

IRIS

the republican magazine

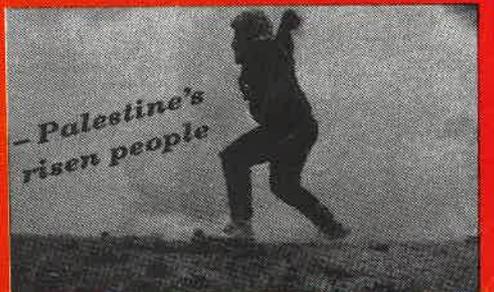
BORDER BUSTERS



Intifada!

INSIDE

Irish ways & Irish *Art*



- Palestine's risen people

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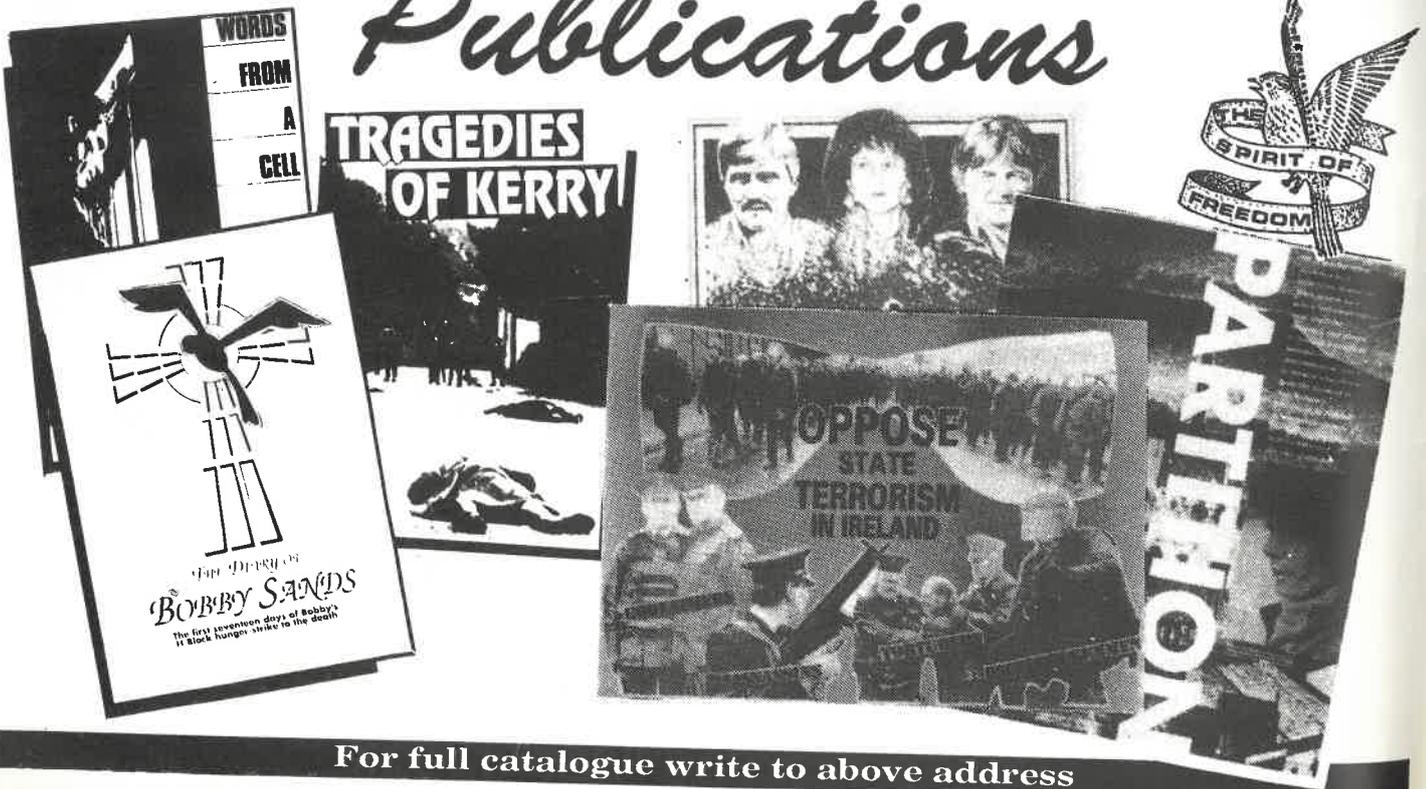
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IRIS

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AUGUST 1990 NUMBER 14

VIEWPOINT

For transformation in the '90s.....2

FEATURES

A child lost in the storm.....5
Eduardo Galeano looks at the state of socialism today.

The Boyne Water9
By Tommy Brogan

Border Busters13
IRIS looks at the campaign to re-open roads and bridges destroyed by British forces

Irish ways & Irish art26
A lecture by Robert Ballagh

Revisionism in Irish historical writings.....36
By Peter Berresford Ellis

Basic rights under Dev's Constitution.....44
By Tom O'Dwyer

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Intifada! – Palestine's risen people.....22
By Nidal es-Samid

ARMED STRUGGLE

War News.....50
A review of IRA operations from October 1988 – June 1990

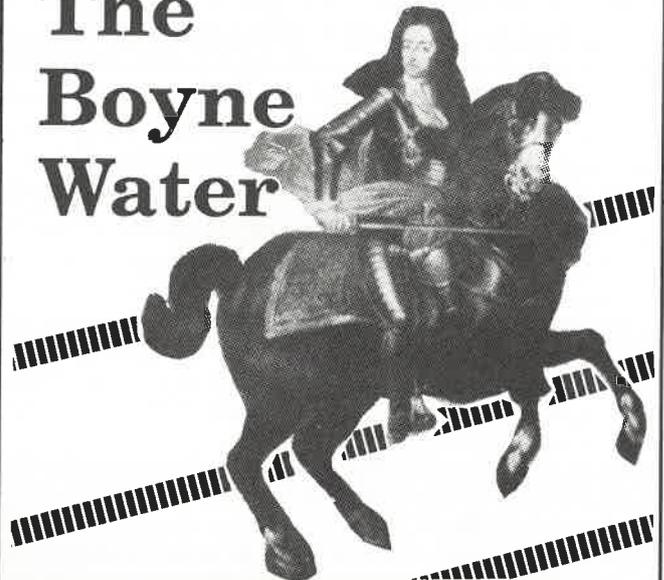
POETRY

1990 Easter statement from Derry Youth60

SHORT STORY

Standing at the corner34
By BA Fox

The Boyne Water



– SEE PAGE 9



– SEE PAGE 50

Front and Back Cover illustrations: Scenes from a road opening at Peadar Francis' on the Monaghan/Tyrone border on April 29th. This road has since been blown up by the British army and rebuilt by the North Monaghan/South Tyrone Community Association on three separate occasions.

For transformation in the '90s

AS IRIS goes to press the talks process begun by Peter Brooke, the ninth British direct-ruler in the Six Counties since 1972, has been stalled. On July 5th Brooke was to announce the arrangements for talks between the SDLP and the unionist parties. In the event he gave the House of Commons a progress report on his preliminary discussions with the parties. The announcement had to be delayed because the Dublin government had not agreed to the format of the talks.

Brooke spent the following 12 days meeting the parties and the Dublin government and attempting to get agreement. His failure was marked on July 17th by the announcement, after a meeting with Dublin foreign minister Gerry Collins in Belfast, that the two sides could not agree.

This came after months of toing and froing between the parties and the Dublin government by Brooke and after acres of newsprint and hundreds of hours of air-time spent speculating about the prospects of a 'breakthrough' in the North. Brooke's diplomatic skills were highly praised, flexibility was said to be in evidence on all sides, and though little of real substance was revealed, great hopes were invested in the direct-ruler's efforts.

Republicans pointed out that much of what was happening was illusion; the appearance of compromise was there but predictions of progress rested on the very vagueness of what was being said. That proved to be correct.

Before the anti-climax of July 5th it was being said that Brooke had "squared the circle" and managed to reconcile the preconditions to talks set out by the various parties. Before unionists would sit down with the SDLP they wanted:

The suspension of the intergovernmental conference (regular Dublin/London ministerial meetings under the Hillsborough Agreement), with a specified interruption period, a set date for its start and for its end;

The suspension of the Maryfield secretariat, the Belfast-based team of four Dublin and four British civil servants who "service the intergovernmental conference" from what has become known as the "Maryfield bunker";

No talks with Dublin until the unionists and the SDLP had agreed the main headings of a new devolved government structure for the North.

It appears that, in effect, the first two conditions were met — but in such a way that the SDLP and the Dublin government could interpret them differently. Thus the suspension of the intergovernmental conference became a "gap in the conference" and the Maryfield secretariat would be "seconded to other duties", namely servicing the new talks. It was the third condition that was to prove the stumbling-block.

All along Brooke spoke of three sets of talks — between the parties in the North (except Sinn Féin), between London and the Dublin government and between the parties in the North and the Dublin government. Having apparently reconciled the preconditions Brooke was ready to announce the timetable for talks on July 5th.

The problem was that the third issue remained unresolved — the role of the Dublin government. It wanted, with the sup-

port of the SDLP, to be represented at the initial phase of the talks by a small committee of civil servants, with observer status only. The British opposed this but offered the 26-County government participation within two to three weeks of the commencement of talks. They could not agree and hence the stall in the process.

The whole incident was a perfect example of the politics of illusion which have characterised Brooke's efforts and the whole Hillsborough process since the signing of the treaty in 1985. What, for instance, is the difference between the British and Dublin government proposals? In either case Dublin has no real say in the talks. Brooke said in his report to Westminster that the purpose of talks would be the "transfer of power" to local politicians in the Six Counties, that is some form of devolution. He went on:

"The Irish government, which as I have mentioned is committed by virtue of the Anglo-Irish Agreement to support our policy to transfer power to locally accountable institutions in Northern Ireland, would not be directly represented in such talks..."

That is the bottom line. Any talks that did get going would be working to that British agenda, within the partition framework, guaranteeing the unionist veto on progress to a united Ireland; the veto the Dublin government has committed itself to maintain under the Hillsborough Agreement.

IT is worth remembering that the man who was responsible for setting the scene for the latest British attempt to cobble together a Six-County administration was Tom King, the longest-serving direct-ruler since the fall of Stormont in 1972. A look at his term sheds light on what the British have been attempting to do throughout the '80s and into the '90s.

King's predecessors in the early '80s had seen the collapse of the policy of criminalisation of republican prisoners and by extension the resistance of the nationalist community. Humphrey Atkins (1979-1981) Jim Prior (1981-1984) and Douglas Hurd (1984-1985) had to deal with the mass mobilisation of people in support of the H-Block and Armagh prisoners, culminating in hunger-strike and the defeat of criminalisation as Britain's role here was exposed internationally; the electoral rise of Sinn Féin and the alarm this caused to both the London and Dublin governments; and finally what was called the "biggest gulf in Anglo-Irish relations" of the decade when Thatcher dismissed the three constitutional options presented by the Dublin Forum with her famous "Out, Out, Out" remark.

That was in late 1984, soon after Hurd took over. He was also carrying the can when the IRA bombed the Grand Hotel in Brighton and almost wiped out Thatcher and her cabinet. These were all disasters for the British government and its allies in Ireland. The collapse of criminalisation, the rise of Sinn Féin, the Forum fiasco and the Brighton bombing concentrated the minds of the Thatcher government and the Fine/Gael Labour Coalition on the task of coming closer together in their attempts to defeat the Republican Movement and to "fill the political vacuum" in the Six Counties.

By the time the Thatcher/FitzGerald negotiations had reached a climax Hurd was gone. King took over as the Hills-



● PETER BROOKE

borough Agreement was launched. Having attempted to regain the high ground of nationalism from Sinn Féin in the Forum — from which Sinn Féin was excluded — 'constitutional nationalists' had egg all over their faces after Thatcher's rebuttal of 1984. They desperately needed to revive the SDLP and this was their major motivation in sponsoring Hillsborough.

The period after its signing was promising for them. They were hailing it as the greatest political initiative since 1920 and promising nationalists the sun, moon and stars courtesy of the Dublin government which would now "have its say" in the running of the Six Counties through the intergovernmental conference and Maryfield secretariat. It was painted as a great concession by the British to nationalism and the storm of protest whipped up by the unionists seemed to confirm that.

From the British point of view King rode out the storm well and subtly used it to convince nationalist opinion of the worth of the Agreement. But the real Hillsborough agenda was only barely hidden beneath the surface; it spelt massively increased repression. That repression only came to full fruition three years after the Agreement was signed.

In order to stabilise its rule in the Six Counties the British government needed to recruit the SDLP and the Dublin government to its political battalions, even if that meant alienating unionists in the process. Hillsborough achieved that. It meant that whenever there was one of those "hiccups in Anglo-Irish relations" — and there were many during King's reign — the Dublin government and SDLP response would be within the British framework of Hillsborough. It was the illusion of power and the promise of change.

Thus when Britain's iron fist hit the headlines with events like the Stalker-Sampson Report, the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four cases, the shooting of Aidan McAneaspie, the Gibraltar killings and so on, grievance could always be fobbed off with the grave promise that the 26-County ministers would raise it at the next intergovernmental conference meeting. Committed to the process and knowing it would be politically disastrous for them to draw back (even if they wanted to) from an Agreement of which they had made so much, the SDLP and the Dublin government were caught in a bind of their own making and King was free to rub their noses in the dirt and tell them to mind their own business — as he did on several occasions — whenever he liked.

Far from lifting up the nationalist community the British Hillsborough strategy aimed to isolate, divide, and reconquer them as British strategy in Ireland had always sought to do. It hoped to isolate the Republican Movement militarily and politically in order to finally defeat it.

With the help of its Irish allies it had, it hoped, provided in Hillsborough a safety-valve for nationalist grievances. Thus all the issues — administration of 'justice', sectarian discrimination, "relations with the security forces", cultural rights, prison reform and others — which had been identified as contributing to "nationalist alienation" from the Six-County state and to support for the IRA and Sinn Féin were being seen to be addressed.

Again it was the politics of illusion. Behind the facade there was the wholesale swiping of civil rights 20 years after the movement for those rights took to the streets of the Six Counties. To the burden borne by nationalists in the Six Counties were added censorship of elected representatives and of the Irish issue generally in the British media, the denial of the right to silence, the extension and refinement of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Provisions Act, increased punitive military raiding in nationalist districts, the redeployment of the Parachute Regiment and the Marine Commandoes in nationalist Belfast, the arming of the UDR with plastic bullets. Along the border a line of forts, spyposts and watch-towers sprang up and the Dublin government committed itself to greatly increased cross-border collaboration and political extradition.

All this came on top of the pre-Hillsborough "nationalist nightmare" which that treaty was supposed to end but which went on, not as a dream, but as a recurring reality for those living in the most repressive state in western Europe.

That was the legacy left by Tom King and the one taken up by his successor Peter Brooke a year ago. Without it he would not have been able to start his talks process.

JUST three days before Brooke stood up to speak in the House of Commons Nelson Mandela addressed a press conference in Dublin and called for talks between the British government and the IRA. The call by the veteran revolutionary, whose release in January transformed the situation in South Africa and whose world tour has been one of the most successful of any political leader ever, shocked the Dublin and London establishments.

Such is the stature of Mandela that the British government was forced to avoid confrontation with him on the issue and his remarks were played down and explained away. But Mandela, as he said himself, was merely setting out the general principle of the negotiated settlement of conflicts and the inclusion of all parties to conflict in dialogue. He did not have to specify the IRA or Sinn Féin for his remarks to be an embarrassment to the British and their allies.

The censorship and exclusion of Sinn Féin, not only through broadcasting bans and denying the party a seat at the table for talks, but through assassination and imprisonment, has always been an important part of British strategy. Well over a third of the nationalist population of the Six Counties is thus excluded. That is because the British fear the strength and potential of republican Ireland.

When the old Stormont was prorogued and the first direct-

ruler, Willie Whitelaw, ushered in direct rule in 1972 it was because the resistance of nationalist Ireland, spearheaded by the IRA, had proved too much for the state.

When in 1982 Direct-Ruler Jim Prior set up his Assembly to work for "rolling devolution" it was the victory of Sinn Féin in taking five seats in the election which put the brakes on SDLP participation in the Assembly.

When the Hillsborough Agreement was signed in 1985 it was because, out of the sacrifice of the H-Blocks in 1981 and the events that followed, a renewed Republican Movement had risen and forced the British once again to try another way.

The difficulties now being experienced by Brooke are because of the insistence of the SDLP and the Dublin government on the Dublin government being involved in the talks from the start, even if only nominally so. The Hillsborough Agreement has given the SDLP and Dublin the illusion of power and participation in the running of the North. Even though Dublin is really powerless and, through Hillsborough, has surrendered its sovereignty, the SDLP can present it as having an influence. For them to relinquish that nominal role would run the risk of gravely harming the SDLP.

That is what has caused the present impasse in Brooke's talks. The republican veto which, since the early '80s, has prevented the SDLP from taking part in an internal Six-County arrangement remains. On the party political front Sinn Féin's base remains strong. Despite censorship and intimidation, despite the massive sums of US money lavished on the SDLP, the republican vote has held firm.

On the military front of politics the IRA is in a stronger position than for many years. Its widening operations against British military targets in Britain and on the European Continent in particular, have had the British establishment counting the cost of its military occupation. Peter Brooke has admitted that the IRA cannot be militarily defeated.

Why then has the Hillsborough Agreement lasted so long and how could the British afford the risk of initiating another attempt to cobble together an internal Six-County arrangement which would "transcend Hillsborough" when such initiatives have all failed so miserably in the past?

For a great part of the answer we must look to the 26 Counties.

SPEAKING at an Ogra Fianna Fáil conference on November 11th 1984, almost exactly a year before the Hillsborough Treaty was signed, Charles Haughey said:

"If this meeting (between the then Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald and Margaret Thatcher) brings forward any set of proposals or initiatives stating that they are purely in a Six-County Northern Ireland context on the basis that Britain will still exercise sovereignty and the Six Counties remain part of the United Kingdom with the constitutional guarantee still there, then that will be disastrous, confining us to violence, hardship, suffering, lack of economic progress and the total disintegration of the social fabric of Northern Ireland for long years to come."

When the Hillsborough Treaty was signed Haughey said it "copper-fastened partition" and led Fianna Fáil in opposition to it. A year later he also opposed the Extradition Act introduced by Fine Gael Justice Minister Alan Dukes.

TDs Des O'Malley, Mary Harney and Bobby Molloy caused the most serious split in Fianna Fáil's history when they left to form the Progressive Democrats in '86. Central to that split

was Fianna Fáil's lack of support for Hillsborough.

Yet after the 1987 general election Haughey was leading a minority Fianna Fáil government propped up with the votes of Fine Gael and fully committed to Hillsborough. In December 1987 they put through the Extradition Act of Alan Dukes (by then leader of Fine Gael) with only minor changes.

Last year came the biggest U-turn of all when the Fianna Fáil leader led his party into coalition with the Progressive Democrats.

Through the '80s there has been a consolidation of the right-wing consensus in the 26 Counties. The FF/PD Coalition was the culmination of that. This consensus has national and social and economic aspects — collaboration with Britain in maintaining partition and Thatcherite economic policies to deal with the debt crisis in the 26 Counties.

The more nationalist elements in Fianna Fáil have been neutralised; many of them have opted out, disillusioned with the leadership's coalition deal and its stand on extradition and Hillsborough; more remain, as was witnessed by the 1990 Ard Fheis' resolutions against political extradition and Section 31, but they are powerless within a totally undemocratic party.

This strengthening of the right has created a situation where it is now possible for many of them to talk seriously about campaigning against Articles Two and Three of the 1937 Constitution and ditching even the aspiration to Irish unity.

That the British and their allies have been unable to achieve this so far or to engineer a return to Stormont in some form is because nationalist resistance in the North remains strong and determined, a community proud and resilient after an extraordinary 20 years of struggle. British rule in Ireland remains in crisis and the best the British can do is to manage that crisis.

Central to their ability to do that is the co-operation of the political establishment in the 26 Counties. Collaboration on the present scale has only been possible because the demand for national self-determination has been excluded from the political agenda in the 26 Counties. The major task facing republicans is to place it at the top of the agenda again.

That demand for national democracy has the potential to unite all the disparate forces in Ireland who are opposed to the social, political, economic and cultural injustices perpetrated against the mass of the Irish people in both partitionist states. The forging of those interests in a broad anti-imperialist movement is the greatest challenge facing all progressive people in Ireland.

Such a movement would force the government of the 26 Counties to disentangle itself from co-operation with Britain in partition; it would put the demand for national self-determination back at the centre of politics in the 26 Counties; it would present the British government with a political challenge, nationally and internationally, which it could not ignore and which would create the conditions for its final disengagement from Ireland.

The task is immense but the tide of history is with us. The events of the past year in Eastern Europe and South Africa have shown how quickly political transformation can take place when the conditions for change are created.

Since the final phase of the Irish freedom struggle entered its second decade there has been a return to the streets North and South. That confidence-building and renewal must continue so that the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Rising in 1991 will not be just a commemoration of an historical event but one of the last milestones in the progress of our people to equality and prosperity in a free, peaceful and just Ireland.

IRIS

A child lost in the storm



Eduardo Galeano is the author of the anti-imperialist classic *Open Veins of Latin America* and the historical trilogy *Memory of Fire*. He is an editor and columnist at the Uruguayan weekly *Brecha*. This article was translated by Asa Zatz and was first published in the American radical newspaper *The Guardian* to whom we are grateful for permission to reproduce it here.

Lenin's statue removed by a crane in Bucharest. An eager multitude lined up outside McDonald's in Moscow. The odious Berlin Wall for sale in souvenir-size chunks. In Warsaw and Budapest, the ministers of economy talking exactly like Margaret Thatcher.

And in Beijing, too; as tanks crush students. The Italian Communist Party, largest in the West, announcing its forthcoming suicide. Soviet aid to Ethiopia cut back and Col Mengistu suddenly discovering that capitalism is good. The Sandinistas, mainstay of the finest revolution in

the world, lose the elections, the headlines proclaiming: "The revolution in Nicaragua falls".

It seems that there is no place for revolutions anymore other than in archaeological museum display cases, nor room for the left, except the repentant left will-

ing to sit to the right of the bankers. We are all invited to the world burial of socialism. All of humanity is in the funeral procession, they claim.

I must confess, I don't believe it. This funeral is for the wrong corpse.

Perestroika and the passion for freedom unleashed by perestroika have everywhere burst the seams of an unbearable strait-jacket. Everything exploding. Changes proliferating at a dizzying pace founded on the certainty that there is no reason why social justice should be the

enemy of freedom or efficiency. An urgency, a collective necessity: The people at the end of their rope, the people fed to the teeth with a bureaucracy as powerful as it was futile, that forbade them in the name of Marx to say what they thought, to live what they felt. Spontaneity of any kind could be considered treason or insanity.

Socialism, communism? Was it all nothing but a historical fraud? I write from the Latin American view-point and say to myself: If that was the case, or might have been, why should we be the ones to pay for the fraud? Our face was never in that mirror.

National dignity lost the battle in the recent Nicaraguan elections. It was vanquished by hunger and war; but it was

vanquished as well by the international winds that are buffeting the left with greater fury than ever. Unjustly, the just paid for the sinners. The Sandinistas are not to blame either for the war or the hunger. Nor do they bear the slightest responsibility for what happened in Eastern Europe.

Paradox of paradoxes: A democratic, pluralistic, independent revolution that borrowed nothing from the Soviets, the Chinese, the Cubans, or anybody else, has paid for the crockery broken by others, while the local communist party voted for Violeta Chamorro.

Those responsible for the war and the hunger are now celebrating the outcome of an election that punishes the victims. The day after it, the US government an-

nounced the end of the economic embargo against Nicaragua. That was just what happened years ago at the time of the military coup in Chile. The day after President Allende's death, the price of copper miraculously rose on the world market.

Actually, the revolution that overthrew the Somoza family dictatorship did not have a moment's respite over these last ten long years. It was invaded on a daily basis by a foreign power and its hired criminals and underwent at the same time the unrelenting pressure of a state of siege on the part of the bankers and commercial masters of the world.

In spite of all this, it managed to be a more civilised revolution than the French Revolution, not having guillotined or stood anybody against the wall, and a more tolerant one than that of the United States, having granted freedom of expression, with some restrictions, to the local spokespeople of the colonial overlord.

The Sandinistas brought literacy to Nicaragua, reduced infant mortality significantly and distributed land to the peasantry. But the country was bled white by war. War damage amounted to one-and-a-half times the gross domestic product which means that Nicaragua was destroyed one-and-a-half times. The magistrates of the International Court of Justice in The Hague found against the United States but their decision had no effect. Nor were the congratulations of the United Nations specialised organisation for education, food and health of any avail. Praise is inedible.

The invaders rarely attacked military objectives. Farm co-operatives were their favourite targets. How many thousands of Nicaraguans were killed or wounded on orders of the US government over the past decade? Proportionately, the number would come to 3,000,000 North Americans. Yet, many thousands of North Americans visited Nicaragua, were always welcomed and nothing ever happened to any of them.



● Sandanista fighters. In the Nicaraguan elections national dignity was "vanquished by hunger and war"

Only one died. He was killed by the Contras. (He was very young, an engineer and a clown. He was followed about by a swarm of children. He organised the first Clown School in Nicaragua. The Contras killed him as he measured the water in a lake for a reservoir that was being built. His name was Ben Linder.)

CUBA'S TRAGIC ISOLATION

But what about Cuba? Didn't the same thing happen there as in Eastern Europe, a divorce between the power and the people? Aren't the people fed up there, too, with one party, one press, one truth?

Fidel Castro has said: "If I am Stalin, my dead are enjoying good health." And that, to be sure, is not the only difference. Cuba did not import a prefabricated model of vertical power from Moscow, but was obliged to transform itself into a fortress to keep from ending up on its all-powerful enemy's dinner plate. And it was under those conditions that this tiny developing country made astonishing strides. There is less illiteracy and less infant mortality today in Cuba than in the United States.

Furthermore, in contrast to a number of East European countries, Cuban socialism was not orthopedically imposed from above and outside but was born deep inside and grew from way below. The many Cubans who died for Angola or gave the best of themselves for Nicaragua expecting no recompense, did not do so against the dictates of their hearts, submissively obeying the orders of a police state. Had that been the case, it would be inexplicable that there were never desertions but always fervor.

Now, Cuba is living a time of tragic isolation. A time of danger: The invasion of Panama and the disintegration of the so-called socialist camp are, I am afraid, influencing its internal process in the worst way, abetting bureaucratic obduracy, ideological rigidity and the militarisation of the society.

NEW TIMES, TWO SIDES OF THE COIN

The US government invokes democracy with respect to Panama, Nicaragua or Cuba in the way the East European governments invoked socialism — as an alibi. Latin America has been invaded by the United States more than a hundred times in this century. Always in the name of democracy and always to impose military dictatorships or puppet governments which safeguarded the money that was in danger. The imperial power system does not want democracies; it wants humbled countries.

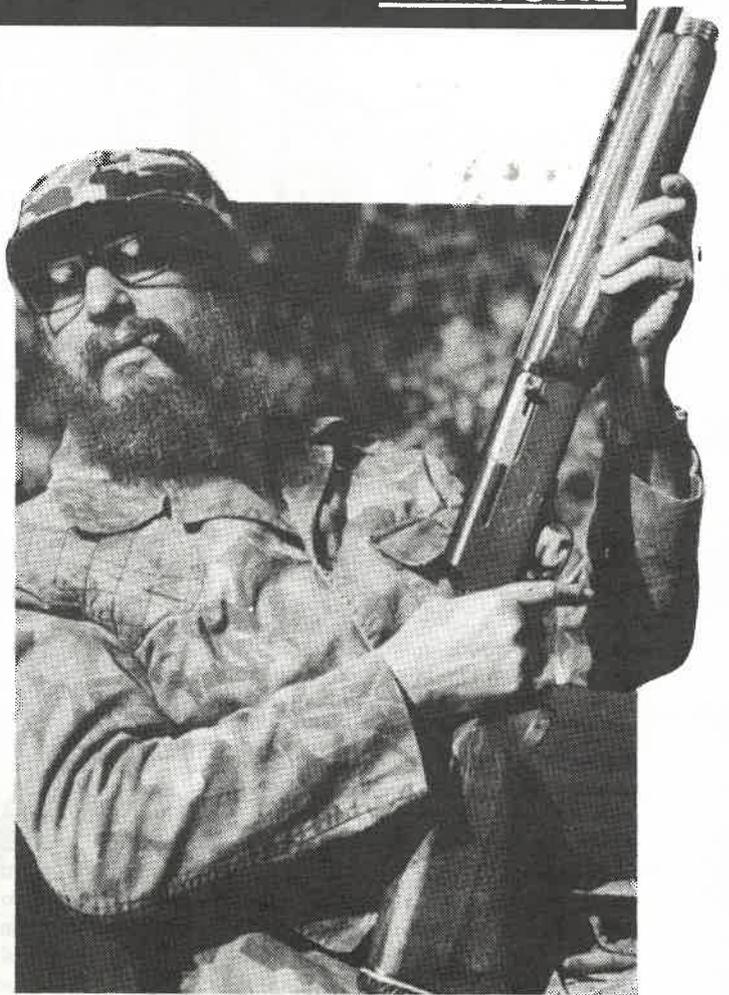
The invasion of Panama was scandalous, with its 7,000 victims among the ruins of the poor barrios levelled by the bombings. But more scandalous than the invasion was the impunity with which it was effected. Impunity, which encourages repetition of a misdeed, stimulates the malefactor. President Mitterand greeted this crime of sovereignty with discreet applause, and the whole word — after the title of a statement had been paid here and there — sat back.

In this context, silence and even thinly disguised complaisance on the part of some of the East European countries speaks eloquently. Does the liberation there give the green light to oppression of the West? I never went along with the attitude of those who condemned imperialism in the Caribbean but applauded or kept their mouths shut when national sovereignty was trampled in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan.

I can say this because I have never operated under a double standard: The right of self-determination of nations is sacred in all places at all times. It is well said by those who point out that Gorbachev's democratic reforms were possible because the Soviet Union ran no risk of being invaded by the Soviet Union; and in parallel, by those who point out that the United States is safe from coups and military dictatorships because there is no US Embassy in the United States.

Without the shadow of a doubt, freedom is always good news. For the East European countries now enjoying it and for the entire world. But, at the same time, are the paeans to money and the virtues of the marketplace good news? The idolatry of the American way of life? The naive illusions of an invitation to membership in the International Club for the Rich? The bureaucracy, nimble only for stepping into better positions, is rapidly adapting to the new situation and the old bureaucrats are beginning to transform themselves into a new bourgeoisie.

It must be understood that from the



● Fidel: "If I am Stalin my dead are enjoying good health"

stand-point of Latin America and the so-called Third World, the defunct Soviet bloc at least had one fundamental virtue: It did not get fat by feeding off the poor, did not take part in the raping by the international capitalist market. On the contrary, it helped to fund justice in Cuba, Nicaragua and many other countries. I suspect that in the not very distant future this will be recalled with nostalgia.

A NIGHTMARE COME TRUE

For us, capitalism is not a dream to be made reality, but a nightmare come true. Our challenge lies not in privatising the state but in deprivatising it. Our states have been bought at bargain prices by the owners of the land, the banks and everything else. And for us, the market is nothing more than a pirate ship — the greater its freedom, the worse its behaviour. The local market and the world market. The world market robs us with both arms. The commercial arm keeps charging us more and more for what it sells us and paying less and less for what it buys from us. The financial arm that lends us our own money keeps paying us less and charging us more.

We live in a region where European



The Captive Voice/An Glór Gafa is a new quarterly magazine written in its entirety by Irish Republican POWs currently being held in Ireland, England, Europe and the US. It is published by Sinn Fein's POW Department.

Irish Republicans have always recognised that resistance to British misrule does not end upon their arrest. The battles to be fought and the tactics to be employed may change but the enemy remains the same. In the words of our comrade Bobby Sands:

"The jails are engineered to crush the political identity of the captured Republican prisoner, to crush his/her resistance and transform him/her into a systemised answering-machine with a large criminal tag stamped by oppression upon his/her back, to be duly released on to the street, politically cured — politically barren — and permanently broken in spirit."

The establishment of this jail journal is a tribute not only to our families, friends and comrades, whose strength and support has been inspirational to us all, but also is a clear recognition that we are what we are — political prisoners, unbroken in our deep-rooted desire for freedom.

The Captive Voice affords us a platform and an opportunity to present in print our views on those topics and issues which affect daily life both inside and outside of the jails. The magazine contains political analyses of current national and international affairs, culture, short stories, poetry and the latest updates on prison-related campaigns and issues. Satire and humour can also be found within the special features, cartoons and artwork illustrations.

We have been pleased and greatly encouraged by the response to the first three editions. It is hoped that the sharing of our feelings and experiences through the pages of **An Glór Gafa** will be both beneficial and enjoyable for all our readers.

We are determined that our message and our captive voice shall be heard by many.

— **The Irish Republican Prisoners of War** ■

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prices and African wages prevail, were capitalism acts like the kind man who said, "I'm so fond of poor people that it seems to me there are never enough of them". In Brazil alone, for example, the system kills 1,000 children a day by disease or starvation.

With or without elections capitalism in Latin America is anti-democratic — most of the people are the prisoners of need, doomed to isolation and violence. Hunger lies, violence lies: They claim that they are part of nature, they feign belonging to the natural order of things. When that "natural order" grows disorderly, the military comes on the scene, hooded or barefaced. As they say in Colombia, "The more the cost of living goes up the less life is worth".

STEP BY STEP

The elections in Nicaragua were a very cruel blow. A blow like hatred from God, as the poet said. When I heard the result, I was, and still am, a lost child in the storm. A lost child, yes, but not alone. We are many. Throughout the world, we are many.

I sometimes feel as though they have stolen even our words. The term "socialism" is applied in the West as make-up for injustice; in Eastern Europe, it evokes purgatory or maybe hell. The word "imperialism" is out of style and no longer to be found in the dominant political lexicon, even though imperialism is present and does pillage and kill.

