

AN
PHOBLACHT
Republican News

IRELAND'S BIGGEST SELLING
POLITICAL WEEKLY



Sraith Nua Imt 5 Uimhir 5 Deardoin Feabhra 3

Thursday February 3rd 1983

(Britain 25p) Price 20p



● Eason's bookshop in Dublin's O'Connell Street

Censored!

A DELIBERATE political decision, aimed at hindering the sales of the newly-published book by the late hunger-striker Bobby Sands, 'One Day in My Life', has been taken by Eason's, Ireland's largest book distributors and retailers in Ireland.

And a storm over censorship has arisen in the *Irish Independent* after editor Vincent Doyle censored a favourable review of the book by C.S. 'Todd' Andrews, due to appear in last Saturday's edition.

In November of last year, a preview copy of 'One Day in My Life' was sent to Eason's by publisher John Feehan of Mercier Press. They claimed that even though names of warders in the book had been replaced by letters — A, B, C, etc. — their legal advisers were of the opinion that physical descriptions of the warders, the numbers of the H-Blocks and the dates, might just lead to identification and a libel action.

PUBLISHED

Feehan therefore postponed publication in order to remove all these details from the text. At the same time, Eason's put in an order for 5,000 copies for their bookshops all over Ireland. But when the book was finally published and the revised copy sent to Eason's, they wrote back to Mercier Press, cancelling the order without explanation.

Three separate legal opinions have been obtained by Mercier Press on the present text and all three have passed it free from any possibility of libel. In the event, the 5,000 copies intended for Eason's were taken up by the Newsread distribution company and are selling well in its outlets.

In contrast to the attitude of the British-owned Eason company to this already acclaimed republican classic, is their promotion



● VINCENT DOYLE
editor of the *Irish Independent*
of other books in their shops.

BRITISH

As well as a large selection of soft porn, Eason's specialise in books extolling the virtues of a variety of British institutions, from the royal family to the SAS, the Falklands/Malvinas conquerors, and Margaret Thatcher.

But perhaps the most significant book on Eason's shelves at the moment is one entitled 'Frightened For My Life' described in its blurb as "a controversial book... which

looks critically at the role of the British prison medical service, prison officers... and the Home Office. What emerges is a deeply shocking picture of brutality and negligence..."

But that book does not deal with the H-Blocks.

INDEPENDENT

And a further instance of this apparently self-imposed censorship, reflecting the deep-seated anti-nationalist venom in certain sectors of Irish society, took place on Saturday morning last at the *Irish Independent* offices.

Independent literary editor Dick Roche had sought and obtained a review of the Bobby Sands book from Tan War veteran C.S. 'Todd' Andrews — father of the Fianna Fail deputies David and Niall Andrews. It turned out to be a very favourable review; Roche had it set up in type under the headline 'Testament of a Tortured Prisoner' and had it laid down ready on the page for printing.

But after Dick Roche had left the *Independent* offices, the paper's editor, Vincent Doyle, broke up the page and extracted the review.

Again in contrast, the *Evening Herald*, sister paper to the *Irish Independent*, had on the previous evening carried a vicious full-page attack on the book, under the headline 'Juvenile Jottings from the H-Block' and written by Ronan Farren.

A furious Dick Roche commented: "They'll be burning books next!"

BOBBY SANDS ONE DAY IN MY LIFE



INTRODUCTION BY

Sean MacBride S.C.

Nobel Peace Prize Winner

More victims of 'shoot-to-kill'

A BRITISH army killer-squad claimed another two victims late on Wednesday night in the continuation of the 'shoot-to-kill' policy which has been stepped up dramatically in recent months.

Neil MacMonagle, aged 23, of Shantallow in Derry, was shot dead only yards from his home in the Leafair estate and another young man, Liam Duffy, aged 18, of Drumleck Gardens, also in Shantallow, was critically injured.

The area was immediately sealed off, but earliest reports indicated that no weapons were found on the men and suggested that a plain-clothes SAS unit was possibly involved in a 'stake-out' operation leading up to this latest murder.

MARCH

AGAINST RUC MURDERS
IN COUNTY ARMAGH

2pm Sunday 6th February,
Meadowbrook Crossroads

LURGAN

Organised by the families of the six men recently murdered in the area

FitzGerald on probation

BY KEVIN BURKE & HILDA MacTHOMAS

THE Free State premier, Garret FitzGerald, appears to be attaching more importance to evolving a Northern policy rather than just trying to use it as a handy distraction from his economic policies when the Fianna Fail leadership punch-up eventually subsides.

In recent days, FitzGerald has been acting the statesman on the North, whilst his parliamentary opponents have gratuitously spurned their way to permanent headlines, and his own ministers are left on their own to face the wrath so far created by cuts and rising prices.

But there seems to be more to FitzGerald's posturing than this basic attempt to appear 'Mr Clean', concentrating on more weighty matters than the dirty world of phone-taps, bugs, feuds and mundane economic strictures.

And his thinking came out very clearly on Tuesday night when he appeared on his favourite television channel — the BBC — in an interview with David Dimbleby.

DISINTEGRATION

The danger he sees is the disintegration of the economic and social system North and South. And the threat to these corrupt and failed systems is not the hypocrisy of power-hungry Free State politicians or the wrath of workers further tortured by budgetary blows, but the significant advance by Sinn Féin in the North.

FitzGerald has correctly identified the major threat to the Irish capitalist establishment by the apparent abandonment of the craven and collaborative SDLP by the British government. And in this, in recent weeks, we have seen all the Irish establishment — church, Dublin government and SDLP — united as never before, in near panic.

Whilst the British govern-



● Tugendhat, Heath, Hume and FitzGerald; their smiles hide their shared fear of the revolutionary threat posed by the Republican Movement

ment continue to chasten both Dublin and the SDLP, with the salutary withdrawal of favour in this way — to bring them more firmly to heel in the future — FitzGerald is desperately signalling that he, at least, is ready to pay homage if given the chance.

He is equally worried that the British have once again miscalculated on Ireland and are powerless to halt the radical progress of the Northern nationalists, dramatically accelerated by

the Sinn Féin electoral success and continued growth.

FATAL BLOW

Any further advance by Sinn Féin, FitzGerald correctly construes as a fatal blow to the SDLP. And Sinn Féin emerging as the majority voice of Northern nationalists would obviously turn traditional Dublin policy on its head and expose it as nonsense.

FitzGerald, on BBC, said: "Our anxiety is to get into a discussion with the

British government as to how we can prevent that destabilisation, which could be disastrous for Northern Ireland and indeed very seriously dangerous for Britain also."

The anxiety to "get into a discussion with the British government," was portrayed on the same day, by the flight of Free State Foreign Minister Peter Barry to meet Northern direct-ruler James Prior in London. The meeting followed last week's brief meeting in Brussels between Barry and the British

Foreign Minister, Francis Pym.

Relations between Thatcher and Haughey had deteriorated to such an extent that, as one political observer put it, the British have put the new Dublin government 'on probation' as it were, and seem unlikely to be rushed into any kind of summit meeting between the two premiers, in spite of FitzGerald's eagerness to co-operate.

And whilst Barry and Prior undoubtedly found

themselves in total agreement on practical, everyday repression and collaboration between their respective armed forces, the headier and vaguer notions of FitzGerald in relation to the North must await a hearing by the British premier on some future occasion.

POSINGS

Just how silly FitzGerald's posings towards the Northern loyalists are, was revealed on Thursday of last week, January 27th, at a dinner in Belfast to mark the tenth anniversary of the enlargement of the EEC.

Helped by his slavish allies in the Dublin media, the Free State premier hoped to portray his 'historic' speech as an indication of his ability to communicate with his loyalist brethren (his 'mother's people' as he sickeningly refers to them).

But whilst FitzGerald simpered in Belfast about the uniting ability of the EEC, the reality was that the dinner was boycotted by both the DUP and OUP (including Euro-MPs Ian Paisley and John Taylor).

WOOLING

The Free State premier, far from wooing the loyalists, was left to grin foolishly at the Dublin-hating EEC Commissioner, former Tory minister Christopher Tugendhat; former British premier Edward Heath, whose stock with Margaret Thatcher is about equal to that of Charles Haughey; and, of course, the worried John Hume.

All found each other in agreement with the premise that the IRA are 'desperate and ruthless' people.

And after travelling back to Dublin, the hypocritical Garret FitzGerald — without explaining what happened to last year's crusade against the 'sectarian' Free State constitution — launched, this week, the anti-abortion amendment referendum, which has been objected to by almost all the non-Catholic church leaders.



● KEN MAGINNIS



● ROBERT MCCARTNEY

Unionist squabbles

BY HILDA MacTHOMAS

EVEN as the squabbling Official Unionist Party grudgingly decided to end its boycott of the Prior assembly's committees, on Wednesday, another cause of conflict looked likely to flare up with the decision by OUP member Robert McCartney to take part in a televised debate with Sinn Féin elected representative Danny Morrison on UTV's 'Counterpoint' programme on Thursday.

