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# IRIS

*the republican magazine*

# 2009



**Cuts and job losses:  
time to fight back**

# 1969



*the point of no return*

## INSIDE

**TIDE OF CHANGE  
SWEEPS  
ACROSS LATIN  
AMERICA**



**CUBA 2009 -  
50 YEARS OF  
REVOLUTION**

**BEATHA  
AGUS BÁS  
SHEÁIN  
SAVAGE**





# IRIS

## the republican magazine

### CONTENTS

Job losses and Government cuts – time to fight back 2

Tide of change sweeps across Latin America 7  
 Seán Ó Floinn looks at how a tidal wave of democracy and socialism is sweeping across Latin America, offering renewed hope in the midst of a global recession



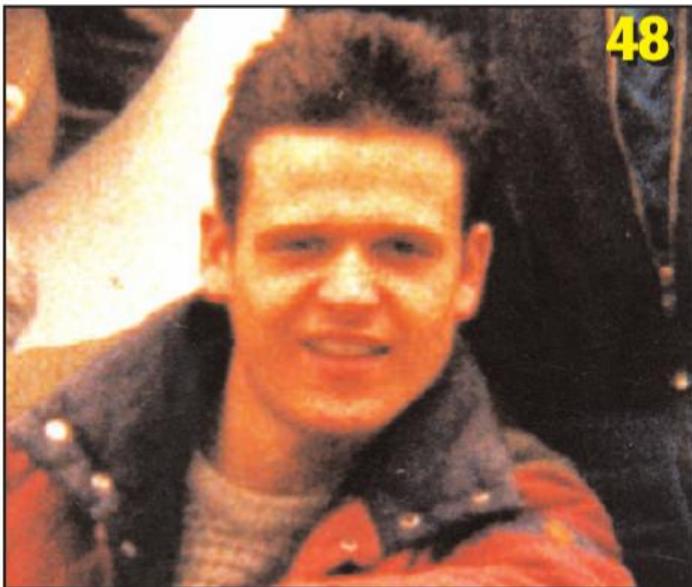
## 1969

The point of no return 11  
 Interviews by An Phoblacht's Laura Friel (first published in 1999) tells of that critical period in Belfast's troubled history.

Unique rediscovered photographs 12  
 IRIS publishes a collection of unique photographs taken by amateur photographer Gerry Collins (now 86) and lay forgotten for 40 years until Gerry and photographer Frankie Quinn of Red Barn Gallery ([www.redbarngallery.blogspot.com](http://www.redbarngallery.blogspot.com)) worked together this year to present the photographs in an exhibition for Féile an Phobail.

The Clonard Pogrom 31  
 Belfast republican Seán Murray gives an eye-witness account of the pogrom.

The Battle of the Bogside  
 40 years on – was it worth it? 39  
 Sinn Féin MLA Mitchel McLaughlin of Derry writes of the Battle of the Bogside in which he participated.



'The book' - Words from Killmainham 46  
 An autograph book signed in Killmainham in the early 1920s is a cryptic but significant reminder of the importance of keeping a record.

Beatha agus bás Sheáin Savage 48  
 Bhí aithne mhaith ag Tony Birtill ar Sheáin Savage, an ball den IRA a mharadh fórsaí na Breataine i nGiobráltar i mí Marta 1988, in éineacht le Mairéad Farrell agus Dan McCann. San alt seo, déanann sé cur síos ar an am a chaith siad le chéile i dTír Chonaill agus i mBéal Feirste.

Cuba 2009 - 50 years of Revolution 52  
 A report of Jane Fisher's experience in Cuba as part of the Cuba Cycle Challenge.

### BOOK REVIEWS

Clare's leading role in the fight for freedom 57  
*Blood on the Banner - the Republican Struggle in Clare*

Irish unity - the legal and constitutional issues 59  
*Countdown to Unity - Debating Irish Reunification*

Pearse - legacy of a revolutionary 61  
*The Life and After-Life of P.H. Pearse*

Future lies with the rank and file 63  
*Organising the Union - a Centenary of SIPTU 1909 - 2009*



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## OUT OF THE ASHES OF '69

In August 1969 one of the hundreds of families who lost their homes in sectarian pogroms in Belfast was that of a four-year-old boy called Seán Savage. As a friend recalls in this issue of *IRIS*, Seán was too young to understand what it all meant but the events of '69 and subsequent years were to have a profound influence on him and at the age of 17 Seán joined the IRA. Six years later he was killed in Gibraltar with his comrades Máiréad Farrell and Dan McCann.

While the nature and location of Seán's death stands out, his story is not untypical of the children of '69. Forty years ago the Orange state was thrown into convulsions by the simple, straightforward and just demands of the Civil Rights movement. Because citizens demanded the equal right to vote, the equal right to housing and the equal right to employment they were banned, batoned, beaten, shot, burned out of their homes and thrown into jails and internment camps. And seeing all this, young people like Seán chose to resist.

The cycle of resistance and repression began. The British government, pursuing its own selfish strategic interests in Ireland, propped up the sectarian Six-County state, sent in the British Army, imposed internment without trial, turned whole nationalist districts into open internment camps. But out of the ashes of 1969 the IRA had arisen and it led the resistance of the nationalist people. The IRA frustrated every effort of the British government to defeat it and for over two decades it fought the British war machine in Ireland to a standstill.

At the root of the conflict was the historic British denial of Irish independence, the partition of Ireland and the establishment of the Unionist one-party state in the Six Counties. That is still the analysis of Irish republicans today and it is still an analysis that needs to be articulated. As someone has wisely said, the past is contested because the future is contested.

But what of the present? The Unionist one-party

state is no more. The armed conflict is over. The British Army is off the streets and most of its apparatus in the North has been dismantled. The RUC has been replaced with an evolving police service. War has been replaced with a peace process and a political process which has seen the previously unimaginable take place – unionists sharing power with Sinn Féin. One-party rule by unionism is no longer politically possible; the sectarian social and economic basis of that rule has been eroded to nothing.

Sinn Féin is now the largest party in the Six Counties in terms of first preference votes. That colossal achievement is the electoral manifestation of the advances made by nationalists in the Six Counties. It is a far cry from the pogroms of 1969, which, in retrospect, was indeed the point of no return.

Republican resistance rose from the ashes of the '69 pogroms. What will arise from the ashes of the economic collapse and ensuing chaos of 2009? All of Ireland is now mired in a huge economic mess caused by the insatiable greed of Irish capitalism which disguised old-fashioned gombeenism as the 'Celtic Tiger'. New forms of resistance are needed now. Not armed resistance but determined opposition to savage cuts in pay, social welfare and public services, resistance involving people organised in communities, in trade unions and in progressive political campaigns.

And beyond these defensive battles there will be a need to go on the offensive, to argue for and campaign for a better way of running our economy and organising our society. Sinn Féin must be to the fore in all of this, providing real leadership and representation, making practical gains for those it represents where possible, drawing from its long experience of struggle and pointing the way forward to real change which must involve Irish unity as well as social and economic equality.

# Job losses and Government cuts – time to fight back

BY MÍCHEÁL Mac DONNCHA

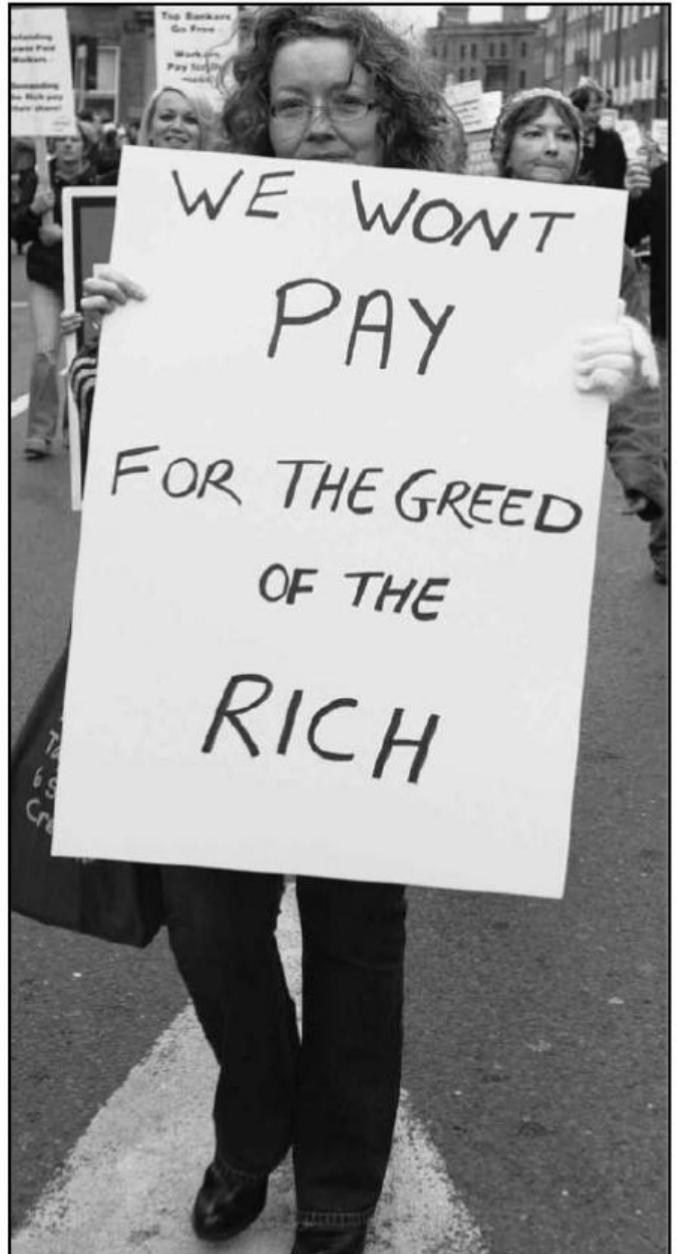
**B**y the middle of 2009 there were 463,000 people unemployed in Ireland – 413,500 in the 26 Counties and 49,500 in the Six Counties. The toll of redundancies and joblessness continues to grow relentlessly as the Irish economy sinks deeper into recession. It will not be long before the figure of half a million is reached for the whole island and shortly afterwards that will be the figure in the 26 Counties alone.

Nothing like this has been seen since the worst of the 1980s but the current recession is far more serious. Unemployment is growing in an economy where very many people are heavily indebted, having taken out mortgages to buy homes at grossly inflated prices as a result of the property bubble. Having operated the

Nothing like this has been seen since the worst of the 1980s but the current recession is far more serious

economy for years on the basis that the property bubble would continue to grow and provide it with easy revenue, the Fianna Fáil-led Government has now created a massive hole in State finances and is borrowing heavily to meet the day-to-day running costs of the State.

It was the disastrous policies and dire management of Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrats Governments from 1997 that created the property bubble and allowed it to grow until it distorted the entire economy. Housing became unaffordable even for many people on middle incomes. Those who could afford to take out mortgages were saddled with massive debt. The wealthy were facilitated with cheap loans from the banks and tax breaks from the Government to keep the vicious cycle going by speculating in ever more extravagant property



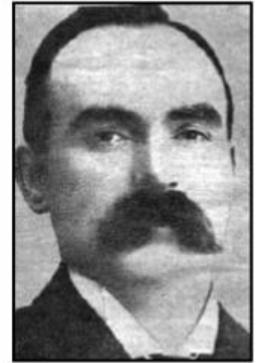
Spelling it out – public service workers' protest

developments. Many who thought they were wealthy emulated the big speculators and ended up ruined after investing in non-residential properties that they could not afford, often resulting in the loss of their own homes.

The two 'positive' spin-offs from this vicious cycle

“The non-socialist Irish man or woman who fumes against that administration is in the illogical position of denouncing an effect of whose cause he is a supporter. That cause was the system of capitalist property.”

- JAMES CONNOLLY



were both unsustainable - the boom in construction employment and the increased revenue for Government from stamp duty. Yet into this one basket labelled 'property' the Government put all its eggs. When the inevitable happened and property prices collapsed, so too did employment and Government income.

Taoiseach Brian Cowen and Finance Minister Brian Lenihan have refused to accept that the Governments in which they served were responsible for any of this. They attempt to blame the collapse of the Irish economy on the worldwide recession and some kind of collective Irish mania which made us 'lose the run of ourselves'. But the recession is worse here because of the actions of Fianna Fáil-led governments over the past decade and they cannot say they were not warned. Critics of their economic policies - including Sinn Féin - pointed out what was happening, as well as the alternatives. They called for investment in sustainable employment and in public

services, for housing policy based on the need for homes not property speculation, for wealth to be shared and equality implemented in health and education.

The warnings and the alternatives were ignored and not surprisingly. Record profits were being made, wealth was flowing to the top as never before, the property speculators, the bankers and the elite of 'corporate Ireland' were rewarding themselves with lavish lifestyles.

Writing about the Great Hunger when millions perished as a result of the landlord system, James Connolly described a scenario that has echoes in Ireland's recent economic plight:

“All except a few men had elevated landlord property and capitalist political economy to a fetish to be worshipped and upon the altar of that fetish Ireland perished...The non-socialist Irish man or woman who fumes against that administration is in the illogical position of denouncing an effect of whose cause he is a



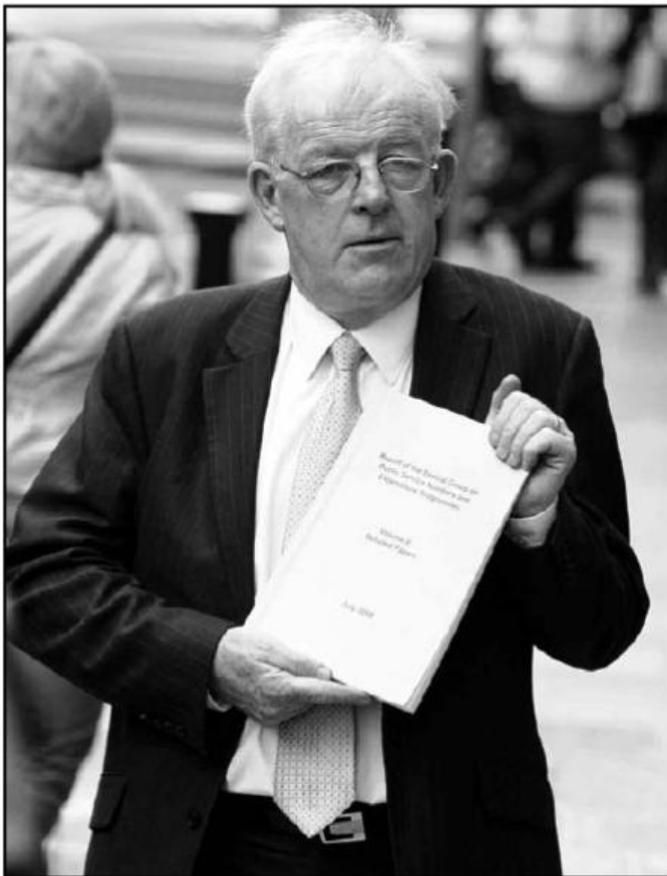
More mobilisations against the cuts and for real solutions will be required

supporter. That cause was the system of capitalist property.”

Connolly said the choice was “between human rights and property rights as a basis of nationality”.

In 2009 the rights of citizens to a basic income, to health and to education are under attack from the Fianna Fáil-Green Government, but no step will be taken by the same Government to interfere with the privileges of capitalist property. Nothing illustrates this better than the refusal, at the end of July, of Finance Minister Brian Lenihan to intervene to prevent Permanent TSB from increasing its interest rates, thus further burdening already hard-pressed mortgage holders. This is despite the fact that the company, along with the other Irish financial institutions, is the beneficiary of a massive bail-out from the State. When the bail-out was announced it was promised that in return the Government would ‘rein in’ these institutions on behalf of the citizens. It was a false promise.

**I**n July the Fianna Fáil-Green Government published a report on public expenditure by a team of consultants led by economist Colm McCarthy, known flippantly as ‘An Bord Snip Nua’. But there is nothing flippant or trivial about the McCarthy Report. As well as containing a long list of specific proposals that would be hugely regressive in their effect on Irish society and the Irish economy, the McCarthy Report is an attempt



Colm McCarthy, right-wing economist

to shift the political and economic debate further to the right. It is a frontal attack on the incomes of the low paid and those dependent on social welfare. It is a plan to slash and burn across the vital public services of health and education.

The level of the debate in the dominant media was typified by an RTÉ radio *This Week* profile of Colm McCarthy as a gruff, straight-talking Dub who loves a pint, a game of hurling and a sing-song. In reality, as exposed in a lengthy profile in *The Phoenix* magazine (17 July 2009) McCarthy is a right-wing economic consultant

## The McCarthy Report provides a manifesto for Sinn Féin in campaigning against Government cuts and for real solutions

who has been highly paid for producing the opinions big business and conservative governments want to hear. July marked the 25th anniversary of the DART, the country’s single most successful public transport project, yet when it was first proposed McCarthy denounced it as a waste of money. He has described the procedures for determining the pay of workers in the public services as “redolent of Soviet-era central planning”.