And the term "militancy"? And the very fact of militant fervor? For the theoreticians of disenchantment it is a ridiculous old relic. For the repentant, a memory disturbance.

In a few months we have witnessed the turbulent shipwreck of a system that usurped socialism, that treated the people like a kid that never grew up and dragged it by the ear. Three or four centuries ago, the Inquisitors slandered God in saying that they were carrying out his orders; but I believe that Christianity is not the Holy Inquisition. In our time, the bureaucrats have stigmatised hope and besmirched the most beautiful of human adventures; but I also believe that socialism is not Stalinism.

Now, we must begin all over again.



● **STALIN**

Step by step, with no shields but those born of our own bodies. It is necessary to discover, create, imagine. In a speech shortly after his defeat, Jesse Jackson championed the right to dream: "Let us defend that right," he said. "Let us not permit anybody to take that right from us." And today more than ever it is necessary to dream. To dream, together, dreams that undream themselves and become incarnate in mortal matter, as was said, wished, by another poet. My best friends live fighting for that right; and have given their lives for it, some of them.

This is my testimony. A dinosaur's confession? Perhaps. In any case, it is the affirmation of one who believes that the human condition is not doomed to selfishness and the obscene pursuit of money, and that socialism did not die, because it had not yet been — that today is the first day of the long life before it.

— **The Guardian, 33 West 17th St, New York, NY 10011.**



THE BOYNE WATER

In this article the importance of the Williamite wars in Irish history and in the consciousness of loyalists is assessed with particular reference to the man who summed up the significance of that era most clearly — James Connolly. An understanding of this period is as essential as ever to-

day as unionists mark the 300th anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne which fell in July 1990. The article was written by Tommy Brogan, Strabane, County Tyrone, who was released from the H-Blocks of Long Kesh in January 1990 after nine years as a republican POW.

*Two foreign old monarchs in battle did join
Each wanted his head on the back of a coin
If the Irish had sense they'd throw both in the Boyne
And partition throw into the ocean.*

*From the ballad *The Sea Around Us**

Modern Irish history, properly understood, may be said to start with the close of the Williamite wars in the year 1691. All the political life of Ireland during the next 300 years draws its colouring from, and can only be understood in the light of that conflict between King James of England and the claimant for his throne, William Prince of Orange... Yet never in all the history of Ireland, has there been a war in which the people of Ireland had less reason to be interested on one side or the other. — James Connolly



THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT in which the Williamite wars occurred has become obscured by myth, half-truths and the cynical political manipulations of fact. James Connolly stated: "It is time we learned to appreciate and value the truth upon such matters, and to brush from our eyes the cobwebs woven across them by our ignorant or unscrupulous history-writing politicians."

"Remember 1690" is a contemporary political slogan for pro-British forces in Ireland. Why and what underpins its significance?

Ireland is Britain's oldest colony, an occupation begun in 1169 and akin to all other colonial situations suffered under the long-term policy of subjugation of the native inhabitants. This policy was forcibly to break up and destroy the Gaelic social, economic and political structure which was based on a clan system of communal property rights — and the imposi-

tion of the system then dominant in England; feudalism based on private ownership of property. Feudalism was imposed on Ireland by the pressure of armed force from without, rather than by the operation of economic forces within.

The land was the main provider of sustenance for all the people and this meant all the political struggles of the period were built upon the material interests of those bent on retaining, and those who wished to obtain, the mastery of these lands. Herein lies the crux of the "unscrupulous history-writing politicians" distortion of Irish history — "The denial of all relation between the social rights of the Irish toilers and the political rights of the Irish nation."

"The lands being the material basis of life, alike of conquerors and conquered, whosoever held those lands was master of the lives and liberties of the nation." — James Connolly

England's colonisation also gave Ireland its first taste of the Protestant reformation's impact; there was literally nothing in Ireland to correspond to the popular ideological/political movement which on the Continent and in England made the reformation:

"The Protestant elements of Ireland were, in the main, a plantation of strangers upon the soil from which the owners had been dispossessed by force. The economic dispossession was, perforce, accompanied by a political and social outlawry. Hence every attempt of the dispossessed to attain citizenship, to emerge from their state of outlawry, was easily represented as a tentative step towards reversing the plantation and towards replanting the Catholic and dispossessing the Protestant." — James Connolly

Thus religion became a symbol of nuance while in reality the differences were of a political and economic nature.

British-imposed sectarianism based on land tenure bestowed upon Protestants rank and privilege relative to the native Irish Catholics.

It is in this context we must look dispassionately at the actual reasons why the two contending claimants to the English throne fought their war out on Irish soil and why at the annual celebration of the Battle of the Boyne, on the 12th of July, Ulster Protestants are told, "...When William of Orange, and our immortal forefathers overthrew the Pope and popery at the Boyne. Then began the era of civil and religious liberty."

The facts of the former expose the latter to be myth.

William of Orange did not defeat popery at the Boyne. The actual fact is that when William landed in Ireland he was po-

litically and financially backed by the head of the Catholic church. This fact was due to the wider European power battle. William of Orange and Pope Innocent XI, along with the emperor of Germany and the king of Spain, entered into the treaty of Augsburg to protect themselves from French encroachments on their respective territories. These powers were impartially Protestant and Catholic.

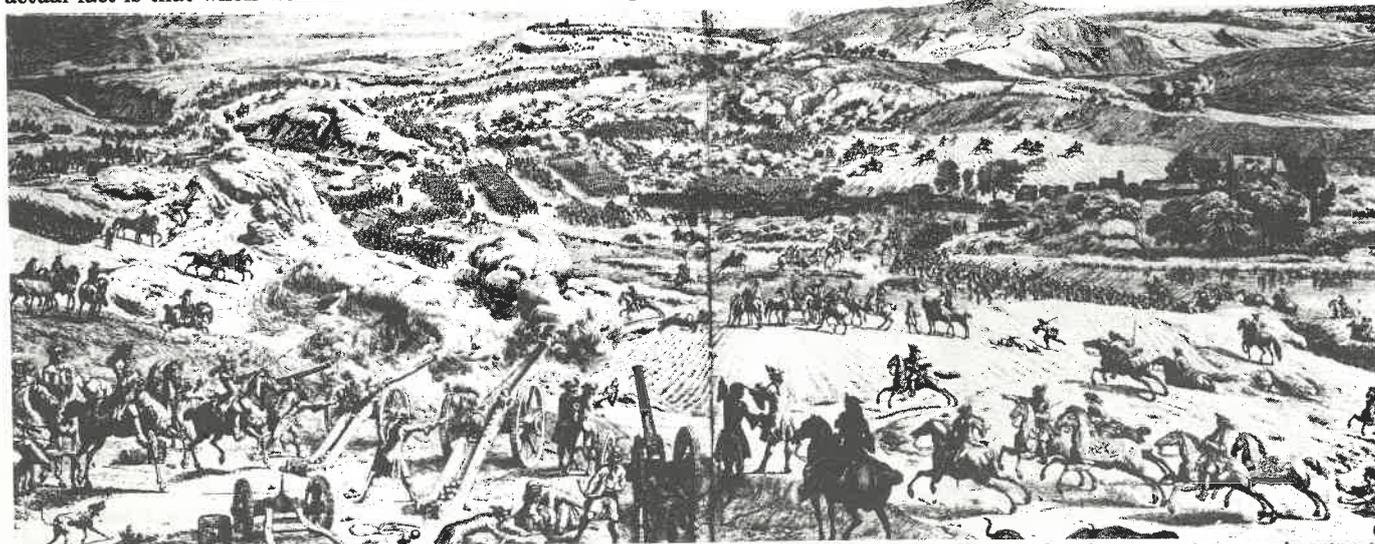
King James of England allied himself to France, thus when William was invited secretly, by members of the English government, landowners, wealthy merchants and ecclesiastics, to come to England with an army, he did so with the full backing of the Augsburg powers. Therefore the simplistic myth of a Catholic/Protestant split at the Boyne is not borne out by historical fact; the myth is in fact the work of "unscrupulous history-writing politicians" to justify a purely political vested interest.

The fact of the matter is that today 'Ulster loyalists' celebrate the same victory as the Catholic Pope of Rome celebrated 300 years ago by having a pontifical high mass and *Te Deum* sung in thanksgiving at the news of William's victory over the Irish adherents of King James.

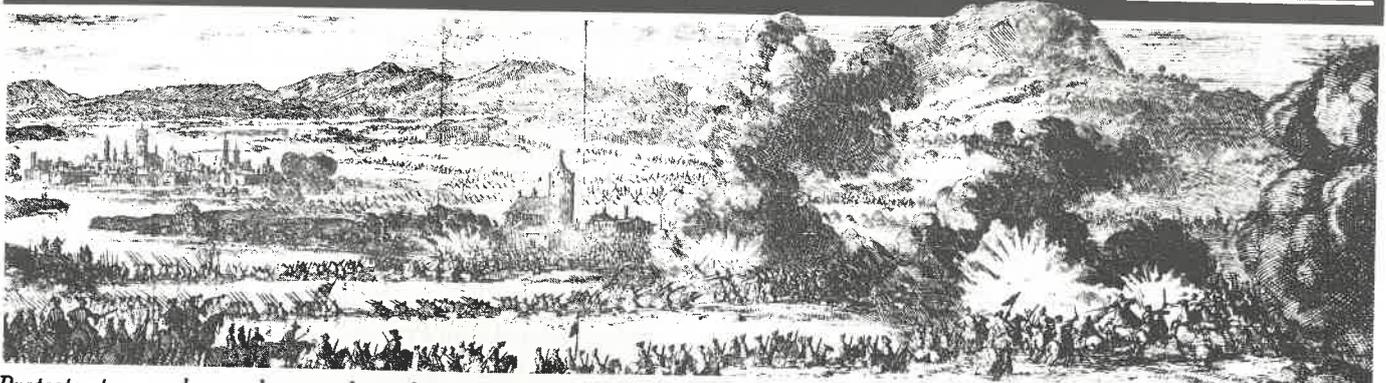
The distortion of historical fact in myth and legend for specific political reasons is nothing new, especially not the use of sectarianism to justify the maintenance of power of a small wealthy elite. The Williamite wars, in Connolly's words, were not between "the forces of England and Ireland but were the forces of two English political parties fighting for the possession of the powers of government". The conquest of political power was a guarantee of economic domination, or to put it plainly, of the social subjugation of the Irish people. This brings up for question the supposition that William's victory at the Boyne began the era of civil and religious liberty.

King James was invited to Ireland, after he fled from William's army to France:

"He hoped to use Ireland as a spring-board to regain the English throne. His allies were the old Anglo-Irish Catholic gentry. The Catholic gentry were descendants of a previous horde of imperial plunderers and were anxious that the land that they had robbed from the native Irish peasantry, and which had been in turn robbed from them by the Cromwellian Protestants, be returned to them. James, needing their support for his own campaign, was forced to co-operate with them and annulled the Act of Settlement, which was the legal guarantee of the Protestant ascendancy. This naturally alarmed the



● A general view of the Battle of the Boyne, showing James's troops in retreat



● The Williamite army forcing the passage of the Boyne

Protestant ascendancy classes who welcomed William of Orange as their saviour. The battle between thieves then began and it ended with William's victory over James at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, after which the prosperity of the Protestant nobility was secured. It is this piece of dreary history, involving two English imperialist factions, that the Orangemen of today claim to be the source of their heritage. — **Loyalism, Republican lecture series No 9**

"The Williamite war in Ireland, from Derry to Limerick, was primarily a war for mastery over the Irish people, and that all questions of national or industrial freedom were ignored by the leaders on both sides as being presumably what their modern prototypes would style 'beyond the pale of practical politics'." — **James Connolly**

The Boyne did not begin the era of "civil and religious liberty", the contrary is the truth.

"The unfortunate tenantry of Ireland, whether Catholic or Protestant, were enlightened upon how little difference the war had made to their position as a subject class. The Catholic who had been so foolish as to adhere to the army of James could not, in the nature of things, expect much consideration from his conquerors — and he received none — but he had the consolation of seeing that the rank-and-file of his Protestant enemies were treated little, if at all, better than himself." — **James Connolly**

What Catholics received were the Penal Laws, basically making them non-people in the social, economic and political spheres of life, whilst:

"Presbyterians, Unitarians, Quakers and all other dissenters from the imperialist established church were deprived of that (civil and religious liberty) which they had imagined they were fighting for, in the name of King William, at the Battle of the Boyne." — **T A Jackson**

Far from "civil and religious liberty" being guaranteed by William's victory, five sixths of the population, Protestant and Catholic alike, suffered under a system of economic privilege which was underpinned by a system of apartheid based on religious discrimination. That this religion was the established religion of the imperial country (England) shows up the pretended zeal for civil and religious liberty, for the imperialist hypocrisy it was.

The complete logic of the situation emerged after 1691 with the stabilising of the Williamite settlement; a dominant landed class that was English-centred, whose dependence on English power created the basis for socio-cultural change, was maintained effectively by the enactment of the property-motivated Penal Laws. The Williamite victory gave to the ruling class a century and a half of what Orme calls "unparalleled development and remodelling at the hands of a favoured minority, the Protestant ascendancy". Colonisation of Ireland was complete.

In British occupied Ireland today thousands of Irish people march on the 12th of July to proclaim allegiance to principles of which the Orange Order is a negation — historical facts prove this, so why do they adhere to their belief in myth?

We have explained how the lands were stolen from the native Irish Catholics and placed in the hands of pro-British gentry. In most of Ireland the land was worked for these landlords by native Irish who, under the Penal Laws, had no security of tenure, but in north-east Ulster the land was planted by Presbyterians who, having been brought in to work the land in place of the native Irish, enjoyed a relative privilege security of tenure. These Presbyterians, while persecuted by the government, also had to defend their lands from the claims of their rightful owners, the native Irish. They had a relative economic privilege as colonialist agricultural workers, a bond exploited by the British to ensure they remained loyal to Britain's interests in Ireland. Step by step.

"The Protestants who had been persecuted joined with the Protestants who had persecuted them against the menace of an intrusion by the Catholics into the fold of political and religious freedom — 'civil and religious liberty'." — **James Connolly**

THUS was forged a cross-class alliance between the Protestant agricultural worker and their Protestant landlords. It was but an easy step from this alliance to a position of regarding their material interests as identical and having a common enemy, the native Irish. They began to teach their children that they had a common cause and common ideals. Throughout the modern phase of Irish history religious divisions have played a dominant role. This is so, not because they constitute the fundamental issue, but because party leaders know that religious prejudices, being what they are — substratum of economic competition — are more easily exploited. Whilst we have here concentrated on lifting the veil of sectarianism to show the core economic factors, the political con-

sciousness of the Protestant community is shaped also by ideological, social and cultural forces which operate to reinforce their material considerations.

Translated into today's terms, the physical manifestation of "loyalism" on the 12th of July provides a now ingrained ideological justification for the economic and political privileges the Protestant settlers have traditionally enjoyed in Ireland. That is not to say that the primary political principle of Ulster Protestants is fealty to Britain. Scratch the red-white-and-blue surface of loyalism and you find stark orange, for this loyalism is a loyalty to no-one but themselves; the psychology of colonialists who take over a country and use all possible means to hold on to it. Thus, in the Six-County statelet, Protestants by and large see themselves as the embodiment of a culture of a distinctive kind from the rest of the Irish, with its own traditions, values, symbols and style of life, the bearers of which are entitled to exercise rights and privileges and to receive rewards to which non-bearers are not entitled. These rights and privileges most particularly involve seeing their values and cultural symbols displayed in the operation of the state, displaying their cultural superiority through Orange marches, for their symbols and traditions generally to have a priority — if not a monopoly — in public display; and for bearers of this culture to have priority of access to employment and rewards distributed by and within the state. The bulk of the Protestant community thus clearly remain committed to the notion of "Ulster" as a Protestant state for a Protestant people, in which Catholics participate — if at all — on terms set by the Protestant community. It's this order that the triumphalism of loyalism drums home to its oppressed minority during their celebrations on the 12th of July.

It is crucial to the unionist "reality" that this annual display of symbolism is rigidly adhered to as a matter of tradition, as any break with tradition is a shift away from the blatant sectarianism of "their" state and "their" politics which are predicated upon intransigent defence of the interests and symbolic superiority of the "loyalist" community. Connolly called this insular mentality "conceptions of political activity fit only for the atmosphere of the 17th century".

Any change is feared because the political conceptions of many Ulster Protestants are a view of politics as a zero-sum activity, with concessions by one side being a gain to the other at its expense, rather than an increment to the general good — to abandon any aspect, any symbol, of public dominance is necessarily to concede it to the opposition. Any challenge or threat seen to be emanating from the Catholic community results in a resurgence of commitment to the only identity which legitimates their economic, cultural and social dominance, their identity as "Ulster Protestants" and this is as true for the bulk of the unchurched as much as for the committed believer.

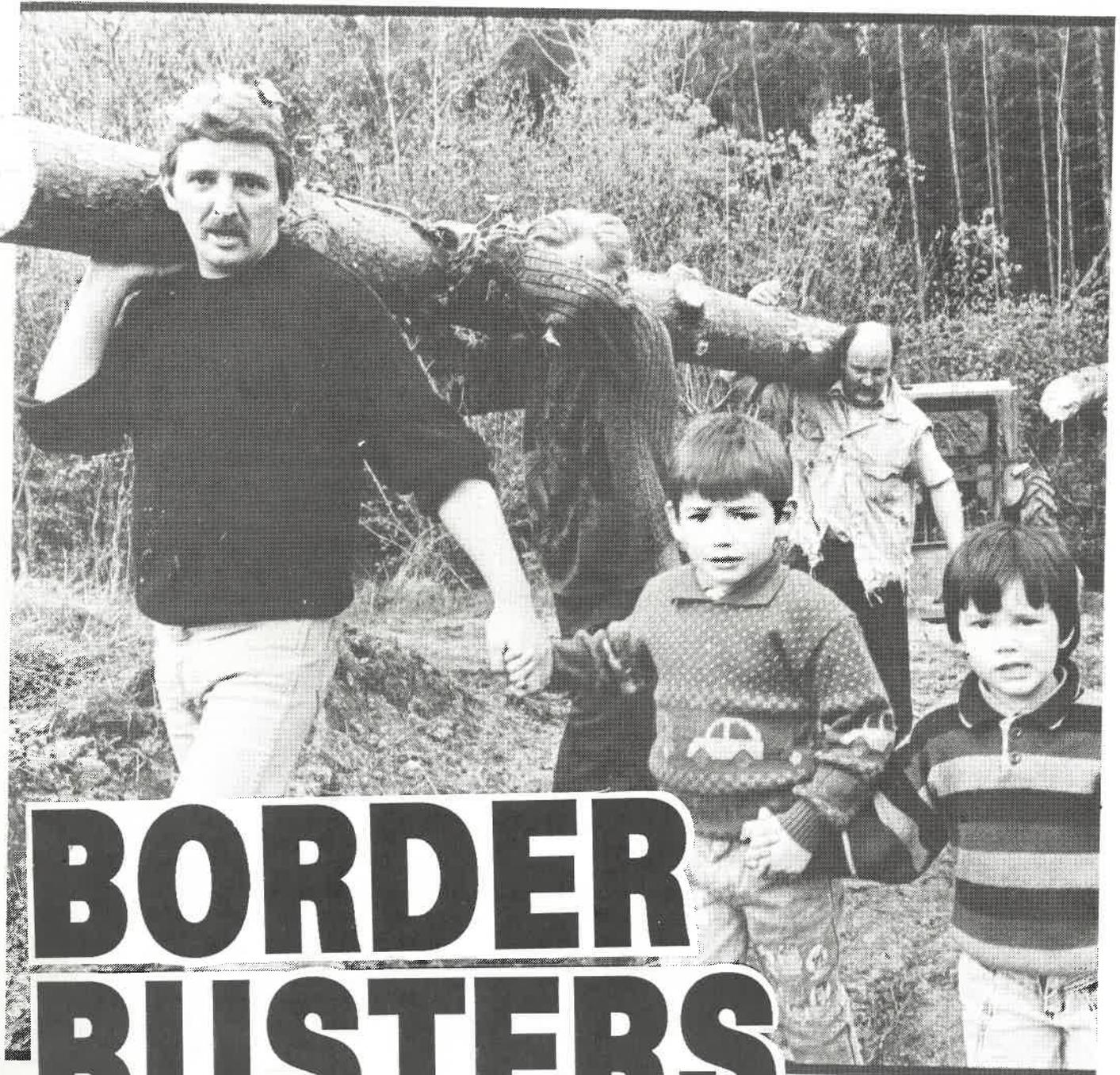
The historical evolution of Ireland economically meant that while most of Ireland was forced into a backward agricultural economy, as Britain's back-garden to feed British workers, in the north-east there grew up industries among the most advanced in the world of their time. While this phenomenon requires detailed explanation it is still true to say that as capitalism grew out of feudalism, it was crucial to this uneven development how the land was held in ownership in both parts of Ireland. The north-east differed from the rest of Ireland in that the majority of tenants, who happened to be Protestants,

enjoyed security of tenure and this factor allowed for the accumulation of capital in the north-east resulting in a faster pace of industrial capitalist development than in the rest of Ireland. This economic fact of Irish life helped consolidate the unionist alliance of Protestant boss and worker that we see celebrated each year on the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne.

In today's economic situation even marginal privileges are prized; adherence to the sectarian ideology of Ulster loyalism helps secure that relatively slight advantage in respect of occupational placement — Catholics are 2½ times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants. Jobs and other material considerations are not all that are guaranteed. By the maintenance of loyalist sectarian dominance in the Six-County statelet, loyalists also receive many other benefits from the fact that the ideology they adhere to dominates; their normal values and symbols have been given prominence in public display and the operation of the state. They still maintain a veto over all and any political change (a veto guaranteed by both the British and Dublin governments via the Hillsborough Agreement). In all spheres of life their identity has been reaffirmed as the one socially approved and favoured, and so on.

WHAT brings Ulster Protestants together every 12th July, when the Orange Order stages mass marches is an ideology of power — an ideology of colonial power. It uses religion, politics, culture and law to mirror its imperial view of the world. It is a siege mentality which, through the passage of time and the artificial reinforcement of deeply rooted myth, has come to mean now that the Orange ideology and Protestant supremacy have become virtually the reason for the existence of the Six-County statelet; to dismantle Protestant supremacy would be to dismantle the state itself. Reciprocally it's the maintenance of the state institutions which give loyalist bigotry a material *raison d'être*. The functioning of the Six-County statelet rests on an Orange machine which involves thousands of people, each of whom has a vested interest, or believes they have a vested interest, in seeing that machine keep its central position in the power structure.

It is important finally to remember that this power structure was created and maintained by Britain for British interests. Just as William and James used Irish troops to fight their war for the mastery of Ireland and Britain so Orangeism has functioned in the 20th century as the rallying-point for pro-British forces. It is the British government's partition of the country and enforced guarantee of the veto of a minority of Irish people over change that continues to bar the way to democracy and social progress.



BORDER BUSTERS

Breaching Ireland's Berlin Wall

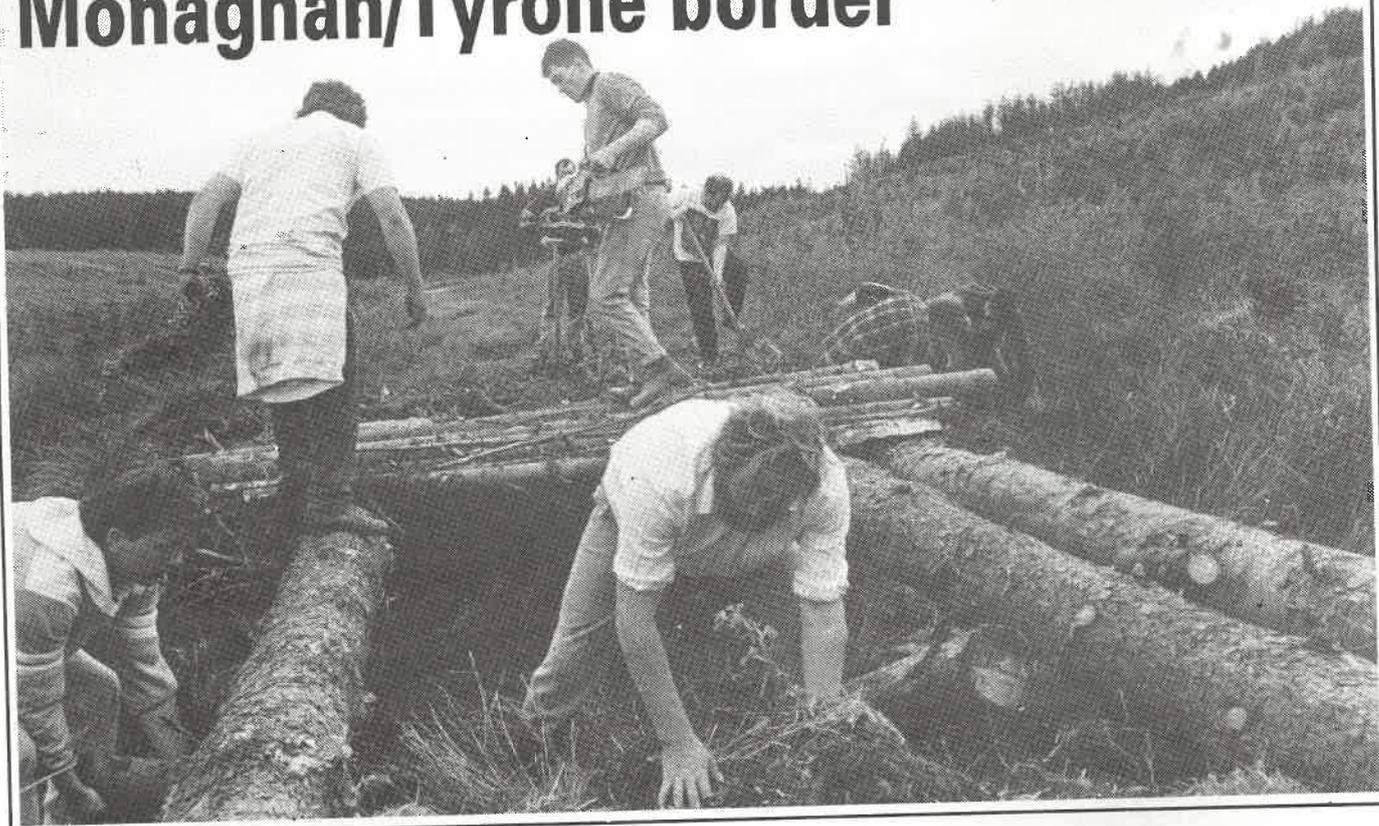
In the past year communities along the border between the two partitioned states in Ireland have been joining together again to re-open roads and rebuild bridges destroyed by British forces since the early 1970s. Such campaigns have been run on and off in the years since but the most recent efforts of the border communities have been the most intense.

In spite of the large number of people involved and the great effort and money needed for the re-openings, in spite of assaults on workers by British forces, including the firing of plastic bullets, little media attention

has been focussed on this major development.

Ironically the 'border-busters' have been working at a time when the hype about the EC Single Market in 1992 and the 'removal of borders' was at its height. Apart altogether from the dire economic consequences for Ireland of the Single Market, this hype ignores the very real social, economic and political effects of the militarised British border. In the following pages *IRIS* looks at those effects and the campaign of the 'border-busters'.

Monaghan/Tyrone border



Born of necessity, founded on exasperation and built on the determination of the local community, the South Tyrone/North Monaghan Community Association has spearheaded the current campaign of cross-border road re-openings.

Since its formation in October 1989, the association has been to the fore in the ongoing activities of border communities from Derry to Dundalk to secure unrestricted access back and forth across the border for all road users. Successful time after time, thwarted on many occasions, the association's endeavours have been the target of repeated British army attacks.

The association has, however, received many statements of popular support from local authorities, organisations and individuals. Among them is a unanimous vote of congratulation from the members of Monaghan County Council, proposed and seconded by the Sinn Féin members, Caoimhghín Ó Caoitáin and Pat Treanor.

The association has also been noted for its innovation. Its members organised the very successful 'Peace

National Congress organised picket in Dublin which coincided with the EC Summit on German unification.

The resolve of the association is clearly exemplified in the statements of its chairperson and secretary, Jimmy McKenna and Mary Treanor.

Jimmy and Mary are 'veterans' of the early/mid-'70s campaign of bor-

der road openings by the local communities and their supporters from all over Ireland.

"The major difference today," says Jimmy McKenna, "is the availability of heavy machinery — mechanical diggers take a lot of the spadework out of an operation like this. We have the support of several

Bus' tour of their area and brought a striking depiction of a cross-border road opening exercise to the Irish



● Rebuilding the road at Drumferrer, locally known as 'Peadar Francis', on Sunday 29th April 1990. This road was once the main Monaghan/Clogher road, and was first destroyed by the British army in 1972. Local people have re-opened the road six times since then, each time the road has been blown up or smashed soon afterwards



● A float made by the Monaghan/South Tyrone Community Association graphically showing the blocking of a border road with big concrete bollards was driven through Dublin on Saturday April 28th during the protest rally organised by the INC at the conference on German unity. (Bottom left) Jimmy McKenna of the Community Association

digger drivers. We also have the lorry men with road-making materials from quarries near and far, tractors and link-boxes from local farms and chainsaws from the forestry workers. The people are behind us," he declared, adding, "They have given generously too when money was sought".

Mary Treanor is a wife, mother and grandmother who, despite her heavy workload on the family's small border farm and the demands of her extended family, has never missed a road-opening in her area.

"The people are really great," says Mary. "They come out to help at the shortest notice. This campaign has helped us all to see the importance of united action. It takes a lot of organisation. Our committee does all the planning. Not only does it plan the various road openings but also the different ways we can use the issue of the roads to highlight the injustice of the border itself. We have shown up the hypocrisy of those who pretend to be interested in fair play and peace. They're not interested

when you confront them with the truth," concluded Mary.

For almost 15 years the people of the parishes of Truagh and Clogher, which straddle the border, have had to endure lengthy detours, long delays, verbal abuse and physical assault are regularly reported by local nationalists, forced to use the until-recently only open road in their area which passes through the infamous British army permanent checkpoint at Aughnacloy. The claims of violence are well supported and documented: On February 21st, 1988, while walking along this road, Aidan McAnespie was shot dead by a British soldier in an observation tower at the checkpoint. On January 14th last, Kevin Connolly sustained a fracture to his skull when hit by a plastic bullet, one of several fired across the border by the RUC at the unprotected road workers gathered on the County Monaghan side of Ballagh Bridge. Nineteen-year-old Kevin, a native of nearby Augher in County Tyrone, spent a number of weeks in Monaghan General Hospi-

tal and continues to suffer from head pains and recurring blurred vision.

Despite the obvious dangers, men and women of all ages continue to turn out in ever increasing numbers to challenge the self-proclaimed writ of the British army along the Tyrone/Monaghan border.

The story of the rebuilding of Lackey Bridge near Clones is an example of the collective determination of local people.

Lackey Bridge was blown up by the British army 15 years ago. It was a vital link for the community in the area and several attempts were made to replace it. On Saturday, November 18th, 1989, nearly 70 local people returned to Lackey Bridge where one week earlier they had been prevented from rebuilding the bridge by the British army. The bridge builders came from Clones, Roslea and Newtownbutler for their second attempt to re-open this very important link road between Clones and its hinterland in South Fermanagh. Just as the new bridge was completed, a large force of RUC

were ferried in by helicopter. Dressed in full riot gear and with dogs and plastic bullet guns, they threatened the crowd and forced them back. They then dismantled the new bridge, wrecking hours of work.

But the North Monaghan/South Tyrone Community Association were back in two weeks time. On Sunday, December 10th, more than 50 local people from both sides of the border rebuilt Lackey Bridge again. Huge timbers were hauled by tractors to make a base for the bridge. By Sunday evening, Lackey Bridge was being used by traffic going between Clones and Fermanagh.

The same determination has been demonstrated all along the border between Monaghan and Tyrone. At Ballagh Bridge, Creagh, Altagalvin, Montforest Road and more. Flat beds from lorries, timber, concrete pipes and rubble have been ingeniously used where available to re-open roads and rebuild bridges long closed to local people. The campaign will go on, pledge the association. "Our roads will stay open."

Strabane, County Tyrone

Below Sinn Féin Councillor Ivan Barr describes how the social and economic life of the town and the region has been destroyed by the border.

STRABANE is a town of average size which has a population of approximately 13,000 people of which approximately 95% are nationalist. The town is situated on the Tyrone/Donagel border and has been referred to in tourist promotional articles as the gateway to Donegal.

There is one main road between Strabane town and County Donegal, and this road is in fact a continuation of Strabane's main street and leads to Lifford, which is a small village in Donegal and is only half a mile from Strabane town centre.

Since 1971, British forces have maintained a permanent checkpoint between Strabane and Lifford, which is located alongside the main road and on the site of the old Great Northern Railway property, now owned by Strabane District Council. In 1972 the checkpoint consisted of an observation post constructed with sandbags, and was manned by RUC and UDR personnel. Over the years it has been extended and has taken on the appearance of a permanent base-cum-checkpoint. The base now includes living accommodation, search bays and a helicopter land-

ing pad. Extensive buildings are constructed of concrete and steel.

The land on which the base is built was taken off Strabane District Council and to date no compensation has been paid to the council in respect of the seized land.

Approximately 100 yards from, and to the rear of the checkpoint is located a local branch of the Wellworths Supermarket chain.