McCartney, already a unionist maverick, is contravening his party's policy to date — shared by Paisley's DUP — to refuse to appear live with any Sinn Féin spokespersons.

The Official Unionist Party climb-down over its attitude to assembly committees — arising from what it perceived as favouritism towards the DUP by the speaker, Jim Kilfedder, in awarding the chairs — has been expected since the beginning of the year.

The formation last week of an ad hoc committee on 'security' seemed obviously designed to placate the OUP and provide it with an official committee chairmanship.

It was even rumoured that the position would go to Ken Maginnis, of Fermanagh/South Tyrone; a fitting appointment for the former UDR soldier.

HUMILIATION

But the OUP were holding out

for a humiliation of Kilfedder by getting the other parties to agree to stripping him of his power to personally nominate the chairpersons, when the chairs came up for rotation.

As the boycott continued, discontent in the party ranks grew to the extent that on Friday, January 28th, OUP assembly member William Thompson resigned the party whip in protest.

However, on Wednesday of this week, without obtaining the curb of Kilfedder required, the OUP capitulated and announced the end of its committee boycott. And it now begins to fight for the ground lost to the DUP in the constitutional arena of the impotent assembly, which nevertheless always remains potentially dangerous whilst in existence.

...War News...War News...

IRA raise the roof

A MASSIVE IRA bomb, placed in a van which had been calmly parked outside Sion Mills RUC Barracks in County Tyrone, blew a massive hole in the so-called 'blast wall' designed to withstand the force of explosions, and completely destroyed the barracks behind it, early on Thursday, January 27th.

The impact of the blast ripped through the fortified building shattering windows, demolishing walls and lifting the entire roof of the building from its rafters. Because of the location of the barracks, in the main street of the predominantly loyalist village close to shops and churches, a 40-minute phoned warning ensured that RUC personnel as well as civilians were evacuated from the vicinity, and there were no casualties.

Robbed, because of the IRA unit's thorough planning of the operation and their usual regard for civilian safety, of even a few token injured to parade before newsmen, the propagandistic RUC had to content themselves with their stock whine on these occasions, that it was 'a miracle nobody was killed'.

VEHICLES

The neatly-executed attack began around breakfast time on Thursday when Tyrone Brigade IRA Volunteers took over a house in Strabane's Ballycolman estate and commandeered a Ford Escort van and a Vauxhall Cavalier. Taking

the vehicles, some of the ASU left, loaded the massive bomb into the van and drove it the couple of miles outside the town to Sion Mills.

Leaving the van directly outside the barracks on the main street, one Volunteer then transferred into the car which returned to the Ballycolman estate. The ASU then returned to base, having ensured that adequate warning of the bomb had been given.

When it detonated, shortly after 9.30am, a huge crater was blown in the road, making it impassable. The barracks themselves, according to the RUC, will probably have to be demolished.



● Work on clearing the debris at the devastated Sion Mills RUC Barracks begins

SDLP disarray on display

BY HILDA MacTHOMAS

"ANYWHERE Sinn Fein put up a candidate, they will be faced by the SDLP," declared John Hume in an interview on BBC's 'Spotlight' programme on Friday last, anticipating the decision of his party's conference two days later.

And, in the event, the delegates at the SDLP annual conference, in Belfast's Europa Hotel last weekend, voted overwhelmingly in favour of contesting all 17 Westminster seats in the next election. One lone voice was raised in opposition to such tactics, that of the SDLP deputy-leader, Seamus Mallon, who had earlier admitted privately to favouring a 'trading off' agreement with Sinn Fein on 'potential nationalist seats' — in particular, one for himself.

As SDLP delegates were voting on the issue in the Europa, thousands of people were marching through the streets of John Hume's home city in commemoration of Bloody Sunday: a contrast which will be remembered by nationalist voters in months to come.

This increasing alienation of the SDLP from the feelings of the nationalist community had been the subject of several television programmes and newspaper articles leading up to the party conference, and far from refurbishing the SDLP's political respectability, the conference further focussed public attention on the party's decline.

DISSIDENT

The January issue of *Fortnight* magazine published an open letter to John Hume which is strongly rumoured to emanate from a senior member of the SDLP.

In terms very similar to those used by SDLP dissident Paddy Duffy when interviewed on the 'Spotlight' programme, the letter accused Hume and the party leadership of having 'lost touch with grass-roots opinion' and no longer believing it 'respectable to publicly and vigorously identify with issues such as Castlereagh and the H-Blocks, which would be difficult to explain and justify to the Garret FitzGerald and Tip O'Neill of this world.'

The same criticisms were repeated on the eve-of-conference television programmes. The 'Spotlight' one concentrated on the Mid-Ulster constituency. Brendan Martin,



● John Hume, leader of the middle-class SDLP whose political fortunes are rapidly declining in the face of Sinn Fein's radical challenge

the local councillor who has resigned in protest from his seat on Omagh District Council and from the SDLP, had harsh words to say:

"The SDLP pretended to bring in all the elements, if people want to join the Alliance Party, let them do that. Things have become confused."

A local SDLP meeting was shown and the age group of those attending — mostly middle-aged and elderly — was contrasted with a Sinn Fein constituency where the participants were all quite young.

Paddy Duffy later admitted: "We have failed to bring in the youth. Sinn Fein are dedicated... they express a gut feeling of anti-Britishness."

And later the same evening, BBC 2's 'Newsnight' showed the drift away from the

SDLP to Sinn Fein in Hume's erstwhile stronghold of Derry.

ATTENDANCE

The lack of young people involved in the SDLP was picked up again by the television cameras at the party conference. Indeed, apart from Hume's main address, the attendance at the conference was poor, with the hall two-thirds empty and the level of debate extremely low.

A considerable number of issues were referred back to the party executive without question. Social and economic issues were dealt with superficially and Ireland's economic dependency on Britain was virtually ignored. A housing document thrown together and presented to the conference for discussion

was described by an observer from Shelter as 'pathetic' and 'inaccurate'.

The topic of personation at the polls has become a matter for denunciation by the SDLP after years of solid vote-stealing by the party. And there was speaker after speaker claiming that this was the basis for Sinn Fein's success, and supporting a call for identification for voters — a sudden and dramatic change in SDLP policy.

ADDRESS

Hume's address as party leader said very little, blaming everyone and offering no perspective. The magic words 'Council for a New Ireland' were deemed sufficient to give the ordinary SDLP delegates a sense of being part of something important, without having to work for it.

And in a long tirade which blamed republicans for all the sufferings of the nationalist people and, at the same time, attempted to explain away the vote they command, Hume left his audience stunned and silent (far from winning the applause he expected) with his claim that a vote for Sinn Fein "is a vote for killing working men and women in the Protestant community who have donned uniforms and who see themselves... as the defenders of the Protestant tradition and way of life in this island."

ROMANCE

But it was the whole nationalist people that came under fire from SDLP right-winger Paddy O'Hanlon who declared:

"An unstable people will always cling to romance as a substitute for the slow trickle of reform."

And he elaborated further, explaining that while the SDLP has "the talent and the intelligence" and "deals in intelligence", Sinn Fein plays on the emotions of those nationalists who are easily led.

In O'Hanlon's analysis, a fickle and ignorant working class voted for Sinn Fein on the basis of emotion, but the real political leadership is to be found in the middle-class SDLP.

Unfortunately for that party, the reality is rather that the nationalist people are, by force of events, the most politically aware in Europe, and have a disconcerting ability of being well able to make up their own minds.

Border incursion

AN eight-strong British army foot patrol crossed 500 yards into County Louth on Tuesday afternoon, January 25th, and conducted a search of farm out-buildings and fields which went on for half an hour.

The owner of the property, at Raffan, Hackballcross, informed the British soldiers as to where they were, but was ignored. None of them spoke but continued the search. Other eye-witnesses claim that they appeared confident that there would be no Free State army or garda interruption.

Sinn Féin county councillor Fra Browne has complained to the Free State Department of Foreign Affairs at this latest in a long line of border incursions, and is to raise the matter again at this month's meeting of Louth County Council, where growing concern is being expressed at the apparent freedom of British forces to operate in areas south of the border.



Task Force on the border

Task Force defied

THE NAMES of Garda Task Force members accused of harassment in Leitrim and North Roscommon were called out on loudspeakers during a march through Carrick-on-Shannon on Saturday, January 22nd. Leaflets handed out named Detective Garda Andy Brennan as the leader of those involved.

The decision to hold a protest march against harassment was taken after three months of intensive Task Force activity against republicans and their supporters, including raids on homes, threats against employment, accosting on the street, and 'promises' of framing people on charges.

The march, in defiance of this policy, attracted over a hundred people. A meeting which followed in Carrick-on-Shannon's town centre was addressed by Michael Colreavy of Manorhamilton, chairperson of Leitrim Sinn Féin, and local Sinn Féin county councillor John Joe McGirl.

Gorey supports repeal

AT THEIR January meeting last week, Gorey Town Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution calling for the repeal of Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act which bans republicans from RTE.

The motion was proposed by Sinn Féin councillor John Sheehan, who is vice-chairperson of the Town Commission.

