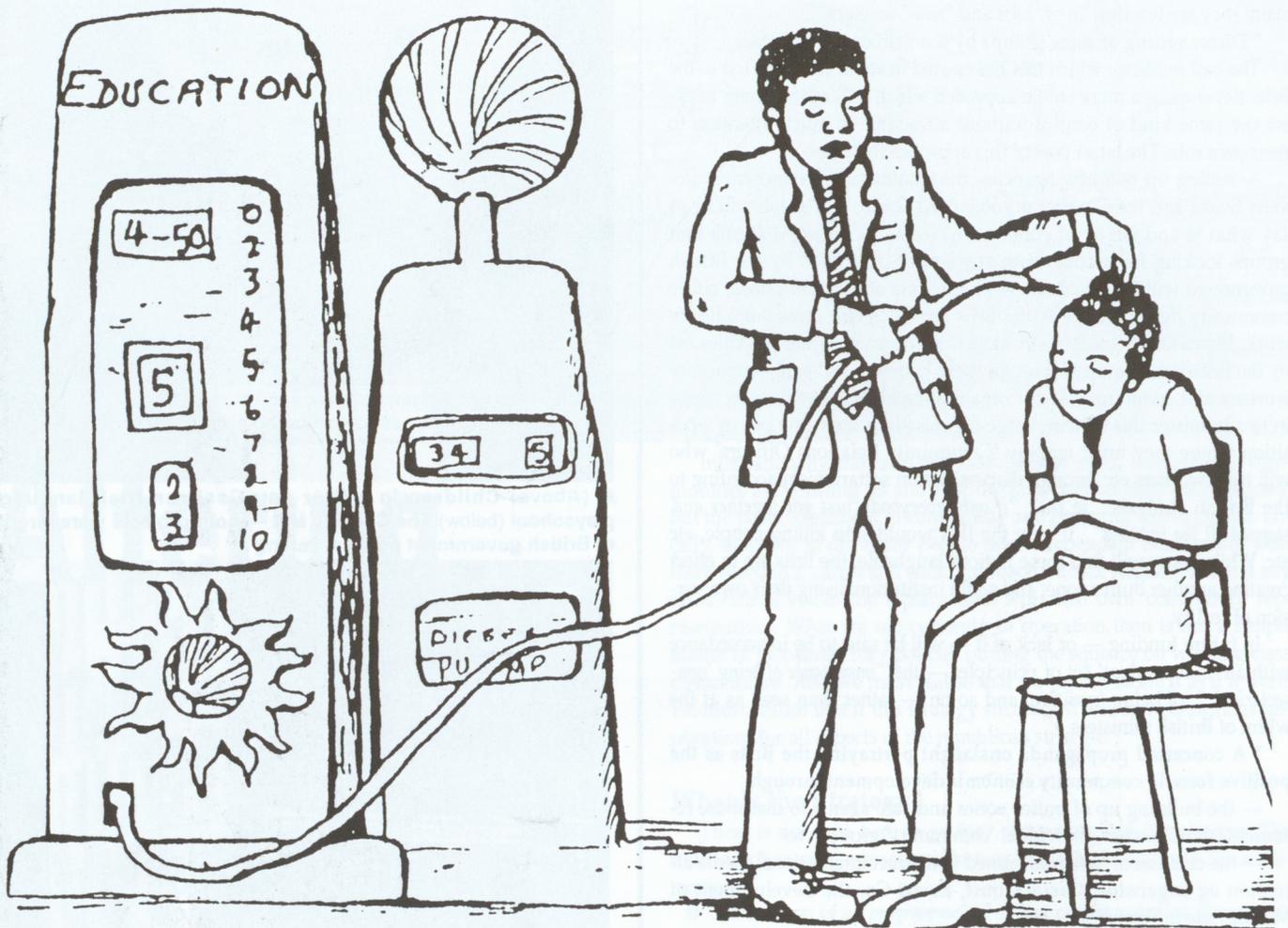
— We recognise that the Brits have always attempted to destroy genuine community action, not only refusing to provide services, funding and resources, but also taking direct action to shut down initiatives many times in the past (eg Whiterock Industrial Estate which was set up by residents in the '70s to create jobs and small businesses and which after much harassment of workers etc, was taken over by the British army and closed down.)

But how many people outside our own base recognise the same things? And within our base, is recognising the same as being able to resist? In our areas, who do you go to if you need a job? Who do you invite to open your new community group offices? Who do you have to push off your committee if you want funding?

And if you are one of those within the community who wants to see this dismal reality changed, who do you look to?

Question: The Brits have always exerted control. Now they are attempting to bring about change also. Some of it has already had effects. Can our communities and our Movement withstand another five years if we do not have a planned strategy?