During the spring of 1988, Wellworths offered to purchase or lease from the District Council an area of ground on the old Great Northern Railway property, which is located to the rear of the supermarket and also to the rear of the checkpoint. Wellworths wished to extend their business premises in the area and also provide customer car parking facilities. The local press reported the debate of the Council meeting at which Wellworth's application was discussed. A few days later the clerk and chief executive of the Council was visited by two legal representatives of the Department of the Environment (DOE) Property Services Agency — the body with responsibility for acquiring land and property for the crown forces. He was served

with an order under the Emergency Provisions legislation, which informed him that the area of land in which Wellworths were interested was being requisitioned for use by the crown forces. It claimed that the land was required to extend further the compound at which the Camel's Hump checkpoint is located. To date the crown forces have not developed this piece of ground, and it is believed locally that the land was requisitioned simply to prevent the supermarket extension which would have eventually meant the daily presence of civilians and vehicles near the crown forces base.

As Strabane has the highest unemployment rate in Europe, currently standing at 30%, the supermarket extension would have been most welcome as it would have created some additional jobs.

Sinn Féin councillors strongly objected to the job losses created by the requisitioning of the land, but could not get support from SDLP or other nationalist councillors. Needless to say, unionist members of the Council wholeheartedly supported the actions of the crown forces in taking the land.

Since the mid-'70s, the Camel's Hump base and checkpoint has been jointly manned by RUC/UDR and British army personnel. Each and every vehicle which passed along the main road and through the checkpoint, whether crossing the border to Donegal or coming from Donegal to the Six Counties, has its registration number fed into a British army computer. Indeed so comprehensive is the collation of information on the cross-border movement of vehicles, that other government agencies such as the DOE Planning Service and Roads Service have used the information gathered at this checkpoint to compile statistics for use in the formulation of future policy on cross-border road usage, shopping trends, etc. Although Lifford in County Donegal is only a half mile distance from Strabane town centre, on occasions it can take anything up to two hours to travel the distance by car, especially when coming from Lifford to Strabane. Crown forces personnel routinely decide to carry out an exhaustive search of all vehicles and personnel crossing the border in either direction. This involves vehicles, drivers, passengers and pedestrians

being taken into a specially constructed search bay, where both the person and vehicle are subjected to a thorough search and checking procedure. Many people have complained of being insulted, abused and even assaulted, particularly by RUC and UDR while undergoing searches and so-called security checking within the confines of the search bay.

For many years, County Council and other public service employees who had been transferred from various parts of the 26 Counties to work in Lifford, had resided in Strabane where accommodation was more plentiful.

By the mid-'70s these people had to give up their accommodation in Strabane and move to more expensive hotel accommodation in Donegal because of the almost daily harassment and delays which they received at the Camel's Hump checkpoint when travelling between Strabane and their work in Donegal.

Traditionally, there had always been strong social links between the people of Strabane and Lifford, with young people in particular travelling from one location to the other to attend dances and other forms of leisure activities. Indeed it was a regular weekend outing for young people from Strabane to walk to Lifford on a Saturday and Sunday night to attend the dance or disco in the Inter-Counties Hotel. That practice has now all but ceased due to the consistent harassment and abuse which young people from Strabane suffered when passing through the Camel's Hump checkpoint when returning home, usually in the early hours of the morning.

One such night out at the weekend dance in the Inter-Counties Hotel cost a local youth his life. In the early hours of Sunday, 16th July, 1972, 18-year-old Tobias Molloy left the Inter-Counties Hotel in the company of his girlfriend and walked towards Strabane. As both approached the Camel's Hump checkpoint, a rubber bullet was fired from the checkpoint and struck the youth at a point just above his heart. He died within minutes, while being taken to Lifford Hospital. Eyewitnesses claimed at the time that as Tobias and his girl-

friend were walking towards the checkpoint, RUC and UDR personnel were harassing a group of young people who were also returning from the dance in Lifford. During an angry exchange of words, a UDR soldier fired a rubber bullet which missed those whom he presumably had intended to shoot, and struck Tobias Molloy as he walked towards the checkpoint.

No charges were ever brought against any member of the crown

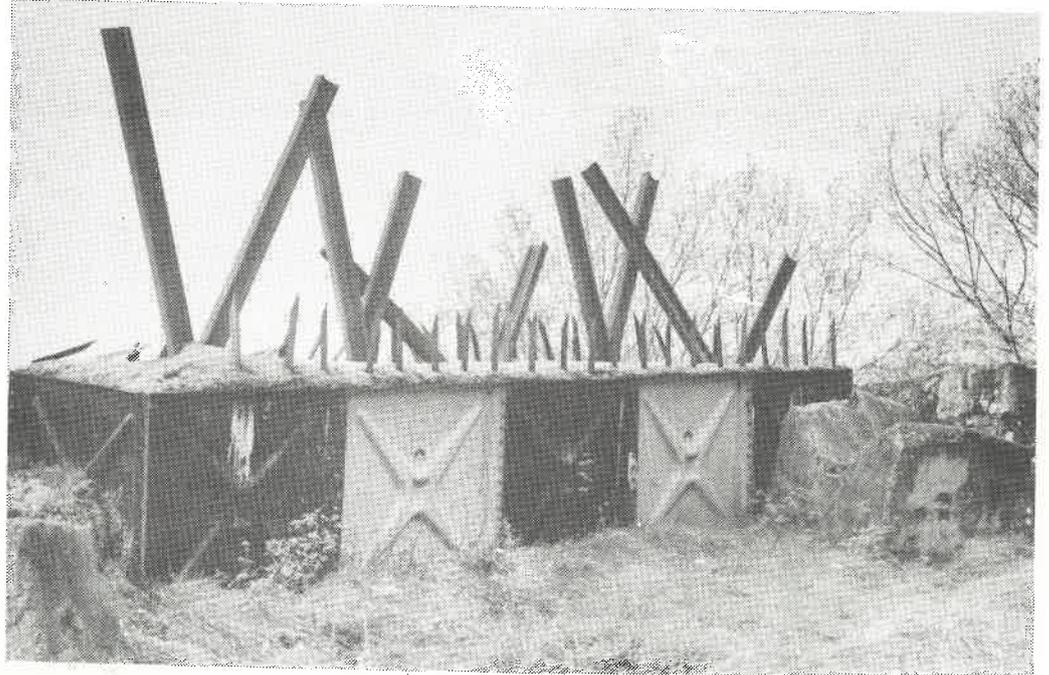
forces in connection with the death of Tobias Molloy.

A similar social visit to Donegal also ended in tragedy for members of a Strabane family. In the early hours of 13th April, 1980, a middle aged woman, Tessie Doherty, was travelling by car to Strabane, having been to Donegal in the company of her husband John to celebrate their wedding anniversary. They were accompanied by Mr Doherty's brother and his wife. As they travelled to-

wards the Camel's Hump checkpoint a shot was fired from an observation tower overlooking the base. The bullet hit the car and killed Mr Doherty. Although a British soldier was subsequently charged with manslaughter, no custodial sentence was imposed. The presence of the Camel's Hump checkpoint has not only represented a physical barrier between the communities of Strabane and Lifford, but has also created a significant psychological barrier.

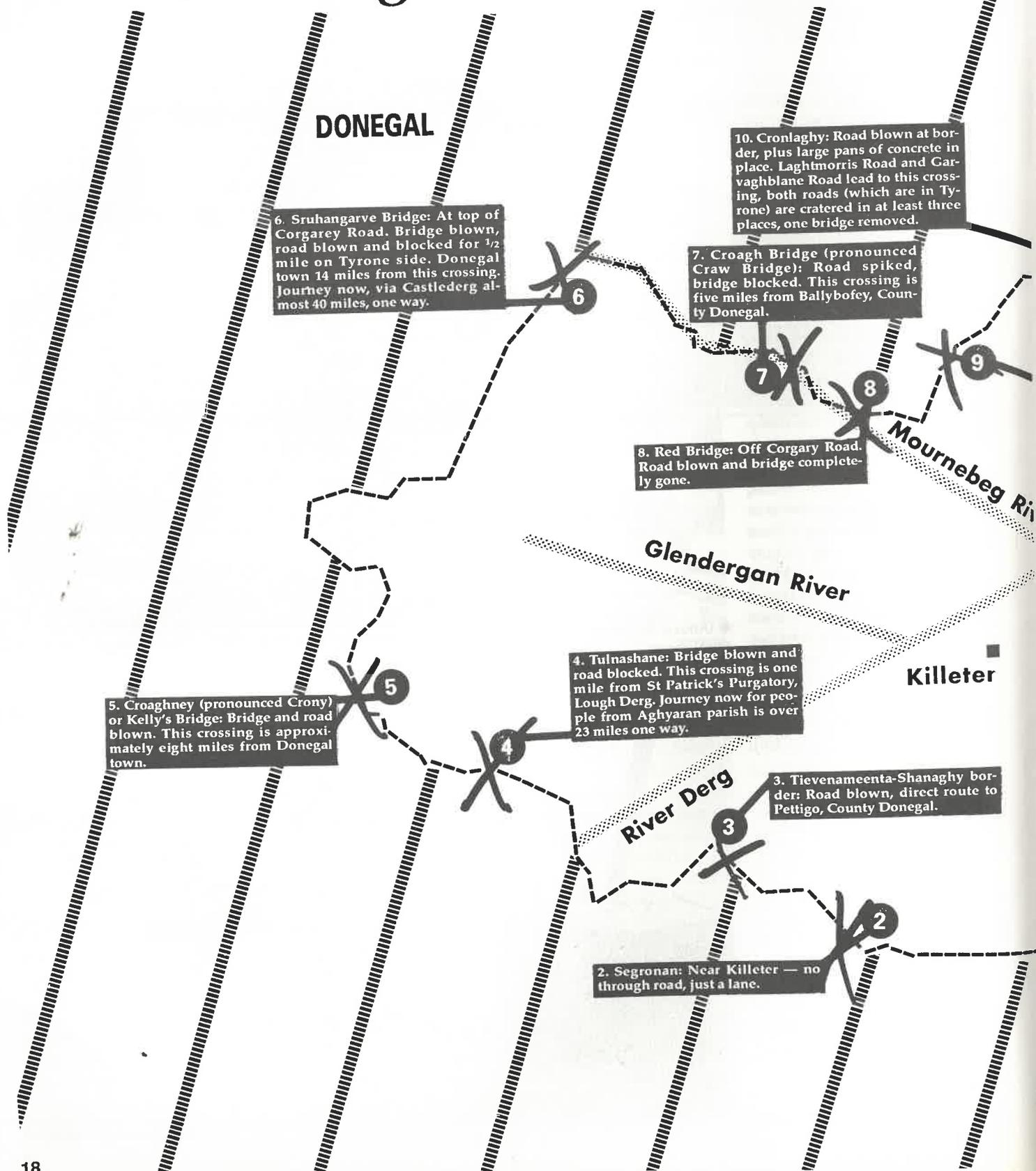


● (Above) British soldiers close the Lenamore Road border crossing, Derry (below) sealed crossing on the Donegal/Tyrone border



Tyrone/Donnegal border

— Crossings blocked since 1973



23. Clady: Open through large Brit army checkpoint. Donnyloop Chapel and community centre is on Donegal side of this checkpoint. Strabane District Council Community Hall can only be reached by crossing through this very aggressive checkpoint. Inhabitants of Clady village are 99% nationalist.

■ Clady

22. Drumban: Cratered and blocked.

21. Tullymoan: Cratered and blocked.

20. Lisdoon: Cratered and blocked.

19. Maxwell's: Cratered and blocked.

18. Craig's: Cratered and blocked.

16. Crossing cut off, only accessible through Kilclean crossing.
17. Fearn Border: Top of Lurganbuoy Road. Cratered and spiked.

15. Cassey Border: Cratered.

12. Pullyernan Road: Blocked and cratered in two places.

13. Green Road: Cratered.
14. Kilclean: Open Garda and Irish army checkpoint.

11. Carn Border: Cratered and blocked. Carn Road and Cavan Road meet on Tyrone side of this crossing. Carn Road cratered and Cavan Road cratered where they meet.

■ Castlederg

9. Meehans Border: Laghtfoggy Road blocked and blown. Bridge on border blown.

In the Corgary area turf was traditionally taken from Meenreagh in County Donegal, just across the Mournebeg river. Since the blowing of bridges and blocking of roads the people from the Corgary area must now draw turf from Mullyfa, County Tyrone, some ten miles away.

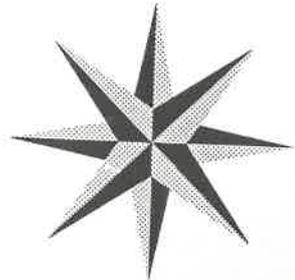
People from the Blane area at the Cronlaghey crossing are involved now in a 15-mile journey to draw turf from Essan, Lough Derg. This is famous as a place of pilgrimage and is one mile from the crossing at Tulnashane. People from the Aghyaran parish must now travel to this place via Killeter, County Tyrone, through County Fermanagh, to Pettigo, County Donegal, a round trip of 40+ miles.

All travellers to Ballybofey and Donegal town must go via Castlederg and the Kilclean crossing.

■ Killen

TYRONE

N



S

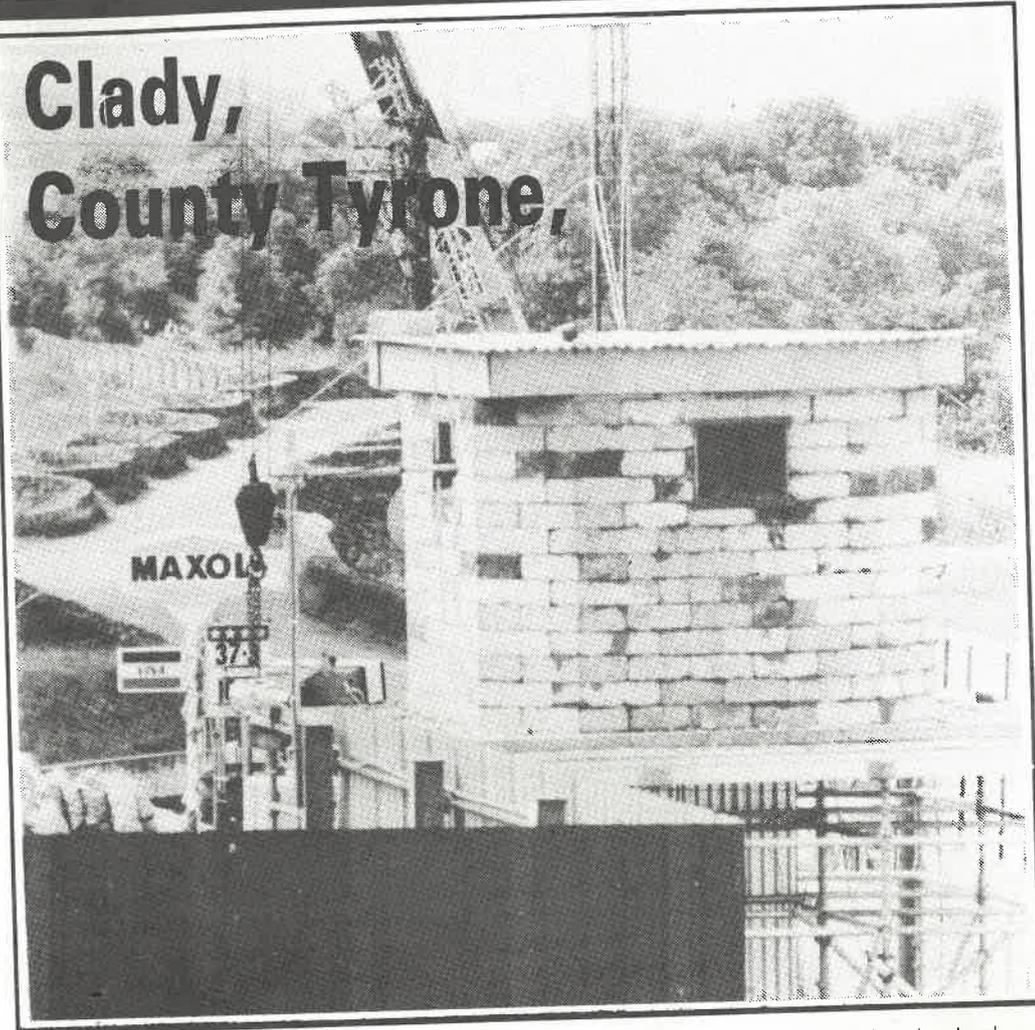
1. Clogher: (pronounced Cloghór) off Scraghey Road. Road blown and spiked. Families must make journey through Tyrone, Fermanagh and Donegal to reach their burial grounds just across the border.

FERMANAGH



CRATERED & BLOCKED

Clady, County Tyrone,



CLADY is a small village which is located on the Tyrone/Donegal border and is six miles south west of Strabane town. The population of the village is put at 530 people who are almost exclusively nationalist.

From the early '70s, the village and its approach roads were patrolled on a regular basis by units of the British army, UDR and RUC who would establish stop-and-search checkpoints which would be maintained for varying periods of times.

In the early hours of one morning during the autumn of 1985, a large convoy of marked and unmarked British army vehicles invaded the village. It included lifting cranes, pre-mix cement lorries, and other vehicles used in construction work as well as standard military vehicles. It soon became clear to the residents that the British army planned to construct a permanent base cum checkpoint on the Main Street leading to the approach roads to Donegal.

There are two roads which lead

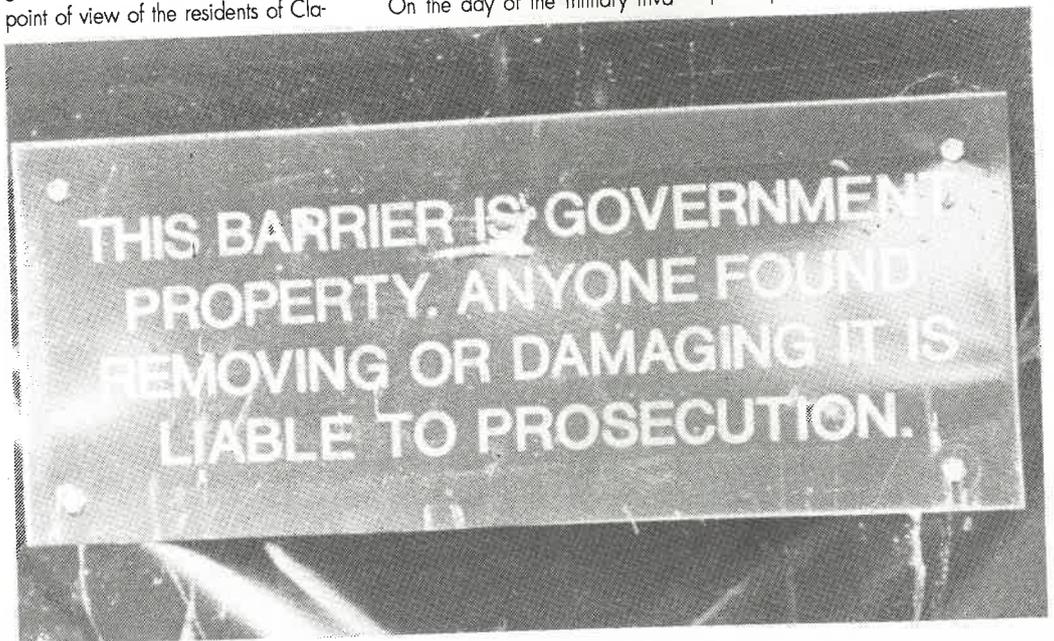
off Clady's Main Street, one which continues over Clady Bridge and leads to the main Lifford/Ballybofey Road in County Donegal. The second road leads to Castlefin in Donegal, but more importantly from the point of view of the residents of Clady,

this road leads to their local community hall, which is just inside the Six-County side of the border, and their local church, Doneyloop Chapel, which is located just over the border in Donegal.

On the day of the military inva-

sion of the village, residents became incensed when they realised the full extent of the British army plans. Not only did they intend to build a permanent base cum checkpoint on the Main Street but they also planned to crater the Doneyloop Road. People from the village would be subjected to a detour of eight miles to get to Doneyloop Chapel, which was only a short walk from the village. The villagers, supported by Sinn Féin councillors, staged a sit-down protest on the Main Street of the village while British soldiers cratered the Doneyloop Road.

Some time later the parish priest arrived and, on learning that the British army proposals were going to affect his church, he summoned Bishop Edward Daly to the scene. The bishop telephoned the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin and as a result a compromise was arrived at between the Dublin and British administrations, that the Free State administration would maintain a permanent Garda/military checkpoint on the other side of the Doneyloop Road as well as on the Lifford/Ballybofey Road. Following the agreement the British filled the cratered road. What was significant about the situation on that day, apart from the hostility of the parish priest towards the Sinn Féin councillors which was only matched by the hostility of the RUC and Brit personnel present, was the fact that the bishop, the parish priest and the Dublin adminis-



tration had no objections to the construction of the Brit base and permanent checkpoint. It was only the possibility that the inconvenience which was to be caused to church goers may have discouraged them from attending!

The Brit base cum permanent checkpoint was constructed forthwith at the bottom of the Main Street of the village and is still in operation to this day. The situation which has existed since 1985 is that the villagers have to walk through the British army base and checkpoint if they wish to go to their place of worship or their local community hall. The result of this situation is that while most villagers are prepared to go through the base once a week to go to the church, they are reluctant to suffer the harassment and threats to frequent their local community hall. The community hall, built by the District Council at considerable expense to local ratepayers, is now rarely used by the community.

The base and checkpoint on Clady's Main Street, like the Camel's Hump Base in Strabane, has sleeping accommodation and a specially constructed search bay. It is manned by British Redcaps (military police) and UDR personnel. The procedures at the base are similar to those operated at the Camel's Hump checkpoint in that all vehicle registration numbers are fed into a British army computer. Long delays are common as a result of intensive vehicle and pedestrian searches. Indeed farmers who own land on both sides of the border in this area have at times to take a 12-mile detour via Strabane to get to their land because of lengthy delays at the checkpoint. Often, local people wanting to cross the border will gamble on taking the 12-mile detour through the alternative checkpoint in the hope of speeding up the process but frequently when they arrive at the other checkpoint they find that they are subjected to similar delays.

A particularly notorious feature of the Clady checkpoint is the fact that most, if not all the people who pass through it, motorists and pedestrians alike, are photographed by UDR personnel, and they have no way of



knowing where the photographs will end up.

The plight of villagers who have to pass through the base to go to their



place of worship and their local community hall has been highlighted in the local press and also raised in the council chamber by Sinn Féin councillors but again no progress was made because of the lack of support from nationalist councillors, including the SDLP. The local parish priest and Bishop Daly have remained silent since their initial objections on the day that the British army moved in in 1985.

Indeed, on one day during the summer of this year, when a local band returning by bus through the checkpoint from a visit to Bundoran was detained and all occupants taken off to be searched, the parish priest happened to be passing through the checkpoint. When two women members of the band approached the parish priest and asked him to witness the abuse they were receiving he replied "What do you expect me to do?" then drove off.

The lack of concern of the 26-County administration over the plight of the Clady community is probably best indicated by the fact that they have also constructed permanent checkpoints on both the Doneyloop and Lifford/Ballybofey Roads. Both Garda/military checkpoints overlook the British army base in Clady and are in constant radio communication with it.



● Palestinian protest in Jerusalem

BY
NIDAL
ES-SAMID

Intifada!

- Palestine's risen people

This account of the Intifada or Uprising by Nidal es-Samid, a Palestinian, was received by *IRIS* some months ago after the second anniversary of the unarmed struggle in the Occupied Territories which began in December 1987.

But on May 20th another chapter in the history of the Intifada was written when a former Israeli soldier gunned down eight Palestinians as they queued up for work. Within hours another seven had been killed by Israeli troops as they

protested over the murders and within 24 hours 785 Palestinians had been admitted to hospital with serious injuries.

Under the Intifada, the people of the Occupied Territories took on the armed might of the Zionist state with nothing more than stones and slugs, while the PLO stated that it would not undertake armed actions in these areas. Its object was to expose the real nature of Israeli power in Gaza and the West Bank and it did so with the enthusiastic support of the people in these areas.

THE PALESTINIANS have always maintained that there can be no peace and no stability in the Middle East until the Palestine Question is resolved. Even within the region, this claim has been regarded as arrogant by larger powers — even the Arab powers which intone rhetorical allegiance to the cause.

Yet it is the cause of Palestine which has provoked the wars of 1947-49, 1967 and 1973 plus the War of Attrition of the 1950s and the 1978 and 1982 invasions of Lebanon. The Intifada has again put Palestine at centre stage of regional and international politics but in a very different way. The Palestinians have always fought bravely against their exile and occupation but, as a small and dispersed people, their effort has usually been on the military sidelines of the wider Arab-Israeli dispute. Until the siege of Beirut their guerilla forces had always been a supplement to the Arab armies. When the West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied in 1967, attempts to organise a 'people's war' in the West Bank were crushed due to lack of political organisation and popular mobilisation. The Gaza Strip held out for longer but even there the bulldozing of swathes through the refugee camps broke the back of the armed resistance by 1973.

The Intifada has changed everything. People's war has become a reality. The stonethrowing children, the striking migrant workers, the merchants who refuse to pay taxes have spawned popular committees which are taking over whole areas of everyday life, organising boycotts of Israeli goods, declaring days of mass participation in agriculture, setting up watch committees and popular courts. As the American and British decision to talk with the PLO demonstrates, the willingness of men, women and children to face the most powerful army in the region has forced a rethink of the map of the Middle East. The British government has all but declared itself for a Palestinian entity if not a state, the US will soon follow. Israel is isolated and increasingly divided.

WHILE NO-ONE disputes that the Palestinian cause is stronger now than at any point since 1948, a number of questions remain to be ad-



● Children queue at an emergency feeding centre

dressed. Firstly, there is the question of the relationship between the PLO leadership (in exile) and the Intifada. Secondly, there is the issue of the 'compromising' stance adopted by PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, who is also leader of Fateh, the largest resistance group within the PLO umbrella. Does Arafat's present position represent a dictatorship of the majority over the opinions of the more 'radical' organisations within the PLO? Thirdly, is Arafat's two-state solution, the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, acceptable and viable?

There is scarcely a Palestinian in the Occupied Territories who does not express adherence to the PLO and believe it to be (in diplomatic-speak) the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people'. After the dispersion of 1948, the degradation of the early years of exile, and the occupation of Palestinian land by Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, it was the PLO which rebuilt the Palestinian identity, which remodelled it into a culture of resistance, opposing any trends towards assimilation into the Arab diaspora or co-option of the 'Palestine card' by local regimes. It reinforced the familial ties between the exile community and those under occupation. It gave a role to all parts of the Palestinian people: pride in their steadfastness to those who remained, an organised determination to return to those in the refugee communities.

With its guerilla operations it proved that the Palestinians existed and rekindled the folk memory of resistance against the European Crusaders, the Ottoman Empire, and the British Mandate occupation. This leadership spurred the people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to build trade unions, medical relief organisations, nationalist universities and a host of other semi-legal institutions which, over a period of 20 years, trained thousands of people in the culture of resistance. Yet the illegality of overt expressions of national identity, let alone allegiance to the PLO, plus the physical separation of those under occupation from those in exile, led the Israeli and American (and British) establishment to believe that the people of the occupied territories could be split off from their compatriots in exile.

THE INTIFADA has disproved this. From the politicised ranks of trade union and women's committee militants, from the student groups and the ex-prisoners as well as the underground resistance groups, the United Leadership of Uprising emerged to lead the Intifada. This amorphous body has pointedly refused any distinction between itself and the PLO. Its fortnightly communiques are signed UNLU-PLO.

It continually expresses its support for the diplomatic and other moves made by the PLO. On the other hand, the PLO has

reciprocated by ceding much local control to the internal leadership. The virtual cessation of guerilla activity inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip is believed to be a result of requests from the UNLU which quickly realised that international sympathy was better gained by stark images of thousands of stonethrowers confronting tanks and helicopters than by a relative handful of gunmen vainly fighting an army, quite prepared to engage in massacres. Similarly, it must be said that the people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have long been more accommodating to the idea of a two-state solution than have been the refugees in, say, Lebanon, most of whom come from the 1948-occupied Galilee and Triangle.

IRONICALLY, the political and moral strength of the Intifada actually pushed the PLO into formally accepting the two-state solution which it had hinted at since 1974. It did so precisely because, for the first time, the question of power was posed in a concrete way. No longer was sloganeering enough — the political reality was that the people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were saying 'We can deliver so much and no more. Do we want it or not?' Furthermore, acceptance of the two-state solution at least as an intermediary measure has long been on the tip of the tongue of the leadership and much of the rank

and file of the PLO. To a large extent the question has been one of when to come out and declare for it.

The aftermath of the glorious victory-defeat in Beirut was not the time, nor was the painful period of division which followed. The PLO leadership can be frustratingly ambiguous and slow but one principle it had long adhered to is that you do not negotiate, let alone make concessions when you are weak. Arafat played the card of recognising Israel and renouncing 'terrorism' (but not armed resistance) precisely because the power of the Intifada meant that that America and Europe (and eventually Israel) would have to respond.

In April 1987 the PLO-reunited after one of its painful but periodic splits in which the smaller 'radical' groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine had joined forces with Syria in opposing Arafat's attempts to bring Egypt (which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979) back into the Arab fold rather than leave the most powerful Arab state isolated with only Israel and America to talk to. The attempt to form another PLO failed due to lack of popular support and Syrian support for the Lebanese factions which engaged in the horrific besieging of Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut from 1985 to 1987.

The unity achieved at the 18th session of the Palestine National Council (PNC) was forced upon the PFLP and DFLP by the day-to-day necessity of unity on the ground, whether in defending the camps in Lebanon or resisting the occupation, and by Syria's de facto ceasefire with Israel. The return of these two groups to

the PLO fold left Damascus in control of only Sa'iqa (a Palestinian wing of the Syrian army) and the PFLP-General Command, a splinter group of the PFLP, and a rag-bag of other minor actors. Even the Abu Nidal group, responsible for killing more Palestinians than Israelis, attempted to rejoin the mainstream. The Palestine Communist Party, strong in the Occupied Territories but not in the diaspora, joined the PLO for the first time.

At the 19th session of the PNC, last autumn, the PFLP opposed the declaration of a Palestinian state and the moves towards the recognition of Israel, but was unable to present a political alternative beyond intoning ritual demands for more armed operations and a Palestinian state in the whole of historic Palestine. The DFLP went along with Fateh, the communists and the majority of the independents and PFLP leader George Habash eventually agreed that he would do nothing to disrupt the new initiative for a trial period of several months. When the Americans agreed to open discussions with the PLO in the wake of Arafat's address to the UN in Geneva, Habash welcomed it. Nonetheless, everybody knows that if Israel is not pressured into accepting Palestinian national rights, the Palestinians are able to revert to different tactics and that they would take a significantly increased body of world opinion with them because they will have been seen to have had 'moderation' thrown back in their faces.

ON THE GROUND, the Intifada has cut across traditional political allegiances like nothing else. In the streets and within the local and national leadership of the uprising, communist and nationalist and Islamic radicals work together. One of the most heartening features of the Intifada has been its ability to 'turn' collaborators. Of course there have been cases where those working for Israeli intelligence have had to be eliminated, but they are few. Palestinian police and tax officers have resigned en masse when requested to do so. Informers and



● RPG attack — West Beirut

Israeli-appointed village councillors have been asked to come to mosques and churches, hand over their firearms and swear not to reoffend and many have done so. The more stubborn have been boycotted (and so rendered ineffective) or encouraged to leave the area.



● Sabra refugee camp, West Beirut

There are only two marginal sections within the community of the West Bank and Gaza Strip which disrupt national unity. The first of these is Hamas. In Arabic the word means zeal. The letters stand for the title of a Muslim fundamentalist tendency which has declared itself for nothing less than an Islamic Palestinian state. Unlike the loose grouping known as Islamic Jihad (nothing to do with the Lebanese group of the same name), Hamas has refused to work with the united leadership and, on occasion, has issued strike calls in competition with those of the united leadership.

While the Palestinians, even the 20% of West Bankers who are Christian, live within an Arab-Muslim cultural tradition which is an ongoing facet of their national struggle, Islamic fundamentalism is not an ideology which can attract mass support outside of a few traditionalist areas. Nevertheless, Hamas is a minor thorn in the side of the nationalist movement.

The second social grouping which should be mentioned is a section within the nascent Palestinian bourgeoisie. Large landowners, petty entrepreneurs, sub-contractors, and merchants have long maintained business and family ties with Jordan and Egypt, embracing the political aims of those states in order to gain funds and trade. Similarly, some of them have accommodated themselves to the occupation, not necessarily to the extent of collaborating as such but certainly not wishing to have their financial boat rocked by militancy. Individuals such as Elias Freij, the mayor of Bethlehem, and sections of clans such as the al-Masris in Nablus have performed a careful balancing act, keeping lines of communication open with the PLO, Jordan, Egypt and Israel. It is just such people whom the Israelis have attempted to promote as 'non-PLO representatives of the Palestinians', in an attempt to buy off nationalist demands with minimalist offers of local autonomy.

BY AND LARGE, the strength of the Intifada has put paid to such games and the overwhelming majority of merchants and employers have played a full part in commercial strikes, withholding of taxes and so on. However, on occasion, men like Freij have ventured to suggest that the uprising be ended in return for concessions such as the release of prisoners.

The PLO and the internal leadership of the uprising have been quick to quash such suggestions. Indeed, in January, Arafat promised "ten bullets in the chest" to anyone who repeated the proposal.

A Palestinian state has been declared but can it become a reality? To some extent the declaration was a diplomatic ploy by the PLO to set a task for the world community, to divide it between those states willing to come out and recognise Palestine and those which would not. By mid-December, 63 states recognised Palestine and the number has increased since then. But it was also a statement of faith, faith in the ability of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to maintain the uprising in the face of massive casualties — 500 dead, 40,000 wounded and 40,000 arrested in the first 12 months — and to impose popular power.