Derry taxi appeal

DERRY'S 16 black-taxi drivers have claimed that constant harassment by the British army and RUC is putting their livelihood at risk.

Brian Ward, chairperson of the Derry Taxi Association, says that their taxis are presently stopped on an average of two or three times a day and, on occasions, passengers have been left standing in the road for up to half an hour while the RUC or British army search the taxi. He says:

"It's ludicrous, at a time when the job situation in Derry is as bad as it is, and all the talk of setting up a new enterprise zone, that an effort of local enterprise and endeavour such as the Derry Taxi Association is being driven out of existence by harassment. We would hope that all local community groupings would support us in our efforts to stop this harassment of our service."

Water strike escalates

BY EAMON TRACY

PERSISTENT strike-breaking by management in the North's water and sewerage workers' dispute has caused an escalation of the strike, with the removal by the trade unions of all emergency cover.

The decision to respond in this fashion was reluctantly taken on Monday of this week, January 31st, at a meeting of shop-stewards belonging to the Transport and General Workers' Union, which represents 60% of the North's 1,200 water workers.

They were supported on Tuesday by a similar decision by the General Municipal and Boilermakers' Union (GMBU). Both unions stressed that they would reconsider their position on emergency cover if management gave an undertaking to stop carrying out any work normally the responsibility of those on strike.

During the first week of the strike, intensification of pressure on the water workers came from the British minister at the Northern Department of the Environment (DOE), David Mitchell, who threatened that a prolonged water strike could result in job losses.



Water workers throughout the North, like these in Belfast's Oldpark, have been forced to remove emergency cover due to management provocation

It also emerged that untreated sewage was leaking not only into Belfast Lough, but also into the River Lagan. The DOE strenuously denied the reports, but Hugh Minnis of the GMBU retort-

ed: "If anyone requires confirmation of sewage leaks all they have to do is walk round the Lagan in East Belfast and they will find they need a gas-mask."

Armagh work protest ends

BY CATHAL O'REILLY

THE 'no-work' protest by women republican prisoners in Armagh Jail has ended after six years, according to a statement from the women issued on Monday, January 31st.

They describe their decision as "simply a case of changing circumstances demanding new approaches to the situation."

"After careful assessment of all the factors relating to our current position we believe that to continue the protest on a 'no-work' basis would prove an unproductive exercise."

"It is therefore our immediate intention to maintain and consolidate that ground already secured through the years while at the same time proceeding to channel our energies and resources strategically through other outlets which we feel will prove more beneficial in furthering our aims."

The no-work protest in Armagh began when Mairead Farrell, the first woman republican prisoner sentenced after the withdrawal of political status, began the campaign on December 8th 1976.

This was a parallel development to that begun in the H-Blocks by

the male republican prisoners but, unlike the H-Block protest, it did not include the blanket protest as women prisoners are not required by British penal regulations to wear prison uniform.

ATTACK

In February 1980, the deteriorating situation in Armagh took a dramatic turn when over 30 male warders joined with female prison staff in a brutal attack on the 32 women prisoners then on protest.

The attack, and subsequent restrictions on toilet and washing facilities, forced an escalation of the protest to include a refusal to wash or slip-on.

The prison campaign in Armagh reached a peak when three women, Mairead Farrell, Mary Doyle and Mairead Nugent, joined seven of their comrades in the H-Blocks on a hunger-strike, which ended on December 17th 1980, when



MAIREAD FARRELL

the British authorities gave the hunger-strikers a document which they believed could form the basis for a just solution to the prison protest.

Although the male prisoners in the H-Blocks ended their no-work protest in November 1982, just over a year after the end of the

second H-Block hunger-strike, for similar reasons now given by the women prisoners, who felt at the time that some gains could possibly be made in their situation by a continuation of the no-work protest, on balance they have now decided this not to be the case.

DECISION

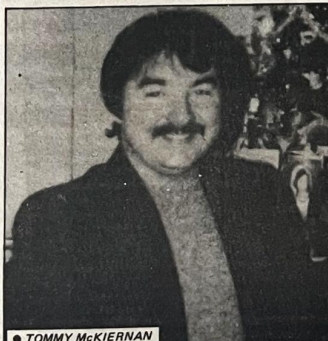
Commenting on the Armagh decision, Chris McAuley of Sinn Féin's Department of Women's Affairs in Belfast said:

"Throughout the six years of the protest in Armagh, the women republican prisoners remained determined and resolute in both morale and spirit despite their atrocious living conditions, loss of privileges and remission and 23-hour lock-up."

"Even to the present day, faced with degrading and humiliating strip-searches, the women on remand in Armagh have not only their dignity and self-respect but have given republican women on the outside a deep sense of pride. And they will remain a source of inspiration to us all in the fight for freedom."

Malicious confinement

BY EAMON TRACY



TOMMY MCKIERNAN

THE PLIGHT of two republican remand prisoners in solitary confinement in Crumlin Road Jail has been taken up by Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin's elected representative for West Belfast.

Tommy McKiernan, a republican remand prisoner who, along with fellow republican Bobby Brown, has been held in isolation in the annexe of Crumlin Road since last summer, recently wrote to Gerry Adams complaining about the prison administration's refusal to move himself and Brown to the wings containing republican prisoners.

In a statement, on Tuesday of this week, Gerry Adams said: "Mr McKiernan and Mr Brown have been trying to be moved

from the annexe to 'A' or 'C' Wing so that they can have the companionship of other remand prisoners. The governor of the prison has informed them that they cannot be moved because their lives are in danger from the remand prisoners."

"I have contacted the remand prisoners on this issue and they assure me that this is not the case and they would be glad to see both Mr Brown and Mr McKiernan out of solitary and into the wing. I accept their assurance and their integrity on this matter and today I phoned Belfast Prison and

informed the deputy-governor of the situation.

"He told me that a decision on this matter was out of his hands and referred me to the NIO. I contacted them also by phone today and discussed the matter with an official in Lord Gowie's office."

"I was informed that Mr Brown and Mr McKiernan had been held in solitary because of a recommendation by the RUC. I asked the official involved should Mr Brown or Mr McKiernan be sentenced would they, on a recommendation from the RUC, have to spend their entire prison sentence in solitary confinement? He could not answer this question."

"It appears that the NIO and the RUC are confining these two remand prisoners in solitary simply out of malice."

Black completes informer evidence

BY SEAN DELANEY

NORTH BELFAST informer Christopher Black completed his evidence last Tuesday against the 33 men and 5 women he has implicated in a series of republican activities, and was immediately flown to England to return to the round-the-clock police protection he has received since he agreed to turn informer in November 1981. It was his sixteenth day in the witness box giving evidence and under cross-examination.

Throughout this time Black has successfully maintained that his statements to the RUC were made voluntarily, without financial inducements and without prompting or coaching. However, along with several inconsistencies in his evidence — in giving details and dates of alleged IRA operations, and those involved in

them — he has been unable to explain exactly why (other than that he 'forgot') it was only eight months after he began giving evidence that he implicated one of the present defendants, Toby McMahon.

On Tuesday, his last day in court, Black admitted that he hadn't been "looking forward" to giving evidence against the 38 defendants, and



CHRISTOPHER BLACK

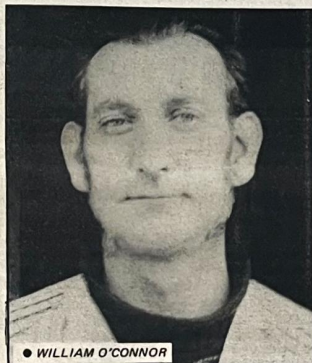
that during the trial he had been very nervous. "I'm sick every morning. I'm not enjoying myself," he added.



Crumlin Road Courthouse where informer Christopher Black has now finished giving his evidence

At least two other people are known to be thoroughly sickened by Black's performance in court. One of them is 70-year-old Rose Harvey, whom Black has accused of allowing her Ardoyne home to be used by the IRA for meetings, and who had to leave the court after becoming ill during Black's cross-

examination. The other is 62-year-old Mrs Margaret Black, who on January 12th was ejected from the court after trying to talk to her son, whom she has not been able to communicate with since his November 1981 arrest, and who on January 18th suffered a heart attack as a result.



WILLIAM O'CONNOR

Twinbrook family tormented

BY MAEVE ARMSTRONG

THE O'Connor family in Belfast's Twinbrook estate have been victims of constant harassment by the British army and RUC since they moved to their present home in Aspen Walk from the Turf Lodge estate six years ago.

In a vicious raid last year a wall between the O'Connors' home and their next-door neighbours was sledge-hammered through by a raiding party. Members of the family are regularly on the receiving end of verbal

abuse from British army foot patrols on the street.

A frequent ploy used to torment the O'Connors is to 'mistake' their address for someone else's.

Just before Christmas, for example, the RUC and British army arrived at the house with a summons and insisted on entering. But, after a scuffle with William O'Connor, it turned out that they were at the wrong address.

PLOY

This ploy was used again on Tuesday of this week, February 1st, when Theresa

O'Connor answered the door and was assaulted by an RUC man. Her father, William, who is not long out of hospital after suffering a heart-attack, came to see what the fuss was about.