The McCarthy Report would devastate incomes and public services. If implemented it would mean:

- Major cuts in social welfare payments for all recipients
- Many thousands of families would lose their medical cards
- Hospital charges and medicines charges would go up, including a €5 charge for medical card prescriptions
- Increased charges for nursing home care and means-testing of home care for older people
- Increase in class sizes in our schools
- Amalgamation of rural schools, leading to many school closures
- 10% reduction in capitation grants (direct Government aid to schools on a per-pupil basis)
- Increased school transport fees
- Axing of 2,000 special needs assistants
- Axing a range of schemes to support the Irish language.

Without doubt the mess created by Fianna Fáil-led Governments and the massive deficit in public finances means that savings need to be made. And such savings are possible without targeting the vulnerable and without

hitting public services. Most such savings could and should have been made long before now. To take just three examples:

- **The two-tier public-private health system in the 26 Counties is grossly wasteful in terms of public money. The Government is subsidising the profitable private healthcare industry. Equity would also mean efficiency and lower costs in terms of public health and public money. McCarthy's report calls for greater use of lower cost generic medicines, something Sinn Féin and others have been advocating for years. Yet the Government's cosy relationship with the big pharmaceutical companies, the wholesalers and distributors of medicines has kept medicine costs – and profits – astronomically high.**
- **The Department of Education is paying a fortune every year in rents for pre-fabricated buildings in overcrowded schools. An accelerated school building programme would have reduced medium to long-term costs, provided a lasting educational infrastructure and boosting the construction industry.**
- **Sinn Féin has for some time called for the standardisation of all tax reliefs. This measure would add up to €1 billion extra to exchequer returns. This would more than cover the €850 million Colm McCarthy's report is seeking to take from those dependent on social welfare.**

The McCarthy Report provides a manifesto for Sinn Féin in campaigning against Government cuts and for real solutions in the months ahead.

This is a key task for Sinn Féin which cannot afford to be inward-looking in the wake of European and local elections that fell short of expectation in the 26 Counties. While those election results did disappoint, in many areas

**On an all-Ireland basis Sinn Féin had a good election, winning the first preference votes of 331,797 people and taking 14.34% of the national vote. That is a formidable political force**

breakthroughs were made and in the Six Counties Sinn Féin became the largest party in terms of first preference votes, returning Bairbre de Brún as MEP at the head of the poll. That was a truly historic achievement with major



**Counting the votes – Sinn Féin must now look forward**

political implications. The percentage vote in the 26 Counties at 11.4% was slightly up on 2004. On an all-Ireland basis Sinn Féin had a good election, winning the first preference votes of 331,797 people and taking 14.34% of the national vote. That is a formidable political force.

How must that force be deployed now? Key priorities in the period ahead include:

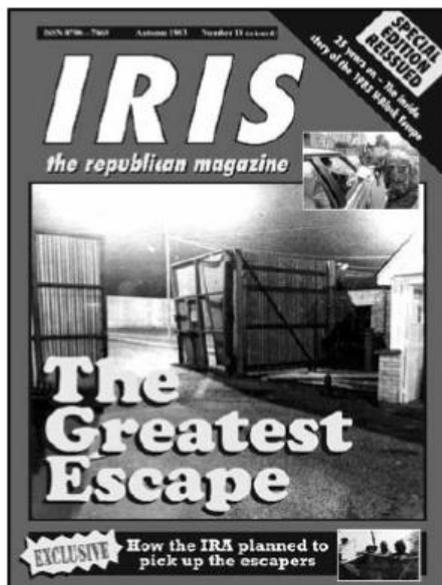
- **Campaigning in defence of jobs, incomes and public services, against savage cuts and for real and equitable solutions to the economic crisis.**
- **Opposing the Lisbon Treaty in the referendum set for 2 October.**
- **Preparing for a General Election in the 26 Counties which could happen at any time and Westminster elections in the Six Counties in 2010.**
- **Continuing to ensure that the Executive in the Six Counties functions and serves the people, taking on responsibility for policing and justice and fully working the All-Ireland structures.**
- **Focussing on the economic recession in the Six Counties also.**
- **Advancing the political, social and economic arguments for Irish unity.**
- **Building Sinn Féin across the 32 Counties.**

These are no small undertakings but when have Irish republicans ever taken on less than formidable tasks or boxed below their weight? 2009 is no different expect that Irish republicans have come through an amazing period of political development when they helped to transform armed political conflict into a successful peace process and a still-developing political process. We have shown that real political change is possible; we must move on to ensure that the next major transformation is towards social justice, economic equality and a united Ireland.

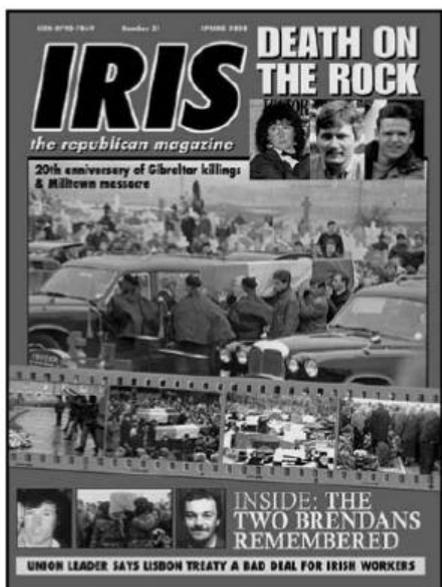
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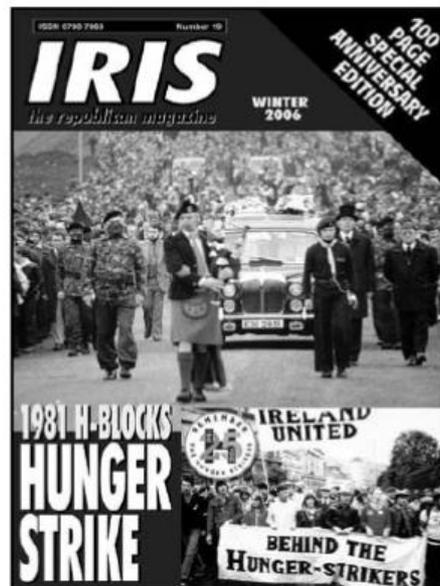
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# TIDE OF CHANGE SWEEPS ACROSS LATIN AMERICA



**SEÁN Ó FLOINN**  
looks at how a  
tidal wave of  
democracy and  
socialism is  
sweeping across  
Latin America,  
offering  
renewed hope  
in the midst  
of a global  
recession

For four long decades in Latin America, the Caribbean island of Cuba trod a lonely socialist path through a capitalist quagmire. With the exception of the Sandinistas progressive yet turbulent rule in Nicaragua from 1979 to 1990, Cuba was isolated and treated as a pariah state by the rest of Latin American countries. The latter were backed to the hilt by the United States and force-fed a strict Washington Consensus diet of privatisation, neo-liberalism and free-market capitalism - euphemisms for greed, exploitation and oppression. North American dollars flowed to prop up right-wing dictators and their paramilitaries and to quell popular left wing revolts. Now, with a left-tide engulfing Latin America, the political landscape has been transformed and the future of the continent's 520 million citizens looks much brighter and full of hope.

The catalyst for Latin America's recent surge to the left was unquestionably the 1998 election of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. Not only has

## Chávez has injected vibrancy into and brought the concept of "Socialism of the 21st Century" to life.

Chávez radically transformed the domestic situation in his own country, by channelling massive profits from the country's vast oil wealth to education, health and subsidised food programmes, but he has also been instrumental in the whole region. Chávez has injected vibrancy into and brought the concept of "Socialism of the 21st Century" to life. Chávez has introduced a viable and workable alternative to capitalism. With the assistance of Latin American leftist presidents he has boldly stated that "we are creating the axis of good, the new axis of the century".

From San Salvador down to Buenos Aires, the people have reacted to the rapacious capitalist system that has wreaked havoc in the region and have voted into office one leftist president after another.



**Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez**

- In 2003 Brazil elected Lula, a founding member of the Brazilian Workers Party. Although he has proven to be one of the more circumspect leaders, he has been re-elected by an electorate who admire his more humane leadership, with his opposition to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas and his Zero Hunger programme.
- In 2005 Uruguay elected its first left-wing president in its entire history, Tabaré Vazquez. Although he has moderated his socialism as a member of the centre-left Frente Amplio (Broad Front) he remains committed to social justice, wealth redistribution and against privatisation.
- The following year in 2006, left-leaning Michelle Bachelet beat her centre-right billionaire businessman opponent in Chile's Presidential race.
- The same year also witnessed the election, for the second time, of Sandinista ex-guerrilla Daniel Ortega as President of Nicaragua. Although Ortega receives much criticism from the left over alleged corruption and a watering down of his previous firebrand Marxism, there are still progressive elements in the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front).
- In neighbouring Honduras President Manuel Zelaya, who was recently the victim of a reactionary

right-wing coup d'état, angered his country's oligarchs with his social programmes for the poor; by raising the minimum wage by 60%; providing free school meals and pensions for the elderly; reducing the cost of public transport and by signing up to an alternative to the Free Trade Agreements.

- More significant still were the elections of Bolivia's first indigenous President Evo Morales and Ecuador's Rafael Correa in 2005 and 2006 respectively.

These latter two Presidents are staunch allies of Chávez and are firmly positioned in his socialist camp. Morales has proven a fearless advocate of "Socialism in the 21st century". When he took over he pledged that "the looting of our natural resources by foreign enterprises is over" and he has not disappointed. He has given the country's indigenous minority, for so long trampled on, more power and dignity. He has also carried out land redistribution and renegotiated and nationalised contracts for the country's vast gas wealth, which he is using to fund social projects for the people. His Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS – Movement towards Socialism) grew out of the highly-organised organic social movements that brought down previous presidents over the highly unpopular and unjust attempts to privatise water in 2000, more commonly referred to as the 'water wars'.

In Ecuador outspoken Socialist Rafael Correa has also tackled multinationals head on and has kept his promise of ensuring that the country's natural resources will benefit its citizens. He wants to build a "more just, fair, and dignified country". Ecuador's recently approved new constitution is one of the world's most progressive.

In 2008, Fernando Lugo, Paraguay's "Bishop of the Poor" or "Red Bishop" broke the 60 year presidential stranglehold of the right and emerged victorious. He is renowned within liberation theology circles, believing that capitalism is exploitative and that through political action social justice can be achieved for the poor and oppressed. Most recently, El Salvador's Mauricio Funes of the FMLN (Farabundo Martí



**Presidents (clockwise from top left) Brazil Lula; Uruguay Tabaré Vasquez; Chile Michelle Bachelet; Nicaragua Daniel Ortega and Honduras Manuel Zelaya**

National Liberation Front), former left-wing guerrillas, won his country's presidential race. He has pledged to end the privilege of the few who have amassed their wealth at the expense of the rest and champions social justice and solidarity.

Due to these developments, all democratic and peaceful, Latin America is no longer merely an annex of the United States. The continent has suffered untold poverty, misery and exploitation at the imperialist hands of the US and its bloody military dictators and proxies. Multinational corporations no longer have as free a reign to exploit and plunder natural resources. The Washington Consensus is no longer as prevalent. Privatisations are being reversed on a frequent basis. Dignity is being handed back to citizens. The masses are being politicised and are taking their destiny into their own hands, opting for progressive change through the ballot box. With their numerous referenda, presidential and recall electoral victories, Latin



**Bolivia's first indigenous President Evo Morales**

America has never known such democratic Presidents as Chávez, Morales and Correa, much to the chagrin of the capitalist democratic pretenders.

Latin America socialism is not mere rhetoric. ALBA, the Bolivarian Alliance for Latin America, is proving a genuine alternative to capitalism. ALBA grew out of an original agreement between Cuba and Venezuela in 2004 and has huge potential. Now it has nine members including Bolivia, Nicaragua,

Ecuador and Honduras. It is a direct opponent of the Free Trade Agreements. ALBA puts people before profit. It is a system of mutual economic aid, akin to a socialist bartering system. The perfect example is in return for daily cheap Venezuelan oil, Cuba provides doctors and health care workers. Operación Milagro (Operation Miracle) is another example of a purely socialist economic exchange at work, and has provided over 1.5 million free eye operations. There is no exploitation, no pillage of natural resources. Citizens from both countries enjoy mutual benefit. Daniel Ortega summed ALBA up stating that it "represents the American peo-

**Morales has proven a fearless advocate of "Socialism in the 21st century". When he took over he pledged that "the looting of our natural resources by foreign enterprises is over" and he has not disappointed. He has given the country's indigenous minority, for so long trampled on, more power and dignity**



**Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa**

ples' aspirations for independence and their rejection of the policies promoted by the United States, which have created a social emergency in Latin America". It is fitting that ALBA translates as 'dawn' in Spanish.

Chávez has been pivotal in expanding his 21st century socialism. He is heavily influenced by his hero Simón Bolívar, the great revolutionary who fought for Latin American independence and unity. Through new companies and organisations, the level of Latin American integration is unprecedented. Petrosur is attempting to integrate the region's energy industries while Petrocaribe supplies oil at preferential prices for impoverished Caribbean nations. Codesur promotes regional defence collaboration. Telesur is a network that broadcasts an alternative message to that of the right-wing capitalist dominated media. Bancosur is a creation that could see the replacement of the neo-liberal IMF in the region, by supplying loans to countries for social projects without the stringent privatisation stipulations associated with the IMF.

Unquestionably Latin America is turning red. However there is no room for complacency and the left must remain vigilant. This became all too apparent recently when Honduran troops seized President Manuel Zelaya from his bed and flew him to Costa Rica under arrest. US President Barack Obama said that "it would be a terrible precedent if we start moving backwards into the era in which we are seeing military coups as a means of political transition rather than democratic elections. The region has made enormous progress over the last 20 years in establishing democratic traditions in Central America and Latin America. We don't want to go back to a dark past."

However, the Obama administration has stopped short of sanctions against the coup leaders and continues to maintain diplomatic ties with the illegitimate Honduran government. Evo Morales has directly accused the US of being behind the coup. He stated that "the imperial structure remains in force". Hugo Chávez has blamed the US for "giving oxygen" to the illegitimate Honduran government. The White



**From Left, Cuban Vice President Jose Ramon Machado, Presidents Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Evo Morales of Bolivia, and Manuel Zelaya of Honduras**

House response as the situation in Honduras develops will be a key test of the Obama administration.

The coup's organiser was General Vasquez, the head of the Armed Forces and graduate of the infamous School of the Americas, euphemism for the School of death squads and coups. Many for-

**The coup's organiser was General Vasquez, the head of the Armed Forces and graduate of the infamous School of the Americas, euphemism for the School of death squads and coups**

mer right-wing military dictators and their generals were trained by US personnel here, including Panama's former corrupt dictator Manuel Noriega, anti-Castro terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, former army officers of Augusto Pinochet and Guatemalan general José Montt who was responsible for the slaughter of thousands of Guatemalans. If the Honduran coup is allowed to succeed then it could prove an inspiration to those who want to return to the dark

days of military dictatorships and halt the spread of Latin American socialism.

The US attempted to invade Cuba in 1962 at 'the Bay of Pigs' because it was fearful of its socialist revolution and ideals. How dare the Cubans offer healthcare and education free to its citizens, surely these should be commodities available only to those who can afford them? In 1973 Chile's democratically elected Socialist President Salvador Allende was viciously overthrown, with CIA connivance, by notorious human rights abuser General Augusto Pinochet who went on to rule Chile with an iron fist under a ruthless dictatorship. After the successful Sandinista revolution which overthrew corrupt dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979, the US backed the Honduran-based 'contras' to fight against the Sandinistas in a civil war to prevent the spread of progressive socialist programmes and reforms. The US also funded ruthless right-wing regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s and 1990s to extinguish the threat from left-wing guerrillas in the popular rebellions. In 2002, the CIA was directly involved in the coup d'état that threatened to unseat Hugo Chávez from power.

A defeat for the left in one country is a defeat for the international left. Solidarity is crucial. Not just words but actions. As the global economic system implodes, Latin American Socialism of the 21st Century provides a shining beacon to progressive people throughout the world and must be protected at all costs. Viva el socialismo del siglo 21!

# 1969



## the point of no return

In August 1969 the Six Counties erupted in civil unrest and loyalist pogrom as the Orange state came apart at the seams. Nationalists were no longer prepared to endure discrimination and second-class citizenship, and the only answer the statelet had for the demands of its oppressed minority was violence and repression.

Two landmarks stand out in those few brief and turbulent days, which had tremendous consequences for the Orange State, for British rule in the Six Counties, and for republican resistance to both. Free Derry Corner and Bombay Street became

synonymous with that period. Free Derry Corner was the spot where nationalists, armed with petrol bombs, stones, and any other missiles that came to hand, took on and defended Free Derry from the RUC.

In Belfast, days later, loyalist mobs took advantage of the IRA's disorganisation and lack of weaponry to invade Catholic areas, driving people from their homes, burning, and looting. Of all the areas worst affected, Bombay Street, stood out in people's memories and became the symbol of Belfast's last pogrom.

- The following series of interviews by *An Phoblacht's* Laura Friel (first published in 1999) tells of that critical period in Belfast's troubled history, a moment which brought British soldiers onto the streets and set the scene for the long war ahead.
- Belfast republican Seán Murray gives an eye-witness account of the pogrom.
- Sinn Féin MLA Mitchel McLaughlin of Derry writes of the Battle of the Bogside in which he participated.