The Israeli army is becoming increasingly aware that its guns, toxic gas, clubs, gravel throwers, helicopters, house demolitions, internment and deportations may break up demonstrations but cannot uproot the social organisation of the Intifada. Increasingly Israeli troops are complaining that every action they take brutalises them, injures the innocent and actually strengthens the resistance. Each funeral becomes a demonstration, each internment camp organises protests: when schools are closed down the pupils refuse to go home but when they are opened the pupils go on strike. Some months ago membership of a popular committee was made punishable by ten years imprisonment but to no effect. Israel has been able to prevent mass destruction of I.D. cards by making life impossible without them and a concerted effort to gather taxes at gunpoint is making refusal to pay difficult. The return to the land

campaign whereby urban communities turn waste ground into allotments to see them through periods of prolonged curfew and siege and rural communities help peasants to work their land, is more of a symbol than a real economic factor.

But what is increasingly clear is that the uprising has spread into every sphere of life. Masked youths carrying nothing but molotovs and kitchen knives have constituted themselves as 'strike squads' of the Palestine Liberation Army. Each community is guarded by a watch committee. Lists of Israeli brand names are circulated to aid the boycott campaign. Food and goods are distributed to families of the dead, wounded and imprisoned. Popular courts are being set up and even refuse collection is organised in some towns. National education and medical relief is organised in houses. Drawing on the years of experience of underground organisation, the Palestinians are creating the rudiments of their state.

The key issues now are whether the price of maintaining the occupation can be made too high for Israel in terms of finance, internal stability and international opinion, and whether a Palestinian state would be viable.

Both questions involve too many ifs and buts to discuss here. The answer to the first question will revolve to a great extent around the degree of pressure put on Israel's western backers and financiers, principally in Washington. In the long run Israel's precarious economy cannot survive both the expense of the uprising and any threat to its annual subsidy from the US government — some \$1,500 per year for each Israeli. There are increasing signs that the US sees its strategic aims as being better served by settlement than by increased instability.

The answer to the second question is regional rather than local. The Palestinians have always seen their struggle as one involving the whole of the Arab world and the Arab world retains, beneath the petty dictatorships which currently control it, a desire for some form of political and economic unity which expresses the shared linguistic and cultural heritage.

A Palestinian state would seek close ties with its neighbours. There are those who argue that economic imperatives would drive a Palestinian and an Israeli state to work together. In this context it is also argued that the 60% of Israeli Jews who come from the Arab world would begin to re-assimilate their Arab roots until the artificial entity that is Israel disappears under the irrepressible tide of indigenous history, culture, and language which surrounds it. Then, just like the Crusaders and the Ottomans and the British, the Zionist state would become just a brief, bad memory in the millennia of Palestinian history and Palestine would be whole and free, embracing equally its Muslim, Jewish and Christian people.



This is the text of a lecture which the artist Robert Ballagh delivered during the West Belfast Festival 1988.

● The artist Robert Ballagh in West Belfast. The mural behind was painted during the 1981 hunger-strike

Irish ways & Irish *art*

UP TO THE ARRIVAL of the Norsemen, the Irish had a mono-culture which is often referred to as the golden age of Gaelic culture and Irish monasticism. The typical productions of this period were the illuminated manuscripts, high crosses and round towers. These have always been seen in Ireland as something unique and unassailable, something which was our own and authentically 'Celtic'.

Yet, as Brian Fallon (art critic) noted: "Modern scholarship has rather damped down this idea and we now know that much of what we thought to be purely and exclusively Irish was in fact an eclectic style made up of Byzantine, Romanesque, Viking and Northumbrian elements as well as native ones. Other countries besides ourselves have or had round towers and even the seemingly unique high crosses are found elsewhere."

This so-called golden age was brought to an end by the arrival of the Vikings and the succeeding years produced a complicated history with divided allegiances which makes the understanding

of the art forms of the people complicated to relate.

Fundamentally, an independent Ireland was always a threat to England's defence, consequently England sought to minimise that threat. This meant that Ireland never enjoyed a period of peace or even the dubious benefit of a conquering monarch who could unify the people and enable them to develop. Eventually, after the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, a new social structure emerged. The old Catholic aristocracy was replaced by a Protestant one and a new middle class was composed of settlers from outside or of Irish who were prepared to conform. Many of these settlers assimilated Irish customs and traditions. The title 'Anglo Irish' was used to distinguish these people who, while not Irish in origin, nevertheless became Irish in most ways. This circumstance has led to the existence of two artistic traditions in Ireland — the Anglo-Irish and the native tradition. Unfortunately from the perspective of the native Irish, "classical music, opera, ballet, and the visual arts tended to be seen as more exclusive than, for example, traditional forms of music and dance".

So we must accept that the history of Irish painting, up until recent times, is in fact a history of Anglo-Irish painting. Also, we should note that this particular history is difficult to construct, for as Anne Crookshank, the art historian, noted: "Time has been much harder on Ireland's works of art than on

those of most European countries." She states that:

"It is self-evident that little could survive the wars, rebellions and peace settlements of the 17th century which all resulted in destruction and changed the ownership of land and wealth in Ireland. The revival in the 18th century, which is so obvious architecturally, is not as readily seen in painting and sculpture. The social changes, which began with the Act of Union with England in 1801 and which were accelerated by the numerous Land Acts of the 19th century, led to the gradual dispersal of the Anglo-Irish gentry who had been the patrons of the arts."

This meant that artists of ambition naturally followed, so that any flowering of Irish talent in the 19th century or early 20th century occurred outside Ireland. And there is ample evidence of such talent.

John Foley was undoubtedly the finest Irish sculptor of the 19th century and achieved great fame in his day, living in London but working for commissions in Ireland and India as well as in England — his Burke, Goldsmith and Grattan stand outside Trinity College, Dublin, O'Connell at the beginning of O'Connell Street and Father Matthew in Cork. In London, he sculpted Prince Albert for the Albert Memorial, also the Asia Group for the same memorial.

John Hogan from Cork lived in Rome for many years. His Dead Christ in Clarendon Street Church reflects how he was influenced in Rome by the broad idealisations of neo-classic sculpture.

Daniel Maclise also came from Cork but he went to England to make a living. He became a successful painter of large canvasses on great themes. His Marriage of Strongbow and Eva in the National Gallery, Dublin, is a fine and representative example of his work. He also painted the great murals for the House of Lords, with such subjects as the Death of Nelson.

Sir Frederick William Burton, who came from Corofin, County Clare, not only worked in England but also in Bavaria under the patronage of King Ludwig. He was also a notable art historian and became a Director of the National Gallery in London.

Sir John Lavery was born in Belfast and as a young artist was originally associated with a group of Scottish artists — 'The Glasgow School'. He became a painter of international renown, both for his landscapes and portraits.

William Orpen was the most brilliant draughtsman of his day and eventually became one of the most fashionable portrait painters in the London of the 1920s.

This partial listing of Irish artists gives some indication of their contemporary international importance and, surely, contradicts the oft-heard cliché that the Irish are a non-visual people. Some may say that because most of the artists lived and worked outside Ireland, that they therefore should not be considered Irish. However, we have never disqualified our Anglo-Irish writers on that score. But we must note that there is nothing particularly Irish in character in the work of these painters and sculptors. Most were working in the English mainstream and created work that was similar in style and approach to that produced by their English contemporaries.

THE Rising in 1916 led to a war of independence which resulted in self-government for the 26 Counties and a separate government under the British crown for the remaining six north-eastern counties. The new government in the southern 'Irish Free State', eagerly searching for an 'Irish' school of painting, thought it had found one in such artists as Paul Henry and Sean Keating. Brian Fallon correctly recognised that: "The cultural

commissars of the new Irish State knew very little about painting, but they could recognise a haycock or a west of Ireland cottage when they saw one." Brian Fallon humorously noted: "Such 'Free State Art' was rather like those old iron letter boxes with green paint applied all over the crest and initials of Victoria Regina and Edwardus Rex." This self-deception in the arts echoed the political reality in the country, where the potential for change in a new independent state was being sacrificed to a resurgent conservatism.

Terence Brown in his book, *Ireland a Social and Cultural History*, questions "why a revolution fought on behalf of exhilarating ideals, ideals which had been crystalised in the heroic crucible of the Easter Rising, should have led to the establishment of an Irish State notable for a stultifying lack of Social, Cultural and Economic ambition". He goes on to suggest that: "An explanation for this social and cultural conservatism is to be sought in the social composition of Irish society."

I can't quibble with Brown's explanation and the following is the thrust of his argument. After partition, the field lay open in the 26 Counties for the Catholic nationalist majority to express its social and cultural will unimpeded by significant opposition from powerful minorities. This majority was predominantly rural in complexion. And Irish rural life continued the social patterns and attitudes of the 19th century. Peasant proprietorship, the outcome of land agitation, was responsible for the immobility of Ireland.

The two social groups that dominated the early years of the Free State were the farmers and the tradesmen and, "their economic prudence, their necessarily puritanical, repressive sexual mores and nationalistic conversation, encouraged by a priesthood and Hierarchy drawn considerably from their number, largely determined the kind of country which emerged in the first decades of Independence".

Since the vast majority of the population of the 26 Counties was Roman Catholic, devotion to religion became a badge of national identity. Also, the inherent conservatism of the Irish Catholic Church, a church which at the time propounded doctrines that enshrined the rights of private property, neatly complemented the attitudes of the new Irish ruling classes.

So, we had a government with its power base firmly established among instinctively conservative and prosperous middle-class elements of society, a government hardly likely to have embarked upon many social, economic and cultural experiments in such difficult times. Yet it did engage in one truly radical policy — the revival of the Irish language. But, because this policy was unmatched by radical developments in other areas (for example, economic expansion in the Gaeltacht areas, etc) it was doomed to failure. Paradoxically, the full burden of the one radical policy of the Free State government was to be borne alone by the children of the nation.

Cultural life in the new state was dominated by a vision of Ireland which was narrow and exclusive — the new Ireland was to be Gaelic, rural, and Catholic. In fact, Daniel Corkery, an early ideologue of the new state, defined the forces which should preoccupy a 'properly' Irish mind as religion, nationalism and the land. It is important to note that at the time there was little or no opposition to this development. Having decided not to contest the elections of 1918 and 1921 in the interests of national unity, the Labour Party and consequently the left found itself on the sidelines of Irish politics. So, there was no effective urban, working-class based, socialist critique of the prevailing economic and social orthodoxy.

With the dominance of the Catholic ethos in the new state, you could think that the small Protestant minority might have raised an intellectual challenge to the one-sided nature of

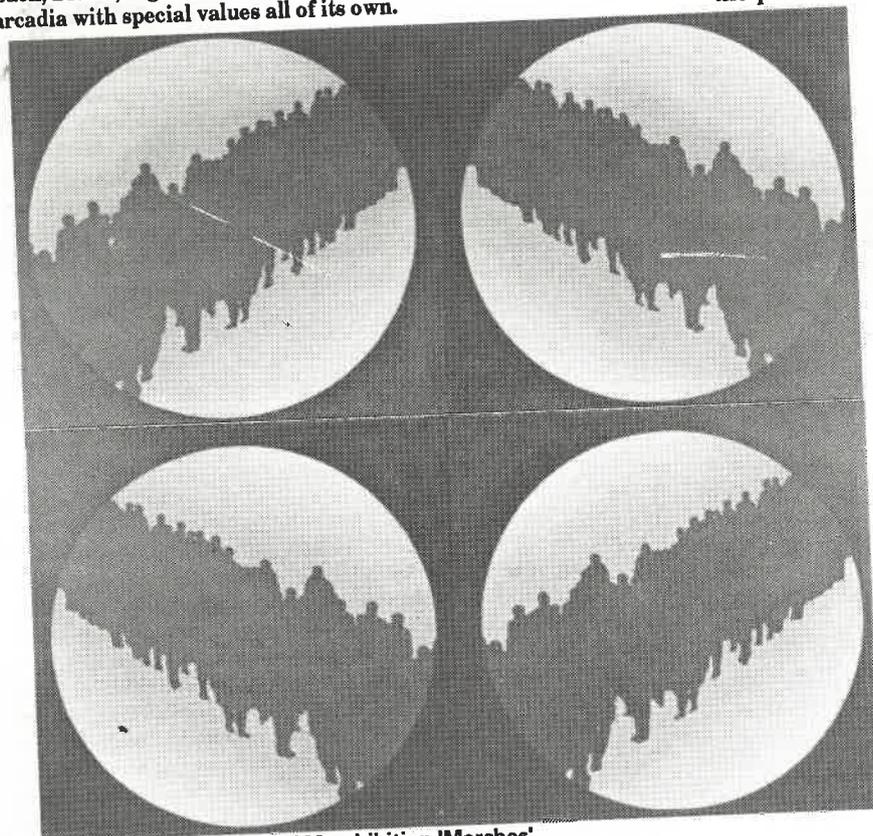
FEATURE

Irish society. In effect, the Protestant community was bought off. Their acquiescence was rewarded by the state recognising their property and institutional rights. However, their cultural and moral attitudes were not to be incorporated in the new state. They received, at best, tolerance and a measure of sentimental affection.

We might sum up by saying that even the conservatism of Irish society in the 1920s lacked any great positive passion. No architectural splendours can be pointed to as expressions of a confident, assertive self-regard in a society persuaded of its own newly-independent status. Rather, a petit-bourgeois state expressing the prudent and inhibiting values of farm and shop, whilst the opportunities implicit in that independence so eagerly sought went begging in a fairly general acquiescence in comfortably provincial modes of social life and art.

The unbalanced and conservative nature of the new 26-County state in the South as paralleled by the social structures which developed in the Six Counties in the North which remained within the United Kingdom. The major difference, however, is the fact that the nationalist/Catholic minority, which was excluded from active participation in the new developing Northern society, was much larger than the Protestant/unionist minority in the South and this reality sowed the seeds for the future disintegration that inevitably followed. For the artists, the new 26-County state was quite hostile in that it respected only conformity. In fact, modern creative activity was seen frequently as a threat. Nineteen-twenty-three saw the introduction of the Censorship of Films Act and in 1929 the Censorship of Publications Act was passed.

When Fianna Fáil entered the Dáil, many thought, indeed some feared, that they would introduce a dash of radicalism to Irish political and cultural life. This was not to be. The '30s, if anything, deepened the conservatism of Irish life — an attitude of xenophobic suspicion often greeted by manifestation of what appeared to reflect cosmopolitan standards. Imagine the following — a contemporary article about traditional Irish music: "The Irish idiom expresses deep things that have not been expressed by Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Elgar or Sibelius." Ireland was seen as a Gaelic rural arcadia with special values all of its own.



● Images from Ballagh's 1969 exhibition 'Marches'

In 1943, Eamon de Valera stated: "That Ireland which we dreamed of would be the one of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit, a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, the romping of sturdy children, homely maidens, whose firesides would be the forums of the wisdom of serene old age."

This at a time of economic depression when Irish people were leaving the land in droves! Yet the image that was continually represented both at home and abroad of the Irish was of a contented rural people, immersed in a folk culture and living in a beautiful landscape.

So it is easy to understand how the paintings of Keating and Henry suited the cultural purposes of the new state, in spite of whatever intentions the artists themselves might have had. I remember while on a lecture tour in the United States of America making an ironic comment at the expense of Sean Keating's 'nationalist' art and in particular his painting *Men of the West* which purports to portray a flying column of the IRA supposedly in hiding, preparing to ambush the enemy.

I suggested that their gay livery might create a distinct disadvantage in effecting a surprise attack. I remarked that in fact they are more reminiscent of being west of the Rio Grande than west of the Shannon.

Luke Gibbons, a lecturer in NIHE, employed this humorous observation in the introduction to a paper called *Synge, County and Western; the Myth of the West in Irish and American Culture*. He wrote that:

"It is easy to see how writers can pass almost imperceptibly from the old West of America popular imagination to the West of Ireland created in the image of Irish Cultural Nationalism. Both concern themselves centrally with the theme of the 'last frontier', the sole remaining enclave of traditional values in a world corrupted by progress and industrialisation. For this reason, the country is extolled at the expense of the city and the past venerated rather than the present. In the old West, there is a general distrust of everything connected with modernisation. In the Irish equivalent, things are no different."

On the Aran Islands, Synge assumed the role of a latter-day Canute, attempting to hold back "the filthy modern tide" (in WB Yeats' graphic phrase). He expressed his profound dismay at "the thought that this island will gradually yield to the ruthlessness of progress". "How much of Ireland," he goes on to ask, "was formally like this and how much of Ireland is today Anglicised and civilised and brutalised?"

This image of a countryside 'where you won't see a car all day' — so dear to the hearts of Bord Fáilte — would not be out of place in the old West immortalised by Hollywood, as is clear from the incomprehension and indeed hostility which greeted Sam Peckinpah's introduction of the car into his westerns. So from the earliest days of the new 26-County state, the old divisions of native versus Anglo-Irish began to be either replaced or complemented by a new divide, the country against the city.

Martin Malone, lecturer in media studies, suggests that the county/city divide is not unique to Ireland and that, for example, in 19th century English literature there is a constant attraction even nostalgia for a pre-industrial community, rural in character and traditional in value. Opposition of country

and city was largely seen in biblical terms: the rural serenity of the Garden of Eden in utter contrast to the dark satanic mills belching the smoke and sulphur of the cities. Heaven and Hell.

In Irish culture the construction was the same but the context crucially different. The Garden of Eden construction of Irish rural life is a central element in the Irish cultural nationalism of the late 19th century and early 20th century. For example, in Yeats's romanticism of the Irish peasant, Gaelic folklore and the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, one can detect his utter disgust for the urban bourgeoisie and working class. For all their subtle differences, the same anti-urban 'organicism' of Yeats can also be found in Charles Kickham's *Knocknagow*, Somerville and Ross's *An Irish RM*, in Lady Gregory's plays and right down to de Valera's concept of "frugal self-sufficiency".

The cultural ideology of de Valera's Ireland reflected the protectionist rural character of his "frugal self-sufficiency". Not only a tariff wall was erected around Ireland to protect the economy from outside competition, but a cultural wall as well to protect the people from foreign cultural competition.

For the artist, it was neither popular nor profitable to attempt to break down this wall yet, amazingly, a few engaged in this courageous task. However, many others followed the example of the great artist Joyce into exile.

Jack B Yeats remained in Ireland yet developed a personal vision that was thoroughly modern in character. His early work was conventional in technique yet was radical in context through his interest in the Irish struggle for independence. However, in the mid-'20s there was a major shift in the development of his work. He introduced blazing colour and free brushwork, an approach influenced by European expressionism, especially the work of the Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka. It was this later work of JB Yeats that introduced expres-

sionism into the Irish art vocabulary and influenced painters like Patrick Collins and Nano Reid, who in turn were seminal to the development of what many consider to be the first genuine Irish school of painting.

This style of painting is characterised by an uneasy restless fix on the unimportant and a reluctance to disclose anything about what is painted let alone make a positive statement about it. Patrick Collins remarked that when, "I see a few bottles on a table I feel that there is more than a few bottles. It is this something else more that I try to paint". Seán O Faoláin, the author, says of Nano Reid that: "She never describes, she indicates, hints and suggests."

Even an artist who deals with the figure, like Louis Le Brocqy, does not attempt to portray the external appearance but tries instead to get below the surface. He maintained that when he painted WB Yeats what he wanted to paint was an "essence of Yeats". Cyril Barrett, the art critic, wrote that by the late '50s his figures had been reduced to a bare white impasto and were called 'presences'. Barrett suggests that they might in fact be called 'absences'. Brian O'Doherty, the critic, believes that this evasiveness summarises a whole defensive mode of existence in Ireland in the '40s and '50s.

Mike Cato, the Northern Irish critic, observed that the reluctance on the part of these Irish artists to assimilate international influence was due to a basic conservatism which gives these outside influences a subordinate position. More interesting, to my mind, is the reluctance on the part of these artists to deal with the reality of life as it was lived in Ireland at that time. After all, Irish society was going through an awesome depression that was both mental and fiscal, and the logical consequence of this was that between 1951 and 1961 408,766 people despaired of Ireland and left to seek a future elsewhere. So, just as the political leaders of the time had no answers to the enormous social problems and therefore ignored



● Robert Ballagh with children in West Belfast

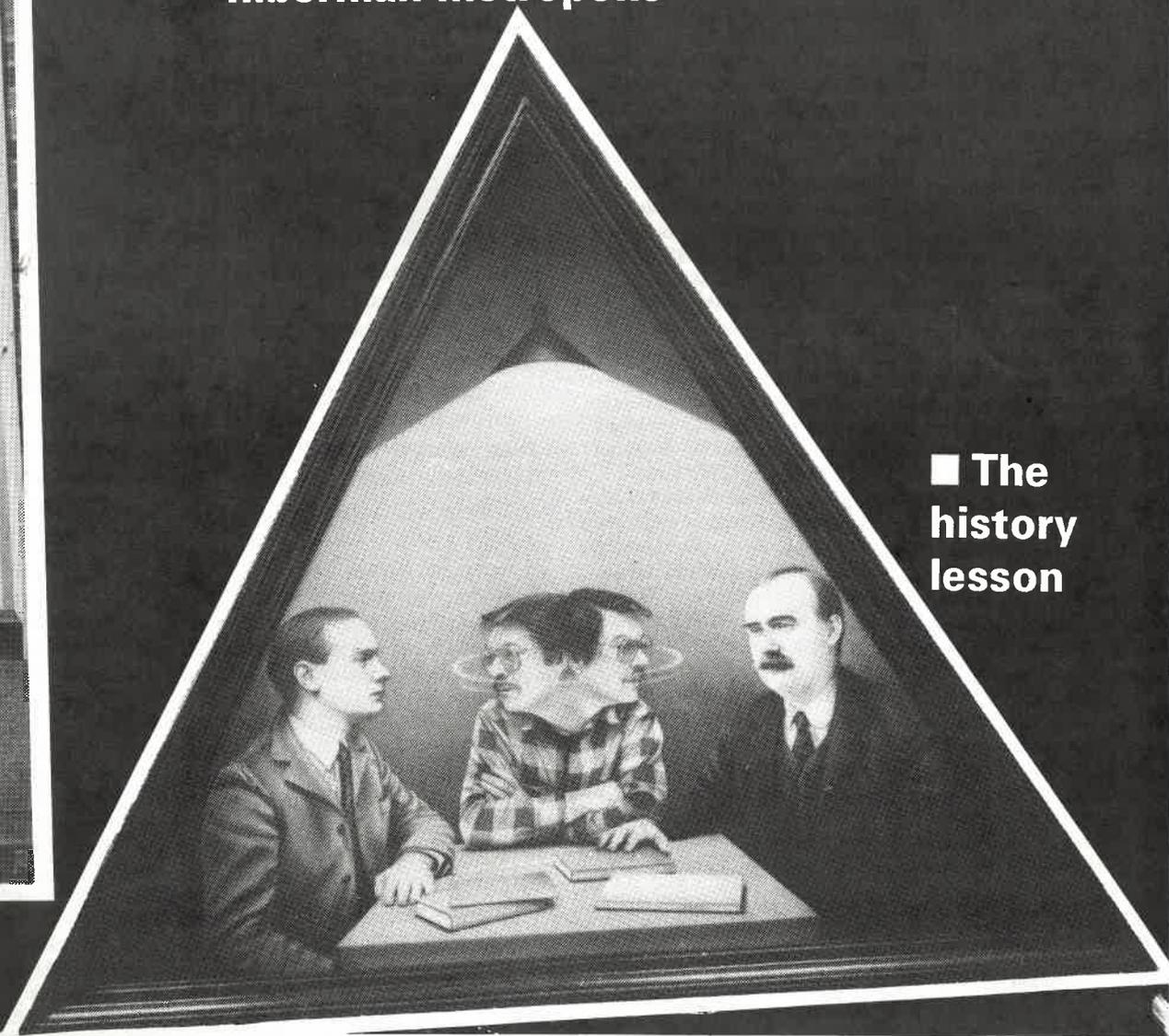
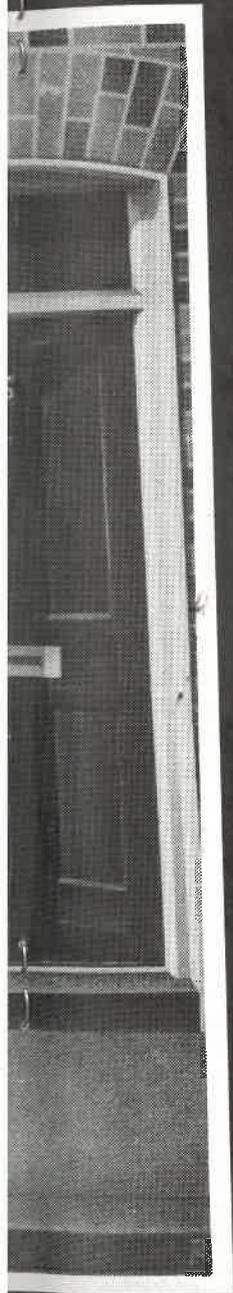
BALLAGH PAINTINGS



■ No. 3



■ In the heart of the
hibernian metropolis



■ The
history
lesson

them, so too the artists turned away from reality and indulged in introspection.

In a piece written about Dublin in *Real Ireland*, a book of photographs by Liam Blake, the poet Brendan Kelly had this to say:

"What often strikes me on such days, particularly at evening, is the quality of the light in the streets. If I were a painter I would never cease to paint that light as it plays in the streets, on the houses, on the rivers and the canals. It seems almost to be a light of revelation and it is truly mesmerizing."

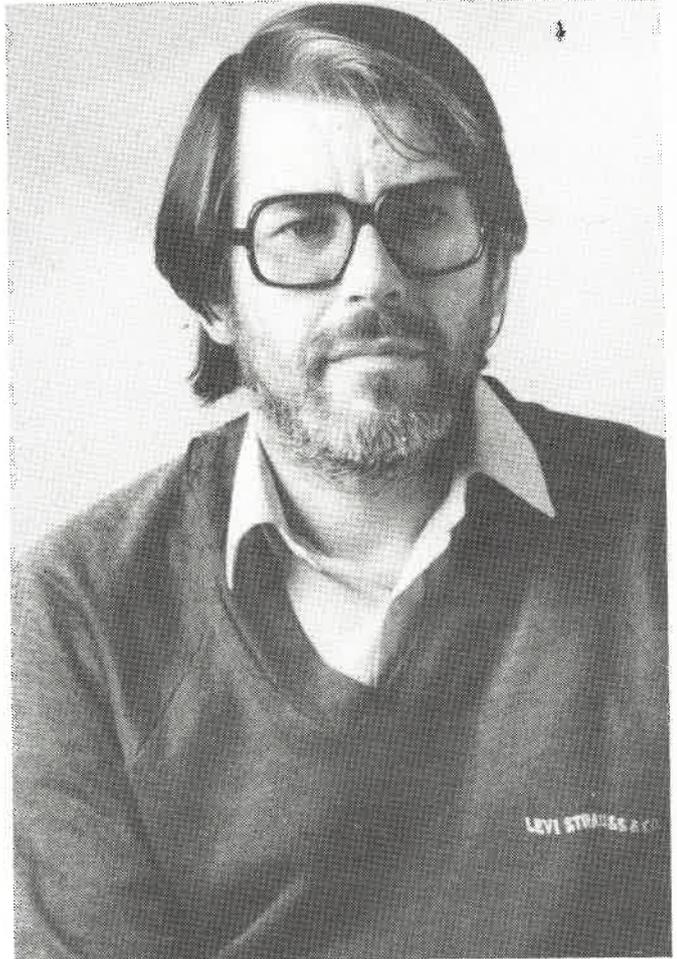
There is another strand of Irish art which stood apart from the atmospheric mode. It had its beginnings in the Paris of the '20s. Mainie Jellet and Evie Hone learned cubism there from Andre Lhote and Albert Gleizes, neither painters of the first rank, though Lhote was by all accounts an excellent teacher. The cubism practised by these artists in the '20s was a mild-mannered version of what was a revolutionary new style in the first decade of the century. Mainie Jellet maintained that her aim was "to interpret the principals of Irish Celtic Art and to equate its essential inspiration with that of two-dimensional 20th century abstract painting".

These Irish cubists also adopted religious iconography. Evie Hone, in particular, succeeded in obtaining patronage from a most unlikely source considering its opposition, at the time, to most things modern, namely the Catholic Church. Mainie Jellet and Evie Hone brought to Dublin a style of painting that was definitely modernist in outlook and which had a deliberate sense of 'Irishness' imposed on it by either the employment of Celtic linear decoration or the introduction of religious subject matter. Nevertheless, in spite of great efforts, and she was one of the few artists who wrote manifestos, Jellet failed to give Irish art a firm cubist underpinning.

In retrospect, perhaps more important was her involvement in the founding of the Irish Exhibition of Living Art in 1943 which provided an annual forum for the exhibition of modern works by those artists who were consistently excluded from the established shows, in particular the Royal Hibernian Academy, which in Brian O'Doherty's words, "saw itself as the curator (indeed embalmer) of the academic tradition". In the 1940s and '50s, the Living Art provided an opportunity to exhibit for artists like Patrick Collins and Nano Reid, maverick moderns, who otherwise would have had no public exposure. Since I have already discussed this poetic genre of painting, I would like to move on to another development in Irish art which was also exhibited in the IELA but during the '60s and '70s.

Patrick Scott responded to international ideas with a body of work incorporating a fine natural sense for material coupled with impeccable taste. Cecil King turned from working in an atmospheric way to austere but elegant abstractions. However, it was Michael Farrell's return from the States in '67 that added a certain, perhaps necessary, toughness to this burgeoning Irish abstract school. His paintings, executed in bright acrylic paints (the first time that this new medium had been seen in Ireland and having an American sense of scale — some paintings were 20 feet across) breached the atmospheric mode once and for all. Now all the post-war developments in modernism began to appear in Ireland and, strange to relate, since it had never happened before, serious patronage of modern art modestly commenced. Large abstract works were to be found adorning the new office blocks and factories of the emerging successful businesses.

SINCE THE '30s, Irish economic policy had been based on protectionism, limiting foreign ownership and attempting to build up the domestic market. After Eamon de Valera was replaced by Seán Lemass this policy



was radically altered. Under the premiership of Seán Lemass, protectionism was abandoned and the country was opened up to foreign investment. Slowly, the economy began to develop and by the mid-'60s there was a buoyant feeling of optimism within the business community. I feel that it was no accident that the new painting and sculpture were chosen to mark this new-found confidence. Anne Crookshank wrote, "that the first impact of the Bank of Ireland collection as a whole was one of vitality".

There is no doubt that the changes introduced in the 26 Counties under the premiership of Seán Lemass fundamentally challenged traditional values. Yet, at the same time, other developments in the North of Ireland were to have equally profound effects on Irish culture and society.

The demand for civil rights was met by brutal opposition from the forces of the state and set in train a troubled sequence of events that continues to this day. The national question was forced onto the agenda once again — yet few artists responded to the traumatic events that continued to unfold.

However, there were exceptions. In 1968-'69, I executed a series of paintings called *marchers* which drew their inspiration from the civil rights marches of the time and in 1969-'70, I painted three large paintings which commented on certain events in the North of Ireland through quoting classical masterpieces by Delacroix, Goya and David. Michael Farrell parodied Boucher's famous painting *Mme O'Murphy* to make reference to the brutal divisions in Ireland. Nevertheless, the mainstream of contemporary Irish art continued to be a

provincial variant of modernism which continued undisturbed until economic stagnation set in with the current recession. Then the undisguised confidence expressed by the bright clean abstractions of the '70s suddenly seemed strangely out of place.

The lack of direction in social, political and economic matters became paralleled by a similar chaotic approach to visual expression.

The recent adoption by the establishment of the new expressionist painting may seem difficult to comprehend, especially since in Ireland this method of image-making had consistently been employed by artists who held decidedly anti-establishment views and whose attitudes were hardened by political principle. Artists like Michael Kane, James McKenna and others founded the Independent Artists to oppose not only the conservative approach of the RHA but also what they saw as a new modernist academy, namely the Living Art. They believed, with some justification, that the forces that supported the Living Art were just as elitist and conservative as the people who surrounded the RHA. It remains an open question whether the radical attitudes of the artists involved with the 'Independents' can survive the embrace of what Denis Donoghue called "the cherishing bureaucracy".

At this stage, I think that it is worthwhile quoting from the New York artist Martha Rosler, in order to offer some explanation of how official attitudes to such a visual approach could have changed so radically:

"Since the beginning of the 20th century and the original appearance of expressionism, it has re-appeared twice, and seems to represent the failed confidence of managerial and financial elites at a moment of historical pessimism about their own mastery and represents a sense that certainties are re-creating."

IN DISCUSSING the new expressionists, I have more or less arrived at the current state of affairs in the visual arts in Ireland. Yet having briefly touched on most art forms or movements that have been seen as being nominally Irish, I have failed to settle on anything that can set such art apart as being uniquely Irish in character and yet I have to admit that many Irish artists produce work that is quintessentially different to work produced by artists from other cultures/societies.

It was in 1975 that the nature of this difference became apparent to me and this revelation occurred quite by accident. At that time I was commissioned to paint two late pictures for a bar in Clonmel, County Tipperary, with the provision that they be of local interest. After long research to find a subject that would be relevant, I finally settled on the famous 18th century author Laurence Sterne, who in fact had been born in Clonmel in 1713. Sterne's family lived with, or more likely off their Irish relatives in Carrickfergus, Mullingar and Dublin and Annamoe until finally Laurence left for schooling in Halifax and then to Cambridge. I read his famous book of *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Gentleman* for the first time in 1975 and was immediately struck by what I felt to be a common sensibility even though we were separated in time by two centuries. Kieran Hickey, the film director, said with tongue-in-cheek, that: "If Sterne had not existed it would eventually have been necessary for Robert Ballagh to invent him."

I first felt that we simply shared a common artistic purpose but slowly it occurred to me that the book was steeped in, what I can only call, an Irish sensibility. The conversational style of the writing, the sense of irony, humour and the "frisky digressions" all go to create a book that, however un-Irish it

may appear on the surface and however much Sterne may be categorised as an English writer, has at its core, uncontestedly, a real 'Irishness'. In my opinion, Laurence Sterne quite naturally absorbed these various qualities during his formative years in Ireland.