A British soldier cocked his plastic bullet gun and pointed it threateningly at Mr O'Connor and when he tried to reason with them, explaining his condition, an RUC man pushed him back inside the house telling him: "I hope you die."

He then demanded William O'Connor's name and faked a bewildered expression before stating that they must be at the wrong house and departing.

PUBLICITY FOR HARASSMENT

BY EAMON TRACY

THE DAILY harassment of Sinn Fein workers in Belfast got an unexpected burst of publicity on Thursday, January 27th, with the arrest of Sinn Fein's elected representative Gerry Adams and the party's housing spokesperson in Belfast, Sean Keenan.

They had been in the Springhill area of West Belfast from 1pm, dealing with a number of housing complaints, and during the afternoon were constantly observed from two RUC vehicles and a British army jeep regularly passing by.

Shortly before 4.30pm, the vehicles pulled up alongside Adams and Keenan and an RUC inspector jumped out and grabbed Adams by the arm and demanded to know where he was going.

Adams brushed the hand away and a heated argument began which resulted in Gerry Adams and Sean Keenan being arrested.

CONFUSED

Both were taken to Springfield Road Barracks where a confused RUC suddenly found themselves the centre of much media attention. After a number of nervous phone-calls by the RUC, the two men were released and the RUC, in order to hide their embarrassment, refused to comment on the grounds that Gerry Adams, they claimed, had made a formal complaint.

Adams replied, however:

"I did not make a formal complaint. In my view, it is pointless making a formal complaint and asking the RUC to investigate it itself."

He added:

"Such disruption of political activity is nothing new, of course, and such actions by the RUC only reflect the high level of harassment tactics aimed at nationalist people on a daily basis."

PROTEST

And on Wednesday of this week, Gerry Adams protested in the strongest possible manner to the office of direct-ruler James Prior about the continuing harassment of Sinn Fein constituency workers.

He referred in particular to the constant harassment of Sinn Fein worker Padraic Wilson, who was again stopped on several occasions that afternoon by British army and RUC patrols in the Turf Lodge area while dealing with a number of advice matters.

Adams commented:

"The RUC and British army

know only too well that Padraic Wilson and many others like him are carrying out Sinn Fein constituency business, yet he, like many others in the nationalist community, is harassed day and daily by these forces.

"They have done this for years, but we are still here, and here to stay!"

Adams called on anyone harassed in any way to contact Sinn Fein immediately.

DRIVERS

Two An Phoblacht/Republican News drivers were also arrested in the last week.

On Saturday, January 29th, Thomas O'Dwyer was followed by two unmarked RUC cars after delivering papers in County Tyrone. He was stopped and, even though he produced his driving licence, was arrested on the pretext of needing to be 'positively identified'. He was held in Dungannon RUC Barracks for almost four hours before being released.

On Wednesday night of this week, another An Phoblacht/Republican News driver, Joe Scott, was arrested by garda Special Branchmen as he arrived at the paper's Dublin offices. He was taken to the Bridewell for photographing and finger-printing and then released.



Sinn Fein elected representative Gerry Adams and housing spokesperson Sean Keenan, canvassing during the assembly election campaign

Work at your po

BY JACK MADDEN

STATISTICS may not lie but they often tell only half-truths, as with the official statistics for accidents at work in the twenty-six counties. These claim that in 1981 there were 3,865 accidents of which 21 proved fatal. Frightening enough, but, according to union sources, these figures are misleading and represent only the tip of the iceberg.

The real figure is hidden under a veil provided by the inadequate legislation which covers the area of safety at work, and is distorted by management practices which have, in the past, treated safety at work as the optional extra of industrial negotiations, judged by employers in financial, rather than human, terms.

As higher standards in safety and health become increasingly relevant in a technological and chemical age, it has become more important for workers to know where they stand in relation to current legislation. It may come as something of a shock, therefore, to discover that in the twenty-six counties only 20% of workers are protected by law. There are no set standards for those employed in agriculture, schools, hospitals, fisheries and forestry! No provision has been made to include these areas in the Safety of Industry Act (1980) which is supposed to be an updating of existing law (the Factories Act 1955).

DANGERS

And the dangers to health and safety at work are endless. They include threats from toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, from radiation, whether from fumes or direct contact, whether from normal usage or accidental spills.

Dust in industry can and does kill, from coal-miner's pneumoconiosis, to the now well-known asbestosis, to 'farmer's lung' caused by mould spores.

Fire dangers come from the use of flammable liquids, heating and lighting systems, and smoking. But how many factories, offices and other workplaces are properly equipped with fire-escapes and fire-fighting equipment, or carry out regular fire-drills?

Lifting and handling weights at work has nothing to do with manly strength, but requires proper training to avoid back injuries in particular.

Loss of hearing is one of the most common industrial injuries through constant exposure to high noise levels from machinery, without provision of sound-insulating covers and partitions, or ear-protection muffs.

Serious eye damage of a permanent nature can result from inadequate lighting or from the now common computer visual display units. A direct eye injury can often be avoided by safety spectacles.

Inadequately guarded machinery can result in maiming. In the construction industry, in particular, injuries from falling objects, or by persons falling themselves, or by reversing lorries, run into hundreds every year.

Electrocution in the factory or office or outside through contact with overhead wires, is another frequent injury. Lacerations from the use of equipment are the most frequent of all.

LEGISLATION

Even those who are covered by legislation have little reason to be happy, since the law is weak in the area of safety and provides mere 'slap-on-the-wrist' fines for employers who disregard statutory safety standards.

One of the major problems confronting unions is the attitude, by both employers

and government, that accidents are primarily caused by 'carelessness'. Thus they concentrate on getting workers to change their work-habits rather than on the creation of safer systems of work. The ICTU in its report for 1981-1982 replies that "errors of judgement may be factors in some accidents but it does not follow that we can cure accidents just by making people 'safety conscious'. Work systems must be designed to take account of the fact that workers are human and do sometimes make mistakes." The law ignores health hazards and the relationship between working time, work organisation and health and safety.

EXCUSE

Another excuse posed by the employers is lack of finance. They plead inability to afford an improvement in safety standards, unaware or uninterested in the argument, advanced by the ICTU, that safety saves money. Faced with the threat of closure or redundancies shop-stewards do not press for the implementation of safety standards.

In its report, the ICTU says:

"It is important to recognise that a central objective of management is to contain costs — all costs — and that the health and safety of employees will not be considered apart from the balance sheet."

Even within those areas covered by the law most accidents are not reported. No record is kept either by unions or employers of the small accidents and the 'near misses' which happen constantly. A worker must be out for three days before the accident is notifiable. There is nothing to stop an employer relocate an injured employee in another area where their ailment will not matter. Thus even a worker who breaks a leg can be relocated in a clerical job.

INSPECTORATE

The Industrial Inspectorate, whose job it is to enforce the law, are hampered through lack of manpower. They prefer to work by persuasion rather than coercion and so there are very few prosecutions. It is clear that the low number of prosecutions does not mean a high standard of safety. Furthermore, it is difficult to justify prosecution for a moderate offence when it is obvious that there are more serious breaches to be tackled.

If, and when, a case does go to court the end result is a small fine which proves no deterrent to an employer.

In 1981, a total of 139 cases were brought before the Free State courts. Of these, 101 ended in convictions and the total fines amounted to a mere £1,950. The choice of paying a large sum to install proper safety standards or paying a small fine proves no difficulty to the employer. Thus it pays not to comply with the law!

In the Safety in Industry Act, provision is made for 'safety committees' in a workplace with 20 workers or more. These committees are composed of employees and employers. No provision is made for trade union representation and it is quite possible that a committee could be composed of white-collar rather than blue-collar employees. In Britain and in the six counties the trade union is represented as of right and can conduct inspections of the workplace and attend training courses.



Those rights are not built into legislation in the twenty-six counties.

● Whilst a number of accidents are caused by carelessness, improved and (below), building sites are veritable minefields when it comes to work

COMMISSION

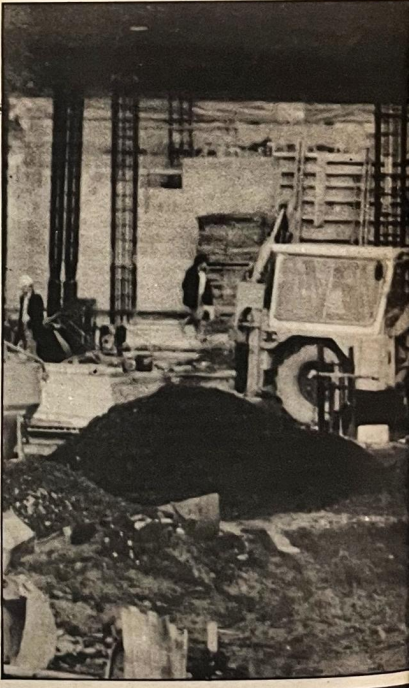
In October 1980, the Dublin government established a Commission on Safety, Health and Welfare at Work to investigate and make a report to the Department of Labour. The Commission is to present its report later this year, but the prospect of having any radical policies introduced seems remote. The ICTU has presented its own proposals to the Commission which, if accepted, could radically alter legislation in this area.