# UNIQUE REDISCOVERED PHOTOGRAPHS

This issue of *IRIS* publishes a collection of unique photographs of the Belfast pogrom. The pictures show the ruins of Bombay Street after it was burnt out as well as neighbouring streets in the Lower Falls, including the ruined Conway Mill, with newly deployed British soldiers on the streets. The photos were taken by amateur photographer Gerry Collins (now 86) and lay forgotten for 40 years until Gerry and photographer Frankie Quinn of Red Barn Gallery ([www.redbarngallery.blogspot.com](http://www.redbarngallery.blogspot.com)) worked together this year to present the photographs in an exhibition for Féile an Phobail.



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



# RITA CANAVAN

"We lost everything but our sense of humour," says Rita Canavan. In a photograph taken in August 1969, two small boys are standing outside the burnt out facade of what had been the Canavan family's Bombay Street home. Short trousers, spindly legs and cropped hair, one child stands up straight for the camera, but his face seems pensive, anxious, unsure. His companion, hands on hips, strikes a more defiant pose.

Behind them, a row of modest terrace houses, fire gutted, roofless, without doors or windows, stand in silent testimony to the sectarian hatred in which they had been engulfed. It's a simple snapshot but all the elements are there, fear and defiance, vulnerability and courage. For the last 30 years, the image of Bombay Street has haunted not only the memory of residents whose homes were destroyed but the Northern nationalist psyche. And not without reason. Between 1969 to 1973, it is estimated that 60,000 Catholics in the Six Counties were driven from their homes.

As newlyweds, James and Rita Canavan moved into Bombay Street in the early '50s.

Rita remembers the area as a "quiet community of decent hardworking people." The largest factory, Mackies, despite being located in a predominantly Catholic area of West Belfast, drew its workforce almost exclusively from the Protestant community, the vast majority from the Shankill. Catholics were more likely to be employed in unskilled, low paid jobs, as store keepers in warehouses, in the mills and at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Whenever there was trouble brewing, Catholic families lived in fear of Mackies' afternoon shift finishing before the local men, forced to work outside the area, had returned home. When on Friday 15 August, 1969, hostile loyalist crowds began to gather for a second evening running, "there was an insufficient number of men to defend the area," says Rita. "Some women wanted to put up barricades but we were per-



Rita Canavan pictured in 1999

sued that everything would be alright by a local priest who was in contact with members of the Protestant community."

Outside a shoe shop on Cupar Street, members of the RUC and B Specials were standing with a crowd of loyalists. "We thought the RUC were there to stop the loyalists invading the area," says Rita. "We were wrong, they

gave us no protection at all." As fears of a loyalist incursion increased, the decision was taken to evacuate Bombay Street and a number of vulnerable streets in the surrounding area. "Crates of petrol bombs had been seen by one of my neighbours." Residents boarded up windows and barred their front doors. "Mrs McCarthy and I were the last two



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



**The devastation caused to Bombay Street and surrounding avenues, picture taken from Clonard Monastery**

in the street to leave," says Rita.

St Paul's parish hall was overflowing with refugees. "There were people there from Ardoyne and other areas of Belfast where Catholics were being attacked," says Rita. Despite the noise and smell of burning, the refugees at the parish hall did not anticipate the scale of the destruction which would greet them the following morning. "A priest told everyone to go home except those families from Bombay Street," says Rita. "We thought the house had been looted, we never imagined the whole street had been burnt to the ground. There was nothing to salvage. All we had were the clothes we stood up in."

With four young children and expecting a fifth, Rita and her family stayed with relatives until they were allocated a caravan in Beechmount. "It was

like a refugee camp," says Rita. "We stayed there throughout the winter of '69. It was so cold even the toothpaste froze in the tube." But as well as the

says Rita. The Travelling community who faced loyalist violence to collect the furniture of fleeing Catholic families in their lorries, "they were great," says

**"We thought the house had been looted, we never imagined the whole street had been burnt to the ground. There was nothing to salvage. All we had were the clothes we stood up in."**

hardship, Rita remembers a sense of community and individual acts of kindness with affection and praise.

The young men who held loyalist gangs at bay while their families saved what they could, "they were heroes,"

Rita. And the many thousands of people who contributed time and money to rebuild Bombay Street are also remembered. "I moved back into Bombay Street on 11 July 1970," says Rita, "and I've lived here ever since."



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast

# NELLIE MCAULEY

"He's not coming home," says Nellie McAuley. "They were the words that confirmed my worst fears." A large black and white pen portrait of her son hangs in the living room of Nellie's terrace street home. "It was drawn by one of the prisoners in Long Kesh," says Nellie, "and given to Gerald's uncle. It's a good likeness."

Gerald McAuley was 15 years old when he was shot dead while defending the Clonard district from loyalist attack. The likeness shows all the optimism and confidence of youth. The kind of face which should have been more at home on a GAA pitch challenging his peers, than facing a pitched battle against a rampaging Orange mob.

At 7am on Friday 15 August, Nellie was in Belfast city centre where she was working as a cleaner in one of the big stores. "I was working when I heard the news that a wee boy, Patrick Rooney, had been shot dead by the RUC in Divis Flats the night before," says Nellie.

There were no buses for the return journey home. "A young woman was standing at the bus stop in the town," says Nellie. She was a Protestant, the girl told Nellie, and was too afraid to walk home through West Belfast. "I told her she'd be alright with me, and we linked arms and walked home together."

Years later, the two women met again. "She remembered me and also knew that my son had been shot dead just hours after we first met," says Nellie. She thanked Nellie for her kindness and said she had been sorry to hear Gerald had been killed. "It was ironic," she said. "No, it was tragic," said Nellie.

"I'd been out queuing for bread," says Nellie, "and when I returned home there was a commotion at the house. Someone said Gerald had been shot. Another neighbour said he'd only been hit with a stone." With an increasing sense of foreboding, Nellie began a desperate search for her son.

"I heard some of the wounded had been taken to the Royal Victoria



Gerald McAuley (circled) picture with his Fianna Éireann Slua

Hospital. I pleaded with a nurse to let me search the wards." A neighbour waiting in Casualty for his injuries to be treated confirmed that Gerald had been shot but he wasn't at the Royal.

Back at home, news reporters had visited the McAuleys, asking for a photograph of Gerald. "He must be dead," Nellie told her daughter Frances. Finbar McKenna's father took Nellie to the City Hospital. "A sister at the hospital said Gerald wasn't there but there was a 19-year-old youth in the morgue at Musgrave Barracks," says Nellie. "I

knew it was Gerald; he was only 15 but he was big for his age."

Returning home, the reaction of people manning a barricade at Kennedy Way added to Nellie McAuley's fears. "They moved so quickly and quietly out of our way." From across a road a priest called to Nellie. "Are you looking for your son?" said the priest, "He's not coming home, go home now, he died for his faith." Later that night Gerald's father travelled to Musgrove to identify his son's body.

"I didn't know Gerald was a mem-

"I'd been out queuing for bread," says Nellie, "and when I returned home there was a commotion at the house. Someone said Gerald had been shot. Another neighbour said he'd only been hit with a stone." With an increasing sense of foreboding, Nellie began a desperate search for her son.



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



**Dark Days:** The aftermath of the loyalist invasion of Bombay Street

ber of the Fianna," says Nellie. "He was often away from home cycling and camping but I never thought anything of it. I was told later that he had been helping evacuate families, loading their furniture onto the back of a lorry."

The McAuley family's ordeal did not end there. Three weeks later a British army captain knocked on their front door. "He asked for my husband and told him he was wanted down the barracks to identify his son," says

Nellie. "My husband told him Gerald was dead and buried but he insisted. 'Is it Jim?' he asked. At the barracks the RUC roared with laughter. It was their idea of a joke, a sort of initiation stunt for the British Army officer."



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



# PATRICK McPARLAND

"They were a few men with very few weapons but they fought bravely to defend this district," says Patrick McParland. Patrick was a young man of 20 when he watched a handful of IRA Volunteers repel an armed loyalist mob intent on driving Catholics out of the Clonard area. "Bombay Street had already gone up in flames," says Patrick, "but I tell you it could have been a lot worse."

Patrick describes the attack of 15 August 1969 as "well planned" by loyalists and endorsed by the RUC. "In the early hours of Friday morning, the RUC raided a house in Kane Street, arrested two men and 'recovered' the only weapon in the district," says

Patrick. The RUC's action suggests they not only knew of loyalist plans to attack the area but also colluded by disarming nationalists in advance.

At Mackies factory, the loyalist workforce held a secret meeting. "A Catholic working in the factory walked into the meeting in the tool room by chance," says Patrick. "The room fell silent and he was questioned about what he had overheard." When Mackies afternoon shift finished work, the workforce was strangely quiet and quick to leave the district.

"Trouble started as soon as Mackies workers were away," says Patrick, "as if they had waited until everyone was safely home on the Shankill before turn-

ing the heat up." The Catholic district began to be showered with hundreds, perhaps thousands of petrol bombs.

"They must have been up all Thursday night preparing that amount of petrol bombs," says Patrick. "This was not a spontaneous riot." The RUC had guaranteed Clonard Monastery that they would defend the area against any sectarian attack. "The RUC lied," says Patrick. "They did nothing."

As residents desperately tried to defend their homes, fires began to take hold in some houses under petrol bomb attack. "At Teddy Lynch's, a loyalist threw a grenade and the whole house just went up," says Patrick. Teddy later came back to collect his motorbike -



Loyalist mob attack nationalist homes



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast

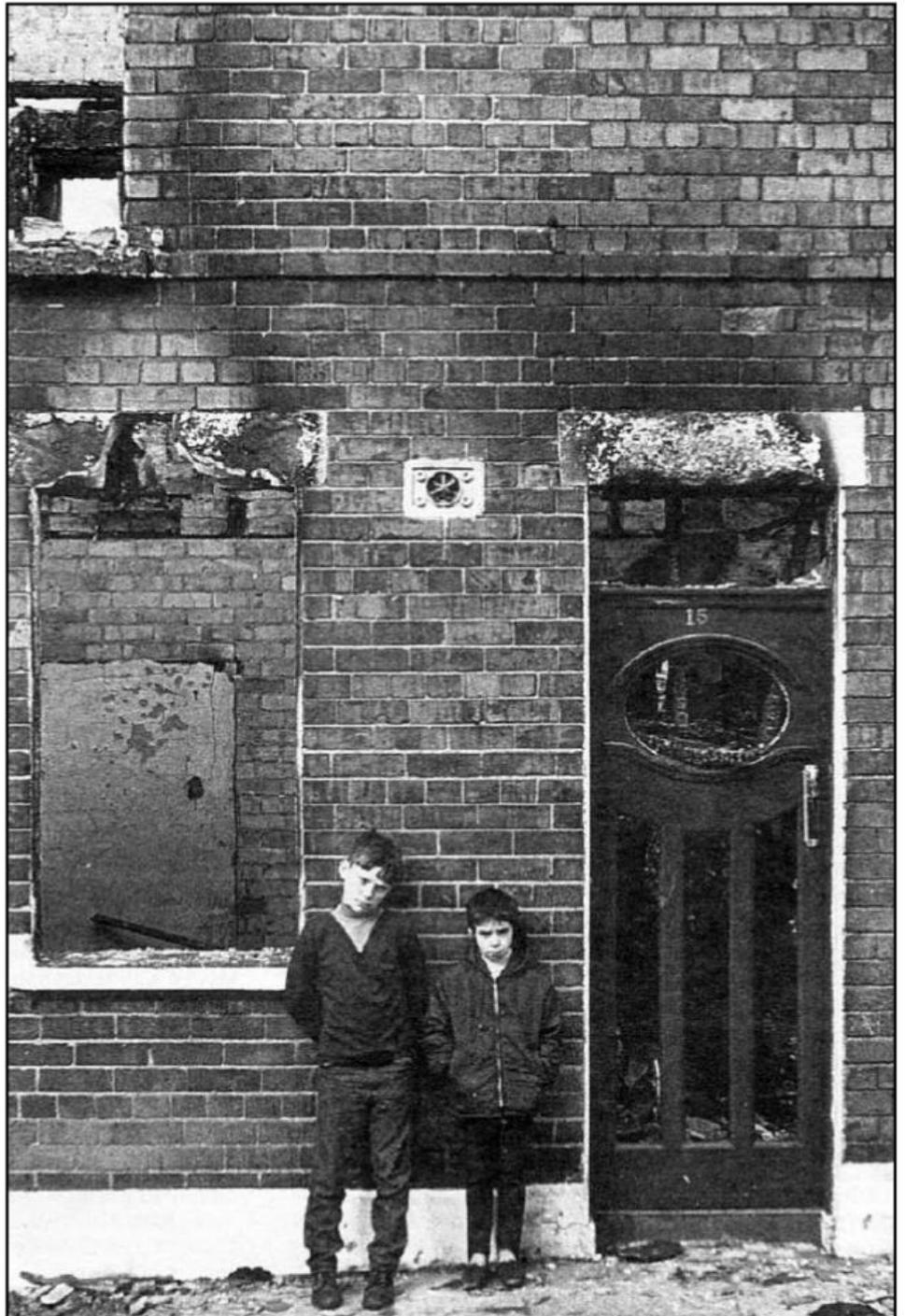
"Motorbike? there was no bloody house!"

"Geordie McMahon took the initiative," says Patrick. "He hijacked an articulated lorry and threw it across the bottom of the Kashmir Road." At a gap between the back of the lorry and a wall, a loyalist gunman appeared.

"He was dressed in a black hat and black tunic and his face was covered

As Bombay Street began to burn, firemen refused to drive into the street. "I think they must have been intimidated by the loyalists," says Patrick. "Colm Meehan drove one of the fire engines up himself. We didn't know how to use it but it was worth a try." The fire engine was abandoned when loyalist gunmen fired through the windscreen

with a hankie. He was carrying a sterling sub machine gun." As the gunman appeared, nationalist residents at the top of the hill ran to the left. "Gerry McAuley ran to the right, he made it as



Homeless

far as Waterville Street, but there was a burst of fire and he fell."

The gunman who killed the 15-year-old was a well-known local loyalist whose family lived next door to a Catholic-owned bar in Cupar Street. Three other people were shot and seriously injured by loyalist gunmen in the Clonard district that day.

As Bombay Street began to burn, firemen refused to drive into the street. "I think they must have been intimidated by the loyalists," says Patrick. "Colm

Meehan drove one of the fire engines up himself. We didn't know how to use it but it was worth a try." The fire engine was abandoned when loyalist gunmen fired through the windscreen.

Then the IRA arrived. "A handful of men and they weren't very well armed" says Patrick, "but what they lacked in manpower and firepower they made up for in courage and tenacity. The men who fought that day became the founding fathers of the Provisional IRA of today."



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast

# MARTIN MEEHAN

"A .303 rifle with eleven rounds of ammunition saved Ardoyne," says Martin Meehan. "In August 1969, the IRA of that time left nationalists in North Belfast defenceless." Trouble had been brewing in the north of the city for weeks. By August, as sectarian attacks on Catholic areas intensified, the steady flow of families fleeing their homes became a tidal wave of refugees.

"It was like something you would see in Kosovo," says Martin, "wave after wave of refugees fleeing to relative safety within Ardoyne and further afield to West Belfast." Every classroom in the local school was sheltering families with their few belongings.

In early August, the then IRA leadership decided to move any weaponry held in North Belfast into a central pool in the west of the city. "It was all done very quietly," says Martin. "They disarmed the area, we were left defenceless and we didn't even know. It was to cause a lot of resentment later."

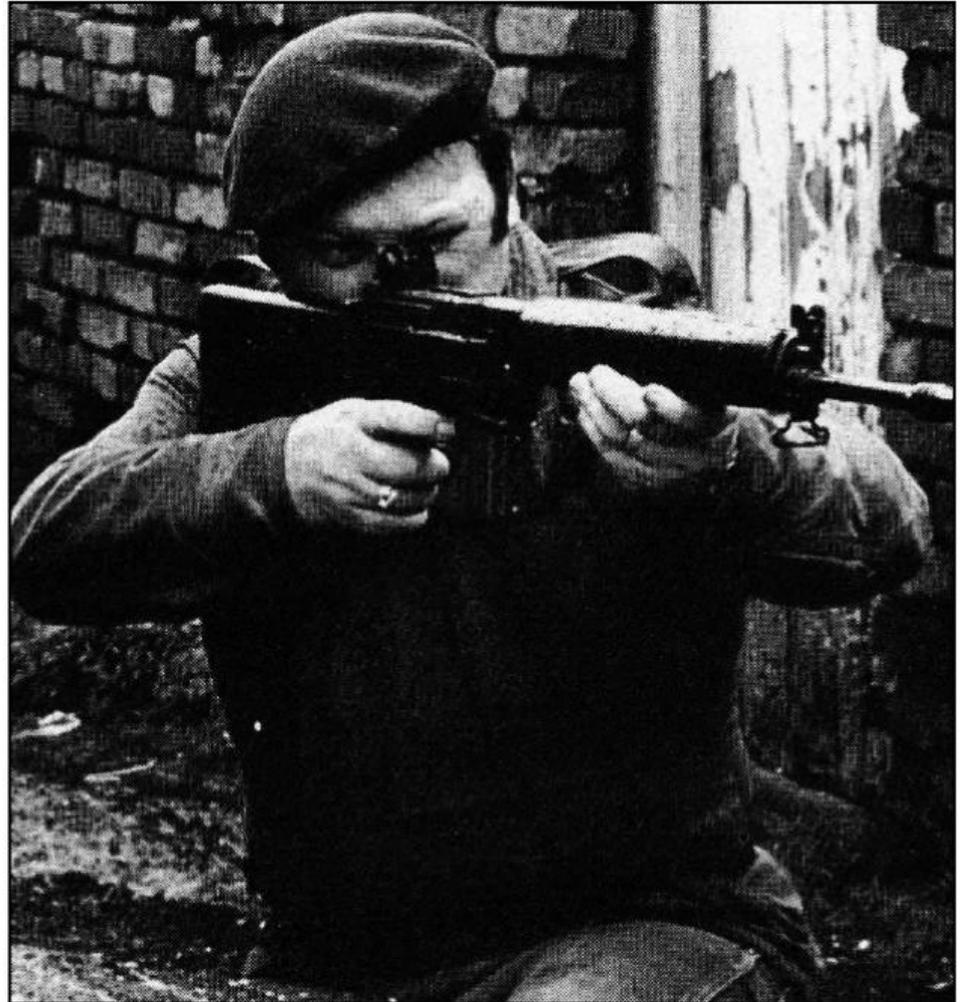
On Thursday, 14 August, the RUC and B Specials "came in very heavy". Catholic homes and businesses were burnt along the front of the Crumlin Road. The decision was taken to use buses at a local depot to barricade the district against further attack.