I now sensed that 'Irishness' is not something that can be superficially imposed on a work of art, for example through the employment of Celtic ornament, but rather that it is something that goes much deeper and is in essence difficult to define. It could be summarised possibly as an attitude to life or, more accurately, a way of dealing with life, consisting of, perhaps, a preponderance to irony, satire or metaphor, a sense of humour, an enjoyment of parody and above all a healthy scepticism. These qualities are not uniquely Irish, but none the less the Irish do have them in abundance.

And there are sound historical reasons as to why this should be the case. The Irish have been a subject people, sometimes willing, sometimes not, for many centuries. This has meant that, in the past, whenever subversive ideas were to be communicated, it became necessary to employ some sort of disguise. For example, the poets frequently used metaphor in order to communicate their true feelings when a direct statement would undoubtedly have been considered treasonable. Over the years, this technique of saying one thing while meaning another has become second nature to the Irish. So, we can perhaps conclude that, because of their troubled history, the Irish were forced by circumstances to adopt qualities that have had the effect of enriching the national character. However, a problem is that, since these attributes are indeed second nature to us, often we can fail to take full notice of them. Frequently, it is an outsider who draws our attention to these 'Irish' qualities.

Hanns Theodor Flemming, the German critic, wrote in *Die Welt* in 1980: "If we look for specifically Irish components among Irish artists we find everywhere the echoes of Celtic spiral ornamentation or of the shapes of early Christian stone crosses in many transformations but hardly any independent works of contemporary character. One exception is Robert Ballagh, who allows one to perceive in his paintings, which are stylistically between old matters and pop art, a specifically Irish irony and a choice of themes which is full of critically conscious allusions. It is rare to find an artist today capable of such well-executed self-irony and cultural criticism."

Yet, the unwillingness or even refusal of many here in Ireland to recognise and acknowledge such attitudes as being Irish in character continue to frustrate me and, in fact, my painting *Highfield* is a reaction to my inability to be able to draw on certain themes which many see as being uniquely or essentially Irish. The painting shows the artist looking out from the studio to the landscape yet the interior canvas remains blank. The torn Picasso poster warns of the danger involved in following international cultural fashions and the flock of migrating swifts refers to the position taken by many Irish artists in the past, namely exile.

So, we could say that *Highfield* is a painting that raises questions rather than provides any answers. It was another painting, completed in 1985, that provided me with the opportunity to resolve some of these contradictions. The painting is a portrait of Dr Noel Browne, the socialist and controversial public figure. On one level, it simply shows him, at 70, in retirement in Connemara. However, the painting is multi-layered and refers to many different and contradictory issues. In fact, it allowed me to connect the landscape and the Irish language with radical ideas through association with the subject. Noel Browne's stubborn insistence of seeing Ireland as it was, rather than through the customary 'ah-sure-it's-going-to-be-all-right' blinkers, puts him outside the Pale of the cosy rituals of party politics or what he calls "the conspiracy of agreed lies". This attitude seemed to me to re-inforce my attempts at subverting accepted images of Ireland.

Confronting life as it is rather than as we'd like it to be is as much a function of art as of politics.

Standing at the corner

BY
B A
FOX

I WAS standing still at the time. So, strictly speaking, it wasn't a 'stop and search', just another routine P-check.

"Name."

It wasn't a question, more a statement of intent. I suppose, on top of everything else, aggravation, bullying, and sheer bloody-mindedness, this is the only way they know how to talk to us. I gave it grudgingly but as a matter of course. There's no point in refusing.

Every time this happens I can't help thinking of that madman Tommy who told them one day that he couldn't answer because, he said, he only had the one name and if he gave it to them then he wouldn't have a name for the next lot that came along. That gag cost him three teeth.

"Address."

He took that too.

"Date of birth."

"Over 21."

He was from the north of England, a Geordie probably, from Newcastle or Gateshead, or more likely from one of those dying coal and steel towns like Consett or Ashington.

There were half-a-dozen of them, the usual untidy straggle. These foot-patrols are always the same, with a point man out in front, his rifle leading the way, and the other poor bastard at the end who has to walk backwards, guarding their rear-end. The tail-gunners always seem like some strange new species. They've lost the art of walking, they scutter and shuffle along like crabs, going in a crazy zigzag, looking behind but always with one eye out over their shoulder, then making that desperate little dash every 50 yards to catch up with the rest.

His face was blacked, a sloppy boot-polish imitation of Al Jolson. Don't ask me why. It was only four o'clock in the afternoon of a gorgeous summer's day, one of those days when the light will surely last well on into the evening. Up and behind me, the hills shimmered purple and deep bottle green, sparkling with flashes of bright yellow gorse, and below, the whole city spread out in a grand arc capturing the indigo and silver of the lough.

The rest was standard issue, none of the ski and scuba glamour promises in the ad campaign in the glossy Sundays. Khaki pants and combat boots, green sweater with shoulder patches, flak jacket. Around his waist, a giant's charm bracelet of canteen, spare ammo, riot-helmet, yard-long baton, plastic bullet gun. And his rifle, casually pointed in my face. All paraphernalia for keeping the peace.

"Where are you going?"

That was a good one. Where would I be going on an empty Thursday afternoon? Anyway, I wasn't going anywhere. I was standing at the corner of my own street, just standing. It was really, all things considered, a very stupid question. But you have to remember they only have a limited repertoire. They have to ask this one before they can get to the next question in the manual.

"Where have you been."

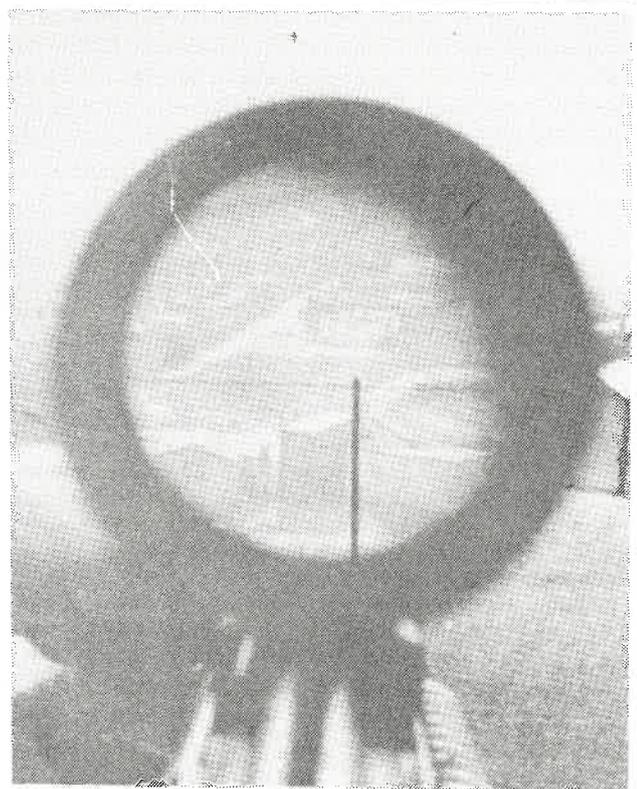
Still not a real question. I said nothing, there was nothing to say. I sometimes wonder, do they not get awfully bored going through this same pattern day after day?

He had that look. They all get it, especially the ones who are over here on their third or fourth tour. The look is a strange and scary thing. It's never there when you look right at them, face on. But as you glance away, which we do all the time, it's there in the corner of their eye, on the outer edge of your vision.

The look. There's fear in it, of course, and some wild tension, all coiled up, ready to spring, and just barely under control. Anger is the only word for it, an anger fathered by fear and borne out of boredom. They're frustrated too, and that often shows in the look. Everybody agrees on those parts, but there's something else, another ingredient. It's like the secret formula for Coca-Cola, or the alchemist's recipe for gold, elusive, a will o' the wisp that defies definition. That's what scares people, I think, the uncertainty of it.

Some say it's just alienation. They are strangers right enough, so that makes sense. But they can't be all that strange. Their streets in Newcastle look just like ours. My uncle lives there. I've seen them myself.

Others put it down to the old imperial curse. The white man's burden has finally



come to rest, humped around our streets on the shoulders of the jackass at the bottom of their pile. Maybe they're just tired of carrying all that responsibility.

For what it's worth, my own theory is they've got those old existentialist blues. Call it what you like — angst or agenbite of inwit — older, more Catholic times had a simpler word. Guilt.

He called me through, murmuring into the mike plugged into his flak jacket. The computer burped, confused on a synaptic short-circuit.

"Lieutenant!"

Over he comes, and butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, butter wouldn't get in past the silver spoon. His khaki was just a veneer, lightly lacquered over a more ancient uniform of convention and breeding, the steel vizor of gentility, the strangled accents of stiff upper lipdom. We've had lots of practice for the ears now, listening to the generals and junior ministerial gentry sent over to bring us to hell with the last of their civilisation. We're quite the connoisseurs of the linguistic quirks of their strange caste customs. This one was a perfect specimen.

"Have you any brothers?"

Well, well, a real question at last. Not that it was much of a surprise. They always ask me this. Still, it made a change from the ordinary name-address-birthdate aggravation which passes for conversation between them and us.

"Five."

A beat. Am I going to volunteer any more? No.

"Is one of them named Seamus?"

They've been here that long now, they're beginning to get the hang of the pronunciation, unless they're being deliberately ignorant, to annoy or to provoke, which they sometimes do just for badness. He was quite good.

"No."

This is going nowhere. Another flash of the look. Off comes the well-worn, worn-out velvet glove.

"If you don't co-operate, you know we can keep you here all day. Or would you rather go down to the barracks? It's all the same to us, we're out here anyway."

Oh yes, they can be bastards alright.

But now there's an audience. The patrol seems to have forgotten their basic training. They're all standing around in a loose circle, watching the lieutenant and their Geordie pal, eyeing me like a side of beef. They haven't got enough eyes to look everywhere, so they start into their St Vitus' dance, dodging and shifting,



checking both ends of the street, scanning the rooftops, and trying to watch and control the gaggle of bystanders, potential witnesses all.

There's never been a P-check in all these years, no matter how routine, but a dog appears to yammer at the soldiers and snap at their ankles. Sean Mac and Peter are across the street, watching, grinning. Three fellows on their way to the bookie's shop, briefly, to look. The next race is too close, but they'll be back when the bet's down. Mrs Bradley comes out of her house to see what's going on, in her apron and that old cardigan she hasn't had off in ten years. She wastes no time creating her own commotion, tugging at the lieutenant's elbow to complain about the broken fanlight in her hall door.

All this for my name, which I share with plenty of others, including one of the lads they're looking for, and have been these past six years.

The look is there with a vengeance now and they've all got it. This is hostile territory so they tell us, the jungle of some far-flung imperial outpost, only an hour's flight from London, but still, it's a foreign land where the natives won't read the Queen's Writ. They're getting twitchy. You can see it in the fingers drumming on rifle-stocks and you can see it in their eyes, of course. One of them reaches for

his plastic bullet gun.

Twenty feet away, oblivious all this time, is a perfect little family of kids. Nothing's going to interfere with the immutable instinct to play house. The biggest girl calls daddy in for his tea. The rest are already in place, sitting in a fairy ring on the pavement, gathered solemnly for the ritual of the empty cornflakes box, the chipped teapot and cracked cups, the pair of empty milk bottles.

The youngest boy, he can't be more than three, soon gets bored and wanders off. It rained this morning and there's a puddle, rainbow-streaked with petrol, at his feet. He goes back and takes one of the milk bottles. Calmly, with all the concentrated deliberation only a child can muster, and must summon for this dexterous task, he sits on the kerbstone and pushes water into the bottle till it's half-full. He reaches down again, picks up a scrap of paper, the discarded wrapper of a chocolate bar, carefully twists it until he can push it into the neck of the bottle. He stands up, examining his handiwork.

The child approaches.

"I'm going to bomb the Brits."

The bottle transected the little crowd of soldiers, suspect and spectators, glass, water and petrol all catching and refracting the sunlight. It landed with a dull crash, unbroken, closer to my feet than the lieutenant's.

At the same instant the radio pack blurts out the computer's verdict, confirming my identity, my relative innocence.

The soldiers all jumped. Then, looking sheepish and angry, they shuffled their feet, all shouting at once, ordering the crowd to stand back, move along, get away.

Mrs Bradley and her neighbour, who'd come out to pretend to control her dog, one of the best yappers on our street, laughed and cheered, and scolded the child for his boldness.

The girl called the wee boy to come away out of that and sit back down to his tea.

Sean Mac and Peter went on grinning.

The betting men smiled and turned away to catch the results of the 4.30 at Newmarket.

The soldiers looked me up and down again, registering me on some internal video. Then they went on their way, on up our street towards the top of the estate.

Mrs Bradley went back in under her broken fanlight.

I stood where I was.

Revisionism in Irish historical writing

By
Peter
Berresford
Ellis

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The new Anti-Nationalist School of Historians

I AM PARTICULARLY honoured to be asked to give this Desmond Greaves Memorial Lecture.* In my opinion, it is very appropriate that this talk should be about the rise of what is popularly called "revisionism" in Irish historical writing. It was a subject which concerned Desmond Greaves very much during the months before his death. When I last saw Desmond, only a month or so before that tragic event, he was discussing the idea of a conference to draw attention to the changing attitudes in Irish historical writing... those attitudes have already been described by Desmond Fennell as "the historiography of the Irish counter-revolution".

Let me start by saying that I do not like the term "revisionism" as applied to historians. Revisionism means the act of revising, correcting, improving or reinterpreting from new materials. Thus all historians worth their salt are "revisionists". The label is meaningless. My own view is that the school we are dealing with is a neo-colonial one, an anti-nationalist school which in its mildest form apologises for English imperialism in Ireland, or, in its strongest form, supports that imperialism. We could term those historians from the 26-County state, who are engaged in such writing, as 'unionist fellow-travellers'.

* The following text was given as the 1989 C. Desmond Greaves Memorial Lecture, under the auspices of the Connolly Association, at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, on Tuesday, October 31st, 1989.

We are not dealing with a new phenomenon. Until 1921, Irish history (we are confining ourselves to the 26 Counties) was in the hands of the unionist school, just as in the Six Counties Irish history has remained in those hands. Only after the emergence of the 26-County state did the nationalist interpretation become the generally accepted view of Irish history — which was based on the premise that the Irish people had a moral right to fight for their political, economic, social and cultural independence against the imperial ethics of their big neighbour — was the accepted view of history. Perhaps we can now call it the traditional view of Irish history.

The rise of the anti-nationalist school, the apologists for imperialism, into a pre-eminent role during this particular period is no accident. Anti-nationalist views of Irish history have surfaced during a time when the unfinished business of Ireland's struggle for political, economic, social and cultural independence has once more come to dominate the life of these islands. The rise of this school, with the obvious blessing of the 26-County government and political establishment, is symptomatic of the concerns felt by that establishment with regard to the problem of North-East Ulster.

We are witnessing one of those extraordinary contradictions which sometimes, and more frequently than is supposed, appear in history. Successive 26-County governments, from 1921 to date, have claimed an inheritance from the national struggle for independence, and appeals have been made to the spirit of every uprising from 1798 to 1916. Irish governments have claimed to be the true inheritors of the Irish struggle.

But the continuing struggle in the North of Ireland has placed the 26-County establishment in an invidious situation.



● Garret FitzGerald and John Hume' FitzGerald's *Towards a New Ireland* paved the way in 1972

To claim the historical validity of the cause of Irish nationalism, that is the independence struggle, is also to accept its validity in that part of Ireland which has been forcibly severed from the rest of the country. Time was when Irish governments refused to admit the morality and, therefore, legality of partition; when they claimed jurisdiction over the entire island of Ireland (at least in the Constitution) and refused to accept the authority of Westminster enforcing partition against the democratic will of the vast majority of Irish people. Time was, indeed, when they could claim that their goal was the reunification of Ireland. Well, that was before the shooting war broke out and Westminster started to apply pressure on Dublin.

The 26-County political establishment grew concerned; they feared for their own power-base, being rocked from the North, and so they felt that they had to reject the very traditions out of which the 26-County state was born. They are conservatives who wish to preserve the de facto status quo between the 26-County state and Westminster. Notice I say de facto, what is in actual fact; for the 26-County state has never been governed according to its Constitution as a truly sovereign republic. Until Ireland went into Europe you would have been hard pressed to find Europeans who realised that Ireland, in some part least, was theoretically independent of Britain. If a minister in Westminster sneezed, a minister in the Dáil would obligingly blow their nose. At no time prior to 1969 did any Dublin government protest before international bodies at the lack of civil rights and the abuses of a corrupt system in the North. They were happy in their cosy home-rule statelet. Happy until 1969... the start of the current phase of the struggle in the North. Then they began to worry and to consider ways as to how the reality of the relationship between Dublin and Westminster could be protected.

Their self-professed tradition, the claim to be the inheritors of the independence struggle in Ireland, placed them in an

awkward position. The sham was clearly revealed. They therefore had to make some changes... and rather than change their position they simply went about changing their inheritance.

Looking at some of the work being done today, I am reminded of George Orwell's 1984. You will recall Orwell's protagonist, Winston Graham, works in the record department of the Ministry of Truth. His job is to correct the newspapers and books and bring the accounts in line with the new political thinking and values. A hero or heroine of yesterday can become the villain of today. So the 26-County political establishment set up their own Ministry of Truth.

In 1972 two books paved the way for the new "revisionism". One was Garret FitzGerald's *Towards a New Ireland* and the other was Conor Cruise O'Brien's *States of Ireland*. Both books sought to negate the nationalist tradition in Irish history, to attempt a sort of peace with English imperialism by maintaining that the real Irish independence tradition was the O'Connellite 'home-rule' philosophies. The lesson they attempted to hammer home was that separation from England was never a popular concept in Irish historical development, that the republican tradition was a minority view which made no significant impact on Irish political philosophy. The theme developed in both books was that all the Irish people ever wanted was a greater say in their domestic affairs within English colonial structures. Above all, these books developed the unionist concept of 'two nations' existing in Ireland — a Catholic nation, which was Gaelic and nationalist, and a Protestant nation, which was English-speaking and unionist. Both nations were recognised as having a valid claim to the label 'Irish'.

For Garret FitzGerald this reasoning must have taken a considerable amount of what Orwell would have called 'double-think' as his father had fought in the 1916 Rising and became a Sinn Féin MP in the 1918 general election, while his mother was Mabel McConville, an Ulster Protestant who was both a republican and an Irish language enthusiast. In endorsing the unionist theory that Protestants in the North constituted a separate 'Ulster nation', FitzGerald and O'Brien become partially responsible for paving the way for the 'Cruthin theory'. In 1974 Dr Ian Adamson, from Queen's University, Belfast, published a book entitled *The Cruthin* in which Ulster Protestants were given a new nationality.

WE HAVE SEEN THAT Ulster Protestant unionists (to give them a full and clear definition) did not accept themselves as being Irish; they were also uncomfortable with the label 'British' since the term was synonymous with English; nor could they really justify the term 'Ulster' as three Ulster counties were outside the jurisdiction of the Six Counties regime. Dr Adamson came up with a new concept for them, a new nationality — the Cruthin or, as they are more popularly known, the Picts.

According to Dr Adamson, the Cruthin were the original inhabitants of Ireland, arriving long before the Gaels. Then the Gaels came and drove the Cruthin to Scotland but, during the 17th century plantations of Ulster, the Cruthin returned to

take their rightful place in the Irish scheme of things. This, at one stroke, gave the unionists a new justification for being in Ireland. They were the original inhabitants and not merely the descendants of the colonial settlements. It is rather like the philosophy of Zionism. They were no longer newcomers settling on the lands of the dispossessed natives but a 'chosen people' who had returned to the 'Promised Land'. Dr Adamson even tries to shore up his theory by examples of blood groupings to show that the Irish are composed of two nations — the nationalist Catholics (the Gaels) and the Ulster Protestants (the Cruthin).

Of course, Dr Adamson had done a tremendous amount of "revisionism" with what is known about the Picts, even to the point of simply ignoring it. The Cruthin is the Goidelic Gaelic form of Preteni, which is a Brythonic Celtic name. The Preteni, known to the Romans as Picti, or 'the painted people', were an offshot of the Continental Celts who arrived in northern Scotland some centuries BC, according to Professor Kenneth Jackson, one of the leading Celtic scholars of this century. There are no texts in the 'Pictish language' but some scanty recordings of personal names and place-names show them to be (according to Professor Jackson) "unquestionably Celtic, and moreover what is called P-Celtic, that is, sprung from the Continental Celtic milieu from which the Britons also came and not from the Q-Celtic, which was the source of Irish and Scottish Gaelic". Now this immediately sends Dr Adamson's theory slightly awry because, according to accepted Celtic scholarship, Q-Celtic (Goidelic) is the more archaic form of Celtic and speakers of this form were the first to reach these islands many centuries before the speakers of the P-Celtic (Brythonic) form. Moreover, in contradiction to Adamson's 'race theory', both his Cruthin and the Gaels shared a common Celtic inheritance.

We might find such arguments very amusing, and very nonsensical, but Adamson's book has had an effect on some prominent sections of unionist thought. More insidiously, Dr Roy Foster, the doyen of the anti-nationalist historians, in a recent lecture in Coleraine, singled out Adamson's work as being worthy of serious historical evaluation. In my opinion, not since Houston Stewart Chamberlain wrote his notorious *Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (*Foundations of the 19th Century*), 1899, which was a view of European history and race ideology which became the basis of Nazi political philosophy in the Third Reich, has there been such a distorted racist mish-mash.

The philosophies of FitzGerald and O'Brien were joyously taken up by certain 'academics'. One influential work was Leland Lyons' *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939* which started life as a series of lec-

tures delivered at Oxford in 1978. Lyons depicted the current struggle, and I quote, as 'the battle of two civilisations'. One he depicted as being 'Anglo-Irish, pluralist, essentially non-sectarian, which is progressive and liberal' and the other was described as 'the heady resurgence of Gaelic separatist values'. There now came a veritable dawn-chorus of historians such as Professor Henry Patterson, Ronan Fanning, Roy Foster and others, emerging mainly from University College, Dublin, and all, lemming-like, rushing to stake their claims as leaders of the new school of historians.

In their hands, Irish history is now being brought into a compatibility with historical perceptions long preached by unionist historians. Benjamin Franklin was right when he observed that historians relate not so much what is done as what they would have believed.

THE CURRENT cause for concern is not that this anti-nationalist school of historians exists but the attempt to fool the public that they have been given a divine gift of historical interpretation, that they are producing neutral and unbiased histories, that they are somehow rising to the moral 'high-ground' above factions, above nationalists and unionists. They use 'academic objectivity' as a watchword, a totem to disguise their partisanship.

And even more worrying is the role of the 26-County government in doing all in its power to promote the works of this school. Recently we have seen Roy Foster having his book *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* short-listed for the Irish Literary Award by the *Irish Times*, the first time a work of history has

ever been short-listed. And we have also seen the Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, taking the very unusual step of personally launching another such book and using the offices of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin. This was Dr Marianne Elliott's *Wolfe Tone, Prophet of Irish Independence*, in which Tone and the United Irishmen, founders of the Irish republican tradition, are dismissed as nothing more than dilettantes and poseurs.

In a brilliant review of this book, Dr Anthony Coughlan, of Trinity College, Dublin, comments: "Sadly this book, despite its impressive academic scholarship and the interesting new material it contains, is a fundamentally hostile interpretation of Tone. This stems from the fact that the author evidently has little sympathy with the ideal of an All Ireland Republic which Tone and his fel-



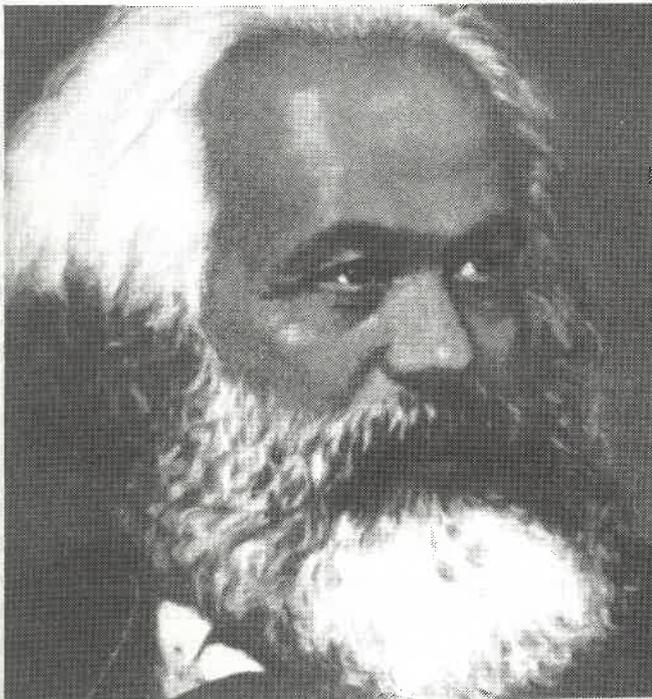
● The daddy of them all – Cruise O'Brien

low Protestants came to adopt in the 1790s, and which of course remains unattained. It is perhaps hard to write a sympathetic biography of a political figure if one does not to some extent share his views." (*Irish Democrat*, December, 1989).

Dr Coughlan sums up Dr Elliott's method when he writes:

"She reveals her own political attitude when she writes of 'Tone's tendency to raise Irish independence from a domestic squabble to a key role in a new international order' (p. 347). A 'domestic squabble' implied that the matter has little to do with English government policy. The cumulative effect of her pejorative and patronising characterisations of her subject shows how out of sympathy she is with his political purposes. The denigratory adjective tends to be chosen when the kinder one might just as validly for the circumstances. Thus Tone was "a negligent husband and father", his republicanism was "an accident of nature", he was "converted by his own arguments", he was "a young Whig careerist", "no great initiator of ideas", "prickly self-righteous", "no democrat", "temporarily unhinged in his mind", with "an inflated sense of honour", "not an original thinker". She speaks of "the characterist Tone device of telling an audience what it wanted to hear". "Tone's thought processes were simplistic." The oddness of her view of subsequent republicanism is conveyed in a comment she makes about Tone in France. "This father of Irish republicanism could still long for a time when he might see Sheridan's *School for Scandal* on an English stage."

BEFORE I deal with some detail of the differences between the nationalist, or traditional school of Irish history, and the new revisionism, I think I should make some general remarks about attitudes to history. I implied at the beginning of my talk that all historical writing was biased. You may have heard statements to the contrary, especially from the works now emanating



● KARL MARX

from the anti-nationalist historian. Bias is only something in the history books with which they are disagreeing... not something in their own works. Well, such statements are nonsensical. Bias is inevitable. An honest historian would begin by stating their philosophical attitudes or making those attitudes known.

History is not simply about the enumeration of facts. It is about the moral interpretation of those facts. Indeed, the very form in which the historian relates the facts conveys judgement and prejudice.

For example, let me take what, on the surface, is a simply statement of fact.

The bottle is half-empty.

It is a quantifiable fact which surely cannot be argued. Yet if the same fact is put another way — the bottle is half-full — it provides us with an entirely different concept of interpretation of that very same fact from an entirely different angle.

History, more than most disciplines, is one in which the historian is thought to sit in splendid isolation as a judge, viewing the events which are paraded before them. The historian, so it is expected, will view the events objectively and dispassionately. But the historian is just as caught up, involved and biased, as any of the historical actors who parade before them. Consciously or sub-consciously, they will contribute to those historical characters something of themselves, giving their own values, judgements and reactions. Very few historians can empathise totally and fully understand what motivates the historical characters.

Often a history book will tell you more about the historian than it does about the historical facts. Historical narratives are full of the personal judgements of the historian.

As those here tonight would obviously adhere to the historical philosophies of James Connolly, who was one of the most brilliant interpreters of 'historical materialism', I will use this viewpoint as a means of explaining differences in historical approach. Connolly said that the use of Karl Marx's theory of historical materialism provided "the most reasonable explanation of history".

This theory teaches that the ideas of human beings are derived from their material surroundings, and that the forces which make for historical changes and human progress have their roots in the development of the tools men and women use in their struggle for existence. We are using the word 'tools' in its broadest sense to include all the social forces of wealth-production. It teaches that since the break-up of common ownership and the tribal community, all human history has turned around the struggle of contending classes in society — one class striving to retain possession, first of the persons of the other class to hold them as chattel-slaves; and then to retain the possession of the tools of the other class, to hold them as wage-slaves. It teaches that all the politics of the world resolve themselves in the last analysis into a struggle for the possession of that portion of the fruits of labour which labour creates but does not enjoy... rent, interest and profit.

Therefore, Marx's theory gives an order and logic to historical interpretation. To sum up: the key to this is that in every historical epoch the prevailing method of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, forms the basis upon which alone can be explained

the political and intellectual history of the epoch. Now Marx's theory was simply a tool of interpretation, and that tool was no better nor worse than the individual who used it.

TO ILLUSTRATE just how Marxist history would differ from others, let me give you an example in the interpretation of the abolition of slavery.

The popular, non-Marxist view is that slavery was abolished because western society progressed to more humane attitudes and ideals. As we know, it was not until 1791 that Britain abolished her slave trade; not until 1807 that British ships were forbidden to transport slaves to other countries and, finally, not until 1833 that slavery was abolished in Britain as a legal institution. Nor did the establishment in this country suddenly become more humane and liberal in their outlook during the period 1791-1833. We know it was a period of tremendous reaction, of the suspension of Habeas Corpus, of press censorship and lack of civil liberties. And one of the oft propounded ideas is that Christian ethics changed the moral climate... well, that is demonstrably false. The Christian Church, in all its sects, lived quite comfortably with slavery for eighteen hundred years and often defended it as a Christian institution.

The Marxist historian would argue that slavery was, in fact, abolished because it was realised that it was cheaper for the owners to hire men and women, discharging them when the job was done, than it was to buy men and women and be compelled to feed them all the time, working or idle, sick or well. During the 17th century many slave owners came to that realisation. That was why Irish indentured servants, forcibly transported from Ireland to the colonies and provided free by the English government to plantation owners, were ill-used, starved and worked to death. The owners had no financial responsibility for them. They could be replaced without charge. But slaves — well, slaves had to be bought and, as a financial investment, had to be treated in far better conditions than the indentured servants. To sum it up, slavery became immoral and was banned because slaves were costlier than wage-labour.

Now it is not my intention to discuss various philosophical views through which one may approach the understanding of history — simply to state that they exist. From the outset one should understand what motivates the individual historian rather than be misled by the nonsensical claims of 'academic objectivity'. Let's be entirely cynical about the subject and echo Paul Valery in *De l'histoire*: "History justifies whatever we want it to."

So, ignoring all the pseudo-academic justifications and cant with which our so-called 'revisionist' friends have bombarded us with in recent years, let us look at the viewpoints of the 'nationalist' and 'anti-nationalist' schools of history. I have already said that history was not simply about the enumeration of facts — it is about the moral interpretation of those facts.

Let us, therefore, deal with the 'nationalist' historian. And perhaps in view of many people's problem with understanding the word 'nationalist' I should begin with an interpretation of that word. To English ears, and perhaps because of their imperialist traditions, nationalism conjures up ideas of chauvinism and jingoism. But, in the context used in Ireland, it simply means a policy of securing national rights, the claim of Ireland

to be an independent nation. It is the advocacy of the freedom of national communities from the political, economic, social and cultural exploitation of other nations. It is a moral stance and one, in my opinion, which goes hand in hand with a socialist view of history — for national and social freedoms are not two separate and unrelated issues. They are two sides of one great democratic principle, each being incomplete without the other. How can one have 'social freedom' in a state wherein a majority nation keeps a minority nation from exercising its right to decide its own affairs? Such a situation is neither democracy nor socialism.

The 'nationalist' historian, therefore, starts from a basic moral premise — the premise that no nation has any defensible right to invade, conquer and seek to destroy the political, economic, social or cultural fabric of another country. Having assumed this view, that imperialism is wrong in all its forms, the historian can commence to interpret Irish history. That history then ceases to be a welter of unrelated facts, a hopeless chaos of sporadic outbreaks of violence, intrigues, massacres, treacheries, murders and purposeless warfare. With this moral historical key, all things become understandable and traceable to their primary origin — the attempt by an alien nation to conquer and dominate Ireland.

Then what of the anti-nationalist, our so-called 'revisionist' historian? Their standpoint is not so simple, for they have to perform several gymnastics to support what is, in my opinion at least, a morally indefensible position. Let me give you a few examples.

The most flagrant position is the acceptance, overt or implied, that England's invasion and conquest of Ireland is not a matter of moral judgement. The argument being that force majeure was merely the politics of the Middle Ages and everyone was indulging in it. The argument goes further; it is claimed that an Irish national consciousness did not exist, that Ireland was simply a land of divided warring factions and the arrival of one more such faction is not a matter of importance nor of moral speculation.

Without wasting much time in rebutting such an argument in detail, we can perhaps point to Donal O'Neill's famous remonstrance to Pope John XXII in 1317 AD which makes it quite clear that the Irish had a concept of a united nation fighting for the restoration of national rights, political, social, cultural and economic, from the interference of an imperial power. The text of the Remonstrance is found in Fordun's *Scotichronicon* (ed. Hearne) III, p. 908-26. It is excellently summed up by Edmund Curtis in *A History of Medieval Ireland*, Methuen, London, 1923, p. 191-194.

The fallacious theory that an Irish national consciousness only evolved at a very late stage in Irish historical development (usually asserted as the late 18th century, presumably to account for the 1798 uprising), is one of the most popular arguments of the 'anti-nationalist' school.

WE HAVE ANOTHER STANDPOINT: the view that English colonial rule in Ireland was beneficial to the Irish people and this is usually argued as a corollary to the historian pretending to take a moral 'high-ground', denouncing all factions as backward and war-mongering before coming to the 'conclusion' that, on the whole Eng-

land had a lot to offer Ireland and that it was simply a matter of regret that she was just a wee bit too brutal, at times, in imparting her civilising effects on the Irish.