Their proposals advocate:-

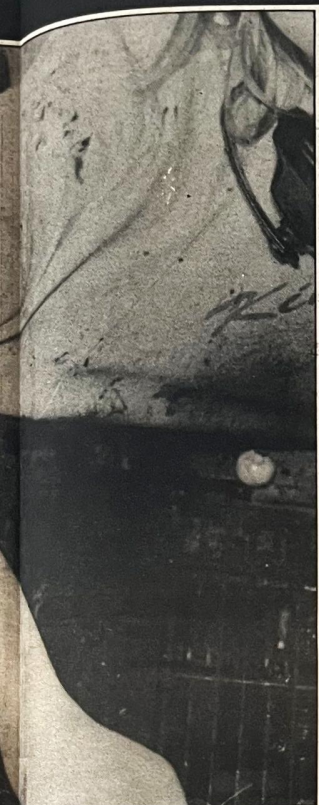
- That legislation be extended to include all workers.
- That safety and health be integrated into general work organisation.
- That a Health and Safety Authority be established.
- That fines be increased to act as a real deterrent.

The Health and Safety Authority, proposed by the ICTU, would be representative of trade unions, employers and government, would formulate, implement and review a coherent overall policy on health and safety at work, would have power to agree on and issue a code of practice and would be responsible for supervising the overall enforcement and inspection of premises.

Certainly, a general policy is badly needed if safety and health are ever to become anything more than an increasingly weak bargaining position in industrial relations. Bread and butter issues are, of necessity, the priority with union shop-stewards on the shop-floor at the moment but safety and health at work is non-negotiable in the view of the ICTU who emphasise that "all workers are entitled to a working environment that is safe and without risk to health."



eril!



are after work systems would reduce these figures (above);
keri safety



Discrimination on the dole

BY RITA O'HARE

DISCRIMINATION against women under the Free State's social welfare code has long been a source of anger, and remains so in spite of some small victories won down the years. And the anomalies in the system are many.

Married women who have jobs outside the home, pay the same Pay-Related Social Insurance contributions (PRSI) as men and single women, and the same conditions apply to them as to other workers before they can qualify for benefits.

But when a married woman loses her job or goes sick, she finds that her equal PRSI payments do not entitle her to equal social welfare payments.

For example, the maximum payment for men and single women on Unemployment Benefit, or 'on the sick', is £31.65 per week — but the maximum rate for a married woman, living with her husband, is £27.80 per week in these circumstances.

And not only is the weekly rate of Unemployment Benefit lower, but it is paid for a shorter period — 390 days in the case of men and single women, 312 days in the case of married women.

INVALIDITY

Invalidity Pension, paid to persons permanently incapable of work, is also assessed differently in this discriminatory way — £35.50 for all men and single women, and only £31.25 for married women.

Benefits that require no con-

tribution conditions are also paid at a lower rate to married women. Injury Benefit is £43.50 for men and single women, but only £34.45 for married women. Disablement Benefit is £47.40 for the first category but goes down to £37.50 for married women. And Unemployability Supplement is at two different rates as well — £31.65 and £27.80.

But not only is this discrimination against married women enshrined in the legislation, but it permeates the Free State Department of Social Welfare officials' attitude to married women at every point.

CHILDREN

A woman claiming unemployment benefit must prove that she is eligible for work and, if she has children, this includes her having to prove that she has someone to look after them. But an unemployed husband is not acceptable in this regard, as this makes him technically unavailable, and also

frequently rejected is the woman's mother, even though she has previously looked after the children for her working daughter.

The personal opinion of a deciding officer at the labour exchange is all that is required to refuse unemployment benefit to married women with children, and almost invariably that decision, in line with the department's discriminatory regulations, goes against the woman.

In the same way, married women with children who are deserted find themselves under almost irresistible pressure from officials to apply, on becoming unemployed, for the Deserted Wives' Benefit, even though they qualify for Unemployment Benefit on the basis of PRSI contributions.

The former benefit has a higher basic rate, but debars the recipient from receiving pay-related benefit which at rates of up to 40% of wages, cushions the hardships of unemployment in the early weeks. The same thing happens in the case of single mothers.

NOT ELIGIBLE

Up until March 1982, married women were not eligible for Un-

employment Assistance when the period on Benefit based on PRSI contributions ran out. And this included married women without children who were separated from their husbands and not maintained by them.

A woman with child dependants could get a Supplementary Welfare Allowance, a Deserted Wives' Allowance or, if unmarried, an Unmarried Mothers' Allowance. But if a married woman had no child dependant, she got nothing.

The change in last year's Budget, making provision for these women, came about because of a case taken in the Dublin High Court by Roisin Conroy, a woman who had been separated for seven years and was being maintained by her husband.

When she became unemployed, Unemployment Benefit was paid to her for the period of her PRSI entitlement. She then applied for Unemployment Assistance and was refused. She took the Department of Social Welfare to court, but before the case was heard the appropriate change was made in the social welfare code.

CAMPAIGN

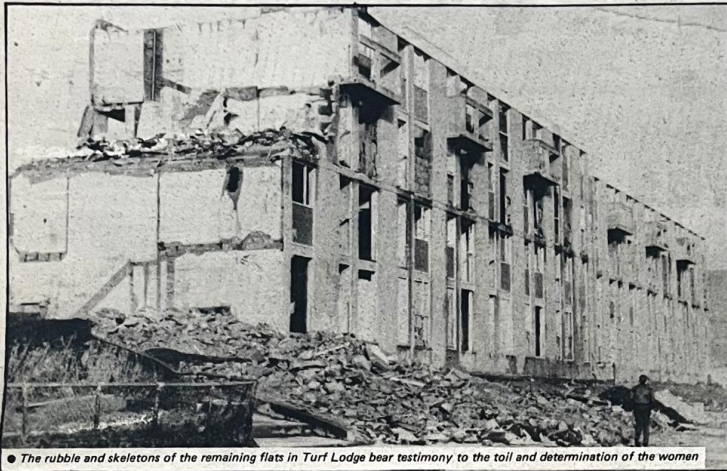
A Women's Campaign for a Unified Social Welfare Code was organised to support her in her fight, and the women involved in it are continuing to agitate for equal entitlements for married women.

The group holds weekly meetings on Tuesday evenings in the Women's Centre in Dublin's Dame Street, and a pamphlet on the range of inequalities is in preparation.

There is still much progress to be made, but there is at least an organised base on which to build on. Social welfare payments are, even at the maximum rate, inadequate, and there is no reason at all why married women, paying into the fund on the same scale whilst at work, should quietly accept even less than that inadequate rate.

THE TURF LODGE WOMEN

BY MAEVE ARMSTRONG



● The rubble and skeletons of the remaining flats in Turf Lodge bear testimony to the toll and determination of the women

HOPEFULLY, by the end of this month, the remaining eyesore of what was once the infamous 'T' Block and adjacent flats and maisonettes in Belfast's Turf Lodge estate will be completely demolished, thanks to the sheer guts, hard campaigning, determination and staying-power of the women who once occupied them.

The Turf Lodge complex, which consisted of some 311 dwellings — including 31 families in the 'T' Block itself — were built 16 years ago and fell into sharp decline with repairs neglected and inefficient amenities. In 1972 a total refurbishing scheme was launched costing thousands of pounds. But, increasingly, through social and economic influences, conditions reverted and during the '70s the complex became a 'half-way-house' for refugees intimidated out of Protestant areas, families coming and going on a temporary basis while they awaited re-allocation.

Practically every dwelling was prone to excessive dampness, flooding and overflowing sewage, posing serious health risks to the residents. Their depressing surroundings and bleak prospects of being re-housed led to a whole series of social problems including nervous disorders, drinking and dependency on anti-depressant tablets.

to give up."

An outbreak of dysentery in the complex towards the end of 1978, with sewage seeping up through sinks and toilets because of inadequate drainage, resulted in members of every household falling sick; four children were hospitalised. The committee took immediate action with residents occupying St Aidan's School overnight. In closing and fumigating the school, the following day, the authorities were actually admitting to the residents that they feared the serious health threat in the flats. The publicity generated by the event, plus the persistent media bombardment in follow-up protests, spurred the Housing Executive to announce in September 1979 their intention to demolish the flats.

However, after a meeting with the Housing Executive, the year 1985 was mooted and was met with total rejection by the committee. The protests recommenced, the women again to the forefront, and eventually, because of the terrific pressure and agitation, they succeeded, in December 1981, in forcing the Executive to agree to begin building 100 new houses in February 1982 on the new Gort na Mona site.

COMPLETION

A mere ten months after building commenced, with the Turf Lodge women pushing for completion, the first residents moved into their new houses just before Christmas. Today the majority of residents (apart from a handful 'awaiting houses') have been re-allocated and practically all the old blocks of flats and the 'T' Block have been demolished. Only the rubble and the few skeletons of buildings that remain bear testimony to the sweat, toil and determination of the Turf Lodge women.