"About 50 buses were used," says Martin. "They were used to block off as many roads into the Ardoyne as possible. It was our line of defence." That afternoon loyalists opened up with shot guns," says Martin, "20 people were hit and Ardoyne was in turmoil."

Martin remembers with some amusement the casualty ward in the Mater Hospital. Injured nationalists and loyalists sat within spitting distance of each other "and never a word was spoken," says Martin.

Snipers had climbed to the top of mills overlooking Ardoyne and were firing at anyone who moved. Unarmed and under fire, a few local men later set fire to the mills as a defensive measure to deny the sniper a vantage point.

"Someone produced a .303 rifle and



**Volunteer Martin Meehan on active service in mid 1970s**

11 rounds of ammunition. That rifle saved this area," says Martin. The weapon was moved from street to street

attacked and burnt but on this side we were able to defend the district.

"In the immediate aftermath

"Someone produced a .303 rifle and 11 rounds of ammunition. That rifle saved this area," says Martin. The weapon was moved from street to street and "the roar of it gave the impression that we were well armed."

and "the roar of it gave the impression that we were well armed."

Both loyalists and the RUC did not attempt to invade the area beyond the barricade of buses. "Catholic homes on the other side of the barricades were

Republicans paid a heavy price for the then leadership's decision to take weapons out of the area. The seeds for the split which gave birth to the Provisions were partly sown in North Belfast in '69."



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast

# ANN McLARNON

"My husband was murdered for being a good neighbour," says Ann McLarnon. In the front parlour of the McLarnon family's Ardoyne home, Ann recounts the night when as a young wife she was robbed of a gentle husband and her three small children lost a father they were too young to really know.

On the wall hangs a small snapshot of a happy couple on their wedding day, holding hands as they walk together down a terraced street. Above the television hangs a much larger framed newspaper cutting of Sammy McLarnon's funeral cortege.

As Ann tells her story, her voice is trembling and there are tears in her eyes. If Sammy and his bride's joy had been brief, the grief of his widow has been as

long as the trailing line of grim-faced mourners carrying Sammy's coffin along a winding road.

"We heard shooting earlier that night but I didn't know what shooting was and when Sammy dismissed it as only blanks I was reassured," says Ann. "Sammy wanted me and the kids to go

and stay in his mother's house but I refused."

Ann and Sammy moved into Herbert Street shortly after they were married. By August 1969 the young couple had a two-year-old son, Sammy, a baby daughter, Ann Marie and Ann was expecting their third child, Samantha.

"A house had been set on fire," says Ann, "and Sammy went up to help put out the flames." Shots were fired as a few local residents tried to save the house. "Leave the fenian bastards to us," an RUC officer had shouted to the loyalist mob



August 1969: RUC stand idly by



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast

Ann was only 20 years old, her husband just 27.

At the top of the street, a crowd of loyalists had gathered together with some members of the RUC. "A house had been set on fire," says Ann, "and Sammy went up to help put out the flames." Shots were fired as a few local residents tried to save the house. "Leave the fenian bastards to us," an RUC officer had shouted to the loyalist mob.

"When Sammy came back into the house we both stood by the front window watching two fellas standing directly across the road," says Ann. "The RUC spoke to the two men and they were moved away." Ann went out into the kitchen.

It was only a few moments later. "As I walked back into the front room, three shots rang out," says Ann, "Sammy fell to the ground." Ann remembers calling her husband's name, screaming and running for help next door.

Sammy McLarnon's body lay where he fell for over five hours while the RUC and B Specials refused to let an ambulance through to the house. In the end, the dead man was taken away in a black taxi. Ann and her children were taken to Sammy's mother's house in Andersonstown. "I was in a state of shock," says Ann. "I couldn't think. I didn't want to believe Sammy was dead."

Later on the night of the killing, the RUC opened fire again on the McLarnon family's home. The walls of the house were riddled with gunfire. It was over a month later before the RUC sent a forensic team to investigate the crime scene.

"There was only three shots fired when Sammy was killed," says Ann. "I have no doubt that those shots were aimed. The RUC deliberately killed my husband and then covered it up. The house was riddled so that it seemed as if Sammy had been killed by a stray bullet, an accident."

\* Since these interviews were conducted Rita Canavan and Martin Meehan have died. *Suaimhneas siorai dóibh.*



**Nationalist families flee their homes in fear**





Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



**SEÁN MURRAY**  
writes of his memories  
of the events in west  
Belfast on Thursday  
night, 14 August 1969

# The Clonard Pogrom, 1969



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast

## BY SEÁN MURRAY

My abiding memory of the events in west Belfast on Thursday night, 14 August 1969, was of standing in the grounds of Clonard Monastery, watching in sheer disbelief nationalist homes in neighbouring Cupar Street, Norfolk Street, David Street and Conway Street burning. This was my introduction to naked sectarian hatred and the true nature of the Orange State.

Growing up in Clonard, we always sensed that we were trapped within a hostile statelet, whose flag was not our flag, whose police force treated us with suspicion and contempt, but nothing could prepare us for what was unfolding before our very eyes that evening.

Earlier that day, word had spread throughout the area that Clonard Monastery had been warned of an imminent attack. Local residents alongside men from the Clonard Confraternity, who worshiped in the church, resolved to defend it to the best of their ability.

Crowds gathered that evening



Patrick Rooney remembered in 2001

around the monastery, armed with stones, bottles and hurling sticks. They later proceeded to put a row of bins across Clonard Gardens beside the monastery, presumably to provide some form of deterrent barrier to would-be attackers.

There was an air of innocence and naivete about the whole situation, besides a sense of standing together, irrespective of the odds, emboldened by what was happening in Derry.

That night, Trooper Hugh McCabe home on leave and 9-year-old Patrick Rooney were shot dead in Divis Flats as the area was raked by heavy machine-gun fire from the RUC's Shorland armoured cars.

As the pogrom erupted along the Falls Road, Nationalist homes were burned to the ground in Percy Street and Dover Street, facing Divis Flats, and further on up the road around Cupar and Conway Streets.

Meanwhile, Clonard remained tense but unaffected. We erected a small barricade across the Kashmir Road, beside where I lived, at its junction with Bombay Street. We were subsequently persuaded by Fr McLaughlin to take it down and return to our homes in the early hours of Friday morning. He assured us that the monastery bells would be rung if the area came under attack. The RUC had promised him earlier that the monastery and local homes would be



Hurriedly erected barriers, like this burnt out truck, failed to save nationalist areas from loyalist mobs



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



**Proinsias Mac Airt**

protected in the event of any loyalist incursion.

Later that morning, the home of a local republican at 6 Kane Street, Proinsias Mac Airt, was raided and weapons taken away. Mac Airt, along with Lurgan republican Malachy McGurran were arrested. These weapons were to assist in the event of any attack of the area; now it was defenceless.

### **THE ATTACK BEGINS**

Mackie's, a large engineering works was located on the Springfield Road, where Springvale Training College is now situated. Despite its location in a

nationalist area, it employed only a handful of nationalists, similar to employment patterns in other engineering firms like the shipyard, Shorts and Sirocco in east Belfast. Every working day, the mainly unionist workforce walked through Clonard to work and local residents feared the worst that morning in the aftermath of the burnings the night before. But their fears were unfounded as the unionist workforce proceeded rather sheepishly to work.

Later that morning, a nationalist worker by chance walked into a meeting in the toolroom. The room fell silent and he was questioned as to what

he had overheard. When the Mackie's afternoon shift finished that Friday, around 3 pm, the workforce again were strangely quiet and wasted no time making their way home via Clonard.

Shortly after they had reached the relative safety of the Shankill, the attack on Clonard began.

A large mob advanced from Cupar Street at its juncture with Kashmir Road, armed with sticks, stones and petrol bombs. As many of the local men were still at work, the initial defence of the area was left to a handful of teenagers and young men, who bravely held the mob at bay. Around this time, a local priest phoned the RUC at Springfield Road Barracks, requesting their assistance, but no help came.

### **SHOTS FIRED**

Around an hour and a half later, the first shots rang out from the loyalist side.

It was at this time that 15-year-old Fiann Gerald McAuley was shot and subsequently died as he bravely fought to repel the incursion. His death alongside the events which led to it were to inspire a generation of young men and women never again to acquiesce to unionist misrule and the denial of human and national rights. He was anointed at the spot where he fell in Waterville Street by Fr Egan, who had been watching events unfold from the upstairs window in the adjoining monastery. He was to anoint four other residents within the next hour.

Fr McLaughlin decided, given the gravity of the situation, to go directly to Springfield Road RUC Barracks. He observed RUC men sitting around, drinking tea, but was informed that they were under orders not to leave their barracks, fearing an imminent IRA attack!

Fearing a massacre, Fr Egan attempted to contact the British Army's GOC in Lisburn to request the presence of troops to deter the murderous onslaught that was now underway.

As residents desperately tried to defend their homes, without any assistance from the 'forces of law and order', in spite of earlier guarantees, fires began to take hold in many homes



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



**A British soldier in position and the rubble on the Falls Road**

as the petrol bombs rained down relentlessly.

This was obviously not a spontaneous attack given the ferocity, confidence and size of the mob and the number of petrol bombs in continuous use. It was well-organised and well-resourced with deadly intent: a brutal, murderous plan to completely destroy the Clonard community.

The Falls was in the firing line the night before; it was Clonard's turn today.

### **BRITISH SOLDIERS**

The first batch of British soldiers arrived on the Falls Road at 7pm. Fr Egan attempted to persuade their commanding officer to move into the Clonard area but to no avail – he had his orders!

Around 9 pm, the first detachment of British troops moved into Clonard Gardens and began to charge the loyalist mob back towards Cupar Street. However, this proved to be totally inef-

fective as undeterred the loyalists systematically went from door to door along Bombay Street and petrol bombed our homes and our local primary school, St Gall's.

In essence, they called the British Army's bluff because they knew that they were under orders not to open fire. Bombay Street in its entirety and the bottom ends of Kashmir Road and Clonard Gardens were now a blazing inferno.

The firemen were fearful of driving into Bombay Street and local residents commandeered their vehicles but couldn't operate them, relying instead on fire extinguishers from the local monastery.

A handful of men did arrive with limited weaponry during the evening but despite their courage and tenacity they were unable to prevent the Clonard Pogrom.

### **A GENERATION RADICALISED**

As was the case in the 1920s,

Clonard once again was on the receiving end of a loyalist backlash as revenge for nationalists having the audacity to challenge the Orange state.

But our generation would not be cowed or intimidated. Overnight, a generation of young nationalists was radicalised. It proved to be a massive watershed for me and my generation. Never again, unlike our parents' generation, would we accept discrimination and second-class citizenship. The death knell was sounded for the Orange state.

When we looked around for a vehicle for change the only viable option, unlike today, was the ranks of militant republicanism, namely Fianna Éireann or Óglaigh na hÉireann. Many young men and women of my generation took that step. Out of the ashes of Bombay Street arose the Provisional IRA like the legendary phoenix of old, reborn and rejuvenated and, as they say, the rest is history.



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



**MITCHEL McLAUGHLIN,**  
then a Derry youth and now  
a Sinn Féin MLA and  
former National  
Chairperson of the party,  
recalls the events of August  
1969 in his native city.



# THE BATTLE OF THE BOGSIDE 40 YEARS ON



## **WAS IT WORTH IT?**



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



## BY MITCHEL McLAUGHLIN

In the late 1960's, Civil Rights struggles in the US, and student protests in France, Germany and England, especially the anti-Vietnam war protests, had evoked a demand for reform and social justice in Ireland but particularly in the North. The Civil Rights movement was formed in the mid-1960s and sought to achieve reform by publicising, documenting, and protesting for an end to abuses in areas such as housing, gerrymandering, discrimination in employment and the Special Powers Act.

The Derry Housing Action Committee had identified a popular cause and a capacity for direct action which had very quickly produced a number of relatively minor but symbolically important victories. The lesson that further pressure might produce other much needed change was not lost on nationalists. Unionists believed that more reform would eventually lead to a United Ireland and were instinctively opposed to the very concept of equality. In hindsight, this may perhaps offer the best rationale for the conflict that was about to engulf the North.

In August 1969, the political context for the controversy about the Apprentice Boys march was anger over the blatantly sectarian decision in 1965 to locate the new University in Coleraine instead of Derry, the housing agitation and direct action of the DHAC, the Duke Street

Civil Rights march, October 5th 1968, the Burntollert ambush of the Peoples Democracy march, January 1969, the subsequent invasion by the RUC of the St. Columbs Well's area of the Bogside and in particular, the deaths of Francis McCloskey, from Dungiven, 14 July 1969 and Sammy Devenny 16 July 1969 who were the first fatalities of the 'Troubles', batoned and beaten by the RUC.

An interesting feature of Derry in August 1969 was the number of organisations or personalities who jostled for the leadership from time to time or indeed from protest to protest. What was equally interesting was the unionist insistence that all of these various leaderships were only a front for republicans.

Whilst a working accommodation would often prevail, the reality was that no single group or leadership could claim to exercise an overall authority. Despite the debates and disagreements about tactics and objectives, a consensus of sorts would often emerge especially during what is now known as the Battle of the Bogside. In reality the nationalist community had rejected the state and the RUC and it seemed that most front and back doors were left unlocked if shelter or food were needed and this became a dependable feature during riots or 'snatch' operations for a number of years thereafter.

The Battle of the Bogside will of course be remembered in popular memory for the first use of CS Gas by the RUC and the trigger for the redeployment of the British Army on the streets of the Six Counties. As the



RUC and nationalist rioters clash in Bogside, Derry. Here the RUC have the upper hand, but not for long



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast

Apprentice Boys parade passed close to the Bogside area the predicted rioting erupted. The RUC used armoured cars and water cannons to drive the rioters back and initially attempted to enter the Bogside. The RUC were closely followed by a loyalist mob.

The Bogside eventually succeeded in forcing the police and the loyalists out of the area. It was a mighty riot alright, and without doubt after more than 50 hours of fierce combat, the RUC were exhausted and on the verge of defeat. But it was the fact that the Unionist Government was losing control of the situation, especially as more nationalist areas rose in support of Derry, which impelled the British Government to send in the British Army.

On 14 August, late afternoon, a small number of people including myself were involved in a clash at the top of Howard Street where the B-Specials had been brought in to support the RUC. Somebody arrived with the news that the British Army were already in William Street and that the riot was over. Shortly afterwards the British Army appeared and B-Specials were withdrawn. I have one overriding impression of that day, as I wandered around the different barricades; that the British Army were always facing into the nationalist areas.

It was only later that I became aware of the price that Belfast and other areas had paid, indeed would continue to pay in the days that followed. At the height of the Derry riots, appeals had been made for other areas to come out and to draw the RUC away from Derry. Calls had also been issued by various spokespersons for the Irish Government or the British Government to act. Jack Lynch made a television address announcing that 'field hospitals' would be set up in border areas. He went on to say: "The present situation is the inevitable outcome of the policies pursued for decades by successive Stormont governments. It is clear also that the Irish government can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse."

It should be remembered that in Derry, despite the intensity of the riot with more than 1,000 casualties and notwithstanding that some RUC officers had used live



British soldiers behind a wall on Derry's Bogside



Bogside eventually succeeded in forcing police, army and loyalists out of the area

rounds; no-one had been killed. But in Armagh a local man, John Gallagher was shot dead by the B-Specials during a protest. He was the first fatality of August 1969 but in the following two days another seven people would die.

In Belfast, after nationalist protests about the RUC actions in Derry, vicious sectarian riots erupted and continued throughout the following day. In Divis Street the RUC fired a number of shots from a heavy Browning machine-gun mounted on an armoured car into the Divis Flats and Towers killing a nine-year-old Catholic boy, Patrick Rooney as he lay in bed

The next day, 15 August, six more people were killed and countless more injured during escalating sectarian pogroms against Catholics in Belfast. Despite the heroic efforts of a small band of IRA volunteers, many families were burned out or forced to move from their homes.