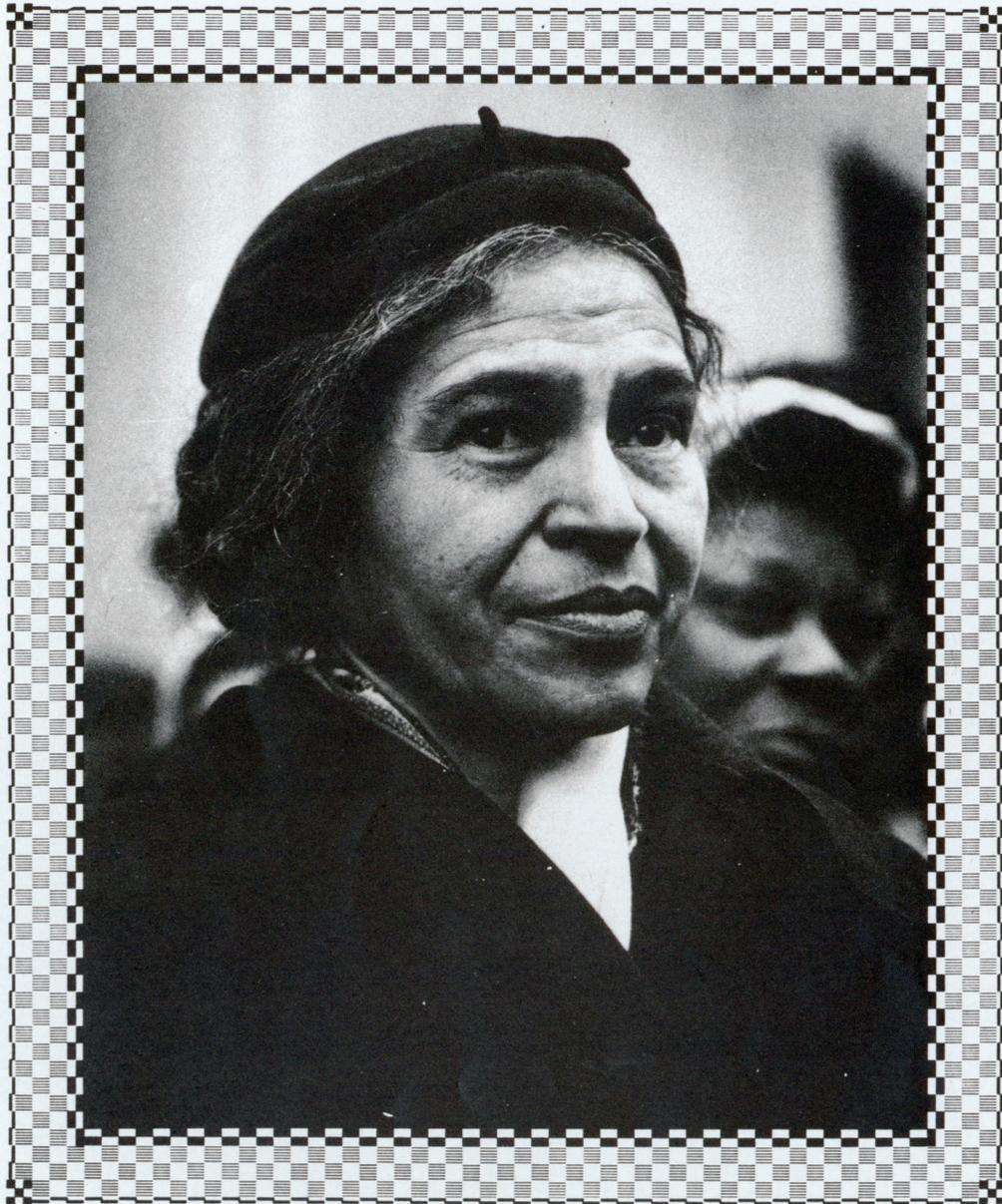
— Woman Republican community activist



"Problem posing education is prophetic, and as such is hopeful, corresponding to the historical nature of human beings. It affirms people as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead,... for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are, so that they can more wisely build the future."

Paulo Freire

Pedagogy of the Oppressed



I find that if I'm thinking too much of my own problems and the fact that at times things are not just like I want them to be, I don't make any progress at all. But if I look around and see what I can do, and go on with that, then I move on.

Rosa Parks

"Remember that the whole history of Ireland is a record of betrayals by politicians and statesmen, and remembering this, spurn their lying promises and stand up for a United Ireland — an Ireland broad based upon the union of labour and nationality."

Irish Worker 4th April 1914



"I believe that the duty of a true socialist editor or trusted leader, is to train as many comrades as possible to fill his/her position, to train and make editors, and writers and propagandists and to encourage the cool-headedness and readiness needed in a revolutionary movement."

James Connolly



"The next step in my evolution, I much fear will be that when a thing is to be done I will consider the consequences so carefully and so long that by the time I have made up my mind the opportunity to act will be gone."

James Connolly



"It is a mistake when trying to convert people, to look for something to differ upon in order to show how smart you are. You should always seek for some point upon which you can agree! Then when that point is established and agreed upon by both, the path to agreement on vital points will become smooth and easy."

James Connolly