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Iris Dhoire
THE ALTERNATIVE VOICE



Nollaig 1991.

HOUSES - *or more RUC?*

The NIO's denial that they intended to take the money for 441 extra RUC men from the Housing Executive's budget (Irish News, 28 Nov. 1991) must be treated with contempt. By mid-afternoon of the same day, the budgets for the year were announced. By "coincidence" the Housing Executive budget was slashed by £16 million, while the Police Authority got an extra £44 million.

Prior to the cutbacks the Housing Executive already faced 1992 with a £7.5 million shortage in its minimum needs budget. Reports abounded of additional millions to be cut from the allocation of grants for upgrading private homes lacking basic amenities. Successive cutbacks in the 80s had already left the Housing Executive severely underfunded, and unable to build enough new homes to meet the community's needs.

In Derry, the current waiting list stands at 1,431 — as high as it has been at any time since the Housing Executive was established in the early 70s. Of these, 913 are classed as being in "URGENT NEED." 220 are actually homeless. Even A-1 priority cases can wait up to a full year before being housed. Many families suffer hardship due to unsuitable housing, with 395 allocated 'priority transfer' status.



• Martin McGuinness

In addition to providing new housing, locally the Executive must meet the costs of dealing with urgent problems. For example, correcting faulty wiring in blocks of flats stopping the emission of dangerous fumes from solid fuel heaters, demolishing derelict flats in Rose Court in the Waterside, and

repairing and refurbishing existing homes.

Our councillors, tenants' associations and community groups struggle daily with the Housing Executive to meet such essential needs from a totally inadequate budget.

Contrast the NIO's tight-fisted attitude towards public housing with their lavish spending on repression. Money is never any object when refurbishing torture centres, ringing S. Armagh with watchtowers, or burrowing into mountainsides to build underground BA and RUC bases with all modern conveniences.

In Derry alone they have spent millions recently. Who really wanted a new RUC barracks at Lisnagelvin? Would any of the 1400 people awaiting homes in this city actually have preferred the money to be spent on the new RUC leisure centre and barracks at Maydown? How do the 220 homeless feel, as they sleep rough, in hostels, or in B&Bs, about the millions spent building a new checkpoint at the Border?

Martin McGuinness

20 Years Since Bloody Sunday

"The world doesn't know about Bloody Sunday" I once heard an embittered Derryman say. And he was, by and large, correct in making that statement. He could have added of course that certain powerful groups of people don't want to make public, and have prevented the world from knowing, the true testimony as to the events of January 30, 1972. Various governments, for instance, of both the southern and colonial variety, plus the media and other would-be controllers of knowledge have at all times conspired to ignore and distort this murderous item of recent history. Apart from Derry and, to a lesser extent, the rest of nationalist Ireland, very little is known about it. Even in Derry and throughout Ireland it is becoming more and more unmentionable, and to some, embarrassing.

Would you be surprised to know that an acquaintance of mine recently asked students at a college in Limerick in what town Bloody Sunday 1972 happened, and that the answers received began with Johannesburg, Cape Town, Sharpeville or to Belfast, and only eventually to our own famous walled city? Or, did you know that in an article in the Belfast Telegraph last week, "Impact '92 ... intends to put Londonderry (sic) onto the international tourist trail, driving off lingering images of Bloody Sunday and no-go areas..."?

Why?

As an adopted son of Derry, I have been struck by the way the shared tragedy of Bloody Sunday bonds so many shades of opinion together in common experience. It is the one event that is burned into the mind of every Derry woman and man and

Sinn Féin CHRISTMAS POST AGAIN

Once again Sinn Féin's unique Christmas Post will be operating - deliveries anywhere in Derry, Monday through Friday, starting Monday Dec 2nd. Last post 12 noon, Friday Dec 20th.

Only 10p per stamp. Calendars - £2; Christmas cards 25p each

Pack of 5 £1

Collection Points

Sinn Féin Centres: 15 Cable Street, & Racecourse Road and Portakabin Central Drive, Creggan.

- AND NOW FOR THE BAD NEWS: - New emergency Powers legislation

What rights remain to the public under the new Emergency Provisions legislation? Must women now submit to being searched in the street by male RUC or BA members? Are the RUC or British Army now entitled to read any and all documents, however personal, when they stop you in the street or raid your house? Is it now illegal to remain silent in the RUC barracks?

At a meeting in Derry's Guildhall on Wednesday, 13 November, a local solicitor presented a detailed explanation of the new legislation. Iris Dhoire has summarised it for our readers.