I have often listened in Derry to discussions, conversations and reminiscences about the 'Battle of the Bogside' and wondered if we have a certain parochial smugness about our part in defeating the RUC on that occasion. But it is that a perspective that too often understates that other areas and most especially Belfast had come out in support



Photographs copyright: Gerry Collins/Red Barn Gallery, Belfast



**Battle of the Bogside: First time CS Gas used by the RUC**

with the certain knowledge that a massive backlash would follow? A question arises: 'Is it not long past time when Derry should formally acknowledge the courage and sacrifice of those areas which came out in support of the Bogside?'

### **'WAS IT WORTH IT?'**

In typical republican fashion I will approach that question by asking another. Did the conditions for social, political and economic justice exist in the North of Ireland in 1969? (I could well ask that as an All-Ireland question but we are discussing the 'Battle of the Bogside'). I have already referred to the reasons for the emergence of the Civil Rights struggle and indeed Unionist resistance to those demands. It might be beneficial to remember the Civil Rights demands, making due allowance for the language of that time:

One man One Vote  
 One man One House  
 One man One Job

Discrimination in employment and housing, gerrymandering, the denial of access to political power meant that for the vast majority of the nationalist community, the conditions for change did not exist and would continue to be denied by state violence.

But as Ian Paisley recently remarked "that was then, this is now".

Most people in Ireland have accepted that massive

reforms have now been won and indeed are guaranteed by an international agreement which was ratified by the people of Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement made historic strides towards redressing injustices by ensuring;

- Power-sharing as of right
- No return to Unionist domination
- Government of Ireland Act repealed
- All-Ireland structures now institutionalised
- Equal rights enforceable by the courts
- Human Rights legislation
- Demilitarisation
- RUC abolished and inclusive policing structures now in place
- Reform of the judiciary and the justice system ongoing
- Formula within the Good Friday Agreement to address the issue of Partition.

Republicans, after many years of struggle have now created the basis for peaceful and democratic means to pursue our goal of national self-determination. No one can seriously deny that these changes have been delivered and that the Orange state of 1969 no longer exists.

To come back to the original question – "Was it worth it?"

'Yes!' is the answer, always being conscious that the longest journey begins with the first step and we still have a lot of work to do to complete the journey.

There's a song, which describes the complexity of Irish politics that goes – 'Ireland is a very funny place, sir - it's a strange and a troubled land.' The political diversity in the late Volunteer Billy Doyle's

family is a classic example of that complexity and his autograph book signed in Kilmainham in the early 1920s is a cryptic but significant reminder of the importance of keeping a record.

## BY ELLA O' DWYER

It was around the time of my father's death last year when I first met Michael Duffy so gradually the Dubliner kind of adopted me. Little did he know the baggage he was taking on board as every Thursday I'd torture him to buy *An Phoblacht*. As it turned out Michael had access to significant literature too – an autograph book signed by IRA prisoners in the early '20s. It took Michael months to persuade his sister Máire to lend him a copy of 'the book' for me to see. The autograph book which was the possession of their late uncle Volunteer Billy Doyle is signed by IRA Volunteers in Kilmainham in the early 1920s. The idea behind these autographs was to leave a record for future generations and an entry from another Volunteer called John Doyle of Cell 31 Kilmainham says as much: "This old page will tell my tale, when I am well forgotten."

There were fierce comings and goings around the trafficking of the book before I could get a glance at it and by now I was petrified about meeting the keeper of the Holy Grail – Máire. "We've known about this book all our lives", she says finally in her home on Killarney Street. "As children we'd visit our uncle Billy and his wife aunt May and we played with the book." From then on Máire (76) and Michael (70) are joined at the hip in a fascinating account of their late uncle's life.

"Uncle Billy married aunt May in the mid 1920s. Billy was too young to join the IRA at the time of the Rising – he was a runner for the 'RA then, a bit like the Fianna. He took messages from one place to the other. Billy was living with an aunt around York Street off Stephen's Green. After the Rising when the Troubles started he joined the



Michael Duffy and sister Máire

# 'THE BOOK' – WORDS FROM KILLMAINHAM

IRA. He'd have been in his early 20s then because he was born around 1900", Máire explains.

Billy Doyle was on active service in Dublin and was involved in the shooting of British soldiers in Baggot Street on Bloody Sunday – the morning before the massacre in Croke Park.

"He and others went off about six in the morning to assassinate British soldiers and officers who were staying in various parts of the city," Máire explains.

Billy Doyle was part of the active service team that operated under Michael Collins's 'squad'. "He always

Stone walls do not a Prison make  
 is very true no doubt  
 but once inside Kilmainham Gaol  
 you will find your luck is out

Daniel Finlayson  
 Cell 22 Section E  
 Kilmainham Gaol

Stone walls do not a prison make is very true no doubt, but once inside Kilmainham Gaol you will find your luck is out. Daniel Finlayson Cell 22 Section E, Kilmainham Gaol

It's all very well to be happy and bright  
 when life goes along like a song  
 but the man whose worth while,  
 is the man who can smile  
 when every dashed thing goes wrong

Cecil P. Malley  
 Cell 2  
 Section 2  
 Kilmainham Prison  
 July 1921

It's all very well to be happy and bright, when life goes along like a song, but the man whose worth while, is the man who can smile when every dashed thing goes wrong. Cecil P. Malley, Cell 2, Section 2 Kilmainham Prison July 1921



Billy Doyle with unknown comrade

told us about shooting a British officer who asked if he could get dressed before they'd shoot him", she continues. Do you know which shooting that was I ask? "No! If he started to talk about that Aunt May would tell him - 'Forget about it, I don't want to hear about it any more.' She didn't want him talking about it because he had gone very nervous and she didn't want him getting upset. But she knew all he did because she did the running for him - she carried his gun, though she never joined Cumann na mBan. She worked with him and another IRA man called George White."

Billy Doyle was an officer in the

**'Ireland is a very funny place, sir - it's a strange and a troubled land.'**  
 - Song

Colour Party when the Irish forces took over Beggars Bush in 1922 and when the British Army headed to Dun Laoghaire for the boat. That was before the widening of the split between the Free State and the Republicans. Later Billy Doyle was involved on the Republican side in the Civil War

So how old were you guys when they were hearing all these stories I ask? "I was born in 1939", Michael responds,

"and I'd say from the time I could understand things I was hearing those stories." But Billy Doyle - like so many other IRA Volunteers was shy of pronouncing his contribution to the struggle - he was another of those unknown soldiers.

"He never bothered", Michael says, "to put himself forward for recognition. He never got his IRA pension until about 1947 - he wouldn't ask. They all had pensions but he wouldn't apply. He was in Arbour Hill about 1918 - I don't know why exactly and later for a year in Killmainham."

Back then, as during all phases of the IRA struggle, there was a justifiable culture of silence - 'whatever you say,

say nothing'. "There are gaps in Billy's story" I remark. "Yes", says Michael, "there are. We weren't allowed to hear much of it but at different times we'd ask questions and get him to talk."

"We were raised up with this book", the siblings Michael and Máire state, "We loved it. So in recent years we took it to the National Library beside the Dáil and they would have loved to have it and preserve it but Billy's son who inherited the book wouldn't part with it – as far as he was concerned it was a family possession."

And speaking of families we went on to talk about the confoundingly contradictory political affiliations that existed amongst Irish families in the 1920s.

"There were bitter memories of the Civil War back then," said Máire. "Our grandfather John O'Reilly was in the British Army, and lived in the

same house with uncle Billy who was in the IRA and my father who joined the Free State Army – so there were three living in the same house. That's a family divided", she remarks bemusedly.

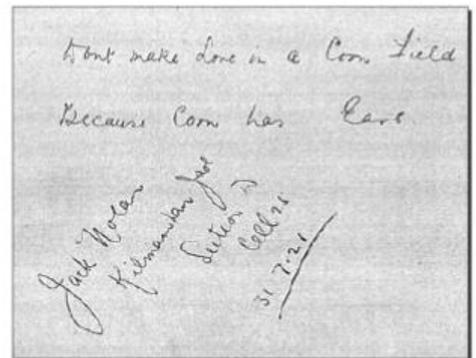
Sure 'Ireland's a very funny place' indeed and the Duffy/Doyle story is an example.

Soon after that Máire's daughter Geraldine, who kindly gave *An Phoblacht* a copy of the original autograph book, arrives.

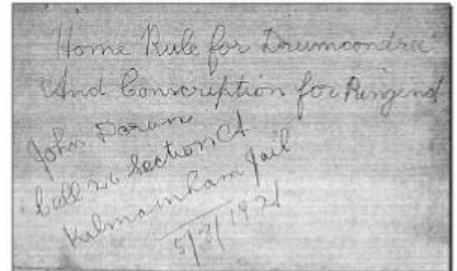
"I actually think the autograph book should have been given to the National Library", she said, "to show people what those people fought for to get the freedom we have here now in the South but my uncle who owns the book wouldn't part with it."

Compounding the political diversity in the Doyle lineage who should arrive at the door but Máire's grandson Pádraig, who's an Ógra Shinn Féin member. "What are YOU doing here?" he asks me. "I'm here about 'the book'"

**"This old page will tell my tale, when I am well forgotten." – John Doyle, Cell 31 Kilmainham Jail**



Don't make love in a corn field because corn has ears. Jack Nolan, Kilmmainham Goal Section D Cell 25. 31.7.21

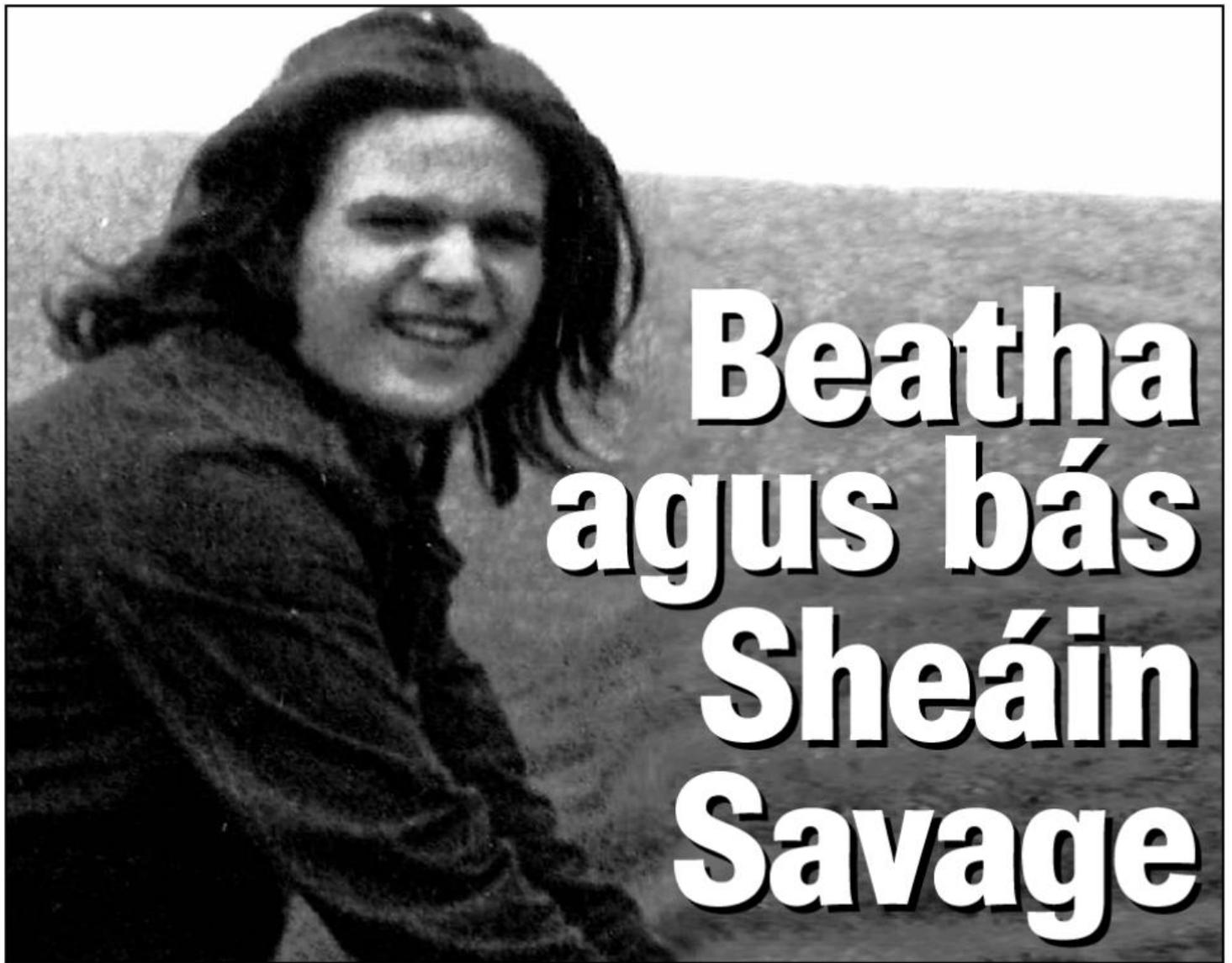


Home Rule for Drumcondra and conscription for Ringsend. John Doran Cell 26 Section A. Kilmmainham Jail 5/8/1921

I said. "What book?," he asks – so another generation is introduced to the family treasure.



Máire and Michael with Máire's grandson Pádraig



# Beatha agus bás Sheáin Savage

**Bhí aithne mhaith ag Tony Birtill ar Sheán Savage, an ball den IRA a mharaigh fórsaí na Breataine i nGiobráltar i mí Márta 1988, in éineacht le Mairéad Farrell agus Dan McCann. San alt seo, déanann sé cur síos ar an am a chaith siad le chéile i dTír Chonaill agus i mBéal Feirste.**



Nuair a fuair mé scairt gutháin ó Eoghan Ó Néill, iriseoir ar Raidió Fáilte, Béal Feirste, ag tús mhí an Mhárta 2008, shíl mé go raibh sé ag iarraidh labhairt liom faoi Learpholl a bheith mar Chathair Chultúrtha na hEorpa, mar bhí agallamh déanta agam faoin ábhar ar Raidió na Gaeltachta cúpla lá roimhe sin.

Bhí iontas orm, mar sin, nuair a dúirt sé liom: “Tá muid ag déanamh cláir faoi Thriúr Ghiobráltar, 20 bliain tar éis a mbás agus bhí d’aínm luaite

anseo mar cara de chuid Sheáin Savage”.

D’inis mé dó go raibh sin fíor, ach scéal brónach a bhí ann agus, mar gheall air sin, bhí sé caite as mo cheann agam le blianta. Ach shocraigh mé le Eoghan go ndéanfainn mo mhachnamh ar an tréimhse sin agus go ndéanfainn agallamh leis an tseachtain ina dhiaidh sin.

Is dócha go raibh an nós céanna ag mo mháthair, nach maireann. Nuair a fuair mé amach ó aintín de mo chuid

go ndearna na Dúchrónaigh ionsaí ar an teach feirme ina raibh mo mháthair ina cónaí i 1920, agus gan í ach cúig bliana d’aois, dúirt mo mháthair liom nuair a chuir mé ceist uirthi faoi: “Is fearr liom gan a bheith ag smaoineamh air.” Bhí mé ag freastal ar ranganna oíche Gaeilge do dhaoine fásta i Learpholl i 1985 agus chuala muid ansin go raibh athbheochan iontach ag dul ar aghaidh i mBéal Feirste, áit a bhfuil gaolta agam. Chonaic mé fógra in *An Phoblacht*, nuachtán Shinn Féin,

faoi “mini-choláiste” a bhí eagraithe acu sa chathair sin agus nuair a chuir mé litir chucu ag fiafraí faoi, fuair mé litir chairdiúil ar ais i mí an Mhárta ó Mháirtín Ó Muilleoir, Ceannasaí Roinn an Chultúir, agus dúirt seisean: “Beidh fáilte is céad romhat ag an chéad mini-choláiste eile”.

Sa seanmhuileann ar Shráid Conway, Bóthar na bhFál, a bhí sé ar siúl, i mí an Aibreáin. Bhí Dónall Ó Lubhlaigh ina “phriomhoide” agus bhain na múinteoirí úsáid as an mhodh díreach. Bhí an-chraic ann agus rinne mé a lán cairde ansin.

Shuigh Seán Savage in aice liom sa chéad choláiste eile, a bhí ar siúl ar an 7 agus 8 Meitheamh 1986. Bhí an cineál céanna acmhainne grinn aige is atá agamsa agus is minic a bhí muid ag gáire le chéile, go mór mór nuair a rinne muid meancóg. Thug mé faoi deara ag an ócáid shóisialta san oíche nár ól sé agus nár chaith sé tobac. Ach mo dhála féin, bhí suim aige i siúl sléibhe agus sa rothaíocht.

Eagraíodh coláiste seachtaine i mí Lúnasa 1986 i dTeach Cholm Cille, Fána Bhuí, Gort an Choirce i dTír Chonaill agus bhí a bheirt againn ann. Chríochnaigh na ranganna foirmiúla ar a dó a chlog gach lá agus mar sin bhí deis againn dul suas na cnoic thart timpeall na háite - Taobh an Leithid, an Eargail, an Eachla Mhór agus an Mhucais.