Perhaps the favourite stance taken by the 'anti-nationalists' is the plea to accept the current status quo as some sort of *fait accompli*. It is very much like the current English government and, indeed, the official view of the opposition, talking about the will of the majority in Northern Ireland as some form of democratic totem. By so doing they totally ignore the undemocratic and bloody history of the birth of the Six Counties, how they were forcibly partitioned in 1921 against the democratic will of the Irish people and were set up as an arbitrary and artificial unit. Democracy has no currency in the Six Counties. The same historians will also argue that the unionists will never accept a reunited nation so it is better to give in to their minority position while ignoring the fact that the people who comprise the bulk of unionists, the Ulster Presbyterians, were the inspiration and mainspring of Irish republicanism during the 1798 uprising and many continued to play not insignificant roles in subsequent struggles for independence. Ulster Presbyterians were subsequently subverted by English propaganda in one of the most successful divide and rule campaigns ever devised. One of the great lessons of history in this respect is how easy it is to change people's political attitudes. So what was changed once may well be changed again.

These, then, are just some of the viewpoints used by the 'anti-nationalist' historians.

I'll sum up the two main tenets of their approach.

Firstly: that the history must prepare the way for an acceptance of a justification for the status quo in Ireland today, particularly in regard to the Six Counties. The Six Counties in North-East Ulster are depicted as a democratically formed unit in which the political majority is represented by the unionists. Partition, imposed by bloodshed and violence, and threats of bloodshed and violence by Britain against the democratic wish of the Irish nation, is not considered in such histories. Partition is merely accepted and made morally binding on the people.

SECONDLY: to justify partition, a two-nation theory is proposed in that it is argued there exists a Catholic-Gaelic nation, nationalist in politics, and a Protestant English-speaking nation, unionist in politics. The cultural separation of the two main religious communities in Ireland is a key part of the 'anti-nationalist' approach. Not for them Wolfe Tone's laudable ambition to unite Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter under the common name of Irishmen and Irishwomen.

Dr Roy Foster, at his recent lecture in Coleraine, tried (and I'll grant with some eloquence) to justify the 'anti-nationalist' school with the claim that it was simply presenting a new 'objective' way of considering Irish history. He dismissed what he called 'the over-used concept of historiographical revisionism' and he went on to tell his audience: "In the last generation, path-breaking work has delineated a political map far less neatly demarcated than the land-lord versus the tenant, the

orange versus the green, patterns of the old textbooks (now adhered to only by wishful-thinking English and American observers)."

I presume that this puts me in my proper academic place!

Foster claims that historians of his ilk want to indulge in "the study of mentalities — not only those of the separatist nationalists... but the mind of the Castle Catholic also, and a fortiori, that of Protestant... The way people saw themselves as Irish deserves attention, rather than awarding or denying Irishness like a mark of good conduct."

Well, one cannot disagree that it is as valid, and as essential, to deal with the mind of the Castle Catholic as with any other section of the Irish community... but what is being argued here is whether the Castle Catholic, supporting and acting as the middleman for English colonial rule, represented the spirit of the Irish nation and were a group to be approved of rather than to be shown as a group who betrayed their compatriots to the exploitation of a foreign colonial power.

A fascinating feature of Dr Elliott's biography of Wolfe Tone is her apologia for Dublin Castle. She is reluctant to criticise the actions of Dublin Castle and its London masters and takes refuge in sociological abstractions.

In another context, one can certainly understand a French historian wanting to examine the mind of Marshal Petain, or consider the Vichy regime of 1940-'44. But it would be a matter of some astonishment if the historian depicted Vichy as a regime to be approved of and being representative of the true French democratic tradition and — even further — to see the current French government applauding such work and claiming their political antecedents from the Vichy regime. To take an even more extreme view... what would be our reaction if a Jewish Dr Foster emerged and, in the name of 'academic objectivity', began to argue the Nazi side of the Holocaust?

Let us clear up this business of 'academic objectivity' which, as I have said, is waved as the totem of the 'anti-nationalist' school and which Foster claims he uses. His texts are full of emotive juxtapositions that hardly support 'objectivity' in any form. A favourite phrase he uses is 'kneejerk Fenianism' — meaning republicans had, and have, no political philosophy but reaction; then we have 'pious nationalism', 'exclusive nationalism' and 'Gaelic Catholic nationalism'. And take this little sentence from Foster: "Fenianism and Anglophobia have given way to more mature politics." The implications of these sort of phrases are obvious.

Dr Elliott's language is equally emotive and her biography is hardly a testimony to any form of balance — academic or otherwise.

I WOULD LIKE to end by giving a direct example of what 'anti-nationalist' history is really about. Seventy years ago, Dáil Éireann was established in Dublin. How do the 'anti-nationalists' view such an event? I'll quote one view: "Throughout 1919 it [the Dáil that is] did its best to cripple the legitimate government of Ireland, which was direct rule from Westminster through Dublin Castle. Rival courts and local government bodies were set up and the ordinary machinery [of government] boycotted." Think about what one

is being asked to believe in these sentences. The Dáil miraculously appeared from nowhere and did its best to cripple the legitimate government of Ireland.

The fact that Sinn Féin had just won, in overwhelming terms, the 1918 general election in Ireland, and on a clear mandate for its MPs to withdraw, if they held the majority of seats, and establish a separate parliament — the Dáil — in Dublin, is not even considered. The Dáil had been set up by the democratically expressed will of the Irish people and therefore was it not the legitimate government of Ireland? What makes a government legitimate if not by democratic will? Yet the 'anti-nationalist' would appear to have us believe that legitimacy can only be conferred by a foreign occupying power who held control only by force of arms.

Let us examine this 1918 general election. At the dissolution of parliament in 1918, the Irish Party held 68 seats; there were ten Independent Nationalists and seven seats were held by Sinn Féin. Unionists held 18 seats.

In the general election Sinn Féin won 73 seats out of the 105 total. The Irish Party were reduced to six seats while the Unionists managed an increase to 26 seats. This increase was explained by the fact that several unionists were able to claim seats on a split vote between Sinn Féin and the Irish Party.

The 1918 election result was a landslide for Sinn Féin in anyone's vocabulary... anyone, that is, except the 'anti-nationalist' historians. These historians are now denigrating the significance of that election result. Their arguments are fascinating. Let me quote:

"Sinn Féin was not at all particular in its methods. Intimidation of rival candidates and voters was rife." And again: "Although it had much genuine support, Sinn Féin depended a great deal upon intimidation for its success."

If, as the 'anti-nationalists' claim, Sinn Féin obtained such a result by intimidating the Irish electorate, then the party's power and organisation would have been unparalleled in history... it would make the Nazi Party and their electoral gains in 1930 and 1932 look like the work of a pack of bungling amateurs.

But adopting this view, the 'anti-nationalist' can even absolve the British government from any moral dilemma when it ignored the democratic will of the Irish nation, attempted to arrest all Sinn Féin elected representatives and poured troops into the country in an attempt to coerce the Irish people into withdrawing the moral authority which they have given to the Dáil.

IN ONE recent work I find another astonishing view of the 1918 general election: "It was not clear what the Irish had voted for in this election. In contested constituencies in Ireland only 69 per cent of the electors had voted;



● The 'Great Hunger of 1845-'49 — revisionists would have us believe it was 'unlucky'

and of these only 47 per cent had voted Sinn Féin. Independence, then, was the wish only of a minority of Irishmen."

Needless to say, our 'academically objective' historian, failed to add to this figure the percentages accruing from the 26 constituencies where Sinn Féin MPs were elected without opposition which would have added substantially to that 47 per cent total. But if one even took 47 per cent at its face value, accepting this myopic equation, then surely the 'anti-nationalists' were walking on some thin ice? Very few western democratic governments have come to power with more than 47 per cent of the votes in an election. The logical conclusion of their argument in claiming that Sinn Féin was not representative of the will of the Irish people would be to claim that Margaret Thatcher's government has no legal validity because she has pursued her autocratic regime in this country with only an endorsement of 42 per cent of the electorate.

As with most of their arguments, the 'academically objective' historians have been extremely selective with election figures to support their claims. And talking of the 1918 period we find subsequent election figures are glossed over because they do not endorse the point they are making.

I refer to the January, 1920, municipal elections in which Sinn Féin won 72 town and city councils, with a coalition of Sinn Féin and the Irish Party taking a further 26 town and city councils — making 98 out of 127 town and city councils controlled by republicans.

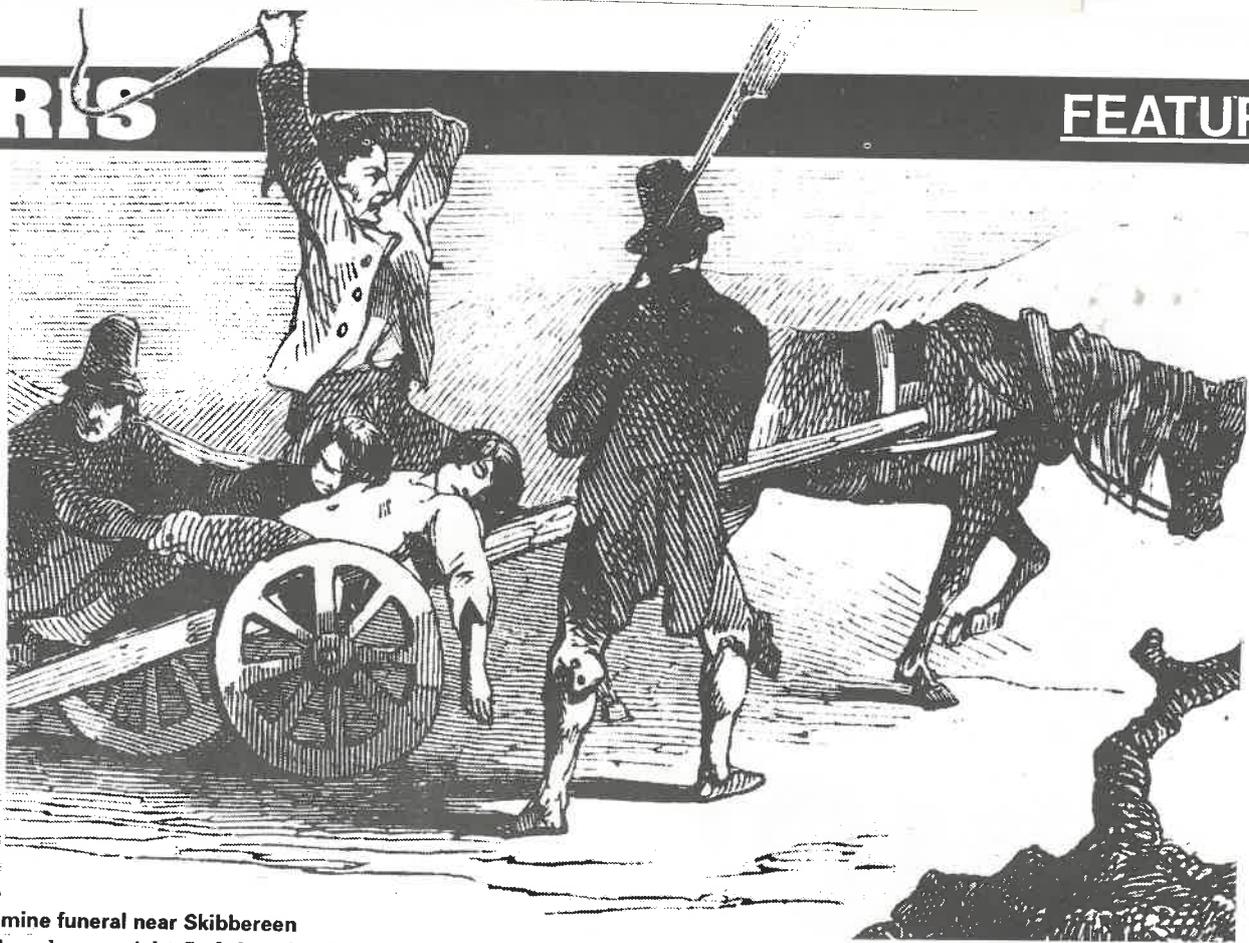
And glossed over are the June, 1920, elections for the county and rural district council and the boards of guardians. Sinn Féin won 28 out of the 32 county councils; they won 186 out of the 206 rural district councils; and they won 138 out of the 154 boards of guardians. And this during a time when the English military were controlling Ireland with an iron fist, when the excesses of the 'Black and Tans' and the Auxiliaries were causing public opinion throughout the world to denounce England's role.

If one is bandying about election figures to prove a point, perhaps we should also remind ourselves of the May, 1921, general election, following the enforcement of partition and the partition parliaments. In this election Westminster introduced proportional representation into Ireland, not because the Westminster government believed in it as a better system of voting [indeed, even today Westminster is wary about proportional representation]. PR was introduced into Ireland in a desperate attempt by Westminster to decrease the support given to Sinn Féin. So if one takes that 1921 result as an all-Ireland total we find that Sinn Féin had won 130 seats out of 180, the Irish Party had won six seats and the unionists had won 44 seats.

But our 'anti-nationalist' historian can calmly remark: "It was not clear what the Irish had voted for."

[During questions, after delivering this paper, I half-jokingly suggested that among future 'revi-





● A famine funeral near Skibbereen

sionist' works we might find that the 'Great Hunger' (1845-'49) was self-induced by the Irish and that English absentee landlords and the government did not contribute at all to what was, when all is said and done, an artificially-induced famine. Well, the revisionists are an industrious crew. Recently published is Cormac O Grada's *The Great Irish Famine* (Gill & Macmillan). He says he is merely presenting an overview of the historiography and urges a fresh appraisal for, he says, no-one was to blame for the 'famine'. The Irish, he argues, were simply 'unlucky'! Yes, the loss of 2½ million population (by death and migration) was merely a question of luck.

Curiously, he argues that had the famine occurred 20 years earlier, people would have been less dependent on potatoes and the government less hidebound by economic dogma. And 40 years later, the population would have been smaller (yes, 2.5 million smaller!) and the philosophy of the government towards poor relief different. Also, he suggests, an antidote to the blight would have been available. What peculiar arguments for an historian to make. The point is about as irrelevant as arguing that had Hitler been assassinated in 1938 then there would have been no war in 1939. It is an interesting speculation but not pertinent.

Christine Kinealy, writing in *Fortnight*, April 1990, sings a paean of praise over O Grada's book, dismissing Cecil Woodham-Smith's classic *The Great Hunger* (1962), which stands as a major work on the period, a product of nine years research by the Oxford-trained historian, as "populist and simplistic to academics". 'Revisionists' all seem to suffer academic snobbery. We are back to 'academic objectivity'; only 'academics' possess this and, for 'revisionist' purposes, only those who work in the history departments of universities can be deemed 'serious historians'.

The new work, delights Christine Kinealy, will go some way to correcting "the prevalence of myths and misunderstandings — stories of ships full of grain leaving Ireland, of overcrowded famine graveyards, of callous landlords". In fact, all these

'myths and misunderstandings' are well-documented facts. I have had the moving experience of visiting an overcrowded famine graveyard where it has been estimated up to 100,000 Irishmen, women and children lay in mass graves. That experience was no myth or misunderstanding. I would suggest a reading of *Grosse-Ile: The Holocaust Revisited* by Pádraic O Laighin (*The Irish in Canada*, edited by Robert O'Driscoll & Lorna Reynolds, Vol 1, Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988) for an extremely well-documented essay of facts in this regard.

Christine Kinealy is not so subtle as others of the school she follows because, in her view of O Grada's work, she lets the 'revisionist' cat out of the bag. She writes: "Yet the famine has been the subject of little serious research — *perhaps because it can be used by nationalists to fit their view of history and most serious historians would not wish to contribute to this interpretation*" (my italics). I can hardly believe she admits their purpose so flagrantly or proudly. So 'serious historians' (only 'revisionists' apparently fit this title) will not tackle those areas of Irish history which might be seen as contributing to nationalist interpretation? My, oh my! That's 700 years of Irish history which should be ignored for a start.]

I agree with Desmond Fennell when he recently remarked that the work of these 'anti-nationalist' historians was 'the historiography of the Irish counter-revolution'.

To sum up: G K Chesterton once remarked: "The disadvantage of men not knowing the past is that they do not know the present. History is a hill or high point of vantage, from which alone men see the town in which they live or the age in which they are living." But to see the town or the age clearly, people need a perspective, a means of interpretation. Unless they know the fallibility or the bias of the tool they are viewing through — the historical interpreter or historian — then great damage will be done. We must beware of our 'academically objective' colleagues. We must make ourselves aware of the new 'anti-nationalist' school and challenge their assumptions and interpretations at every opportunity.

Basic rights under Dev's Constitution



THE RELEASE of Dermot Finucane, Jim Clarke, and later Owen Carron by the Dublin Supreme Court, has highlighted once again the complex set of compromises arrived at by de Valera in 1937 when he drafted the present 26-County Constitution.

Judges, usually the most reactionary elements in any state, suddenly seemed to be enforcing 'radical' decisions — if the reaction from Alan Dukes and Dessie O'Malley was anything to go by. In reality, the judges were reaffirming the commitments to basic rights in the Constitution, something they have not always done. Judicial protection of these rights has had a chequered history since 1937, largely because of political manipulation of what is claimed to be a 'non-political' office.

Until the mid-'60s no-one could accuse the Supreme Court of enthusiasm for defending these rights. By their silence the judges helped crush the more progressive aspects of Dev's Constitution. Foreign observers stood aghast as they disregarded legal principles which are considered fundamental elsewhere.

From 1965 until the mid-'70s the tide turned and the Supreme Court under Cearbhall O Dálaigh began to protect citizens' rights, a duty it had always been entrusted with. But O Dálaigh's reforms were the signal for a counter-offensive by the right, led by T F O'Higgins, O Dálaigh's successor as chief justice and a former Fine Gael presidential candidate. From 1977 until the recent decisions, the state's highest bench tended to become once again a rubber stamp for repressive government decisions.

The present direction taken by the Supreme Court may be the beginning of a move back to progressive principles. But to do so the court will have to move in the teeth of a ferocious campaign by Fine Gael, the PDs, the Workers' Party, and their allies inside Labour. A look over the role taken by judges since par-

BY TOM O'DWYER

tion, in comparison with other countries is very sobering — it shows what is at stake.

The very purpose of having a written Constitution at all is to protect basic rights. In the words of Tom Paine, the most radical philosopher of the American Revolution, these documents are a curb on "upstart governments". Under the US Constitution, the judiciary is charged with "reviewing", or overseeing both the laws and the actions of governments. The Supreme Court can "strike down" laws which it believes conflict with the Bill of Rights section of the Constitution.

No-one could seriously maintain that full democracy exists in a country where only a millionaire or the friend of a millionaire can become president or where membership of the Communist Party has been held as a crime. But the US system does provide some protection for the citizen. One US socialist or-

ganisation has successfully sued the FBI for infiltrating it during the 1950s and '60s.

By 1937 when Dev finally drafted his Constitution, the phrase "rule of law" had acquired a curious ring. Under the Free State Constitution on which his own was based, Habeas Corpus — the right to appeal to a court after arrest — was suspended on two occasions. Special courts with the power to order the death penalty for the possession of arms were established and in 1931, military tribunals with the power to order the death penalty were set up. Dozens of the state's political opponents were shot without anything like a trial.

THE COURTS were sidelined and the parliament had the power to amend the Constitution at will. The Constitution, which had to be submitted in advance to British law officers, made parliament supreme.

There was provision for a form of judicial review, but the fact that the parliament could amend the Constitution as it saw fit, made Cosgrave's government all-powerful. There was also provision for referenda on constitutional changes after eight years. But the parliament was quite entitled to defer such referenda indefinitely. In fact it deferred them for 16 years, but the Constitution itself did not last that long.

In 1932 Fianna Fáil won the general election and de Valera began almost immediately to draft an alternative document. It was his and his alone. Ministers only saw the final draft on the very day they were expected to vote for it in cabinet.

His object was to remove the most obvious aspects of the 1921 Treaty and to make a verbal commitment to republican ideals. But his handiwork was deliberately intended to leave partition intact. Republican rhetoric glossed over practical subservience to Britain. It was the first

great Fianna Fáil "solution of an Irish problem".

At its roots, the new Constitution was nothing more than a compromise between the various power-blocs in the Ireland of his day. The Catholic Church and the business class loomed large within it. But, in the background, the British government towered over them through its occupation of the Six Counties and even of the "Treaty ports" at Berehaven, Cobh and Lough Swilly. None of these three forces was entirely happy with the end-product but each was sufficiently satisfied not to disturb the balance.

For the Catholic Church, Fr John Charles McQuaid (later archbishop of Dublin) helped draft substantial sections of the Constitution dealing with religion, the family, and the role of women in line with the extremely right-wing Papal Encyclicals of the day. The Fianna Fáil leader clearly attempted to reassure the business class through the provisions on private property.

The 1937 Constitution committed the state "in particular" to defend "property rights" in Article 40. In a later article, there is also a commitment to "social justice", designed to mollify trade union leaders. But the latter right is clearly placed below that of pri-

vate property in importance as the state is allowed to "delimit [it] by law".

The new Constitution contained much stronger human rights provisions than its predecessor. It could only be amended by referendum and the courts were given the power to "determine all matters and questions, whether of law or of fact, civil or criminal". This included the right for the High and Supreme Courts to declare any law invalid.

BUT THE interests of the British government and the naked political interests of Fianna Fáil, lay behind various other provisions of the Constitution which heavily limited these rights.

Article 28.3.3° states that nothing in the Constitution will be used to invalidate any law "which is expressed to be for the purpose of securing the public safety and the preservation of the State in time of war or armed rebellion". "Time of war" includes any time when "there is an armed conflict in which the State is not a participant" but which Leinster House believes has caused "a national emergency".

In practice, this was to be used to put down republicans and this provision warns the courts that they may not interfere. It is interesting to note that such a "national emergency" has existed from 1939 until the present day.

There was considerable opposition to this document from feminists and republicans as well as the right-wing parties and it was passed on a surprisingly low poll. Around 39% of the total electorate supported it, 30% opposed but 31% declined to vote.

For 51 of the 53 years that the 1937 Constitution has been in existence, governments have been empowered to set aside all the basic institutions of democracy and rule by decree, using military courts.

Despite the Consti-



● Archbishop McQuaid helped put women "in their place" in the Constitution

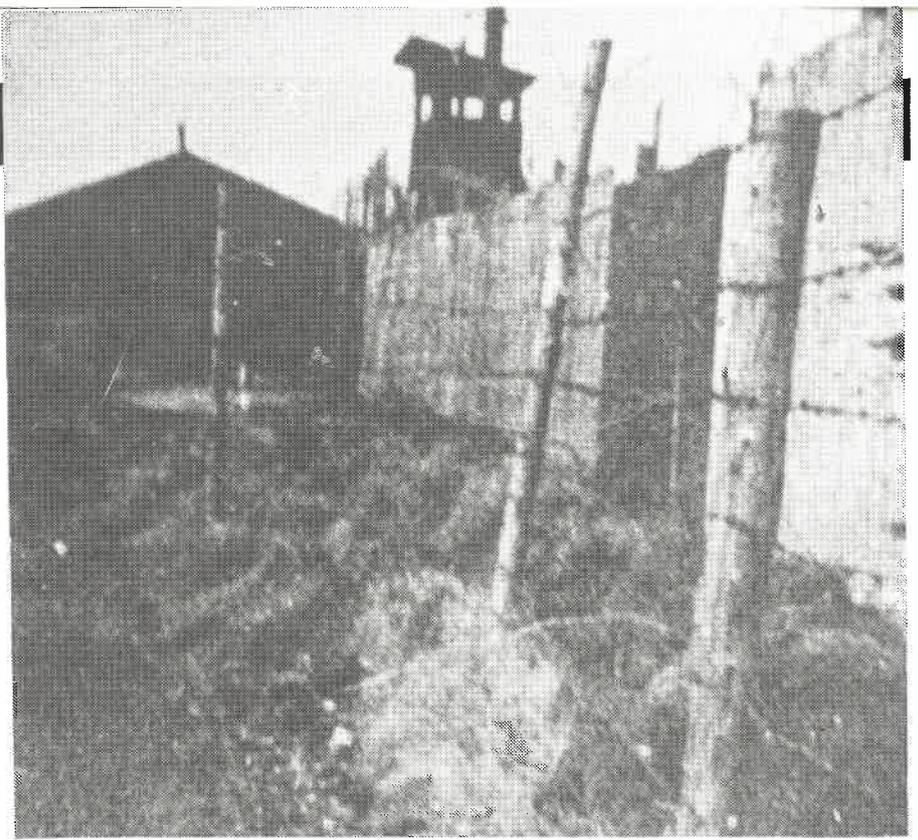
FEATURE

tution's commitments to freedom of expression (Article 40.6.1^o), heavy censorship has been common. The 'protection' of the Supreme Court was not enough to prevent the 1939 Offences Against the State Act which, among many other things, prevented journalists from even mentioning the letters IRA. Long articles were written in the press about "a certain organisation". The entire public knew exactly what organisation was being discussed, but naming it could mean prison for the writer. This part of the act went into abeyance in 1946.

More tragically, constitutional safeguards failed to protect republicans from executions that amounted to state murder. In March 1942 George Plant, an IRA member, was executed after trial before a military court under the emergency powers of the Offences Against the State Act for killing a suspected informer. (Michael Moroney: "George Plant and the Rule of Law", *Tipperary History Society Journal* 1987.) The trial in Collins Barracks, Dublin, was first marked by the refusal of the key state witnesses to testify. These witnesses were then charged with the murder as well. The prosecution then refused to proceed with the case and the men were released only to be immediately re-arrested. Their counsel Seán MacBride appealed to both the High and the Supreme Courts but was turned down in both cases. The "time of war" provision in the Constitution enabled the government to run the military tribunal as it chose, according to the courts.

Plant and the others were then tried again in front of a military tribunal and the government intervened once again by issuing orders changing the rules of evidence — while the trial was in progress. The outcome was inevitable — Plant was executed. Placing someone in "double jeopardy" like this is a flagrant disregard of basic legal principles and the case of George Plant was not the only example in this period.

EVEN John M Kelly, a noted writer on constitutional law and a Fine Gael TD with little sympathy for republicans was moved to state, in *Fundamental Rights in Irish Law* and *The Irish Constitution*, that the order changing the rules of evidence was "remarkable" and that "it appears to have



● Curragh internment camp

been made for the purpose of trying these particular prisoners".

He goes on to refer to the military court as "frightening" and quotes a statement by Fianna Fáil Minister Gerry Boland in Leinster House on the matter: "This court has been described outside as a terror court. I have no objection to it being so described. That is exactly what it was."

It should be noted that the state was not at war at the time, nor was it in any threat from the small numbers in the IRA. Nor was there any real danger of the state being dragged into the huge European war. Switzerland, which also remained neutral, had not been invaded although Hitler's troops had swarmed over the surrounding countries.

Dev's sheer savagery in dealing with the IRA fulfilled only two purposes: it was diplomatic in that it created better relations with Churchill's government, making re-occupation of the treaty ports unlikely, and it was political. The Fianna Fáil leader wanted to terrorise opponents who could outflank him on republican issues.

The ease with which governments executed and imprisoned people during the Second World War (around 500 were interned) has a lot to do with the silence of the courts and the period from 1937 until the early '60s saw some very quiet judges. With only two exceptions, the High and Supreme Court judges ruled that they had no right to intervene.

The constitutional guarantees of rights were almost all based on the phrase in Article 40.4.1^o: "No citizen shall be deprived of his personal liberty save in accordance with law." In general, the courts took this to mean 'in accordance with whatever law Leinster House decides on'. But there was another way they could have taken this provision. The Constitution makes reference to "natural rights" and the courts could have taken these too to mean law as does the US Supreme Court.

IN 1967 Lauren Beth, a visiting US law lecturer, examined the behaviour of the courts since 1937. His verdict, in *Lauren Beth: Judicial Review in Ireland*, was highly critical. He believed they "dithered" between enforcing the human rights commitments in the Constitution as the US Supreme Court had done on the issue of civil rights for Black people and allowing the parliament a totally free hand as is done under the Westminster system. The Supreme Court was "suspended uneasily between the two".

The internment provisions in the 1939 Offences Against the State Act provided the first known example of a

judicial challenge to the government. James Burke was interned on a warrant signed by a minister under section 55 of the act. High Court Judge Gavan Duffy ruled that the warrant infringed personal liberty. He argued that the new Constitution filled in the gaps in previous legislation on fundamental rights. It was "the Charter of the Irish People and I will not whittle it away". The internment section of the act was deemed unconstitutional. Burke was released as were 50 other internees.

The government had been rapped on the knuckles but it was quick to respond. It juggled with the wording of the act and passed the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Bill 1940. The president was virtually obliged to refer this bill under the Constitution to the Supreme Court to see if it was in order.

That had the merit, from the government's point of view, of by-passing Gavan Duffy in the High Court and of avoiding any further challenge to the legislation. Once a bill has been judged constitutional by the Supreme Court, its constitutionality can never again be challenged.

The Supreme Court showed none of Gavan Duffy's scruples when it ruled on the matter. Lauren Beth was scathing about Judge Sullivan's ruling in which the chief Supreme Court judge said "detention is not in the nature of punishment":

"Perhaps the most amazing aspect of Sullivan's opinion... was the bland and sophisticated assertion that the power of indefinite internment was not a judicial power — because, he said, it is not a punishment but only 'preventive justice', a 'precautionary measure'." Beth suggested that this was the first time in history that long term imprisonment was regarded as anything but punishment.

THE US commentator also went on to point out a matter well known in legal circles at the time. Judge Meredith, an opponent of the new law, had absented himself from the proceedings and was replaced by Conor Maguire who supported it. The 3:2 verdict among the five judges left the "unpleasant suspicion that the government, in effect, tampered

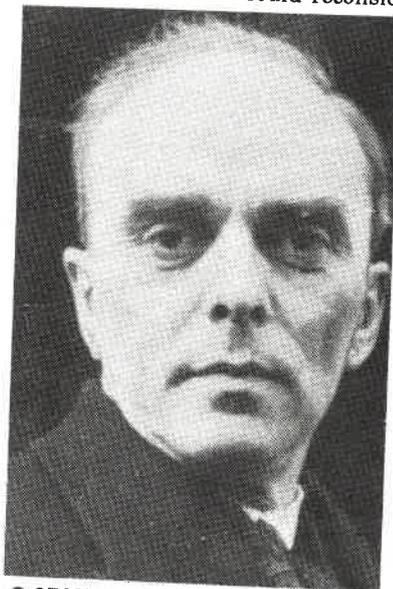


● GEORGE PLANT

with the court". After his book was printed in 1967 Beth was prevailed upon to withdraw this suggestion but that fact does not remove the suspicion.

Beth also criticised the Constitution's ban on any further consideration of a bill once it had been referred by the President to the Supreme Court and had been approved. The court was forced to presume that any bill coming before it was constitutional and to place on the opponents of the bill the onus of proving it wasn't.

He questioned how it was possible to "clearly establish" how a bill infringed the Constitution when it hadn't yet become law, pointing out that the US Supreme Court only considered individual cases and that it could reconsider



● SEÁN MacBRIDE

laws it had dealt with in the past.

In the same year as the execution of George Plant, the court ruled that the School Attendance Bill was unconstitutional, supporting parental rights over those of the Minister for Education. Beth pointed out that "a more appropriate candidate for unconstitutionality" than this "relatively innocuous" law was the amended Offences Against the State Bill.

In 1947 Judge Gavan Duffy once again challenged the government over the Sinn Féin Funds Act. An action had been taken by the party to recover part of its funds from trustees who would not hand them over. The High Court was due to consider the matter when Leinster House passed a bill which would have prevented the party from getting back its money. Gavan Duffy indignantly refused an application from the Attorney General to pay the money to a government board under the new act. Both he and the Supreme Court found the act unconstitutional.

WITH THE exception of Gavan Duffy and Supreme Court Judge Murnaghan, who supported his view on the Offences Against the State Act, no judicial voices were raised in defence of the rights of republicans in this period. But the government was highly embarrassed by one republican internee in the late '50s when he challenged his detention on the basis of international human rights agreements.

Gerry Lawless was represented by Seán MacBride who argued that his internment contravened the European Convention on Human Rights which had recently been signed by the government. The Supreme Court held that it could not be bound by the agreement as it had not been laid before Leinster House as the Constitution demands. But, aware that its double standards had been exposed, the government released him.

In front of the Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg, Lawless continued with his case which now became an action for damages. Although he lost it, the court further embarrassed the government by ruling in 1961 that the amended Offences Against the State Act contravened the convention.

This inglorious period in the history of the Supreme Court ended in the same year when Cearbhall O Dálaigh was appointed to head the state's highest bench and Judge Brian Walsh became one of its five members. But it was not until a case in 1965 that the court clearly stated new principles. Curiously enough, the case involved water fluoridation and Pope John XXIII.

Gladys Ryan challenged the right of the government to put fluoride in her drinking water, arguing that the constitutional guarantee to protect the "personal rights of the citizen" gave her the right of "bodily integrity".

She lost the anti-fluoride case in the High Court, but, in his ruling, Judge Kenny pointed out that personal rights are not confined to those mentioned in the Constitution "but include all those rights which result from the Christian and democratic nature of the state". Among these, he included the right to bodily integrity, quoting an encyclical from the Pope entitled 'Peace On Earth'.

O Dálaigh's Supreme Court supported his view and ushered in a new period in the history of the court when legal decisions actually extended the rights of the citizen, rather than reducing them. The 1965 Extradition Act survived an early challenge before this court. The act exempted from extradition those who were involved in political acts or in acts related to political acts. Republicans were therefore able to avoid extradition to British courts. This formula is an internationally-recognised one based on the fact that a fair trial is impossible in such situations.

The McGee case followed in 1973 when the court ruled that Mrs McGee had the right to import contraceptives for her own use. In terror of the crozier, politicians had for generations failed to

legalise contraception. Now the courts forced them to reconsider.