SECTION 19:

Stop, search and question

This is used ONLY when the RUC stop you on a street; if not, it can be unlawful. (Note: the RUC are obliged to tell you, if you ask, under what Section they are stopping you; the UDR and BA need not).

19 permits them to enter any premises to search it. They can make all members of the family stay in one room, and can search for 4 hours, and a further 4 hours if authorised by the Chief Constable.

(continued on next page)

is the point at which Derry people seem to snap to attention to give an opinion or relate their own personal experience of that day.

But, within the realms of officialdom in this city, Bloody Sunday doesn't exist. Official tour-guides and maps make absolutely no reference to it. Is officialdom paranoid? Is there something wrong when some Derry people are deliberately adding to an already seething mass of ignorance about our own city and about Bloody Sunday? Yes, there is!

When confused tourists have to physically search for a vestige of recent history, like the Bloody Sunday monument at Rossville Street (which isn't shown on street maps) and when visitors have to ASK tourist guides, "Where is the Bogside?" while being led around an implanted craft village, there is most definitely something seriously amiss.

Bloody Sunday is an aspect of past and present-day reality. To the shame of

the Irish media and especially RTE, British television is currently engaged in producing two documentaries on the killings and their cover-up by the Widgery Tribunal, which might help put Britain and its policies on Ireland under scrutiny. Of course, apart from officialdom, very few of us in Derry have any illusions about Bloody Sunday.

The twentieth anniversary should be an opportunity to look back in sadness and anger at Bloody Sunday, and to reflect on what "British justice" meant for the 14 Derrymen and boys who died marching to protest against internment. But we shouldn't stop with just looking back. Sadness should abate when we look at today and what we must do for tomorrow.

The thousands who shall march to the Guildhall Square on January 26th are certainly not ashamed of their heritage and will help keep the record straight about Bloody Sunday as part of Britain's war in Ireland.



* Bloody Sunday 1972

REAL ECONOMIC MIRACLE

You can't lift a copy of the Journal or the Telegraph, or tune into the news without being bombarded with the "ECONOMIC MIRACLE" being wrought in Derry. For most of us, it's hard to see. Sinn Féin Councillor Barney McFadden draws attention to the latest report by the Child Poverty Action Group, which shows:

• 27% of all people in the Six Co's live at or below the poverty line.

• 39% of all children live at or below the official poverty line.

The REAL economic miracle is how the people in this community, especially parents, cope with life and with great ingenuity, create a remarkable quality of life for their families and community despite the very real economic deprivation.

19 permits a member of HM Forces to stop a person in any public place and search him/her for munitions (guns, explosives) or transmitters. They can have you remove your outer clothing in public, including shoes and socks. Trousers, skirts, shirts can be removed only in private. Whether they can search your hair depends on the circumstances; the law is vague here. This law gives them very wide powers. They DON'T need to have "a reasonable suspicion" that you are involved in anything illegal. They can search ANY person, in ANY public place.

SECTION 22:

Powers relating to DOCUMENTS are clarified in this section. It allows BA or RUC to examine ANY document or record, BUT must have a genuine suspicion that these documents are intended for the use of "terrorists". They can do this when stopping and searching you, but RUC must quote Section 22. They are NOT allowed to take it away or photocopy it under this Section.

Section 22 also gives them powers when they stop and search your car. Previously, under the 1989 legislation, if your car was taken to Ft. George, no-one was obliged to accompany the car. Now ALL occupants of the car can be required to go with it to the RUC barracks. The RUC must quote Section 22.

Under SECTION 23, re; identity checks on the street, they can hold you "for as long as necessary" to ascertain your identity, where you are coming from and going to, and whether you know anything about recent "terrorist" incidents. (Of course, all you need to say is that you know nothing about these). Note: if you are within sight of your home, AND they know you, it can be ILLEGAL for them to hold you for an hour ... see your solicitor about this.

SECTION 27

Is the one about "directing terrorism". Upon conviction you are liable to LIFE imprisonment. This is (literally!) "catch-all" legislation. It gives them wide and sinister powers, as the legislation does NOT specify what "directing acts of terrorism" is.

Also under Section 27, any person(s) who professes to belong to a proscribed organisation, solicits support or membership, or addresses a meeting of such an organisation, is liable to prosecution and upon conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 10 years. (So be careful shouting "Up the RA!")

More NEW powers are given in SECTION 30. This makes it illegal to possess ANYTHING which might further the aims of a proscribed organisation. It is designed to cover masks and paramilitary clothing, but can be very wide, just because it DOESN'T specify what items are contraband.