Réitigh muid go maith le chéile, an bheirt againn ar ár suaimhneas amuigh faoin spéir san aimsir maith. D’inis sé dom go raibh sé ina chónaí i nGort na Móna, Béal Feirste ach gur rugadh é i gceantar Kashmir Road. Nuair a rinne na dílseoirí ionsaí ar an áit sin i mí Lúnasa 1969 agus nuair a chuir siad cuid mhaith de na tithe trí thine, b'éigean don teaghlach bogadh go Baile Andarsan le dídean a fháil. “Ní raibh mé ach ceithre bliana d’aois ag an am sin agus níor thuig mé cad é a bhí ag tarlú,” a dúirt sé liom.

Bhí sceitimíní air a bheith ag fanacht i dteach difriúil ach ní raibh a fhios aige go raibh a dteach féin dóite go talamh. “Bhí brón orm nuair a fuair mé amach go raibh mo chuid bréagán scríosta,” a dúirt sé liom.

Níor labhair sé faoi chúrsaí polaitíochta mórán, ach bhí inní air go



Seán Savage

mbeadh cuid de na Caitlicigh ag lorg díoltais mar gheall ar an mhéid ionsaithe a bhí na dílseoirí a dhéanamh orthu faoin am sin. Níor aontaigh sé leis an seicteachas in aon chor.

## Leabhar ar iasacht

Bhí suim ag Seán sa stair, mo dhála féin, agus thug mé labhair ar iasacht dó agus sinne i bhFána Bhuí, *The Fenians in England 1865-1872*, le Patrick Quinlivan agus Paul Rose (John Calder, 1982). Léigh sé é go gasta agus phléigh muid an leabhar le chéile. Shíl sé go raibh sé suimiúil go raibh rún ag na Finíní ionsaí a dhéanamh ar Ghiobrálta.

Ba grianghrafadóir maith é agus ghlac sé pictiúr díom féin ar bharr na hEargaile.

Bhí an-chraic ag an dream uilig ar Oileán Thoraí, áit ar fhan muid thar oíche. Ní raibh aon bhád farantóireachta ann 20 bliain ó shin agus b'éigean dúinn fanacht i Machaire Rabhartaigh go bhfaigheadh muid síob ar bhád iascaireachta. Nuair a bhí muid ag imirt sacair le chéile ar an trá ansin thug mé faoi deara go raibh Seán an-ghasta agus oilte.

Leathbhád a bhí ann don turas naoi míle go Toraigh. Ní raibh siorc feicthe agam san fharrage go dtí sin

agus bhí inní orm nuair a chonaic mé eite mhór ag gobadh amach as na tonnta. “Níl aon fhiacra aige!” arsa an t-iascaire, ag gáire. Tuigim anois gur liamhán gréine a bhí ann, ach ní raibh barúil ar bith agam faoina leithéid ag an am sin. Bhí cairde ag Seán Mac Corraidh agus Breandán Ó Fiaich, múinteoirí ar ár gcúrsa, ar Thoraigh agus chuir siad fáilte romhainn. Chodail muid sa bhrú garbh tar éis céilí iontach sa chlub - bhí sé geal sula raibh muid inár luí.

Lá deas geal eile a bhí sa lá dár gcionn agus bhí brón orainn uilig an t-oileán a fhágáil. Ghlac mé grianghraf de ón bhád ar an bhealach ar ais go hÉirinn, mar a deir siad ansin. Bhí Seán ann, agus sin an pictiúr a bhí sna meáin chumarsáide ar fud an domhain tar éis a bháis i mí an Mhárta 1988. Bhain muid uilig an-sult as an turas sin - tréimhse shona inár saol ab ea í. Ní raibh a fhios againn go mbeadh saol chomh gearr ag Seán is a bhí. Ní raibh sé ach 23 bliain d’aois nuair a fuair sé bás.

Shocraigh muid dul ar thuras rothaíochta le chéile an chéad samhradh eile, ach sa deireadh dúirt Seán liom nach raibh sé ábalta dul. Níos measa ná sin, bhí an coláiste i dTeach Cholm Cille curtha ar ceal. Ach bhí áthas orm an samhradh sin fosta, mar d'éirigh liom i scrúdú Gaeilge an O-leibhéil. Spreag lucht Gaeilge Bhéal Feirste mé leis an scrúdú ardleibhéil a dhéanamh. Cheannaigh mé na leabhair sa siopa an Cheathrú Póilí ansin agus thug múinteoir roinnt seanpháipéar scrúdaithe dom. D'fhill mé ar mo rothar go Learpholl agus mé sona sásta.

## Bás Sheáin

Bhí mé ag déanamh staidéir ar an dráma Lá Fhéile Mhichíl sa bhaile nuair a fuair mé scairt ó Mháirtín ar an 6 Márta 1988 le cur in iúl dom go raibh Seán agus a chomrádaithe marbh i nGiobrálta. Bhain sé preab an-mhór asam. Shíl Máirtín go mbeadh an tórramh ar siúl Dé Sathairn i mBéal Feirste.

Chuaigh mé trasna ar an eitleán ar an 12 Márta ach chuir na húdaráis moill ar theacht abhaile na gcorp. Rinne mé comhbhrón leis an teaghlach

ach b'éigean dom filleadh go Learpholl roimh an tórramh ar an 16 Márta. Bhí teannas san aer i mBéal Feirste agus mharaigh Arm Shasana an t-Óglach Caoimhín Mac Reachtain ar an 14 Márta i nGort na Móna.

Ag an tórramh féin mharaigh an dílseoir Michael Stone triúr agus ghortaigh sé 50 duine eile. Agus trí lá ina dhiaidh sin, ag tórramh Chaoimhín Mhic Bhrádaigh, an t-Óglach a rinne iarracht Michael Stone a stopadh, mharaigh an IRA beirt bhall d'arm na Breataine a bhí gléasta in éadaí sibhialta. Tá síocháin ann anois, buíochas le Dia, agus tá athbheochan na Gaeilge ag leanúint ar aghaidh. Seán Savage: 26 Eanáir 1965 go 6 Márta 1988. Grásta Dé ar a anam.

*Is de bhunadh Éireannach é Tony Birtill agus rugadh i Learpholl é. Bíonn sé ag obair le hOideas Gael i nGleann Cholm Cille gach samhradh.*

**Buíochas don suíomh idirlíon Beo! [www.beo.ie](http://www.beo.ie) a d'fhoilsigh an alt seo den chéad uair.**



Íomhá a tógadh sa bhliain 1986: chun tosaigh, tá Seán Savage (ar dheis) agus Pádraig Ó Maolchraoibhe; ar chúl tá Seán Mac Corraidh agus Tony é féin

## Gluais: Glossary

a chomrádaithe: his comrades  
 a mharaigh fórsaí na Breataine i nGiobrálta: whom British forces killed in Gibraltar  
 Ach mo dhála féin: but like myself  
 ag an ócáid shóisialta: at the social event  
 ag fiafraí: asking  
 ag freastal: attending  
 ag gobadh amach: sticking out  
 ag lorg díoltais: looking for revenge  
 agallamh: interview  
 an ball: the member  
 an cineál céanna acmhainne grinn: the same kind of sense of humour  
 an dílseoir: the loyalist  
 an seicteachas: sectarianism  
 an t-iascaire: the fisherman  
 an t-óglach: the volunteer  
 an tórramh: the funeral  
 an-ghasta: very fast  
 ar ár suaimhneas: at our ease  
 ar bhád iascaireachta.: on a fishing boat.  
 athbheochan iontach: a great revival  
 athbheochan na Gaeilge: the revival of Irish  
 Ba grianghrafadóir maith é: He was a good photographer  
 beirt bhall: two members  
 bhain na múinteoirí úsáid as an mhodh díreach: the teachers used the direct method  
 Bhain sé preab an-mhór asam: It really shook me  
 Bhí sceitimíní air: he was excited  
 bogadh: to move  
 caite as mo cheann: thrown out of my head

Chodail muid sa bhrú garbh: we slept in the rough  
 hostel  
 comhbhrón: sympathy  
 curtha ar ceal: cancelled  
 déanann sé cur síos ar: he describes  
 deis: opportunity  
 dídean: refuge  
 dóite go talamh: burnt to the ground  
 éadaí sibhialta: civilian clothes  
 Eagraíodh coláiste seachtaine: A week-long course was organised  
 eagraithe: organised  
 eite mhór: a big fin  
 faoi chúrsaí polaitíochta: about political matters  
 faoi Thriúr Ghiobrálta: about the Gibraltar Three  
 faoin ábhar: about the subject  
 fógra: notice  
 gaolta: relatives  
 geal: bright  
 ghlac sé pictiúr diom féin: he took a photo of myself  
 gléasta: dressed  
 go bhfaigheadh muid síob: until we'd get a lift  
 go gasta: quickly  
 go ndéanfainn mo mhachnamh ar an tréimhse sin: that I would have a think about that period  
 grianghraf: a photograph  
 imní: worry  
 ionsaí: attack  
 iontas: surprise  
 iriseoir: journalist  
 le cur in iúl dom: to inform me

liamhán gréine: basking-shark  
 litir chairdiúil: a friendly letter  
 luaite: mentioned  
 mar Chathair Chultúrtha na hEorpa: as European City of Culture  
 meancóg: mistake  
 mo chuid breagán: my toys  
 mo dhála féin: just like myself  
 moill: delay  
 na dílseoirí: the loyalists  
 na Dúchrónaigh: the Black and Tans  
 na húdaráis: the authorities  
 na ranganna foirmiúla: the formal classes  
 nach maireann: who is now dead  
 ní raibh barúil ar bith agam: I had no idea  
 oílte: skillful  
 Réitigh muid go maith le chéile: we got on well together  
 roinnt seanpháipéar scrúdaithe: some past exam papers  
 rún: intention  
 sa rothaocht: in cycling  
 saol chomh gearr: such a short life  
 scairt gutháin: telephone call  
 scriosta: destroyed  
 seanmhuileann: old mill  
 siorc: shark  
 sna meáin chumarsáide ar fud an domhain: in the worldwide media  
 teannas: tension  
 thug mé labhair ar iasacht dó: I lent him a book  
 tréimhse shona: a happy period

# CUBA 2009

## 50 YEARS OF REVOLUTION

BY JAYNE FISHER

**A report of my experience in Cuba as part of the Cuba Cycle Challenge. With thanks to all those who sponsored me and supported the Music Fund for Cuba.**

### Celebrating 50 years of the Cuba Revolution

I was privileged to be part of the Cuba Cycle Challenge, which had particular significance this year taking place in the 50th anniversary year of the Cuban revolution.

Some 37 of us took part in the 350k cycle through the beautiful Cuban countryside and over £80,000 was raised for the Music Fund for Cuba, and other practical solidarity was taken over by the group. In addition, we were able to be part of the May Day celebrations in Havana, along with millions of Cubans celebrating the gains of the last 50 years and what Cuba continues to achieve at home and internationally.

What instantly struck me – having not been to Cuba for some 12 years – was that Cuba has clearly survived the very



difficult period during the '90s, and the worst efforts of the illegal US blockade. Indeed it appears to be thriving, as reflected in the increase in economic activity, reflected by the number of vehicles on the roads, the shops, restaurants, bars and general increase in living standards which was clear to see.

### Cuba's achievements

The achievements of the Cuban revolution, notably in health, education and culture, continue to inspire and clearly demonstrate, at a time of global economic crisis, that there is a positive alternative way forward for humanity.

Of the many places we visited during the trip, the achievements in health and education stood out as positive examples of Cuba's achievements, and in particular the general outlook and approach of the Cuban people in the way they organise their society and live their lives, in the context of all the problems they have faced, is hugely inspiring.

Cuba's international role was also demonstrated, in the help they have given in terms of medical care and education throughout the world, in huge disproportion to their tiny size. It was also reflected in the new trade relations with countries such as Venezuela.

However, many people we met raised the ongoing problems of the US blockade which creates shortages and hardships in a range of critical areas, underlining the need to keep up the pressure to end the blockade and for governments to develop positive relationships with Cuba.



## The Cycle Challenge

The fundraising Cuba Cycle Challenge – organised through the Cuba Solidarity Campaign – was an incredible experience, and involved cycling 350k over 5 days, beginning in Sancti Spiritus, and travelling around the Escambray Mountains, and from Caribbean coast to Atlantic coast. It was a truly brilliant way to see the country and to meet people, taking in dramatic scenery, quiet coastal roads, some beautiful and breathtaking rural views and many challenging uphill!

We also had a particularly good group participating in the cycle, reflecting the support for Cuba in the trade unions in particular.

Every village and hamlet we passed through bore the evidence of the nature of Cuban society, with a school in every place. We received a great reception at every turn of the road, with shouts from bus stops, encouraging us to go faster and harder, to farmers in fields waving. Hand painted murals and posters marking figures and heroes of the struggle for self-determination were evident, alongside signs for the CDRs (local committees which run the day to day

workings of the local areas and provide a key cohesive structure which forms their inclusive and democratic society).

The first – and very long – day's cycle took us to the beautiful UNESCO world heritage city of Trinidad. From there we went along the coastal road to Guajimico, and then on to Lake Hanabanilla. To reach the latter involved a very long uphill cycle, which, in my view, alone merited the sponsorship money. Despite a downpour that evening, the views of the lake were amazing and the following day's boat trip preceded the next leg of the cycle to Santa Clara.

## Santa Clara and Che Guevara

Santa Clara represented a high point of the trip, given the significance of the battle in that town to the victory of the revolution. While there, we visited the Che Guevara Memorial Museum, with a huge striking monument, beneath which is a modest memorial where Che's remains



are interred. A flame is constantly lit, and there are small plaques with images of the other compatriots from Peru, Bolivia and Cuba who died alongside Che in Bolivia, making this an incredibly moving experience.

We also visited the monument to El Tren Blindado, the derailed train which was one of the most dramatic and decisive events in the revolution, when the revolutionary forces, led by Che, blew up the train tracks and captured the enemy forces. The train remains there as a monument in the town.

From Santa Clara we travelled the last day to the laid

back town of Remedios on the Atlantic coast, happy to have completed the challenge, in the face of some very hard uphill and a strong headwind for most of the time. It was an excellent achievement for all concerned.

## Cuban society

During the cycle we made some other significant visits, giving further examples of Cuban life. An evening organised by the CDR (Committee for the Defence of the Revolution) in Condado, near Trinidad, gave a keen insight into Cuban life and was also a highlight, with performances by the children and a chance to discuss the role of the CDRs. These local committees are crucial to organising life in Cuba, and are a very fundamental unit of democratic



participation and accountability. They ensure there is a strong cohesion to the local area, that there is inclusion, a true community participation, which is organised at all levels – from kids going to school to rubbish being collected. From the oldest citizen to the youngest children, the CDRs are a critical way of life there, and work amazingly well. We were given a tremendous welcome, and even our incredibly bad dancing (with a couple of honourable exceptions) did not seem to dent this enthusiasm.

## Achievements in healthcare and international solidarity

Later, en route to Santa Clara, we visited a polyclinico healthcare centre at Cumanajagua, where the delegation donated 3 wheelchairs which had been taken over. On being shown around the centre, it was evident how valuable the Cuban healthcare system is, and what a fundamental difference has been made to people's lives. Before the revolution life expectancy was 58. Today it is upwards of 77. Infant mortality in 1959 was 60/1,000 live births. Today it is 5.8 – among the lowest in the world. Today Cuba leads the world in vaccinations and illness prevention, having eradicated at home serious illnesses and diseases such as TB, malaria and polio. Before 1959 malaria affected 30 per cent



of people and TB 14 per cent. Cuba has the highest number of doctors per capita anywhere in the world, one doctor for every 165 inhabitants (compared to one per 1,076 in 1959). And Cuba has exported its doctors around the world to assist other countries, such as Venezuela, where doctors from Cuba established the free health system under President Chavez, Barrio Adentro. This was evidenced by our own doctor, Jorge, who accompanied the cycle all the way and was on hand if anyone needed any medical attention. Jorge told me how he had spent 5 years in Venezuela working in the Barrio Adentro projects, and two years in Africa. Cuba's international role is incredible in this regard – for example I was told that in Haiti the only functioning hospital is a Cuban field hospital.

It was a real privilege to meet and talk to doctors like Jorge, and to visit the health centre and witness what they have achieved. Moreover, what they have done to help other countries is out of no other motivation than the needs of humanity.