But for legal conservatives like John Kelly, the new departure was unacceptable. Kelly, a Fine Gael TD, provided page after page of criticism of it in his *Fundamental Rights in Irish Law*, warning that it introduced "uncertainty" into the law and that judges might end up deciding issues "on their own criteria". Ultimately his criticisms were political. He feared the independence of O Dálaigh's judiciary, preferring the silence of earlier years even if it meant a few questionable decisions.

Kelly returned again to these matters in 1988, but by then he had acquired almost the opposite view. The discovery that there were rights outside those referred to in the Constitution or "judicial creativity" was "revolutionary", a "spectacular conquest". He still had some quibbles, but in legal terms it is hard to square his overall attitude in 1988 with that of 1967.

The explanation for this radical change lies in the political sphere. The intervening years saw Fine Gael-led coalitions administering blow after blow to the independence of the Supreme Court. Then right-wing judges began to realise that they too could make their mark through judicial creativity. Instead of extending rights, of course, they reduced them.

The first blow to the judiciary came after O Dálaigh resigned from the court and was elected unopposed as 26-County president. In 1976 the Coalition government introduced the Emergency Powers Bill, which among other things would re-impose the State of Emergency which had existed since 1939. O Dálaigh had grave reservations about this measure and referred it to the Supreme Court.

The Constitution states that a presi-

dent may refer "any bill" (Art. 26.1. 1^o) in this way, but the Coalition argued that this was a breach of the article which forbade the courts to invalidate emergency legislation. The court allowed the bill through but reserved the right to examine such legislation in future.

For the Coalition it was a mild rebuke but Cosgrave's government did not take it lightly. Having wine and dined at an army officers' mess, Defence Minister Paddy Donegan referred to O Dálaigh ["supreme commander of the Defence Forces" in the Constitution] as "a thundering bollocks and a fucking disgrace" during an after-dinner speech.

After this insult, O Dálaigh called upon Cosgrave to dismiss Donegan but the Fine Gael leader refused. O Dálaigh then resigned in protest. In the crudest of all possible ways, the government had served notice on the judiciary that it was not prepared to be crossed.

The appointment of T F O'Higgins to head the Supreme Court was another blow to the court's independence. O'Higgins was guaranteed to protect the government against court actions over brutality by gardai.

DURING this period the Garda 'Heavy Gang' was in operation with the approval of the government. Trinity College Professor Basil Chubb was moved to write that by 1977 there were signs that "the Republic was beginning to move inexorably down the same dangerous slope as Northern Ireland".

O'Higgins' period as chief justice was a bleak period for democratic rights. Gay people were denied the basic protection of the Constitution in 1983 in a judgement which was later overturned by the European Court. In the Norris case it was put that their personal privacy should not be invaded. But, in a three to two decision, the court ruled otherwise. O'Higgins claimed that the state had the 'right' to "discourage conduct which is morally wrong and harmful to a way of life and to values which the State wishes to protect". This decision is interesting in the light of a ruling in 1976 when O'Higgins stated that the laws "should be interpreted from time to time in accordance with prevailing ideas".

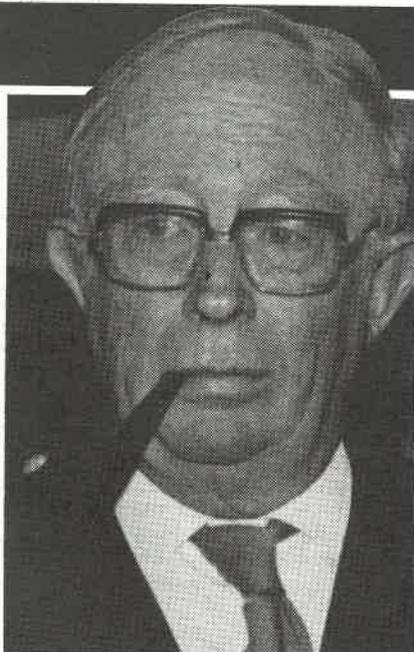


But his real value to the state came with his application of this notion to the extradition laws. It became clear that, by 'prevailing ideas', O'Higgins meant those prevailing among members of his political affiliation.

In the Dominic McGlinchey case, the former Blueshirt and Fine Gael representative amended the 1965 Extradition Act virtually on his own. His action remains the most radical piece of 'judicial creativity' in the history of 26-County law and it is typical of the man that it was done in order to restrict rather than to extend rights.

He denied McGlinchey the right to the political exemption on the grounds that he was accused of having gunned down a woman pensioner. For an act to be considered political, it had to be "what reasonable, civilised people would regard as political activity". Previously courts recognised the fact that 'reasonable, civilised people' disagree about what is political and choose instead to depend on the motivation of the individual charged.

O'Higgins' judgement was discredited by the fact that, when McGlinchey was handed over, the case against him disintegrated. It became clear that the RUC had no evidence to connect him with the shooting and that the story was merely a means of securing extradition. But the decision stood for all that as a precedent until the recent decisions reversed it and a number of other similar verdicts.



● TOM O'HIGGINS

Although O'Higgins left the Supreme Court for the International Court of Justice at the Hague, his legacy lived on in the Russell case of 1986 when Robert Russell, who stated that he was a member of the IRA, was denied the political exemption and extradited.

Russell stated clearly that the IRA did not seek to overthrow the 26-County state and that it was solely involved in a conflict with the British government. But the court, now under Judge Finlay, ruled that it could not offer the protection of the Constitution to him because the purpose of his 'offences' (which included escaping from Long

Kesh) was to "subvert the Constitution and to usurp the function of government".

Finlay's argument was bogus in the extreme. He claimed that, by seeking to achieve the re-unification of Ireland by armed force, the IRA was "exercising the functions of government". By doing so, it "challenged the Constitution". Therefore, he alleged, any member of it should be deprived of constitutional rights. Since medieval times, the judicial system has avoided considering people as 'outside the law' in this way.

It was only with the presence of Judge Brian Walsh on the bench for the first time in a political extradition case, that the political exception was restored in law by the Supreme Court in the Finucane, Clarke and Carron cases. He has since retired but his verdict in these cases is now taken as the precedent — at least until the implications of the 1987 Extradition Act become clear.

It seems absurd for basic rights to depend so much on individual judges. But in a political atmosphere like that of the 26 Counties, where censorship is the rule and where a large section of the political establishment is unified in its desire to crush certain political beliefs by almost any means possible, it seems unavoidable.

If such rights were to depend on governments alone, as they did under the Free State, and as they do under the Westminster system, they would not last long.



● Extradition victim Robert Russell at the Four Courts



WAR
NEWS

A REVIEW
OF IRA
OPERATIONS
DURING THE
PERIOD
OCTOBER 1988
- JUNE 1990

1988

OCTOBER

20th: A rocket and gun attack on British soldiers on patrol in Bishop Street, Derry, left three soldiers injured.

22nd: A soldier was injured when an impact grenade was thrown at a crown forces patrol in the Riverdale area of Belfast.

25th: An anti-personnel mine exploded in Belfast injuring a British soldier.

26th: An RUC man was killed and another seriously injured when their unmarked car came under attack as it left the heavily-fortified Kinawley Barracks in County Fermanagh.

29th: Fermanagh Brigade claimed responsibility for mortaring Roslea Barracks. Severe structural damage was caused to the base.

NOVEMBER

4th: An RUC man was caught in a booby-trap explosion in Kinawley, County Fermanagh, when he tried to remove a Tricolour flying in the main street.

9th: In a statement issued after a 300lb car-bomb wrecked the homes of 30 soldiers, Derry Brigade said: "No longer can we tolerate the ridiculous situation where British soldiers can come into nationalist areas, raid and systematically wreck homes, harass people, make arrests and then retire just a few miles away to the comfort of their families."

14th: Tyrone Brigade mortared Cookstown and Stewartstown Barracks simultaneously, injuring two soldiers and causing severe damage to the two bases.

15th: North Armagh Brigade shot and injured a British soldier in an unmarked car in Lurgan.

18th: Derry Brigade demolished the city's main tax office when they exploded a 120lb car-bomb outside the premises.

20th: A 500lb bomb placed out-

side North Howard Street Barracks, Belfast, exploded, injuring nine soldiers. The device had been planted in full view of surveillance cameras.

21st: West Tyrone Brigade executed an RUC man and injured another when they opened fire on them inside Castleberg's security barrier, using a captured RUC weapon.

23rd: An attack on the Benburb Barracks, County Tyrone, went tragically wrong when the explosion claimed the lives of two passing civilians.

24th: A British soldier was injured when an anti-personnel mine exploded as he passed it in Belfast.

25th: An impact grenade lobbed at a crown forces raiding party in Ardoyne, Belfast, injured a soldier.

DECEMBER

3rd: IRA Volunteers transporting mortars for an attack on Clogher Barracks were given an RUC escort.

8th: A British army housing estate was devastated after Belfast Brigade exploded a 200lb bomb inside the estate in Lisburn. Two RUC men were injured in the attack.

10th: Despite sophisticated surveillance equipment Volunteers of Belfast Brigade exploded a 7lb limpet mine on the defences of the British army observation post on the top of Divis Tower. Seven soldiers were injured in the attack.

12th: Derry Brigade exploded a 200lb van-bomb outside the British army's Fort George Barracks in the city, causing severe structural damage to the base.

A mortar exploded inside the yard of Henry Brothers, County Derry. Henry Brothers have been engaged in reconstruction work for the crown forces.

13th: The tax office in Upper Queen Street, Belfast, was wrecked in a 200lb car-bomb attack.

A contractor working for the crown forces, John Cory, was executed by the IRA's South Down Command in his garage in Portadown.

14th: Two RUC men were injured when the Land-Rover they were travelling in took the full blast of an RPG warhead fired at it by Volunteers outside Newry Courthouse.

16th: Derry Brigade seriously injured an RUC man as he walked into Strand Road Barracks

18th: A British soldier was shot and killed in Downpatrick.

Derry Brigade attacked a British army housing estate wrecking 100 homes in a car-bomb explosion.

19th: Two more British army housing estates were attacked in West Tyrone and North Armagh.

31st: The main UDR barracks in Cookstown, County Tyrone, was damaged when a single mortar exploded inside the base.

1989

JANUARY

4th: Two RUC men and a British soldier were injured when a 3lb anti-personnel mine was detonated as their patrol passed a wall at New Barnsley Crescent, in West Belfast.

14th: Derry Brigade detonated a 4lb anti-personnel mine in the Butcher Street area of the city as a British army patrol moved through the area. Two British soldiers were injured, one seriously.

Another British soldier was seriously injured when an anti-personnel mine was detonated as his patrol was moving up the Andersonstown Road in West Belfast.

15th: A former RUC man was shot dead at a friend's house in Ballintra, County Donegal, by Volunteers of the IRA's Fermanagh Brigade. The IRA said

the dead man had been acting in an intelligence-gathering capacity for the RUC.

In Belfast two more British soldiers were injured, one seriously, when Volunteers detonated an anti-personnel bomb hidden in an old tyre in Beechmount Avenue.

16th: Dungannon's courthouse was completely wrecked in a massive bomb blast. The bomb was driven into the court buildings after a security guard was overpowered. The IRA's East Tyrone Brigade warned civilian contractors not to engage in reconstruction work on the courthouse.

18th: A 200lb car-bomb at Belfast High Court on the Crumlin Road only partially exploded.

24th: Crown forces at a permanent border checkpoint at Mullanbridge near Kinawley, South Fermanagh, had a narrow escape when a salvo of mortars were fired at their fortified position.

25th: Extensive damage was caused to the main Derry courthouse and surrounding buildings in a bomb attack. A 400lb van-bomb, with an anti-handling device, exploded near the courthouse on Bishop Street after a 20-minute warning.

27th: Volunteers scored a direct hit on an RUC vehicle with an impact grenade, killing one RUC man and inflicting serious head injuries on another.

The IRA's West Tyrone Brigade also claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on the Strabane/Lifford permanent border checkpoint. A garage near the checkpoint, which had been serving enemy personnel, was blown up.

31st: A soldier from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's home town of Grantham, Lincolnshire, was the British army's first war fatality of 1989 in the Six Counties. The soldier was part of a raiding party returning to barracks after 12

hours of destructive house searches in the St James/Rodney area of West Belfast. As his patrol moved through Rockmore Road, the IRA detonated a 2lb bomb hidden in a drainage pipe. He later died of wounds and another soldier was injured. Claiming responsibility, the IRA issued a public appeal:

"We call upon British soldiers to refuse to serve the lost cause of British imperialism in Ireland. To each one of you we say: the majority of British people want you to withdraw from Ireland. Eventually the British army will be forced to withdraw, but by then it will be too late for you. Don't die for a lost cause."

FEBRUARY

1st: In Belfast Volunteers took over Chichester Street fire-station and threw a device over the wall into the RUC base in Musgrave Street. A bomb was then detonated outside the barracks, injuring RUC men who came from the base.

On the same night Volunteers of the IRA's Derry Brigade launched a bomb attack on a joint British army/RUC patrol on the Race-course Road injuring one of the occupants of an RUC Land-Rover.

6th: Just one month into 1989 20-year-old IRA Volunteer James 'Josie' Connolly of the West Tyrone Brigade, died from severe injuries received after a bomb prematurely detonated as he attached it to the van of an RUC man in Drumquin.

7th: Despite being overlooked by three major British army observation posts, equipped with infra-red cameras and constantly patrolled, IRA Volunteers managed to plant a device which disrupted rail traffic on the Belfast to Dublin railway line at Kilsnasaggart Bridge for five days.

19th: Two RUC officers were wounded in a gun attack carried out by Derry Brigade as they entered the Spencer Road RUC Barracks in Waterside.

20th: In a daring attack on the Parachute Regiment at their Tern Hill base near Shrewsbury, Shropshire, an IRA Active Service Unit narrowly missed inflicting major casualties. The ASU, having penetrated the inner area of the camp and planting two bombs, were discovered by a sentry who asked them to identify themselves. Despite this the Volunteers were able to avoid capture and plant a third bomb, alongside sleeping quarters housing some 60 Paras, before making their escape. The sleeping Paras were all roused and evacuated. The three bombs exploded a half-hour later at 3.30am, causing extensive damage to the accommodation block.

22nd: A British soldier from the Royal Corps of Transport was

shot dead in Derry City, while in plainclothes and driving a civilian Educational Board schoolbus. The IRA ambush was set-up after it was established that British troops were using civilian guises to ostensibly collect British army families and also to travel around the city freely.

23rd: The main Six-County railway line between Belfast and Dublin was attacked by the North Armagh Brigade. An explosion was heard on the line near Lurgan. British army engineers took five days to clear the track.

26th: Volunteers of Derry Brigade detonated a 2lb anti-personnel mine in the town's High Street as a British army patrol moved along it. One soldier was seriously injured.

In Belfast the IRA executed Joseph Fenton, a 35-year-old estate agent from Sawell Hill, Andersonstown. Joseph Fenton, who owned Ideal Homes estate agents on the Falls Road, was found shot in the head in an alley off Bunbeg Park, Lenadoon, in West Belfast. In a statement issued immediately after the shooting, the IRA said it had "executed a British agent". Following RUC claims that Fenton had no connection with the Special Branch, a detailed statement of Fentons' involvement with the RUC was issued by the IRA.

"He had been a British agent for five-and-a-half-years and was handled by a Special Branch officer Jimmy McIlveen, whom he reported to at a Belfast telephone number 450088."

"Fenton was first approached in 1981 by the RUC who accused him of having shifted explosives. Fenton did not show up for a subsequent pre-arranged meeting and planned to emigrate with his family to Australia in 1982."

"However, the Australian Consulate in Britain told him it was revoking his visa at the intervention of the RUC. Later that year, Fenton succumbed to a combination of RUC blackmail and bribery and agreed to become an informer. He contacted Branchman McIlveen and an Englishman named 'Don' at Castlereagh Barracks."

"He met his handlers at regular intervals at various locations in and around Belfast. They encouraged him to offer help to the IRA. Volunteers were caught on five occasions and other operations were abandoned."

"The RUC helped him secure a £15,000 grant to buy the franchise for Ideal Homes estate agents. He then supplied houses and garages for the IRA, and hired cars for our organisation which were constantly kept under RUC surveillance, resulting in more arrests and arms seizures."

"We are not prepared to state

how we eventually detected him but the RUC were clearly lying when they stated that Joseph Fenton had no connection with them."

"Responsibility for the death of Joseph Fenton lies squarely on the shoulders of the RUC who recruited him and used him, knowingly placing his life in jeopardy."

"We realise the predicament that this places the Fenton family circle in. They cannot be held responsible for Joseph Fenton and should bear no stigma for his action."

A 200lb car-bomb was driven into a housing estate used by crown forces and their families in Cookstown by the East Tyrone Brigade. Telephone warnings were given and the estate was evacuated. The car-bomb was later defused.

27th: An RUC inspector was killed when a 4lb bomb exploded under his car in East Belfast.

MARCH

1st: Volunteers of the IRA's Belfast Brigade threw two bombs into the British army's North Howard Street base as members of a patrol entered the base.

2nd: The railway line between Belfast and Dublin was attacked just north of Newry.

4th: Seven members of a joint British army/RUC patrol were injured as their patrol was leaving Girdwood Barracks in North Belfast. Volunteers had earlier driven a 500lb car-bomb up to the main gates of the barracks with a command-wire attached. As a large force of British soldiers and RUC personnel were leaving the base the bomb was detonated.

7th: Claiming responsibility for shooting dead a local UVF commander, Leslie Dallas, in Coagh and the regrettable death of two civilians standing near Mr Dallas at the time of the attack, Tyrone Brigade said:

"The object of the attack at Coagh was Leslie Dallas and his UVF colleagues (two serving UDR soldiers named in the IRA statement who were with Dallas

at the time of the attack). These three have been involved in the murder campaign against nationalists and republicans in East Tyrone and South Derry areas..."

About the shooting of the two civilians the IRA said:

"Three armed Volunteers alighted from a commandeered vehicle and entered the garage. One Volunteer kept watch over the street. When the Volunteers identified Dallas there were a number of men with him. As they opened fire on Dallas, the two UDR men dived for cover. Austin Nelson and Ernie Rankin were killed in the general confusion."

8th: Two British soldiers were killed in a landmine attack on their mobile patrol on the Bunrana Road outside Derry City. A 50lb Semtex device concealed in a roadside embankment exploded, ripping through one of the two Land-Rovers the soldiers were travelling in to the permanent border post at Cashquin.

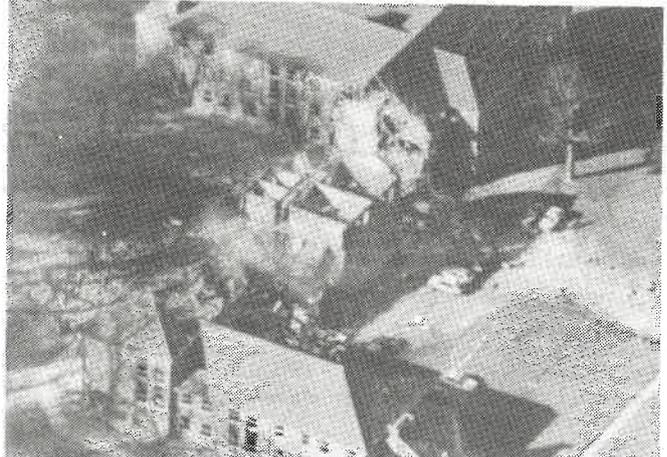
10th: North Armagh Brigade injured an RUC man in a gun attack on the main Portadown Road. A leading loyalist from Spa near Ballynahinch in County Down was shot and wounded by the IRA. In a statement they said they "targeted Samuel McCoubrey because he was behind the setting up and financing of the arms factory near Ballynahinch which was manufacturing machine-guns for use by loyalist death squads".

13th: A UDR soldier was ambushed and wounded by Volunteers of the West Tyrone Brigade near Artigarvan, on the outskirts of Strabane.

14th: Volunteers from East Tyrone Brigade shot and killed a UDR soldier as he arrived at a meat factory on the Aughnacoly Road, near Dungannon.

In Belfast Volunteers carried out an RPG rocket and gun attack on a British army mobile patrol on the Andersonstown Road.

16th: A UVF commander, John Irvine, was shot dead at his home



● Daring IRA attack on the Parachute Regiment's Tern Hill base in Shropshire, England

in North Belfast. The Belfast Brigade, claiming responsibility, said that as part of its stated policy of "reserving the right to execute those responsible for either organising or taking an active part in sectarian attacks against the nationalist community", the IRA executed John Irvine for "playing an instrumental role in recent sectarian assassinations".

23rd: Two senior RUC officers on their way back from a top-level meeting on cross-border collaboration with Garda chiefs in Dundalk were ambushed and killed by Volunteers of the South Armagh Brigade. Chief Superintendent Breen and Superintendent Buchanan were responsible for the overall co-ordination of RUC and British army activity in the South Armagh border area. Breen had 1,200 personnel under his command and had played a leading role in all major RUC/British army actions, including the wiping out of an eight-strong IRA unit and a passing civilian by the SAS at Loughgall in May 1987. Breen and Buchanan were travelling in an armour-plated Vauxhall Cavalier on the Edenappa Road near Jonesboro when they met an IRA road-block. When they tried to reverse, IRA Volunteers raked their vehicle with 12.7mm machine-gun fire and both RUC commanders died instantly. Volunteers then searched the car and recovered a number of secret RUC intelligence documents.

25th: Fermanagh Brigade claimed responsibility for a sniper attack in which an RUC man was injured as he patrolled the border village of Belcoo, Fermanagh.

26th: An RUC man was injured at his home in Dundrum in a gun attack carried out by South Down Brigade, IRA.

29th: A 300lb car-bomb was placed outside the main tax office in Upper Queen Street, Belfast. After numerous attempts a British army bomb disposal squad partially detonated the bomb, blowing up a bomb-disposal robot and causing structural damage to surrounding buildings.

APRIL

2nd: Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade carried out a mortar attack on the Grosvenor Road RUC Barracks. Four mortars were fired from the back of a commandeered vehicle which had been left in Stanley Street, in full view of crown forces surveillance cameras.

4th: An RUC man was shot and injured by two Volunteers as he drove in his car along the Springfield Road in West Belfast.

Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade, IRA, six hours later detonated a small explosive device in a car as a joint British

army/RUC patrol moved along Kennedy Way in West Belfast. One soldier was injured.

6th: A UDR soldier working as a part-time security guard for a North Belfast electrical wholesaler, was shot and wounded at his place of work. The attack was carried out by Belfast Brigade.

The main tax office in Armagh City was devastated by a 250lb car-bomb planted by North Armagh Brigade.

11th: Three British soldiers were injured, one seriously, in a bomb blast in Derry city centre. In a daring operation IRA Volunteers planted a bomb right beside security barriers at Strand Road RUC headquarters. The blast occurred shortly before midnight as a mobile patrol drew level with a car parked at the edge of Victoria car-park on the Strand Road.

12th: A huge van-bomb exploded prematurely after being placed beside Warrenpoint RUC Barracks in South Down. A 19-year-old, Joanne Kelly, working in a builder suppliers yard next to the barracks was tragically killed. In a statement the South Down Brigade IRA, after detailing the IRA's understanding of how the bomb went off prematurely, went on to "offer sincerest apologies to the dead girl's parents and to those injured. We reject as contemptuous the comments British politicians like Eddie McGrady, the RUC's latest recruiting sergeant for informers, that our objective was to kill and injure civilians."

22nd: William Thompson, a loyalist paramilitary, was shot dead by Volunteers in North Belfast. In claiming responsibility for William Thompson's death, who the IRA said was involved in the recent spate of sectarian killings, they said that "the IRA is not involved in any so-called tit-for-tat campaign. Any actions taken by us are directed against those members of the loyalist sectarian killer gangs who are waging a campaign of genocide."

24th: Belfast Brigade, IRA, claimed responsibility for a mortar attack on Ballynaveagh RUC Barracks. A 50lb booby-trap, hidden in a bin close to where the mortars were launched, was discovered.

26th: Three anti-personnel grenades exploded inside North Howard Street army base.

MAY

In response to the British army's continuing militarisation of the South Armagh area, IRA units from the South Armagh Brigade launched in May a series of attacks against British forces assisting in this militarisation.

3rd: After observing ten British soldiers 'dug in' in a field lying in the shadow of Glassdrummond observation post, IRA Volunteers commandeered a tractor and

trailer and loaded a half-ton of explosives aboard. A dummy was placed in the tractor cab and the tractor driven into the field where the soldiers were dug in. The vehicle was pointed in the direction of the soldiers' position with the engine running and the throttle up. Unfortunately the tractor struck a pot-hole and veered off course while still over 50 yards from the soldiers. Realising the possibility of scoring a direct hit now unlikely, they waited until the vehicle was at its closest point and detonated the massive bomb.

A prison officer was killed when a bomb exploded under his car. The officer had served in the British army and the UDR. North Armagh Brigade claimed responsibility.

4th: The following morning at Cashel a second half-ton bomb concealed in the roadside ditch, was detonated by Volunteers of South Armagh Brigade as part of a large British army foot-patrol passed by. One soldier died in the blast and four sustained injuries.

6th: Five more British soldiers were injured when a landmine was detonated as they searched in and around a derelict house at Moybane near Crossmaglen, South Armagh.

7th: Volunteers of the South Armagh Brigade continued their attacks on British forces when they detonated a landmine as a British army mobile patrol moved along the Camlough Road. Five British soldiers were injured in the attack.

8th: Two UDR soldiers, travelling in an unmarked van, were seriously injured in a landmine attack on their vehicle near Clogher, County Tyrone.

In Belfast, IRA Volunteers launched a single mortar at Grosvenor Road Barracks in West Belfast.

10th: Three British soldiers were injured, one seriously, when Volunteers detonated an anti-personnel bomb in the Lower Falls area of West Belfast. In North Belfast Volunteers were also in action when they scored a direct hit with an impact grenade on an RUC Land-Rover.

11th: Volunteers of the Derry Brigade, IRA, exploded two grenades in Rosemount RUC Barracks.

13th: Glassdrummond observation post in South Armagh came under mortar attack. Volunteers drove a tractor with three primed mortars on board to within 100 yards of the post. All three devices exploded, causing significant damage.

In Derry IRA Volunteers took part in a rocket and gun attack on Fort George army base.

16th: Six members of the crown forces were injured, two seriously, when an anti-personnel bomb

was detonated in Forfar Street, West Belfast.

17th: Glassdrummond observation post in South Armagh again came under attack when IRA Volunteers penetrated security around the tower to plant an explosive device beside it and under the noses of the soldiers.

JUNE

1st: A booby-trap bomb, placed under an RUC man's car, exploded after he had parked and alighted from the vehicle in Belfast city centre.

2nd: In South Armagh, IRA Volunteers attacked a British army observation post at Crievekeeran near Crossmaglen. Volunteers using heavy machine-guns attacked the post for 15 minutes, before withdrawing undetected through a massive concentration of sophisticated bugging and surveillance equipment.

In Belfast, IRA Volunteers narrowly escaped capture after an RPG rocket and gun attack on a British army patrol travelling along the M1 motorway. As the Volunteers were withdrawing, the area was invaded by British soldiers, forcing them to abandon their getaway car. The IRA weapons were captured by the crown forces.

5th: Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade, IRA, carried out a mortar attack on a British army installation in North Belfast. Four mortars were launched from the back of a pick-up van parked less than 50 yards from the base.

6th: The show-piece in Britain's normalisation policy in Belfast's revitalised city centre was blasted into a tangle of masonry and steel by Volunteers who planted a 400lb van-bomb inside the prestigious Castle Court. Using forged passes they drove the bomb into the guarded complex. The bomb exploded as British army engineers were trying to defuse it.

7th: Two hand grenades were thrown at two crown forces targets on the Antrim Road in North Belfast by IRA Volunteers.

13th/14th: Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade, IRA, carried out two gun attacks on RUC personnel and civilian contractors at Woodbourne RUC Barracks on two consecutive days.

15th: A British soldier, stationed in Ballykelly, was seriously injured when a bomb exploded under his car at the Ballysally housing estate, Coleraine. The South Derry Brigade, IRA, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Later that day an IRA Volunteer using an automatic rifle shot and wounded a British soldier who was part of a patrol moving through the Ardoyne area in North Belfast.

One hour after the Ardoyne attack, in West Belfast, IRA Volunteers detonated a 100lb bomb

in a derelict building on the Donegal Road as a joint British army/RUC patrol passed. Four soldiers and two RUC men were injured in the attack, two of the soldiers seriously.

17th: An IRA Volunteer using a sniping rifle wounded a British soldier standing at the corner of Henry Street, North Belfast.

19th: The IRA's campaign against British targets in continental Europe continued when their Volunteers breached the tight security around the British army's Quebec barracks in West Germany to plant five bombs inside the base. Volunteers, who had managed to avoid patrolling sentries, were placing the last of the five bombs at one of the accommodation blocks, when a civilian maintenance worker saw them and raised the alarm. A warning shot was fired at the man and the Volunteers escaped. Over 800 British soldiers were evacuated before the bomb at the accommodation block exploded 15 minutes later. The four remaining devices were defused. The IRA Volunteers, who had carried 330lbs of Semtex into the barracks, avoided capture.

21st: One member of a British army mobile patrol was wounded when his two-vehicle patrol came under attack as it made its way along Lanark Way in West Belfast.

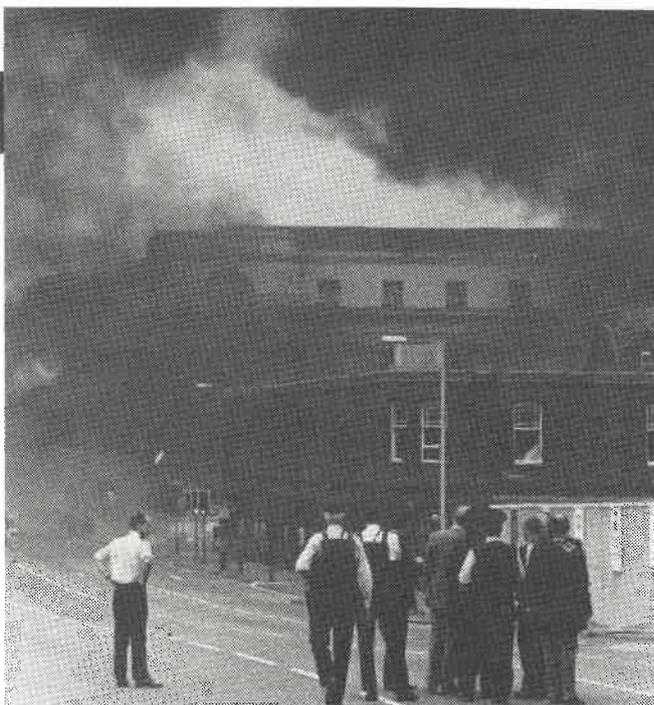
23rd: British soldiers escaped injury when Volunteers of the IRA opened fire on them inside North Queen Street British army/RUC base in North Belfast.

24th: An impact grenade exploded amidst a crown forces patrol in Derry City.

27th: Volunteers of the West Tyrone Brigade, IRA, executed an RUC man on the outskirts of Strabane. The RUC man died when a booby-trap bomb exploded under his car.

Later that day and not long after British Direct-Ruler Tom King visited Derry to promote the British government's policy of normalisation, the IRA's Derry Brigade carried out two bomb attacks. In one of the attacks on a commercial premises on Strand Road a number of civilians were injured. The IRA, in their statement, blamed the RUC for complacency in dealing with the bomb. Despite two warnings, informing the RUC of the bomb, they failed to clear the area. The bomb exploded 45 minutes after it was planted, exactly the time given in the IRA warning. The second bomb exploded on a hijacked bus abandoned on the Foyle Bridge.

29th: Volunteers of the Derry Brigade, IRA, planted bombs on the main Derry to Belfast line. Despite several warnings, trains were allowed to continue on the line. Due to this, a train suffered



● IRA bomb attack on Belfast's High Court

minor damage when caught in a blast at Umbra crossings in County Derry. Again the RUC in Derry deliberately ignored IRA warnings about devices planted and unnecessarily endangered civilians.

JULY

1st: An RUC member was executed by Volunteers of the South Derry Brigade in the village of Garvagh.

2nd: Less than 24 hours later the IRA struck again at crown forces members, this time in the city of Hanover in West Germany. A British army corporal had just gotten into his car when a booby-trap bomb, attached to the underside of the vehicle exploded, killing him instantly. Another booby-trap was discovered attached to a British army sergeant's car, parked not far from the dead soldier's car.

3rd: Security around Belfast City Airport was penetrated in the early hours by Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade, IRA, who planted six bombs. The bombs were placed near two aircraft, a control tower and a fuel pipeline belonging to the aerospace and armaments manufacturers, Shorts Brothers. Two planes and a control tower were damaged during the attack.

7th: North Antrim Brigade claimed responsibility for a devastating landmine attack on an RUC mobile patrol on the Antrim Coast Road, close to Cushendall. Three RUC personnel sustained serious injuries — one later died in hospital — from the attack which blew their armoured-plated vehicle off the road and into a nearby field.

14th: Two hand grenades were thrown into Springfield joint British army/RUC base in West Belfast.

Belfast's main telephone exchange in May Street was blasted by an IRA van-bomb. Volunteers of the IRA's Belfast Brigade

managed to transport the 500lb bomb into Belfast city centre despite a massive and ongoing search-and-seal operation in the Markets area. The bomb exploded as a British army bomb disposal technician was preparing to deal with it, causing extensive damage.

16th: The South Armagh Brigade, IRA, claimed responsibility for the execution of a County Down businessperson, Jack McNulty, saying that he had been an active RUC informer for 17 years. The IRA said that John McNulty had regularly contacted his RUC handler in a hotel in Banbridge and the information given at these meetings had led to the capture of weapons, the pinpointing of safe houses and the arrest of Volunteers over many years. One of the men arrested due to McNulty's betrayal was Volunteer Ray McCreesh, from South Armagh, who died in the Long Kesh hunger-strike of 1981. McNulty received immunity from prosecution for motor-ing offences and smuggling from the RUC due to his informing role.

