

IRIS

March 1983

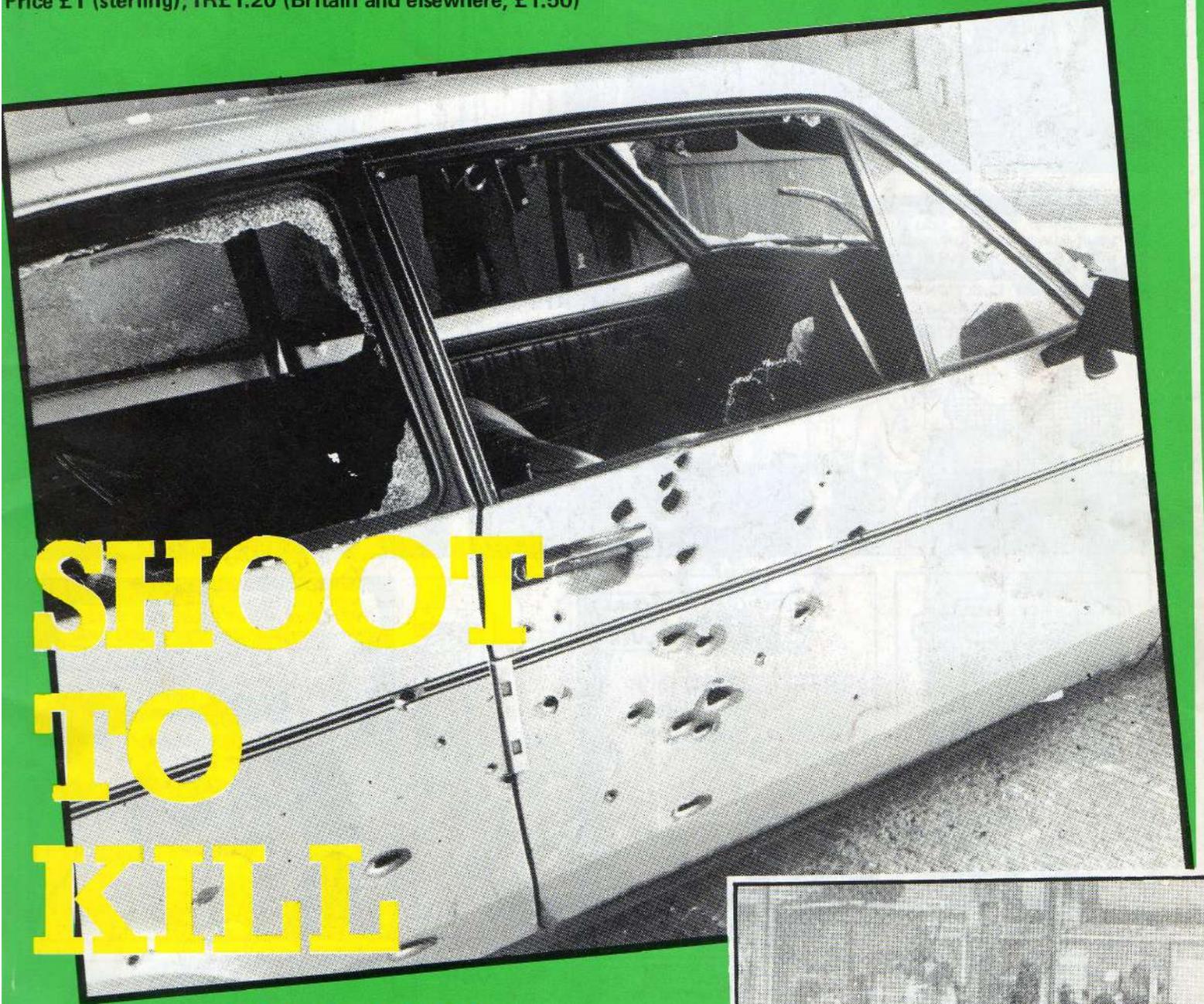
Number 5

the republican magazine

INFORMERS
The RUC's
psychological
war



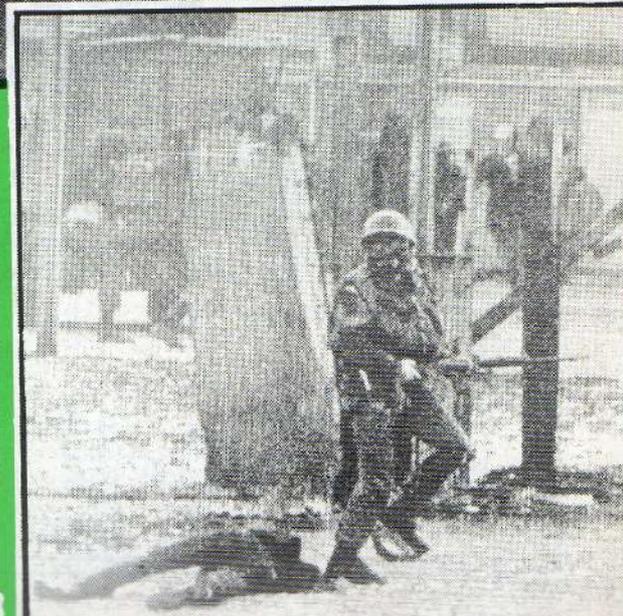
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SHOOT TO KILL