## The Music Fund and Cuba's inspiring education system

Back in Havana we were able to visit some of the projects funded by the Music Fund for Cuba, and hence the

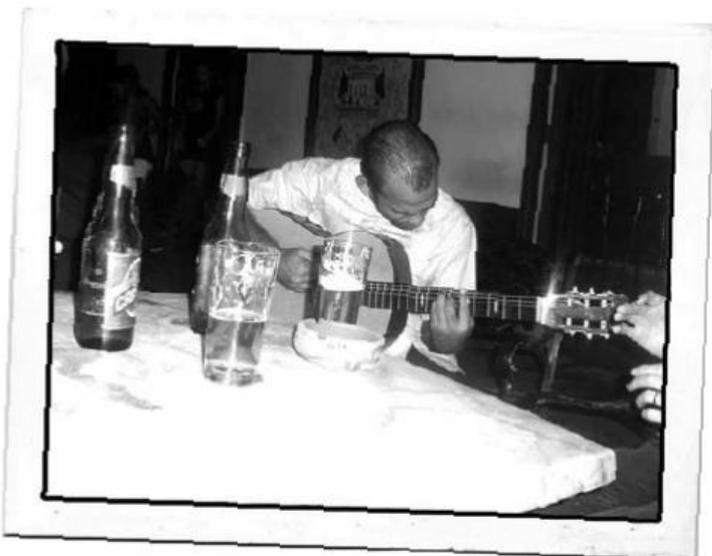


sponsorship raised by the cycle. A highlight of many, many throughout the trip – was the Abel Santamaria school for visually impaired children, where we took equipment over, including a Braille printer, software and individual donations of musical instruments, and other educational



material which are more useful than money, as some essential items cannot reach Cuba due to the blockade.

We received, as elsewhere in Cuba, a tremendously warm and generous reception from the director of the school and the children, who performed for us.



One young pianist was so unbelievably good, it was an amazing testament to how Cuba's system not only prioritises the fundamental needs of food, health and education, but also strives to enable all people to achieve their highest goals of personal development, resulting in a high level of culture which is a shining example around the world. This is evidenced by Cuba's leading role in the fields of dance, sport, music and so on.

Everywhere, from the scruffiest bar to the Ambos Mundos hotel features musicians and singers of such incredible talent, who would play and were happy to chat and even show us a few chords and songs on some occasions. The Abel Santamaria school epitomises in the clearest way this philosophy of lifting every human being to

their best potential. It has a ratio of one tutor per pupil. Children with disabilities, such as those we met, are given every chance and encouragement to excel, and to be an integrated part of society.

The school underlined Cuba's big achievements in education – reducing illiteracy from 24 per cent in 1959 to around 3 per cent today. Their literacy programmes are thought to be the best methods anywhere, and are, for example used in Venezuela as part of their education missions which helped eradicate illiteracy in that country very rapidly. In Cuba pre-1959 only 55 per cent of children went to schools, and had to pay fees. Today schooling is totally free and compulsory up to 18. University education is free. There are universities in every municipality and one fifth of Cubans have a degree. Primary class numbers do not exceed 20. The numbers of schools in every area we cycled through were clear evidence of this.

Elsewhere, we visited the Miramar theatre which the Music Fund is raising money to renovate. A significant amount of the sponsorship money is going towards this project, where work has recently begun. An amazingly lovely art deco building, in a totally desperate state of disrepair, its enthusiastic director spoke of how vital to the community the theatre will be, used for rehearsals, performances and so on for many different projects. Support is still needed for this project (see below Music Fund for Cuba).

## Cuba and Ireland – two Island people in the same sea of struggle and hope

In Havana I was particularly pleased when we stopped to visit the memorial to the 1981 Irish Hunger Strike, which was opened by Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams in 2001, alongside President Fidel Castro, with a guard of honour. It sits on a corner of a beautiful park, and it was, again, very moving to visit this memorial and read the inscription, which alongside the names of the ten Hunger Strikers, is inscribed Fidel's statement condemning the actions of the





Thatcher government at the time, reflecting the strong support for the Hunger Strike and the fight for political status from within Cuba. Elsewhere in Havana, O'Reilly Street has a plaque in Spanish, Irish and English, encribed: 'Cuba and Ireland – two Ireland people in the same sea of struggle and hope', which encapsulates the common solidarity and experience of struggle for self-determination between the two countries which was evident.

## May Day in Havana

Toward the end of the trip was the May Day Rally, an incredible honour to be part of, joining the millions of Cubans in the Revolution Plaza, with thousands of banners



and hand made signs, clearly expressing a strong identification with the gains of the last 50 years, the government and its current efforts, a pride in Cuba's achievements and the assertion of the right to self-

determination and against the blockade.

Strong support for socialism and internationalism was clear. All sectors of society, ages and areas were present and an incredible atmosphere.

As part of the international guests, we were privileged to be there with an amazing view of the parade, and to see President Raul Castro and others as well.

## Solidarity with Cuba

With the recent changes across Latin America, with progressive governments applying pressure to end the blockade and with the United States' change of



administration, now would clearly be the time to redouble all solidarity efforts with Cuba.

This trip was just one small example of the kind of support which can be demonstrated, but moreover, it is a tremendous way of experiencing why Cuba should be supported.

I can honestly say that I am so pleased to have done the cycle and raised the funds, but I am particularly inspired by travelling there and confirming my view that there is a better way forward for humanity, of which Cuba is the living example.

**Music Fund for Cuba**  
[www.musicfundforcuba.org.uk](http://www.musicfundforcuba.org.uk)

# Clare's leading role in the fight for freedom

Blood on the Banner –  
the Republican  
Struggle in Clare

**Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc**

**Published by Mercier Press**

**ISBN: 978 1 856356138**

**Paperback €19.99**

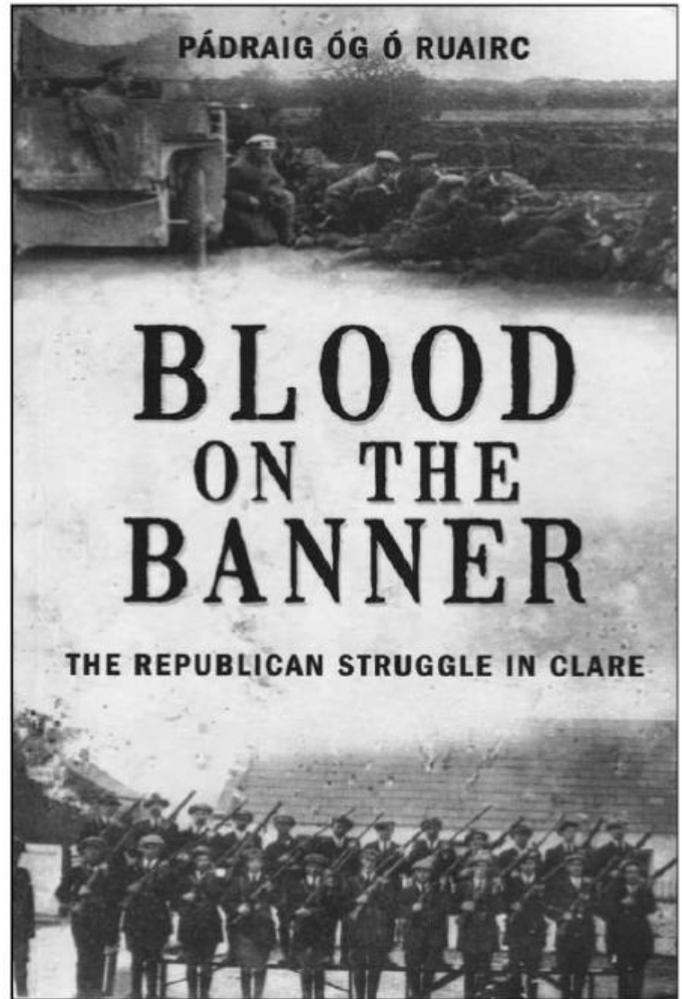
**BOOK REVIEW BY COLM BRESLIN**

This outstanding book has to be one of the best ever written on the freedom struggle from 1913 to 1923. As well as giving a comprehensive picture of the war in County Clare it sheds light on the struggle nationally and from the perspective of the IRA Volunteers and the people who supported them.

With the passage of years the fight against the British forces in County Clare has been somewhat overshadowed by the better known exploits of the IRA in Cork and Dublin. But Clare was a hot-bed of militant republicanism and a thorn in the side of the British Empire. And the book reminds us that this was by no means the work of the Volunteers alone; they were the spearhead of a popular resistance movement.

I found the accounts from the years 1917 and 1918 especially interesting. It is often forgotten that British repression was intense in these years as shown by just one typical incident. On 28 March 1918 the Carrigaholt Sinn Féin Cumann was holding its weekly meeting in the town hall when a detachment of the British Army's Royal Welch Fusiliers raided and tried to disperse the meeting with fixed bayonets. Thomas Russell, a Gaelic League teacher of Irish from An Daingean, Ciarraí, was bayoneted to death.

The IRA in Clare, as elsewhere, benefited from the help of disaffected British soldiers and RIC men. Soldiers sold weapons to the IRA or simply handed them over for no reward, while many RIC men acted as IRA agents. Even the Auxiliaries and Black and Tans were not immune. An Auxie, Major Reynolds, sold intel-



ligence to Michael Collins in Dublin and later did the same in Clare. The chapter *Keeping Down the Irish* provides a very good account and analysis of the use of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries by the British, not only in Clare but across the country.

Clare republicans were to the fore in the prison struggle, none more so than Peadar Clancy of Cranny. He led the April 1920 hunger strike in Mountjoy which was backed by a one-day general strike of workers and which ended in victory with the release of 100 prisoners. The tragic sequel was the shooting dead of three republicans by the RIC and British Army in Miltown Malbay, as they celebrated the releases, and the mur-

der of Peadar Clancy, with Dick McKee and Conor Clune, in Dublin Castle the following November.

The author has made extensive use of the accounts of Volunteers of the period from the Bureau of Military History in Dublin. This is especially valuable in recounting the IRA's many engagements with the British forces in Clare, including the capture of the RIC

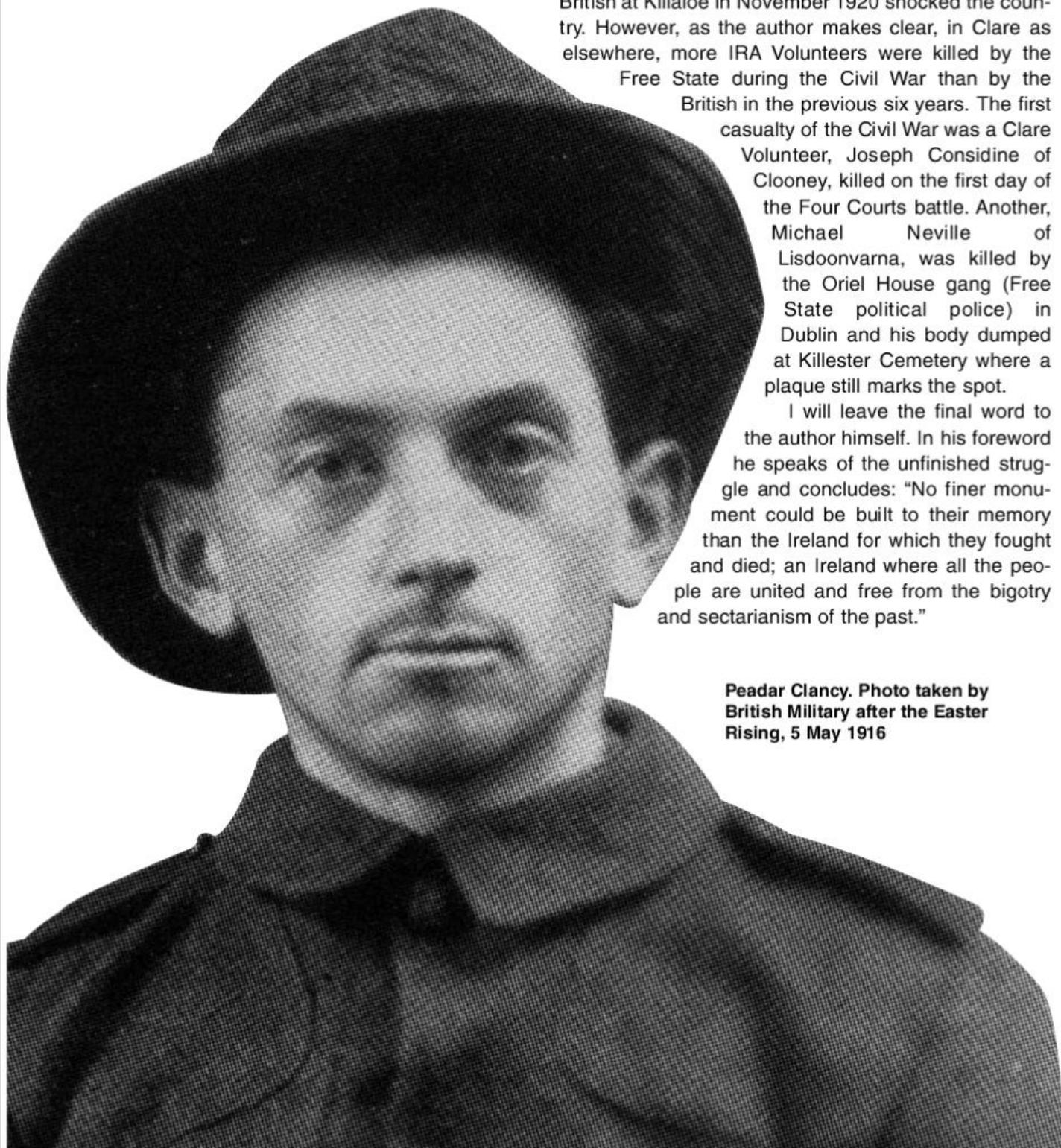
barracks at Sixmilebridge and the Rineen ambush in which six RIC men were killed. In reprisal the RIC and Black and Tans attacked the town of Ennistymon, shooting, looting, burning and killing five people, including an IRA Volunteer and the local secretary of the ITGWU.

The killing of three Volunteers and a civilian by the British at Killaloe in November 1920 shocked the country. However, as the author makes clear, in Clare as elsewhere, more IRA Volunteers were killed by the

Free State during the Civil War than by the British in the previous six years. The first casualty of the Civil War was a Clare Volunteer, Joseph Considine of Clooney, killed on the first day of the Four Courts battle. Another, Michael Neville of Lisdoonvarna, was killed by the Oriel House gang (Free State political police) in Dublin and his body dumped at Killester Cemetery where a plaque still marks the spot.

I will leave the final word to the author himself. In his foreword he speaks of the unfinished struggle and concludes: "No finer monument could be built to their memory than the Ireland for which they fought and died; an Ireland where all the people are united and free from the bigotry and sectarianism of the past."

**Peadar Clancy. Photo taken by British Military after the Easter Rising, 5 May 1916**



# Irish unity – the legal and constitutional issues

Countdown to Unity  
Debating Irish  
Reunification

**Richard Humphries**  
**Irish Academic Press**  
**ISBN 978 0 7165 3347 4**  
**Price: €27.50**

REVIEWED BY EOIN Ó BROIN

*Countdown to Unity* is an important and valuable book. Focusing on the legal and constitutional aspects of Irish reunification, it opens up a series of debates about the how, what and why of reunification. In doing so it attempts what is the impossible task of leaving politics to one side, in order to assess the legal and constitutional issues in a dispassionate and objective manner.

While for some, including this reviewer, such a task is both futile and unnecessary; it does enable Humphries to focus strictly on his chosen subject matter, which in the end is rewarding for even the skeptical reader.

Humphries is a barrister; legal advisor to the Labour Party parliamentary party in Leinster House and from 1993 to 1997 was advisor to the then Minister for Equality and Law Reform Mervyn Taylor. His command of domestic, British and international constitutional law is impressive, as are his analytical skills.

He emphasises at the outset that his book does not attempt to 'make the case for a united Ireland' as that 'is one to be made at the political rather than legal level'. His intention is rather to identify the legal and constitutional obstacles to reunification and outline potential legal routes through which such obstacles could be overcome.

The book's first two historical chapters provide the general reader with a useful narrative of the constitutional evolution of the island's two states from the Anglo Irish Treaty, through de Valera's 1937 Constitution, the



Sunningdale Agreement, New Ireland Forum and Anglo Irish (Hillsborough) Agreement. These chapters also outline the legal foundations of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, a subject that is dealt with in greater detail in the subsequent two chapters.

At the centre of his discussion of the 1998 Agreement are the questions of what would and should happen to the legal and institutional mechanisms of the Agreement during and after reunification. Humphries is strongly in favour of extending the life of the Agreement into any post unity constitutional and legal order. In addition to arguing that the Agreement provides a roadmap to reunification the author is keen to stress the

value of its architecture in securing and underpinning any level of unionist consent to such an outcome.

The remainder of the book explores the various steps required after successful referenda on reunification. A chapter is dedicated to the various legal requirements to the framing of a bi-lateral treaty on reunification between the British and Irish governments. In addition to the more technical issues of legal harmonisation, Humphries argues that "the greatest legal challenge will be posed by the Irish constitutional order".

The book's remaining two chapters explore what these readjustments may look like. Humphries expands on his earlier argument regarding the longer-term development of the Belfast Agreement architecture post unity, mapping out how it could be used in conjunction with various confidence-building measures from the British government in the form of legislative reform.

A full chapter on potential confidence-building measures from the Irish government asks how constitutional reform in the 26 Counties could create the space within which the political arguments for reunification are strengthened and advanced. Both substantive issues, such as the very concept of a written constitution and the official status of the Irish language, as well as more symbolic issues such as flags, anthems and national symbols are discussed.

Humphries' conclusion is that a tension exists within Irish nationalism between promotion and protection of Irish cultural and political identities and the need to accommodate their unionist counterparts. A resolution

of this tension, through generating greater consensus amongst nationalists, is essential in Humphries' view if the political task of reunification is to succeed.