Two RUC members were seriously injured when the armoured-plated vehicle they were travelling in was hit by two impact grenades. The vehicle was travelling along Upper Edward Street in Newry town, when the IRA launched the attack.

Fermanagh Brigade claimed responsibility for a bomb blast which destroyed a garage at Wattlebridge near Newtownbutler. They also claimed responsibility for the blast incendiary attacks which caused thousands of pounds worth of damage to the Derryadd Marina near Lisnaskea.

Two grenades thrown at Craigavon's RUC base exploded inside the base. North Armagh Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack.

21st: A British army bomb disposal technician suffered blast injuries in an explosion at Mill Bridge, Aughnacloy, as he was about to deal with a 100lb bomb planted earlier by Volunteers of the Tyrone Brigade.

24th: Volunteers of the IRA Derry Brigade detonated a land mine as a British army patrol moved along the Letterken Road outside Derry City.

29th: The main customs post in Newry was completely wrecked when Volunteers of the South Down Brigade, IRA, drove a 400lb van-bomb to the front of the building.

31st: IRA units continued to disrupt the main railway line between Belfast and Dublin, carrying out bomb attacks at Newry on July 28th and 29th, at Fingagh Halt on the outskirts of West Belfast on July 30th, and at Lurgan on July 31st. All these attacks, and the many bomb hoaxes, require large numbers of British troops to protect the line from attack, to search the line once a bomb warning is given, and to seal off an area where a suspect device has been found. Some of the IRA attacks on the line have taken many days to clear, keeping the crown forces busy.

Belfast's High Court was badly damaged in a successful IRA bomb attack. Volunteers used a laundry van to carry out their attack. The firm that owned the van was previously warned to stop supplying services to British establishments. A 1,000lb bomb was loaded into the van with Volunteers accompanying the vehicle to within 200 yards of the target. The van driver and his assistant were then ordered to drive as normal into the court precincts. A warning was shouted by the driver after he stopped the vehicle at the front of the building.

AUGUST

4th: Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade, IRA, carried out a mortar attack on Girdwood British army base in North Belfast. Using a hijacked van loaded with four mortar tubes, Volunteers drove the vehicle to a street at the rear of the base. Only two of the devices fired, both overshooting their target.

10th: South Down Brigade reported that their Volunteers discovered a British army undercover unit operating outside Newry. They said:

"Our Volunteers fired shots at the identified location of the undercover unit in an attempt to flush them out into a prepared ambush. But this tactic failed and because of the presence of other enemy undercover units our Volunteers withdrew from the area."



● Royal Marine base in Deal, Kent, after an IRA bomb attack

12th: Volunteers of the Derry Brigade planted a bomb in a public house in Derry city centre. The bomb, which had a timer, was meant to explode as British soldiers were searching the area. The bomb exploded as a British army bomb disposal unit was preparing to examine it.

14th: A number of RUC personnel were injured in Derry City when a Volunteer threw a grenade at them during heavy rioting in the city.

15th: An impact grenade was thrown at a two-vehicle RUC patrol in Rostrevor, County Down. The grenade, which struck the second vehicle in the patrol, exploded injuring an RUC man. South Down Brigade claimed responsibility.

Volunteers of the Tyrone Brigade, IRA, threw grenades over the perimeter fence of Coalisland RUC base. As both devices detonated, covering fire was directed at the base. Earlier Volunteers of the same brigade had a narrow escape when they encountered a UDR road-block and were forced to abandon a bomb which had been en route to a pre-determined target. The UDR patrol opened fire on the IRA ASU as it took evasive action. Volunteers returned fire sending the UDR men running for cover and enabling the ASU to escape despite an intensive follow-up search.

North Armagh and Tyrone brigades, IRA, targeted petrol stations in Armagh and Dunganon after the owners failed to heed repeated warnings about supplying the crown forces. Both stations were extensively damaged in the blasts.

23rd: A 1,000lb van-bomb was parked outside Downpatrick RUC base by Volunteers of the Down Brigade, IRA. The massive bomb was later defused by British army bomb disposal technicians.

26th: Belfast Brigade, IRA, claimed responsibility for a gun attack on Oldpark joint

RUC/British army barracks. Using a van containing hoax mortar tubes as bait, Volunteers took up positions at the rear of the base. When British soldiers emerged from the base to examine the suspect van Volunteers opened fire, directing 40 shots at the crown forces.

28th: A renewed state of alert was announced by British military chiefs in Europe following the discovery of a booby-trap device attached to the car of a British army staff sergeant stationed in the West German town of Hanover. An immediate warning was issued to the 1,800 British servicemen stationed in the Hanover region.

SEPTEMBER

1st: An IRA ASU shot and critically injured two British soldiers based at the British army's main German barracks at Munster in North Germany. The two soldiers were entering the main barracks gates when one of three Volunteers, sitting in a parked car, called them over to ask directions. As they approached the car a Volunteer opened fire with an automatic weapon, seriously wounding both men.

7th: The IRA, in a statement issued through the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau in Dublin, claimed responsibility for the killing of a British army wife who died in an ambush in Dortmund, West Germany. The IRA said they believed the woman to have been a serving member of the British forces garrisoned in Dortmund. "The outcome of the operation reinforces," the IRA statement added, "a warning we gave on August 2nd, 1988, for civilians to stay well clear of British military personnel and bases."

11th: A key British military and NATO base at Bishops Court on the County Down coast was attacked by an IRA ASU using mortars. The attack began shortly before 9pm when Volunteers drove a large box-type van into position at Ringawoody crossroads, close to the base. At 10pm

all the devices fired and exploded inside the base, causing widespread damage and injuring a number of British military personnel.

16th: A British officer and signals expert with almost 20 years' service in the crown forces was killed by IRA sniper fire as he repaired a radio mast at Coalisland RUC Barracks in County Tyrone. A statement from the East Tyrone Brigade, IRA, said:

"The Volunteers armed with automatic rifles, despite a massive crown forces presence around the base, were able to breach security." Another British soldier was also wounded in the attack.

22nd: Volunteers of Ogligh na hEireann in England carried out a devastating attack on a Royal Marine barracks in Deal, Kent, which left eleven soldiers dead and injured many more. After breaching security around the base, Volunteers placed a bomb near one of the buildings inside the base which collapsed when the bomb exploded.

23rd: A British soldier was seriously injured when IRA Volunteers detonated an anti-personnel bomb as a British army mobile patrol passed along the Falls Road.

25th: The main railway line between Belfast and Dublin was closed after an IRA unit detonated a bomb on the line near Newry. Because of this operation the line remained closed for several days.

OCTOBER

1st: Randalstown RUC Barracks, on the border between counties Derry and Antrim, was wrecked when a 500lb bomb exploded at the front of the barracks. The IRA's South Derry Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack.

2nd: A British soldier carrying out repair work to a communications mast at Coalisland barracks in County Tyrone was seen falling from the aerial at which he was working when an IRA

Volunteer, in a position close to the barracks, fired 40 shots from an automatic rifle.

4th: The Belfast Brigade, IRA, in a statement, expressed deep regret at the death of a man shot in a tragic case of mistaken identity. The dead man was shot in North Belfast as he walked along Chichester Park South. The initial IRA statement following the shooting mistakenly identified the dead man as a former resident of West Belfast who was active as a loyalist agent and who was responsible for a number of sectarian attacks as well as intelligence gathering activities on behalf of the UDA/UFF.

7th: A British army bomb disposal technician was injured while trying to defuse six mortars in Derry City.

8th: An RUC superintendent, who was divisional commander for the South Down area and an RUC member since 1956, was executed in Lisburn, when a booby-trap bomb exploded under his car.

9th: A British army reservist identified by South Derry Brigade as being involved in UVF sectarian murder squad activities, was shot dead in the town of Killea.

18th: North Armagh Brigade claimed responsibility for the execution of UVF man, Robert Metcalf, shot dead at his home on the outskirts of Lurgan.

21st: One RUC man died and another was critically wounded when Volunteers of South Armagh Brigade opened up on their armour-plated car with a heavy calibre machine-gun. The unmarked car burst into flames when it was fired on from the machine-gun which was mounted on the back of a tipper truck parked outside the village of Bellecks.

The main telephone exchange in Castlewellan, County Down, was destroyed in a bomb attack.

22nd: A British soldier was wounded when Volunteers in the Springfield Road area of West Belfast opened fire on a crown forces patrol.

26th: A Royal Air Force non-commissioned officer, stationed at Wildernrath, West Germany, and his baby daughter died in an IRA attack on his vehicle. In a statement the IRA said:

"We profoundly regret the death of the RAF officer's infant daughter who was killed and are certain that our Volunteers were not aware of the child's presence when they opened fire."

"We repeat that there would be no necessity for IRA attacks in West Germany or elsewhere were it not for the British presence in the North of Ireland."

In an undeniably daring operation, South Armagh Brigade drove a mortar-laden tractor lit-

erally under the noses of British sentries at the massive Crossmaglen army base and parked it five yards from the front gates. Prior to this at 12 noon, all civilians had been evacuated from the village square by IRA personnel. As Volunteers walked to waiting cars all four mortars exploded, devastating the post.

29th: The inside of Carrickmore RUC/British army base was severely damaged as Tyrone Brigade forced a civilian contractor working on the base to drive the 200lb bomb into the barracks yard. The IRA, after the attack, reiterated its warning to civilians working with the crown forces to desist or face the consequences.

NOVEMBER

2nd: A sustained gun attack was carried out on an RUC vehicle as it entered Oldpark RUC Barracks in North Belfast on Thursday, November 2nd.

3rd: Volunteers of the IRA again succeeded in penetrating massive security around the RUC's Strand Road headquarters, to plant a 1,000lb bomb against the base's perimeter wall. An active service unit of six Volunteers secured the area surrounding the base while two drove the van to the security gate at the corner of Queen Street and Clarendon Street where they removed the lock and drove the van-bomb past surveillance cameras up to the barrack's perimeter wall. Despite the presence of an RUC foot-patrol the Volunteers parked the van-bomb directly underneath an observation post. While the full charge did not explode, the 'controlled explosion' caused structural damage to the wall of the base and the observation post.

4th: Four RUC men and one British soldier were injured in a daring IRA ambush on a mobile patrol in Andersonstown, West Belfast. Two Volunteers, armed with an RPG rocket launcher and an AKM assault rifle, fired at the rear RUC jeep blowing off its roof and forcing the injured occupants to abandon the vehicle.

7th: RUC assistant chief constable, David Brooke Mellor, one of the RUC's most senior men and third in rank to Hugh Annesley, the chief constable, survived an IRA bomb attack on his home on the outskirts of the garrison town of Lisburn.

In their statement claiming responsibility, the IRA's Belfast Brigade said:

"This operation against a leading member of the RUC indicates our ability to secure major intelligence and then to penetrate the tight security arrangements surrounding this type of target. Despite the current smoke-screen about the leaking of information to loyalist paramilitaries, designed to suggest that this information is being leaked only at the

lowest levels of the RUC, we are aware that it is in fact RUC officers of Mellor's seniority who are orchestrating these leaks. It is these people, too, who are directly responsible for the ongoing massive destruction of nationalist homes in raids which amount to collective punishment of the nationalist community. Those responsible, like Mellor, cannot expect to rest comfortably in their homes while orchestrating the destruction of other people's."

8th: British soldiers clearing the rail line near Kilnasaggart Bridge came under sustained attack from a number of IRA Volunteers from the South Armagh Brigade. Just as darkness fell the Volunteers, who had been in position for some time, opened fire with heavy-duty machine-guns from several different positions overlooking the railway line.

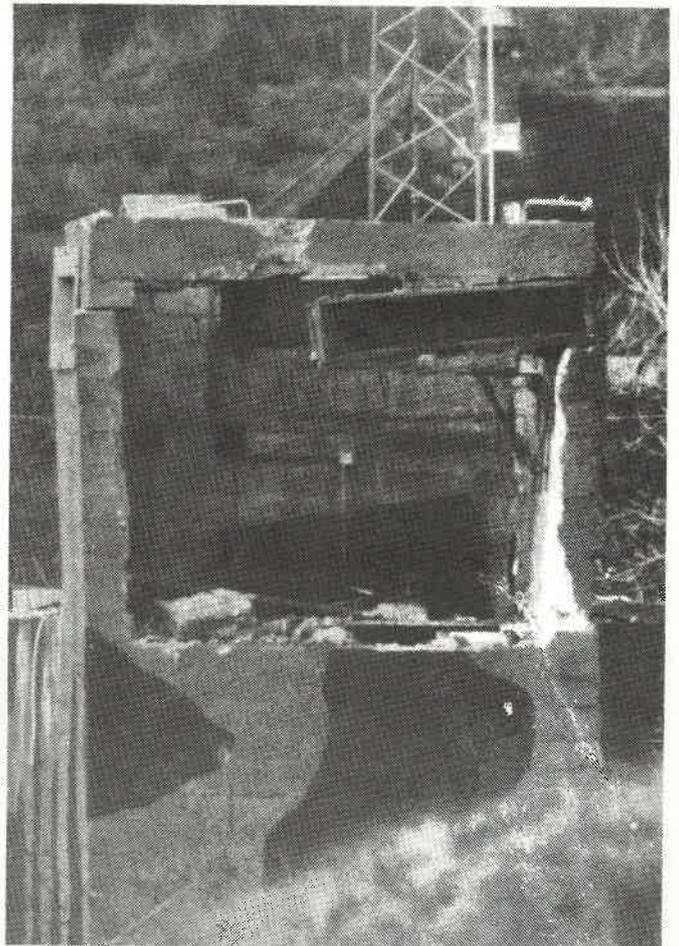
11th: Volunteers drove a van with four mortar bombs on board to the perimeter fence of the RAF's Aldergrove base in County Antrim. Despite the base having 'priority one' security, the IRA succeeded in planting another bomb to thwart British attempts to prevent the launch. British army technicians, however, succeeded in preventing the mortars from reaching the base by exploding them on the van, causing widespread damage to the security fence.

Two British soldiers sustained serious injuries after they were caught in the blast from a hidden 3lb bomb on West Street, Stewartstown, County Tyrone.

15th: The IRA in County Tyrone killed one of the main suppliers to crown forces in the Six Counties. The man died when a booby-trap bomb exploded under his car. The IRA stated that the man had been targeted as part of their ongoing policy of isolating the crown forces and ending civilian collaboration with the British war-machine. They warned employees at the man's firm, Acheson and Glover Ltd, that they would remain targets until their work for the crown forces ceased. A statement from solicitors on behalf of the firm, repudiating crown forces contracts and giving an undertaking not to supply materials to anyone engaging in crown forces contracts, was issued within 48 hours of the contractor's death.

17th: Volunteers of the North Armagh Brigade ambushed and killed a UDR soldier and former B-Special as he left Drumadd barracks in County Armagh.

18th: A massive IRA landmine exploded beside a British army Land-Rover on the outskirts of Newry, killing three of its four occupants and critically injuring another. The four soldiers in the armoured vehicle were part of a larger mobile patrol which was



● Aftermath of Derry yard checkpoint operation on December 13th 1989

travelling along the main road between Drumgath and Mayo-bridge villages in County Down. Volunteers of the South Down Command, Ogligh na hEireann, observing a mobile patrol and in control of a command wire, detonated a massive 1,200lb bomb hidden in a derelict house.

A Military Police staff sergeant, based at Goojerat barracks in Colchester, England, headquarters of the 19th Infantry, lost both his legs in a booby-trap bomb attack on his car outside the base's married quarters. There was severe embarrassment when the media revealed, in the wake of the blast, that British defence secretary and former direct-ruler for the Six Counties, Tom King, had visited the barracks the previous evening. King had told reporters that he was satisfied with security arrangements.

In their statement the IRA also stated that it targeted Lieutenant General David Ramsbotham, commander-in-chief of the UK Field Army. They stated that their Volunteers had placed the 3lb Semtex device under Ramsbotham's car, outside his London home. It was discovered on November 14th.

27th: Five bombs were planted in Shorts Brothers. Three of the

bombs exploded; one at the main gates and two under a £4 million aircraft.

The border barracks of Belleek was severely damaged. Under cover fire an engineering unit drove a tractor laden with a 500lb bomb up to the base's fence, another unit fired rocket-propelled grenades and strafed the base with automatic fire.

Two soldiers were injured when a 4lb bomb was detonated as they were entering the Poleglass estate on the outskirts of Belfast.

29th: Two RUC men were injured when a bomb exploded as they were setting up a vehicle checkpoint on the New Road, Derry.

DECEMBER

1st: A British soldier was shot and seriously injured by Derry Brigade on the Northland Road.

7th: A 500lb bomb, driven into the so-called security zone of Lisburn, exploded after a 45-minute warning.

11th: Serious injuries were sustained by three British soldiers inside the security zone in Derry's Bishop Street. The bomb exploded shortly after the crown forces moved in to investigate an earlier bomb blast.

13th: The British army admitted two soldiers died and two were

critically injured in one of the IRA's most brilliantly executed operations. Twelve Volunteers, eleven in the back of a lorry, one driving a 400lb bomb, approached the Derryard check-point on the Fermanagh/Monaghan border. With military precision the Volunteers firstly shot a British soldier on the road, then they simultaneously opened fire with a general purpose machine-gun on a fortified outpost, rocket-propelled grenades and a general purpose machine-gun were fired at the main observation post and a flame-thrower was used against the other look-out post at the base. After placing a bomb against the outpost the lorry was reversed through the re-inforced steel gates into the compound's yard. The Volunteers strafed the base after the British soldiers refused to surrender when called on to do so. The van bomb was then driven

into place and as the Volunteers began to withdraw, a Wessex helicopter approached, but took cover after fire was directed at it. Fire was also directed at soldiers who opened fire on the lorry. A 300lb bomb was left on board the lorry before it was abandoned a few hundred yards down the road.

1990

JANUARY

2nd: UDA/UFF Inner Council member, Harry Dickie, was executed by Belfast Brigade when a booby-trap bomb, placed by Volunteers under his car in the Sydenham area of East Belfast, exploded.

Claiming responsibility for the attack Belfast Brigade, Oglai na hEireann said:

"As a member of the Inner Council, Dickie bore a major re-

sponsibility for the murder and mayhem carried out by the UDA/UFF against the nationalist community and has now paid for his activities."

3rd: A British soldier, a member of the UDR, was seriously injured when a bomb exploded under his car in the Rainey Street car park, Magherafelt.

Two British soldiers were injured, one of them seriously, when an anti-personnel mine was detonated as they passed a derelict house at the junction of Brompton Park and Etna Drive in the Ardoyne area.

9th: A long-serving member of the British army's Ulster Defence Regiment in Castlederg, County Tyrone, was executed.

10th: Five members of the crown forces sustained blast injuries in Belfast in separate bomb attacks against two crown forces patrols. In the first attack Volunteers in control of a command wire deto-

nated a landmine as three soldiers were passing, two were seriously injured.

Less than two hours later a British soldier and an RUC man sustained serious blast injuries when two out of three jeeps which were travelling down the Springfield Road towards the Henry Taggart Barracks, sustained direct hits from impact grenades.

13th: Volunteers of the Tyrone Brigade breached top-level security at Lisinelly Barracks at Gortin Road, Omagh. Volunteers, under cover from a second armed ASU, breached the base's perimeter defences to plant a 150lb bomb at soldiers' living quarters. The bomb exploded after the Volunteers withdrew.

15th: Tyrone Brigade, IRA, reduced another fortified British army/RUC base to rubble. Sion Mills barracks in Tyrone came under attack when Volunteers calmly drove a 1,000lb bomb right up to its perimeter fence and gave a 50-minute warning.

A second 1,000lb landmine was placed four miles away intended for British army and RUC re-inforcements.

17th: Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade demonstrated their ability to breach Belfast city centre security by planting a 350lb car-bomb at the Victoria commercial centre just off Chichester Street. Claiming responsibility for the attack the IRA said:

"The economic bombing attack using a 350lb car bomb carried out by our Volunteers in Chichester Street this morning indicates our unhampered ability to penetrate high security zones despite all the paraphernalia of crown forces surveillance and road-blocks.

"The Victoria centre, like the nearby Castle Court complex, is a jewel in the crown of the 'Belfast is Buzzing' campaign. This promotion is a politically-motivated sham used by the British government to portray Belfast as a place of increasing normality and prosperity, while in reality the problems of repression, discrimination and poverty remain, as ever, outside the city centre facade. Today's attack highlights that hypocrisy and sham. The IRA will continue to highlight it in 1990."

22nd: A senior RUC commander, stationed at Middletown Barracks and attached to the RUC's Divisional Command in Armagh, was executed at his Kilburn Park home on the outskirts of Armagh City.

20th: A British army corporal, attached to the Ulster Defence Regiment, sustained critical blast injuries when a booby-trap bomb exploded under his car in the Plumbridge area of County Tyrone.



● Sion Mills British army/RUC barracks, following an IRA bomb

22nd: A daring IRA operation inside Belfast city centre's security zone narrowly failed to destroy an RUC base and kill its contingent of crown forces personnel when a British army unit discovered a powerful 25lb Semtex bomb with only hours left on its timing mechanism. The discovery of the bomb, which had been planted in a snooker club adjacent to Queen Street Barracks, meant that British army technicians defused it. They described it as being powerful enough to wipe out the base and all its occupants.

27th: Lisbellaw crown forces base in Fermanagh was the target of a 500lb IRA bomb. Severe damage was caused to the base in the attack.

28th: An explosion aimed at crown forces monitoring the Bloody Sunday march from Derry city walls tragically claimed the life of a young Strabane youth, Charles Love, when a piece of masonry struck him several hundred yards from the blast.

FEBRUARY

2nd: The British normalisation policy was attacked when IRA Volunteers succeeded in planting a bomb in the Castle Court complex in Belfast's city centre in spite of a massive crown forces saturation of the area for the previous two weeks.

7th: Volunteers of Belfast Brigade breached security at the Shorts Aerospace complex in East Belfast. A bomb exploded in one of the hangars on the site. In

a statement the IRA said:

"The weapons division of Shorts is an integral part of the British military establishment, and as such, is a prime target. Only last week RAF personnel were in Shorts taking part in a missile test-firing exercise."

They later said that *"we reserve the right, as in the past, to target individuals who play a significant role in the maintenance of the British war-machine"*.

A British soldier suffered serious blast injuries in Belfast when the mobile patrol with which he was travelling was blasted by a landmine in the Turf Lodge area of West Belfast.

11th: Three soldiers were injured, one of them seriously, when a Gazelle helicopter was shot from the sky in the townland of Gala between Augher and Aughnacloy, near the Tyrone/Monaghan border.

In their statement on the attack, the IRA's Mid-Ulster Brigade revealed that the helicopter had come under sustained gunfire from a five-person ASU and that one soldier had suffered serious gunshot wounds in the attack.

17th: Two British soldiers suffered blast injuries when their mobile patrol was caught in an IRA landmine attack at Dunmurray Lane on the outskirts of West Belfast.

The 700lb bomb blast, which was heard over a wide area, came shortly before midnight as a two-vehicle patrol drove along Upper

Dunmurray Lane not far from the massive Woodbourne British army/RUC base.

21st: Soldiers escaped injury when a booby-trap device fell from their Sherpa van and exploded in the roadway in Leicester city centre, England. A sergeant attached to the Women's Royal Army Corps and a sergeant attached to the Coldstream Guards had driven off from the nearby joint British Services Recruiting Centre and had travelled less than 50 yards when the device detonated.

Volunteers of the Fermanagh Brigade ferried a single mortar bomb on board a commandeered tractor to within yards of Kinawley crown forces base's perimeter. The device was positioned to blast straight into the base. Considerable damage was caused to the base's defences.

23rd: The IRA in South Down said in a statement that one of their units bombed Newry Railway Station. The statement read:

"The bomb attack which was directed at Newry Railway Station was part of our ongoing campaign aimed at drawing crown forces from their bases and tying up large numbers of troops and explosive technicians in lengthy clearance operations. As has been stated before this attack, as with all others on the railway, this is a military tactic which we have used and will continue to use to our advantage. These attacks are not an attempt to close down the railways or permanently sever cross-border links, the only army

carrying out bombing operations with a view to totally severing cross-border connections are the British."

MARCH

4th: The main crown forces base in the County Tyrone village of Stewartstown came under attack from several IRA active service units, who virtually took over the village. The IRA used a 600-gallon capacity slurry tanker to douse the main fortified building with a mixture of petrol and diesel liquid, which was set alight. Retreating crown forces came under RPG grenade and AKM assault rifle attack.

8th: A British soldier, attached to the Ulster Defence Regiment and working part-time on crown forces refurbishment contracts, was executed by Volunteers of the Tyrone Brigade, IRA, as he drove a lorry belonging to the contractors Henry Brothers of Magherafelt, on Thursday, March 8th. The company persistently worked for the crown forces.

20th: Two bombs exploded in the heart of Shorts Missile Division in East Belfast in spite of the base being on full alert after other recent attacks. The two bombs that exploded caused damage to the complex, but another bomb failed to explode.

24th: Two undercover British operatives were killed in a carefully-executed ambush in the town of Cappagh, County Tyrone. The IRA had been monitoring eight unmarked crown forces vehicles which were tracking an IRA commandeered vehicle. Fourteen Vol-



unteers were involved in luring the crown forces into the ambush. Following a chase through the village, one of the IRA cars drew alongside one of the chasing unmarked cars and shot dead the two occupants. Coming under fire from other British soldiers which they hadn't anticipated, the Volunteers withdrew from the area under covering fire from the other Volunteers. An immediate cover-up by the British war-machine could not prevent local eyewitnesses and journalists backing-up the IRA statement of crown forces casualties.

25th: One of the most modern and supposedly invulnerable British barracks in the Six Counties was severely damaged in an IRA bombing operation. The Galgorm Road base in the County Antrim town of Ballymena was rocked by a 1,000lb bomb. Volunteers had driven the device right up to the base's front gates where it was placed adjacent to a sentry box.

26th: A jeep containing a massive one ton device was driven along a road opened to facilitate contractors working on the Castleberg British army/RUC base, in West Tyrone. Volunteers then cut the security fencing around the barracks and drove the jeep into the main yard, where it was parked against the main barracks wall and directly beneath surveillance cameras. A massive device ripped through the base reducing it to rubble.

28th: An RUC man was executed by a number of Volunteers armed with assault rifles, on the outskirts of Armagh City.

APRIL

9th: In a devastating military operation which sent shock waves through the British political/military establishment, Volunteers of the South Down Brigade detonated a massive 1,000lb landmine killing four and injuring a further four members of the British army attached to the UDR. The second of two armoured jeeps, in a routine military patrol, was completely blown apart when it caught the full force of the massive bomb which had been carefully hidden in a culvert on the main Ballyduggan Road into Downpatrick.

12th: Two bombs exploded inside the Castle Court complex a week before it was due to open. Widespread damage was caused by the bombs.

15th: South Down Brigade executed an informer, Eoin Morley, in the Meadow Estate, Newry, after he had ignored several warnings to leave the country and had passed on information about Volunteers and materials to another organisation.

22nd: At least one British soldier suffered head injuries in an IRA rocket attack which crippled an



● Scene of IRA landmine attack near Downpatrick on April 9th 1990

armoured jeep in the Turf Lodge area of West Belfast. Allowing the first of two jeeps to pass by, a Volunteer armed with an RPG, broke cover and from less than 15 yards fired a single rocket which scored a direct hit on a British army jeep. A second Volunteer then opened fire providing cover for their withdrawal.

In their statement on the operation, the IRA said:

"All of the evidence available to us suggests that soldiers were, at the very least, severely injured in the vehicle. These facts, coupled with the reluctance of the RUC to provide information to the media until several hours after the operation, and then only after our first statement had reached the media, taken alongside the recent cover-up in Cappagh, begs the question of the existence of a high-level policy decision to minimise the damaging effect of successful IRA operations whenever possible."

27th: A leading contractor, Kenneth Graham, involved in building and refurbishing work at British military installations, was executed when Volunteers of the South Down Brigade, IRA, booby-trapped his car with a 2lb Semtex bomb.

28th: A British soldier sustained serious leg injuries when Volunteers of the South Armagh Brigade opened fire on a heavily fortified border spy-post near the village of Silverbridge not far from Crossmaglen.

MAY

2nd: Despite heavy crown forces activity, armed Volunteers penetrated high security at the Territorial Army base in Lisburn to booby-trap a British army jeep. Under cover from a back-up ASU,

Volunteers planted a 5lb Semtex device on the vehicle. A mechanic working on the vehicle a short time after the device was planted suffered very serious blast injuries.

The IRA in Derry launched a mortar bomb attack on the RUC's Derry Strand Road headquarters.

4th: Three bombs placed inside the British army base at Langenhagen, Hanover, Germany, were defused after the Volunteers were spotted planting them. Despite this, they made good their escape.

5th: A British soldier, who was part of a contingent of troops secreted in a dug-out near the South Armagh village of Cullyhanna, was shot dead when an IRA unit, acting on accurate intelligence reports, surrounded and ambushed the troops. A 500lb bomb, left at the outskirts of a nearby village in the hope of catching British army reinforcements, had to be detonated when it became apparent that the crown forces had spotted the device.

14th: Seven employees at the headquarters of the British Army Educational Institute, in Court Road, Eltham, South-East London, sustained blast injuries in an IRA attack which badly damaged the base. The IRA's ASU involved managed to evade security to the extent of being able to bury the powerful 10lb Semtex device in the grounds adjacent to the building.

In its statement on the operation, the IRA also claimed responsibility for an attack in February on a British army recruiting office in Halifax.

15th: An RUC mobile patrol travelling along Copperfield Street,

inside the staunchly loyalist Tiger's Bay area of North Belfast, was destroyed and the occupants injured when a Volunteer, under cover from an armed comrade, walked to within three yards of a jeep and lobbed an impact grenade into the side of the vehicle.

16th: In London, just after 5pm, the IRA struck at a British army recruiting centre in Wembley. Two British army sergeants were driving their van away when a bomb destroyed the van, killing one and seriously injuring the other. The blast occurred near the back of the centre at the corner of Thurlow Gardens and Harrow Road in the London suburb.

21st: A British soldier sustained blast injuries when the mobile patrol with which he was travelling came under grenade attack in Turf Lodge, West Belfast.

22nd: An RUC man was shot and critically injured in a daring IRA gun attack on a fortified crown forces position inside Derry City's exclusion zone close to the city's Strand Road RUC headquarters.

27th: Following the shooting of two Australians in a case of mistaken identity the IRA said:

"The Irish Republican Army accepts responsibility for the death of two Australian men in Roermond last night. The active service unit involved in the shooting tragically mistook the men for British army personnel. This tragedy we deeply regret."

JUNE

1st: Volunteers identified and then ambushed three British soldiers awaiting a train in Lichfield railway station in Staffordshire, England.

One of the soldiers, stationed at the Prince of Wales training

division depot in Whittington Barracks, died and the other two were injured.

Less than five hours after the operation in Lichfield, Volunteers of the IRA served a timely reminder to British troops that there is "no safe haven" when they executed a British army major in the German town of Dortmund. The dead man, serving with the Royal Artillery was stationed at the main British army base on the Rhine at Dortmund Barracks.

4th: Derry Brigade carried out the bomb attack which injured one person working on the site of a proposed RUC base at Lisnagelvin. Work had just resumed on the site which has been lying partially constructed since 1986 after the IRA forced construction work to be abandoned.

6th: Belfast Brigade, IRA, claimed responsibility for the the bomb explosion which killed ex-RUC man James Sefton and his wife Ellen in North Belfast.

Fermanagh Brigade said they ambushed British troops in an

armoured personnel carrier, with rocket and gun attack, injuring one soldier, in Kinawley.

10th: A bomb ripped through a mess hall at the Headquarters of the Honourable Artillery Company in London's City Road. The midnight bomb explosion in the base's main mess hall injured a number of people who were attending a function at the army company's headquarters.

A British soldier sustained very serious injuries when a booby-trap bomb ripped through his car in Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh.

12th: An explosion which caused severe damage to the Hampshire home of the Tories' top financier was carried out by Volunteers operating in England.

14th: A military training centre used by the British army was destroyed by the IRA in a bomb attack in Hamelin, West Germany. The building, including a lecture hall, was severely damaged in the explosion.

16th: British cover-ups of injuries received by their forces in the

war was again highlighted by North Armagh Brigade's attack on British soldiers on the railway line near Lurgan. Three British soldiers were injured in the explosion but the authorities said that there were no British army injuries, despite one local eyewitness seeing a blanket being placed over a soldier lying on the ground.

21st: An explosion caused damage at RAF Stanmore Park in northwest London on Thursday, June 21st. The bomb, inside the base's security fence, was spotted before it exploded at 9.35am, wrecking a hut and sending hundreds of British soldiers scurrying for cover.

The James's Street area of Cookstown was devastated by a bomb blast.

In Belfast a lone Volunteer lobbed an impact grenade which damaged one of three jeeps travelling along the Stewartstown Road in West Belfast.

In Fermanagh a border customs posts outside Newtownbutler was completely destroyed by

Volunteers of the South Fermanagh Brigade.

25th: Claiming responsibility for the bombing of the British Tory Carlton Club in London, the IRA said that it had "brought the war directly to those who keep the British army on the streets and in the fields of Ireland". The club, which Thatcher is a member of, was devastated in the attack.

27th: Two RUC men responding to a hoax call were injured when they walked into a carefully laid IRA trap in Armagh.

28th: A British soldier, in Pomeroy, County Tyrone, was seriously injured after being shot three times by a lone Volunteer who opened fire on a British army patrol with an assault rifle.

30th: Two RUC members were killed in a gun attack inside Belfast city centre's so-called security zone. Volunteers armed with hand-guns, stepped from positions of cover beside the Castle Street steel security gates and executed the two within 50 yards of their heavily fortified city centre base. ■



● Scene of execution of two RUC members in Belfast city centre's 'security zone' on June 30th 1990