This section can make possession of coffee grinders, bags of sugar, rubber gloves and other common household items illegal. The accused is guilty until and unless they can prove otherwise: the person in possession of the items must prove that s/he has them for an innocent purpose.

SECTION 33

Makes anyone wearing a ski-mask in a public place liable to 1 year's imprisonment or fine.

INTERNMENT

The power to intern was retained under the new laws, despite a recommendation to the contrary by Lord Colville. The Secretary of State is permitted to detain anyone for up to 14 days initially, during which time he must refer the matter to an "advisor", which can be any lawyer of ten years standing. The advisor investigates the person and decides whether s/he is involved in "terrorism". Based on this report, the Sec. of State can then sign a full detention order. There is NO limit on how long a person may be interned.

ARREST

SECTION 14

Previously under this section people arrested could be held for up to 48 hours. This is now increased to 7 days. (Section 11, which allowed 3 days detention, is abolished). The average length of interrogation under this Section is 3-5 days. In about half the cases, a person is permitted access to a solicitor on request. BUT the RUC still have the power to keep a solicitor out for up to 48 hours, and they will use this.

The person arrested MUST request a solicitor by name upon arriving at the RUC barracks, by asking the Custody Officer there. It does no good to ask for one when you leave the house, or rely on relatives or friends to do this. You MUST specify which solicitor you want. Since s/he may be unavailable at the time, it's a good idea to have several in mind.

RIGHT TO SILENCE

Remaining silent can be held against you if you are arrested "in suspicious circumstances". Although vague in law this can mean being in or near a place where munitions or such gear is found or if in actual possession of such items. Example: if you were decorating a house, and something was found there 2 days later, and your fingerprints were found in the house, if you don't explain this to their satisfaction, or refuse to give evidence at trial, an inference can be made against you in court.

At first it seemed this outrageous change in the tradition of "presumed innocence" would never be used. But although initially judges were reluctant to use this power, they have now bent to the will of the British government, and are using it with great gusto against defendants.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

• Men searching women: The new legislation does NOT give male RUC, BA or UDR members the right to body-search women. The law is unchanged; a person may only be body searched by someone of the same sex - otherwise, this constitutes sexual assault. Often women can successfully insist on having no-one but a female search their handbag.

LEGAL PRIVILEGE:

Originally Crown Forces were to be allowed to read ANY private documents, including matter addressed to your solicitor. Outraged objections from solicitors resulted in maintaining the centuries-old right of "legal privilege": any material found in your house in a sealed envelope addressed to your solicitor cannot be examined or taken away.

• Copying Documents: Although a document may be examined under Section 22 it CANNOT be copied, unless it is incriminating.

• Date of Birth: You cannot be charged with failing to give your date of birth; "over 21" or "under 21" is sufficient.

WARNING:

"OBSTRUCTION"

The new laws give the RUC in particular very wide powers, and one of their favourite intimidation tactics is to threaten objectors with "obstruction". Unfortunately, the legislation is wide open to abuse here. For example, the RUC wanted to search a handbag during a house raid, and the husband said "You're not searching it until my wife gets here". He was charged and recently convicted with obstruction. To be sure you are on safe ground, know the law and check with a solicitor if in any doubt. Remember: LEGAL ADVICE IS FREE, except for those with high incomes. If you have ANY questions or doubts, consult your solicitor.

SUMMARY

- Stopped in street and searched
Section 19
- Examining documents
Section 22
- Asked name, address, movements
Section 23

Creggan PUBLIC PHONES

If your child takes sick in the middle of the night, where do you get a phone? If you live in Creggan, you have no alternative now but to wake a neighbour who has a phone. With 1992 fast approaching one public phone at the bottom of Iniscarn Road must serve all 13,000 people in Creggan.

Recently, Sinn Féin councillor Dodie McGuinness successfully negotiated with British Telecom for the installation of some of their new "vandalproof" phones. They have agreed to put in one opposite St. Joseph's School, near the top of Beechwood, and another at the junction of Lislane Drive and Arranmore Avenue.

"These phones are being installed on a trial basis, and British Telecom has indicated its willingness to provide more if these survive. More phones are needed, but obviously it would make no difference if there were phones on every corner if they continue to be vandalised."

"This is a much-needed service for the public, and it's up to the public to look after it. I would appeal to parents in particular to talk to their youngsters and teenagers about this, so that the thoughtless actions of a few don't deprive the whole community".