*Countdown to Unity* has a number of weaknesses. While Humphries has a greater appreciation than many writers of the detail of both Sinn Féin and the SDLP's political and policy approaches to reunification and national reconciliation, he nonetheless fails to grasp the full extent of Sinn Féin's approach. The author focuses primarily on Sinn Féin's macro political proposals such as *A Green Paper on Irish Unity* to the exclusion of the party's detailed policies and actions on unionist engagement and its attempts to build grass roots communities for reunification. As a consequence Humphries treats the SDLP's more rhetorical approach to unity in an unjustifiably favorable light. Likewise his attempt to find innovative and clearly valuable legal forms of accommodation with Unionism blind him to aspects of unionist political and cultural practice that are not deserving of respect.

However, Humphries book is an important contribution to the ongoing debate on Irish reunification and deserves to be read widely.



Eoin Ó Broin is a writer, policy analyst and Sinn Féin activist based in Dublin. His new book, *Sinn Féin and the politics of left republicanism* was published by Pluto Press in February.

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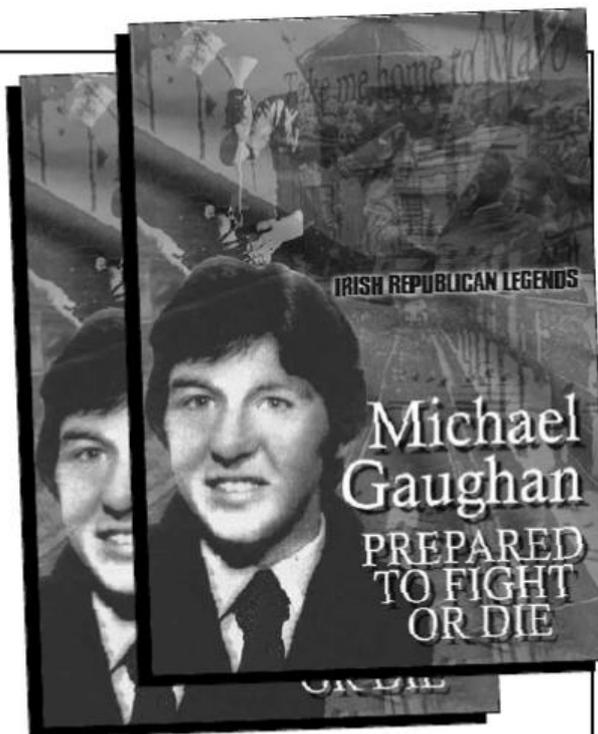
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— AENGUS Ó SNODAIGH TD



# Pearse – legacy of a revolutionary

The Life and After-Life of P.H. Pearse

**Editors Roisín Higgins and Regina Uí Chollatáin**

**Published by the Irish Academic Press**

**ISBN 978 0 716530121**

**Paperback €24.95**

**BOOK REVIEW BY**

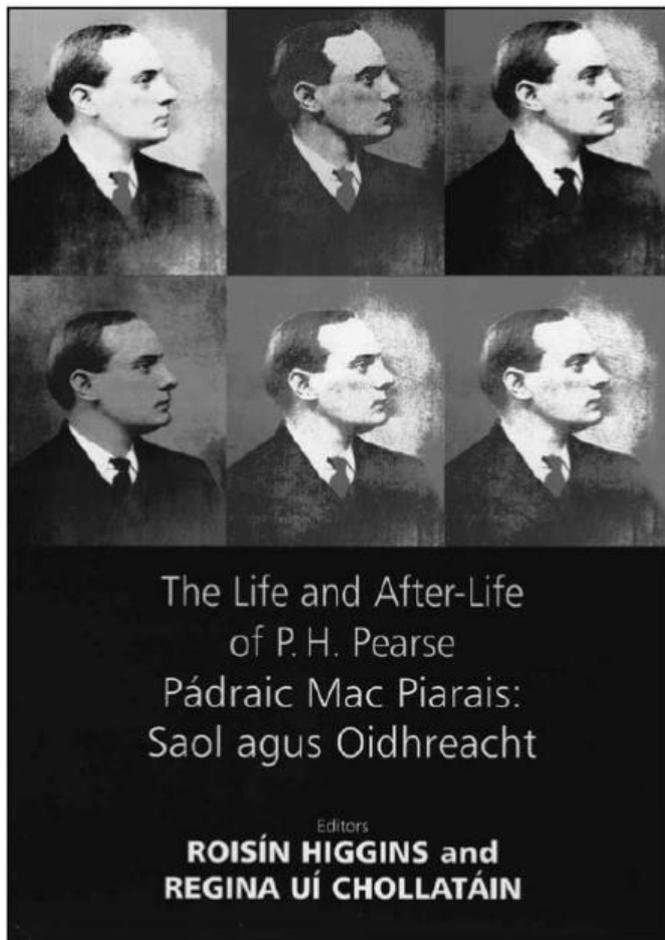
**MÍCHEÁL Mac DONNCHA**

Repeatedly during his term as Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern was filmed with a framed photograph of Pearse on his office wall behind him. Yet as Roisín Higgins argues in this collection of essays on Pearse and his legacy, Irishness and independence had become “devalued currencies in a globalised economy” and Pearse could be “employed safely because what he represents has so little meaning in contemporary Ireland”.

Ahern and others were happy to employ Pearse in that way, just as their predecessors had during the 50th anniversary commemorations of 1966, so long as awkward questions about contemporary Ireland were not raised.

The political establishment in the 26 Counties went through a number of phases in their attitudes to Pearse and his comrades of 1916. In '66 they were the officially approved founders of the State. A decade later they had become an embarrassment for the 26-County government because to praise Pearse and Connolly while condemning armed resistance to British rule in the Six Counties was to risk charges of hypocrisy or, worse, the ridicule of the people. So Pearse was either demonised by the likes of Conor Cruise O'Brien or placed on a higher pedestal, out of harm's way, by the likes of Charlie Haughey.

I recall 1979, the centenary of Pearse's birth, when the minimal State-sponsored commemoration was largely confined to Pearse's role as an educator. They must have thought this was somehow safe but in education as in politics Pearse was a revolutionary and the 'murder machine' he exposed in 1912 was still in place



in a different form in 1980s Ireland, as I realised in our totally exam-driven secondary school system.

What none of Pearse's detractors or selective adulators wanted was for his principles and ideas to be applied to modern Ireland. If this were done partition would have to be challenged in a real way; social and economic inequality would have to be addressed; the State's commitment to the Irish language would have to be converted from lip-service to real action. This was far too dangerous so Pearse was pushed into the background.

These 15 essays are divided into three sections dealing broadly with Pearse the man, Pearse the political activist and Pearse the educator and writer.

Joost Augusteijn writes about the development of



Pearse's political thought up to 1914. This is interesting but the author's treatment of Pearse's schooldays is questionable. Pearse himself admitted that he was influenced by the British Empire-oriented curriculum which ignored Ireland. The author cites a schoolmate of Pearse who recalls him and his family as being pro-British. He alleged that they sang *God Save the Queen* "after formal dinners" at their home. Given the radicalism of Pearse's English father and the nationalism of his mother's family, this seems highly unlikely and the stuff of schoolboy rumour. In any case Pearse acknowledged that he, like so many of his contemporaries, were victims of the colonial education system, before family and other influences opened his eyes to his Irishness.

There is much food for thought in this book and the pieces by Pat Cooke and

Declan Kiberd are especially good, with Kiberd placing Pearse alongside James Joyce and Samuel Beckett as an Irish modernist. Thomas Hennessy's rehashes the 'revisionist' argument that Pearse's legacy is partition.

The plan to partition Ireland was one of the key factors in radicalising Pearse and persuading him to strike in 1916. Partition was the legacy not of Pearse but of John Redmond who, having surrendered to the British on the principle of Irish unity, sacrificed tens of thousands of young Irishmen in the trenches for the promise of Home Rule.

Some of the essays in this book are very academic but overall they serve to get people thinking about Pearse and his contemporary relevance once again. As Roisín Higgins concludes: "The insistent voice of Pearse is that found in his own writings. When myths fall away the human being is the reward."



Patrick, William, Margaret and Mary Brigid Pearse

# Future lies with the rank and file

Organising the Union – a Centenary of SIPTU 1909 – 2009

By Francis Devine

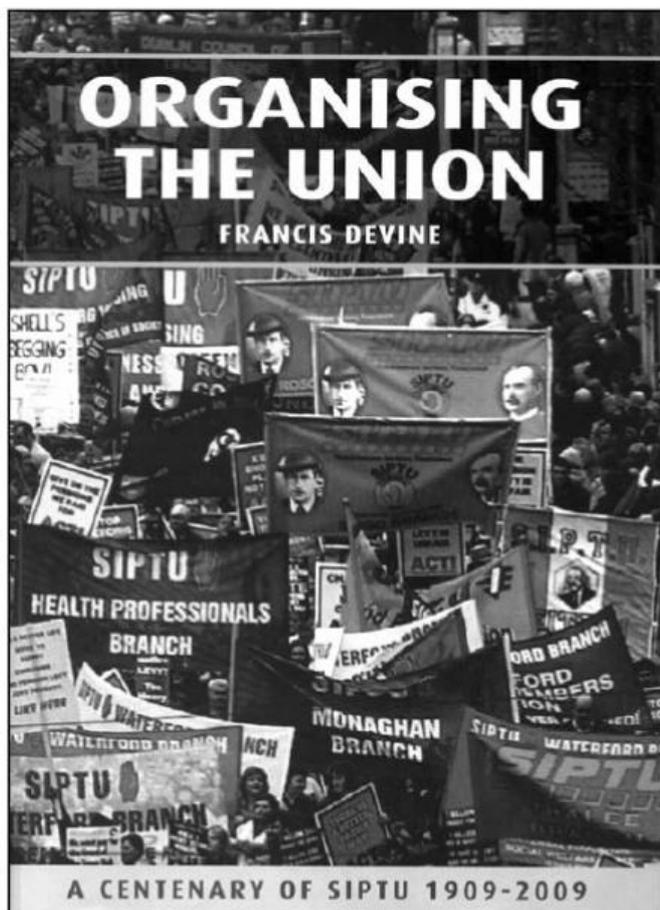
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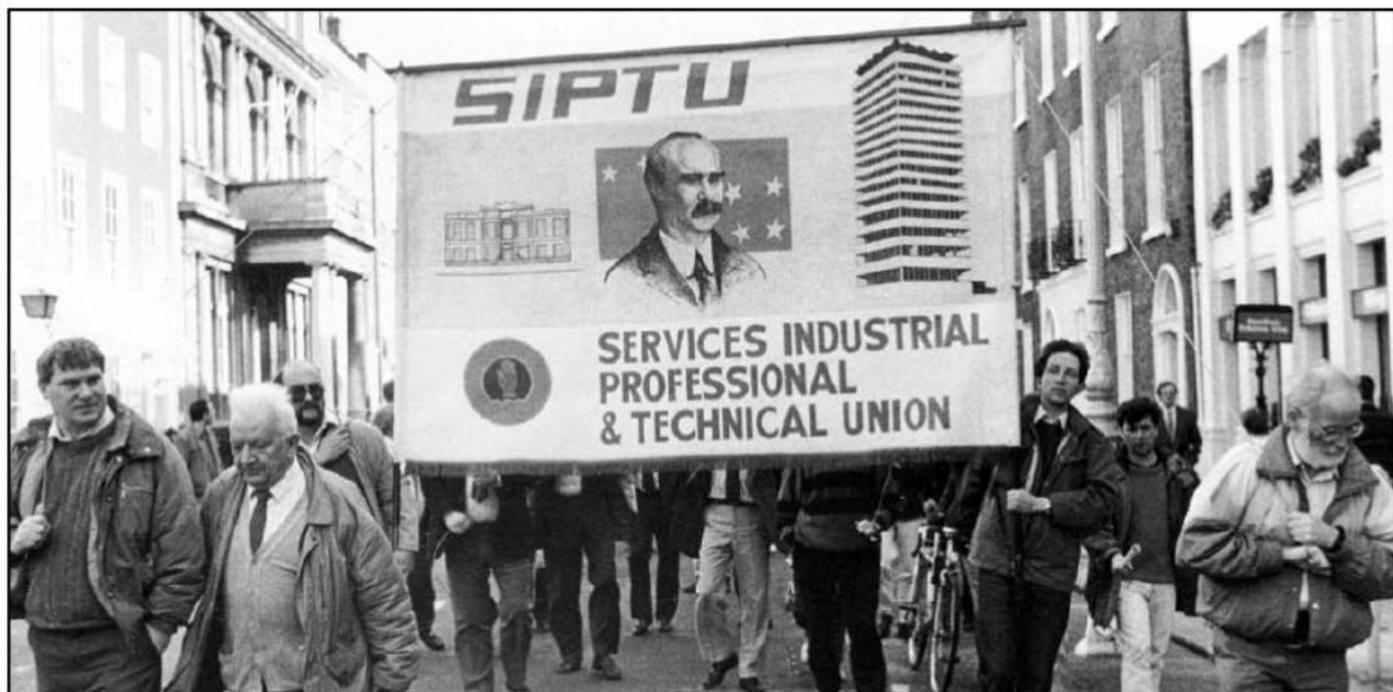
BOOK REVIEW BY  
MÍCHEÁL Mac DONNCHA

This commemorative book traces the history of the Irish Transport & General Workers Union from its foundation one hundred years ago, through its many struggles and various manifestations up to its amalgamation with other unions to form SIPTU.

The largest union in the country has a chequered



history to say the least. The inspirational but often divisive figure of Jim Larkin dominated trade unionism from his advent in 1909 to his death in 1947. If Larkin was a firebrand flaring up and setting fire to oppo-



Banner depicting old and new Liberty Hall on unemployment demonstration in 1992

nents, but also sometimes to friends, Connolly was a slow burning flame, forging the weapons of revolution. Connolly's ideas remained – and remain – influential for decades after his execution in 1916 and Larkin survived as an always turbulent presence.

Behind both of these giants it was the inconspicuous figure of William O'Brien who came to control the ITGWU. He was essentially a trade union bureaucrat and he lacked the passion of Larkin and the revolutionary politics of Connolly. But the story of the ITGWU in the revolutionary years of 1913 to 1923 is the story of the rank and file, the workers who resisted heroically in the Lockout, whose vanguard, the Citizen Army, was pivotal in 1916, who defeated

Conscription, who struck against British militarism and who paralysed the British war machine in Ireland. The impetus for these struggles in the post 1916 period came from the membership of the Union.

The ITGWU never reproduced the fervour of those revolutionary years. There was conservatism and deep division within the trade union movement leadership for much of the 20th century. Through it all, though, workers used the weapon of the union to fight many struggles. A new century has brought new challenges. Can the trade union leadership meet that challenge? They can, but only if they realise that the future lies with the rank and file and that for unions to make a real impact they must be membership driven.

**TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDWARD HEATH, M.P.**

WE THE MEMBERS OF IRELAND'S LARGEST TRADE UNION, THE IRISH TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION, WITH 150,000 MEMBERS IN BRANCHES THROUGHOUT THE THIRTY-TWO COUNTIES OF IRELAND, PETITION YOUR GOVERNMENT TO PUT AN END TO INTERNMENT WITHOUT TRIAL COMPLETELY AND WITHOUT QUALIFICATION. INTERNMENT WITHOUT TRIAL IS NOT ONLY IN BREACH OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT IS CONTRARY TO ALL CIVILISED STANDARDS OF HUMAN JUSTICE. AS CONCEIVED AND EXECUTED IN THE SIX NORTH-EASTERN COUNTIES OF THIS COUNTRY, IT IS SECTARIAN AND DIVISIVE AND THE CAUSE OF GREAT SUFFERING IN MANY FAMILIES. WE DEMAND ITS IMMEDIATE REMOVAL AND THE REMOVAL OF THE UNCIVILISED SPECIAL POWERS ACT ON WHICH IT IS BASED. WE INTEND TO DO EVERYTHING WITHIN OUR POWER, PERSONALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, AT HOME AND ABROAD, TO SEE THAT THIS MAJOR IMPEDIMENT TO AN EARLY POLITICAL SOLUTION IS REMOVED.

(SIGNED):

<i>Michael Mullen</i> General Secretary	<i>Joe McGinnis</i>
<i>Julian Kennedy</i> General President	<i>Lawrence White</i>
<i>John Farrell</i> Vice-President	<i>Miss. Meyrick</i>
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<i>Christopher Burke</i>	<i>Patrick Powell</i>
<i>Patrick Naughton</i>	<i>Tom Moore</i>
<i>Anthony Dunne</i>	<i>(ITGWU National Executive Council)</i>

ITGWU national petition against internment without trial in the Six Counties addressed to British Prime Minister Edward Heath, March 1972. The first signatory is General Secretary Michael Mullen

# Sinn Féin – an páirtí is mó sna Sé Chontae, an tríú páirtí is mó in Éirinn



Toghadh Bairbre de Brún mar Feisire Phairliminte na hEorpa Shinn Féin do na Sé Chontae i mí Meitheamh 2009. Bhí Sinn Féin chun tosaigh le 126,184 vóta, 26% den vóta iomlán. In Éirinn fuair Sinn Féin 331,797 vóta, 14.34% (11.2% sna 26 Chontae). Mar sin is é Sinn Féin an tríú páirtí is mó in Éirinn.



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