"We're only housewives," joke Kathleen and Sheila but the underlying truth is that they and the women like them in similar situations are far from being 'only' anything!

DEATH

The tragic death of a young mother in May 1978, who hung herself in the flats, focussed public attention for the first time on the conditions there and triggered the women in the flats and 'T' Block into establishing the Turf Lodge Flats and Maisonettes Action Committee. There were only seven of them in the beginning but they — with the full support and backing of all the residents — took on the enormous workload of organising protests, pickets, occupations and sit-ins of government buildings and Housing Executive offices. All of them with families of their own, they put their resources, time and energy into their campaign.

Kathleen Thibodeau and Sheila O'Hara, two of the action committee members, recall the early days:

"We would organise protests from the top of our heads. We'd get out with the loudhailer, get everybody out and there on the spot we'd head off to take over some building or set up a picket. It was extremely effective and the Executive hated the bad publicity."

The women believed they had the power in their own hands to achieve success and, given that on most occasions it was the women who did the protesting and agitation, it is no wonder Kathleen Thibodeau remarks:

"To me, men tend to disrupt or destroy a committee. They're bloody hopeless because they aren't aggressive enough. The authorities react a lot quicker to a group of militant women. They listen more because they know we're fighting for our families and aren't going

Callous disregard

BY MAEVE ARMSTRONG

THE Housing Executive's callous disregard for individual hardship is again illustrated in the treatment of a needy Belfast family.

The Raffertys, of Westrock Drive, were allocated a house on the nearby Whiterock estate over a year ago. Mrs Monica Rafferty, who is suffering from Huntington's Disease — a terminal illness — requires constant attention from her husband, Gerald. They have four children, aged from 16 to 5 which gives him a double burden of work and responsibility in coping with the family and home.

Mrs Rafferty's condition necessitates that she is within easy access of a ground-level bathroom and bedroom. Quite apart from the danger of her injuring herself in falling downstairs, which has happened in the past, the ground-floor rooms would, for Mr Rafferty and his wife, make life that little bit



● Monica and Gerald Rafferty

easier.

The Executive gave the go-ahead for such conversions over a year ago, but instead of giving this case urgent priority barely any work has commenced and any enquiry from Mr Rafferty has been met with unconcern and buck-passing by the

Executive to the builders. Doctors' reports have been met with the same attitude and it appears to the Raffertys, as to many other families in similar circumstances, that the Executive revel in their mis-used power of controlling and determining their lives.

Ring road ructions

BY EAMON TRACY

TENANTS of the Devonshire housing estate in Belfast's Lower Falls area were still successfully halting work on the new Belfast ring road this week, in protest at the damage its construction is causing to their homes.

Just before 8am on Monday, January 31st, workmen, who attempted to recommence work on the ring road site beside the Devonshire estate, ran off after being challenged by several residents.

Since last October, the Devonshire Tenants' Association have prevented construction because they are frightened by the shattering effect pile-drivers, yards from their wooden-based houses, were having. They are also objecting to a proposed subway, the entrance of which is being built directly in front of the estate.

Tenants fear it will become a magnet for glue-sniffers and muggers.

MEETINGS

Over the last four months, several meetings with the Housing Executive, and involving representatives from Sinn Féin, have been held. The tenants' association have proposed that, as their homes are in need of major repair, after only six years in existence (a fact acknowledged by a proposed massive refurbishing scheme for the estate), they be only used as temporary accommodation for families whose homes are being repaired.

While these talks were taking place, the Department of the Environment (DOE), which is directly responsible for building the ring road, kept a low profile. However, with the refusal of the residents to be fobbed off with empty persuasion, the pressure to begin work again has been increased. On Monday of this week the first attempt by the DOE to defeat the Devonshire protest began with the erection of a strong corrugated iron fence and barbed wire around the site, but on Monday, and on the following day, workmen were frightened away by resolute tenants who braved the barbed wire and freezing weather.



● Mairead Fox of the Devonshire Tenants' Association



● The new houses in Turf Lodge

Burke's at the back

BY KEVIN BURKE

COMPANIES going into liquidation aren't all bad news.

The collapse of the McCartan group of companies in Leitrim in 1980, was an enormous blow to hundreds of people in that deprived county. The ruinous financial effects are still being felt there.

On the other hand, it is understood that the accountants appointed as liquidators, Stokes, Kennedy and Crowley, have made £750,000 in fees out of the collapse.

Laurence Crowley, the man in charge of the liquidation, who clashed many times with workers trying to redeem something from the wreckage, is reported to have been charging himself out at £100 per hour.

The liquidator, of course, gets first go at money realised by sale of assets; money owing to workers and small debtors come way down the list, by which time the money has almost invariably run out.

But, as they say, every cloud...

☆☆☆

The Department of the Environment in the North has announced that it is over-ruling the Planning Appeals Commission and allowing a new RUC barracks to be built at Racecourse Road, Shantallow, in Derry.

The Commission had rejected the application on the grounds of "the danger and anxiety and apprehension accruing from the proximity at the site to dwellings and a primary school."

Not factors thought worthy of consideration by the NIO.

☆☆☆

Last Thursday night, renovation work was being carried out on the advice centre in Carrickmore, County Tyrone, of Sinn Féin elected representative Danny Morrison. The repairs coincided with the evening visit to Belfast for an EEC anniversary dinner of Free State premier Garret FitzGerald.

Not surprisingly, workers were agitated to discover that the fluorescent light rings they were fitting were produced by a company called



Fitzgerald with a Union Jack symbol proudly displayed on the label.

No need to add that Fitzgerald was 'Made in England'!

☆☆☆

I see that Gerry Adams' book 'Falls Memories' has reached number three in the best-sellers list as published in the Sunday Independent last Sunday.

It is also at number two in the 'Alternative Bestsellers' book-list published in the current issue of the London weekly City Limits. The book keeping it out of the number one spot there is entitled 'Keep The Peace'.

Don't look at me, I'm saying nothing.

☆☆☆

A British soldier serving in the Royal Regiment of Wales has been jailed for life at Winchester for a most sadistic sexual assault and murder of the wife of a fellow soldier at Aldershot in April of last year.

Robert Scott, who had recently served in the North, was described by his adjutant as 'a hard worker and popular'.

☆☆☆

In April of last year, the RUC were called to a house in Cookstown, County Tyrone, where an aggressive, abusive man, carrying a child, smelling of alcohol and armed with a loaded pistol, was attempting to force his way into his mother-in-law's home, where his wife was taking refuge. He was arrested and charged.

But last week, in Cookstown Court, all charges against him were dismissed.

UDR soldier David Wilson explained to the magistrate that he was merely dropping the child off with his wife before going to the local UDR barracks for duty.

☆☆☆

Not so lucky were two UDR men found

A silver lining



● Laurence Crowley — coining it



● John A. Murphy — a nasty surprise

drunk in the Golden Nugget Saloon at Newtownstewart after hours. They shouted abuse at the RUC when they arrived on the scene and refused to give their names.

For this lack of solidarity in Her Majesty's forces, Keith Allison and Geoffrey Anderson, of 6 UDR, Omagh, were each fined £25 at Castlederg Court last week.

☆☆☆

Talk of redrawing the border seems to have confused the *Daily Mirror*, which has never quite got to grips with the Irish scene.

According to a report in last Wednesday's paper, vandals damaged several cars in the car park of 'the Ulster Hospital in Dundalk, near Belfast.'

☆☆☆

Good to see that the viciously anti-republican

an professor from Cork, John A. Murphy, has been slung out of the Free State senate in this week's elections to that useless assembly.

But does this slap in the mouth mean we have heard the last venomous vowels from this whining Sticky fellow-traveller?

Alas, I think not.

☆☆☆

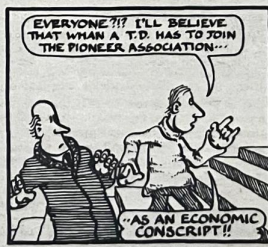
The story is told in Belfast of two IRA Volunteers sat over an M60 machine gun at a suitable vantage point on the Falls Road waiting for a British army patrol to come past.

Ten o'clock comes and goes and no patrol appears. Eleven o'clock, and the two sit patiently on. At twelve o'clock there has still been no sign of any Brit patrol.

As one o'clock strikes, one turns to the other and says:

"I wonder where they are. I hope nothing's happened to them."

Notes by Corrac



WHAT'S ON

WOULD readers please note that all insertions (memorials and sympathy notices, birthday greetings, listings for the What's On column, etc.) should reach the An Phoblacht/Republican News office in either Dublin or Belfast no later than 5pm on the Monday prior to publication to ensure inclusion in that week's edition of the paper.