The Dissenting Voice

John Hume and the British and Irish governments frequently take the Republican Movement to task for its alleged failure to address the position of the Unionists in the six counties. By 'Unionists' these critics really mean 'Protestants'. Aspirations of Irish unity, they would have you believe, are luxuries only Catholics can indulge in. This black/white, us/them analysis is both divisive and unhelpful. To treat the Protestant population of the six counties as an intransigent bloc with a common history and tradition of opposition to all things Irish is to deny them a part of their heritage.

However, November 1991 saw the publication of a book which does much to remedy this defective analysis of Ulster Protestant history. One of the healthiest books to have emerged in years, *The Dissenting Voice* by Flann Campbell (Blackstaff Press, £12.95) brings to light the hidden story of Ulster's Protestants. Covering the period from the Plantation of Ulster up to Partition, Campbell reveals not a closed minded herd but a diverse and lively mix of people, many of whom were to the forefront in struggles for social, political, religious and national rights. Using the papers of statesmen of the day to great effect Campbell shows how the Protestant community was split, coerced, bribed and deceived to prevent any alliance between the various Protestant denominational groups and their Catholic fellow countrymen.

Many are aware of the Protestant contribution to Irish nationalism, Ulster's Presbyterians being the founding fathers of Republicanism, less well known is the sterling work done by Protestants to champion equal rights for Catholics, to save and promote the Irish language, to promote religious toleration. Little is ever written of Ulster's common history - the horrors of the Great Famine during which Catholic and Protestant alike died or were forced to emigrate in their tens of thousands, the grinding poverty they all endured while a chosen few prospered. Nor is it popular to suggest that the only solution to the island's ills - a united Ireland free from sectarian division - was the one arrived at by countless Protestants who had risen above the narrow prejudice of the politics of religion.

Campbell's book redresses the balance, restoring the positive contributions of Ulster's Protestants towards a more just society to the public gaze. Much that is in *The Dissenting Voice* has been conveniently forgotten by modern day historians, intent as they are in maintaining religion as the main factor dividing the people of Ireland.

PULP MILL - as dangerous as the incinerator?

After studying in depth the environmental impact assessment published by the John Lees group in support of their proposed pulp mill, Sinn Féin Councillor Hugh Brady has questioned the safety of the project.

"Despite a glossy report of many pages there are serious gaps in the information provided by the Lees Group. The environmental impact of the project is so minimised that we must question the report's objectivity. Much is made of the superiority of the CTMP (chemi-thermo-mechanical-pulp) process compared to the more traditional chemical process. Yet we are told this would be the first such plant in the EC, and that the technology is "relatively recent". So why should we be so confident that it is safe and clean?"

Little detail is offered on the chemicals used. How does this differ from the "old" chemical process that they admit was environmentally harmful?"

The main motivation of this technology appears to be that it is cheaper than alternatives.

There is a great deal of detail about how the ecology of the greenfield site will be relatively undisturbed (especially two rare slugs) but little on how noise will impact Strathfoyle Estate nearby. Far less attention is paid to the precise chemicals to be imported for the process, and the effect of their eventual disposal. All this becomes vague and we are asked to take things on trust. For example, "The best practical means of treating the effluent will be used" (p.4) Says who?

Some discharge will go into the Faughan and we are asked to accept that with "driving heavy rainfall conditions, the additional runoff from the mill will be relatively minor and transient and will therefore have no detrimental effect". (p.4) **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THERE ISN'T HEAVY RAIN???**

Final effluent will be discharged into the Foyle estuary via a buried pipeline. This is where the report becomes most evasive and the company is at its weakest. They promise a "comprehensive scientific monitoring programme will be put into place" (p.5) Like DuPont's? Why should we place any confidence in any company to monitor their own mess?

A mathematical model is used, to support the claim that the Foyle tides will rapidly dilute the toxicity of the discharge. However, tides in the Foyle are known to be unpredictable and so the mathematical model is suspect...

As to the impact upon marine life, we are told that fish could "swim upstream under the buoyant plume of poor quality water". (p.198) Therefore it will not deter migration. Unsure of this argument, they refer to existing plumes of Culmore Sewage Treatment Works and DuPont. If the fish have survived two sources of poison, they can survive a third.

"Not enough solid information is provided to satisfy me that this proposed pulp mill will be safe. It could be as harmful as the incinerator."

Protestants have been robbed of a valuable and enlightening part of their own past, whilst Catholics are still being told that Protestants are a race apart. *The Dissenting Voice* should be compulsory reading throughout schools and homes all over Ireland, giving Protestant and Catholic alike a shared history which goes a long way towards explaining current attitudes and misconceptions. All good bookshops in the town should stock it, and no-one, of whatever religious denomination can come away from such a book without having a healthier regard for their fellow countrymen.