VOLS FITZSIMMONS/O'HANLON WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY

Sunday 8th February
After 11am Mass, Ardglass
12 noon, Downpatrick
COUNTY DOWN

CHARLES MCCANN/PHILIM GRANT COMMEMORATION MARCH

2.30pm Sunday 8th February
Ballyduggan Villas
Parade to Cargin Graveyard
CARGIN
County Antrim

COMHAIRLE CUIGE MUMHAN MEETING

2.30pm Sunday 8th February
LIMERICK

Two delegates from each comhairle ceantair to attend

SINN FEIN DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS MEETING

8pm Tuesday 8th February
5 Blessington Street
DUBLIN

Speaker: Maggie Langsdorf followed by informal discussion Women only

BALLAD SESSION & COMEDY ACT

Featuring Brimmer & Chart Busters
Wednesday 9th February
The Rossmore Hotel
DROGHEDA
County Louth
Admission £2
In aid of the Prisoners' Dependents Fund

THE BUDGET & THE CUTS PUBLIC MEETING

8pm Thursday 10th February
ATGWU Hall
Marlborough Street
DUBLIN

Speakers include Mary Murrigan (ATGWU) and Joe Duffy (USI) Organised by People's Democracy

SOCIAL & CABARET

Featuring The Irish Brigade
Friday 11th February
The Commercial Hotel
BALLINAMORE
County Leitrim
Bar extension
Admission £3

SINN FEIN FOREIGN AFFAIRS FILM & SLIDE SHOW

Film: 'Out of the Furnace' — Argentina & the Peronists
Slide: 'Women of Eritrea'
Raffle & social to follow
8pm Saturday 12th February
The No. 5 Club
5 Blessington Street
DUBLIN

Admission £1
Similar events will be held every month
Future films & talks on South Africa & Chile

FRANK STAGG COMMEMORATION

(7th anniversary)
1pm Sunday 13th February
Wakefield Prison
Love Lane
WAKEFIELD
Yorkshire
Organised by Sinn Féin

MUNSTER SINN FEIN EDUCATION SEMINAR

'The Role of Officers in Sinn Féin'
1.30 to 6pm Sunday 20th February
Ballyphehane Community Hall
CORK
All comhairli ceantair & cumainn officers to attend

BENEFIT NIGHT

(in aid of the Jeff McKenna Fund)
Featuring Brimmer
8.30 to 11pm Friday 25th February
Dowling's Lounge
PROSPEROUS
County Kildare

ULSTER SINN FEIN EDUCATION OFFICERS MEETING

11am Saturday 26th February
Sinn Féin Centre
DUNGANNON
County Tyrone
All comhairli ceantair education officers to attend

REVIEW

Social dramatics, socialist classics and SDLP antics TV

BY SIOBHAN O'MALLEY

IN RTE 2's 'Midweek Drama' slot last Wednesday was 'Spongers', a play originally shown on BBC some years ago, but still all too topical today.

Set against a background of the queen of England's jubilee celebrations in 1977, it centres around the plight of Pauline Crosbie, a deserted wife with four children. Part of her social welfare allowance is being deducted to pay arrears of rent and electricity bills and she simply cannot manage on what is left.

Her pleas for assistance with the bills are ignored, while the council allocate thousands of pounds to street parties and the like.

The last straw comes when her mentally-handicapped daughter, 13-year-old Paula, is moved by the local council, for reasons of economy, from the special residential school to a hotel for perverts, where she is condemned to sit in a silent, drugged state.

TABLETS

Pauline is told that if she does not like it, she can take Paula home, and the same week her last appeal to the Social Welfare Board is refused. Pauline takes Paula home, and that night, after the Jubilee 'celebrations', she kills herself and the children with an overdose of sleeping tablets.

Television's tendency is to exploit misery for entertainment purposes and commercial ratings, and the misery continues. Occasionally, a play like 'Cathy Come Home' in the '60s, which so shocked opinion that it resulted in legislation being passed to make care of the homeless compulsory on local councils, does have an effect. But for the most part, such social drama is forgotten or treated like last week's episode of 'Dallas', a talking-point perhaps but that is all.

IRISHMAN

Robert Tressell's classic novel 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' was written in 1910. Channel 4's 'Eleventh Hour' film series on Monday was about the writing of this book and about its author.

His real name was Robert Noonan, an Irishman born in Dublin's Camden Street. He was a painter by trade,

and the film followed his emigration to Hastings in England in search of work. 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' was an account of his and his fellow-workers' life, exploited and degraded by profit-seeking employers. It was the first novel of working-class life in England written from a socialist viewpoint.

Robert Noonan died from TB in dire poverty in 1911. He never saw his book published, but it survives as a memorial to a man of integrity and idealism who fought for the rights and dignity of workers until his death.

Not too much integrity on view on RTE 1's 'Feach' on Monday night. Seamus Mallon and Brid Rogers of the SDLP were accompanied by an RTE crew into Armagh to do a film report on the murder of six nationalists there recently by the RUC shoot-to-kill squad.

There was much hypocrisy from both as they strove to show how truly Green they could be.

ROADBLOCK

At one stage, Brid Rogers and the RTE crew were stopped at a UDR roadblock. Brid leaned out and said pompously: 'I'm general secretary of the



● A scene from a BBC production of Robert Tressell's socialist classic, 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists'

SDLP

"The what?" replied the UDR man. "What are the cameras for?"

"It's an RTE film crew," says Brid.

"Pull up over there," says the UDR man.

And what does Brid Rogers take out of her bag when asked for identification? A Long Kesh purse!

A graphic film clip of the confused and confusing SDLP. David Calvert of the DUP

was also interviewed on the programme and wanted an inquiry as to why the RUC had not been out sooner shooting down Catholics at this rate.

'Feach', being mostly in Irish, has a minority audience, and can therefore deal with nationalists being murdered and show bloodthirsty loyalists. The main current affairs programme, 'Today Tonight', is confined to sipping stories on dead UDR men and attempts to show unionists in lighter tones.



● Armagh Jail picket

International Women's Day

FOR THE fourth year in a row, Sinn Féin is asking its members and supporters to take part in a picket outside Armagh Jail, to mark International Women's Day. While that day falls on Tuesday, March 8th, the picket itself will take place on Sunday, March 6th, at 2pm.

Sinn Féin's Department of Women's Affairs in Belfast has also extended an invitation to other republican women, in particular those from the twenty-six counties, to go to Belfast on the previous day, Saturday 5th March, for a programme of discussions, video show, photographic exhibition and social function.

Billets and a creche will be provided. A bus will leave Dublin for Belfast on the Saturday morning, and buses will leave Dublin, Derry and Belfast for Armagh on the Sunday.

Further details can be obtained from the Sinn Féin Department of Women's Affairs, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin (phone 747611) or from local Sinn Féin offices.

Wexford welcome

TWO recently-released republican prisoners from Portlaoise were officially welcomed home to Wexford on Friday night of last week at a dinner in the Talbot Hotel.

Jimmy Kavanagh and Sean Finn were presented with sashes by Cuchulainn by Sinn Féin president Ruairi O'Bradaigh, on behalf of the Republican Movement in Wexford.

Veteran republican Jack Dunne also spoke at the event and made a presentation on behalf of the local Padraig O'Pearraill Sinn Féin cumann.

Sinn Féin AGM

AT the recent AGM of the Galway Sinn Féin comhairle centain the following officers were elected: chair: Michael Loughrey (Gort); vice-chairs: Maire Ní Bhriain (UCC); secretary: Bernard Conroy (Tum); PRO: Irene Bean Mich 'a Ri (Galway city); treasurers: John Hynes (Athenry) and Billy Smith (Galway city); finance organiser: Brendan Madden (Athenry); organiser: Matt O'Bradaigh (UCG); delegates to comhairle aige: Michael Loughrey and Bernard Conroy.

Spirit of Freedom badge



A HIGH-QUALITY badge depicting Bobby Sands 'The Spirit of Freedom' (the lark and the Armaite) is now available.

The badge — which has a green background, black border and the lark in gold — is available from Republican Publications, 2a Monagh Crescent, Tuff Lodge, Belfast, at Stg £1 each (75p each orders of 20 or more) or £1.10 (80p each orders of 20 or more).

CALL TO BAN PLASTIC BULLETS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

BY ANNE MacKENZIE

A CAMPAIGN Against Plastic Bullets was launched in London this week by the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) and the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), a group of radical scientists who have campaigned against riot control weapons since 1969.

Among the campaign's sponsors are John Alderson, former Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, John MacDonnell QC, chairperson of the Society of Liberal Lawyers, and London Euro-MP Richard Balfe, as well as several professors, Labour MPs and barristers.

The campaign demands that plastic bullets be withdrawn from service in Ireland and Britain, and that their manufacture, stockpiling and export be terminated.

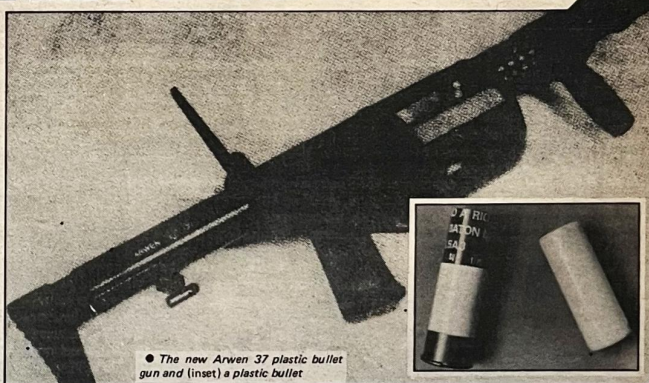
Speaking at a press conference held in the British House of Commons on Monday to launch the campaign, Labour MP Jock Stallard said he hoped the campaign would "stir the public conscience as well as move governments." The issuing of plastic bullets to police in Britain has raised the level of concern there.

ARWEN

Jonathan Rosenhead, a member of the executive committee of the BSSRS, said plastic bullets were four times more dangerous than rubber bullets. Yet the government remained impervious to the widespread condemnation of them, and was continuing to develop them.

The Ministry of Defence has taken out three separate patents on the new ARWEN 37 gun, which fires several rounds in quick succession. He stressed that it was wrong to look for a technical substitute for the plastic bullet — any weapon that is going to deter is bound to cause injuries. Instead of trying to impose a 'technological fix', the people's underlying grievances must be solved.

Professor Pat Wall, Professor of Anatomy at University College London, described the impact of the plastic bullet as "a very severe hammer blow." Most of the deaths were caused by the weapon hitting the skull directly, resulting in a massive skull-fracture accompanied by uncontrollable bleeding. For each death there were hundreds of injuries, including face-fractures and destruction of one or both eyes. He emphasised strongly that



● The new Arwen 37 plastic bullet gun and (inset) a plastic bullet



● JOCK STALLARD



● RICHARD BALFE

the plastic bullet could never be a safe weapon, even if fired under ideal conditions by well-trained troops with guns of improved accuracy. The official aim of the weapon was to produce a stunning pain — but the point of a person's pain-sensing mechanisms was to tell them they had been injured. There can be no stunning pain without injury.

MEANINGLESS

Desmond Whittiers, from Derry, told how he had watched his 15-year-old son, Paul, die over ten days in 1981 after being hit by a plastic bullet. He was unrecognisable, and his brain and nervous system disintegrated. If plastic bullets were meant as a deterrent, they were not working: they only

helped to harden people's attitudes. The regulations on the use of plastic bullets were meaningless, since British soldiers and police who broke them went unpunished.

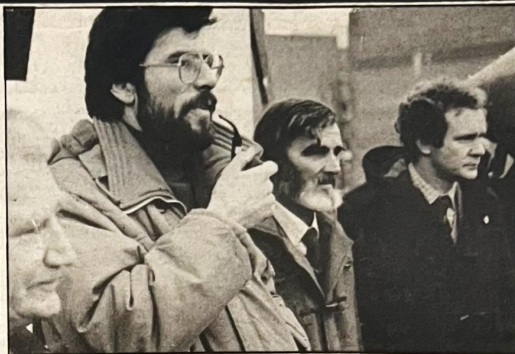
Patricia Hewitt, general secretary of the NCCL, said the campaign is approaching police authorities in Britain to persuade them to put pressure on their police forces not to stock the weapon. The NCCL is taking the case of Brian Stewart, killed by a plastic bullet in 1976, to the European Commission of Human Rights. The Commission, moving with unusual speed, has agreed to hear the case in its next session at the end of February. And in an unprecedented act, the Commission is moving straight to a hearing without seeking the British government's observations. If the case succeeds, it will be a major embarrassment to the British government.

MOMENTUM

The Campaign Against Plastic Bullets is the weightiest pressure group yet formed in Britain on the issue. If it keeps up the momentum it could — unless blanketed by media silence — bring some pressure to bear on the government, though a ban on the weapons remains unlikely. Also, if Labour win the next election, the campaign could embarrass the party leadership, which demonstrably does not wish to implement the almost unanimous call made by the last party conference for a ban on the weapons.



● (Above) Thousands gather at Free Derry Corner following the commemoration march (right)



● The main speaker, Gerry Adams (second from left), flanked by Sean Keenan, Jim Wray and Martin McGuinness



BY MAEVE ARMSTRONG

DRIVING snow, hailstones, winds and rain could not deter the thousands of marchers who swelled Derry's streets last Sunday, January 30th, to commemorate the eleventh anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

They came from Dublin, Cork, Belfast and even Glasgow to join in the march which was organised by Derry Sinn Féin and which retraced the original route taken on that fateful Sunday by the 20,000 civil rights marchers.

Altogether, 14 bands formed up in Central Drive under the close scrutiny of a low-flying British army helicopter, five of them Scottish bands from Glasgow who had travelled over for the commemoration. Several others were from Belfast, but among the many Derry bands the pride of place was reserved at the front of the march for the newly-formed Francis Hughes Memorial Band from the Waterside who were making their debut. Dressed in smart green uniforms, the 57-strong band were precise in their drill, talented and extremely enthusiastic.

Also making its first public appearance was a striking and colourful banner made by Derryman Joe Coyle in honour of hunger-striker Francis Hughes, depicting a six-man IRA firing party and a portrait of Francis. Mr Hughes and his daughter, Noreen, were present for the unveiling and a loud cheer rang out from the crowd as it was raised to begin the march.

DIGNITY

Relatives of the 14 dead, bearing wreaths, led the march. Behind them, 14 young girls and boys carried black flags in silence and dignity. The march made its way to Free Derry Corner for a meeting chaired by Neil McLaughlin of Derry Sinn Féin, who praised the determination of all those who had braved the elements and travelled long distances.

"It is very evident from the vast crowd today that the people of Derry and the people of Ireland have not forgotten those who were brutally murdered on this very street 11 years ago," he said.

He introduced his first speaker, Derryman Patrick Coyle, who was released last August after six years on the blanket in the H-Blocks, and he was followed by Jim Wray, who spoke on behalf of the bereaved relatives, and whose son, Jim, was shot down in Glenfada Park and shot several times at

Bloody Sunday remembered



● PATRICK COYLE

point-blank range by a member of the Parachute Regiment.

● MARTHA McCLELLAND

"These soldiers were described as only doing their job," he said. "What was their job? To murder, to keep you people off the streets. But you have answered them today. You have shown them the futility of the murders on Bloody Sunday. You will not be coerced, you are still on the streets and will remain there."

Martha McClelland, who has just returned from the United States after a three-month speaking tour, told the crowd:

"In city after city, once people heard the facts of life under British rule in Ireland, they agreed that resistance to British rule, by whatever means are necessary to win, is far more legitimate than British rule in Ireland can ever be."

The main speaker, Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin vice-president and elected representative for West Belfast, was introduced to a loud welcoming cheer from the crowd.

He said:

"Bloody Sunday was a well-planned shoot-to-kill operation, cleared by the highest level of British government authority, co-ordinated by the British army's General Ford, and aimed at provoking the IRA into a confrontation with the terrorists of the Parachute Regiment."

"For his part in these murders the Parachute Regiment's commander was awarded the OBE, and Downing Street, following pleas from the Irish establishment, gave us their 'Widgery Whitewash'. Now, 11 years later, the British army and RUC are still engaged in their shoot-to-kill operations. They are also receiving the same pleas from the SDLP and Catholic hierarchy for more Widgery enquiries."

CONTRADICTORY

Adams emphasised that now, just as on Bloody Sunday, the British government had issued contradictory statements in an attempt to cover up the truth. And he asked people to take note of the absence of establishment politicians and the clergy, an indication that "if nothing else, ensures that

no-one on this demonstration or on this platform will sell us out."

"For that reason we should congratulate the SDLP for organising their political side-show on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, because it gives us the opportunity to remind them and their British government backers that what is happening here on the streets of Derry is more important in political terms, than any SDLP conference."

Speaking of the recent spate of Sinn Féin bashing by the SDLP, the Catholic Church and Leinster House, Adams asked:

"And what have we done to deserve such venom? Hardly our clearly stated political defence of the IRA's right to engage in armed struggle. We have never made any secret of our attitude on this issue. No, the recent attacks have come because we had the audacity to get elected and because people like you had the audacity to vote for us."

He then added (much to the amusement of the crowd):

"This, from the establishment's point of view, is unforgivable. Imagine it: the IRA and Sinn Féin actually have support! Sinn Féin spokespersons actually have the ability to articulate on republican policies!"

He continued by pointing out the failure of the SDLP to give the people a principled leadership which was one of the main reasons why they are becoming increasingly irrelevant.

"Sinn Féin are providing a principled position not only on the question of the British presence and all that flows from it but are, in real terms, dealing with, and giving leadership to, our people on a daily basis."

BLAME

"The SDLP have chosen their side and, because of this, while they blame everyone else, they are now a party in decline. This process, whether it be lengthy or otherwise, has commenced already and Sinn Féin, with youth and principle on its side, is going to ensure that never again will the nationalist people be sold out by Uncle Tom careerist politicians."

"Let us go from here today, pledging ourselves to ensuring that the dead of Bloody Sunday and all those who have died, regardless of their circumstances, in Ireland, will not and have not died in vain. Those who kow-tow to the terrorists of Downing Street have everything to lose. That is why they squeal so loudly. We have everything to gain. That is why we struggle so determinedly. There is work to be done. Let us do it!"