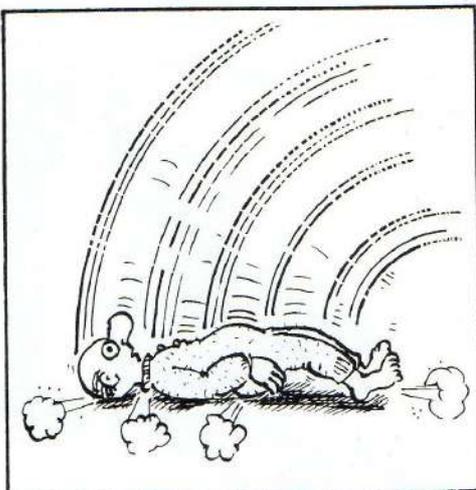
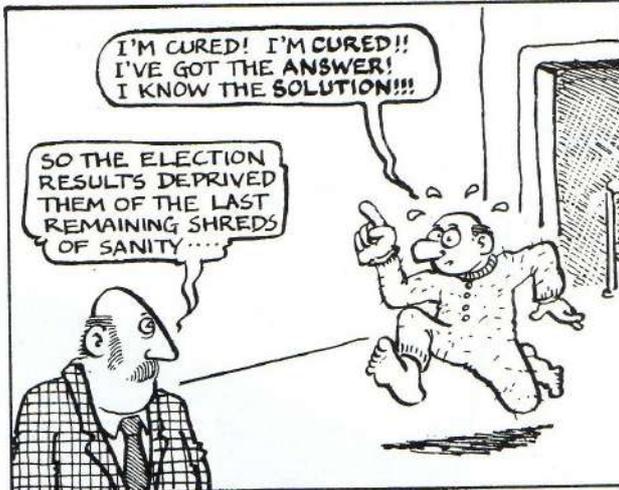
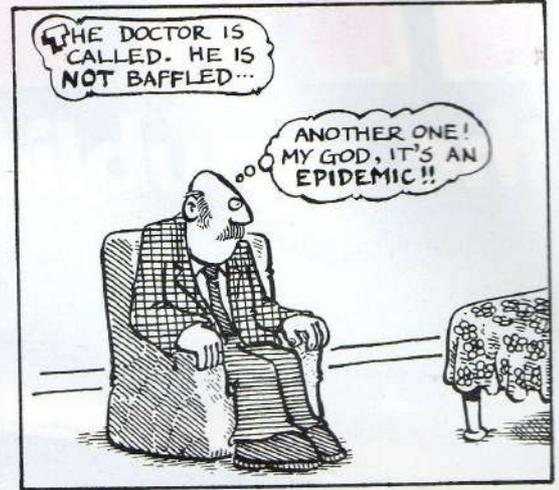
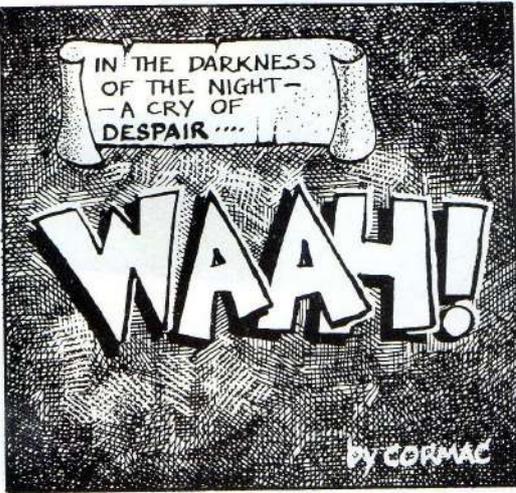
1972-1982

The unchanging face
of British repression



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British Labour and republicans

Steve Bundred (above), the Greater London councillor behind last December's invitation to Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison, writes about Labour Party attitudes to the North

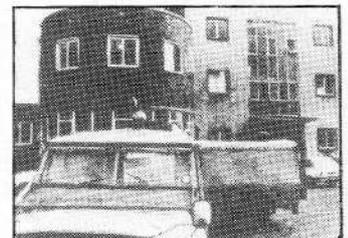
Mellows and the Civil War

Phil Flynn examines the class basis of the Civil War and Liam Mellows' analysis of it



The RUC and informers

The use of paid informers is not a new phenomenon but part of a 'psy-ops' strategy against the nationalist community, writes Sean Delaney



COVER: Gervase McKerr's bullet-riddled car, November 11th 1982; (inset) Bloody Sunday, January 30th 1972

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Broadening the base

WITH the real possibility of Westminster elections taking place as early as June, and with October being the next but less likely proposition, Sinn Fein activists and republicans generally in the six counties have already begun the process of revitalising the electoral machine in readiness.

Undoubtedly, with the spectacular results of October 20th still fresh in the mind, there will be considerable optimism and enthusiasm in the republican camp, and a confident belief — which nevertheless should not slip into complacency — that Sinn Fein can improve significantly, at the SDLP's expense, on the 35% of the nationalist vote it received last time round.

Indeed, in all of the areas where Sinn Fein stood candidates last October there has been a vigorous republican political involvement in many of the social and political issues most affecting the nationalist people. Sinn Fein's involvement in those areas has in many instances clearly exposed the failures of the SDLP — not only in terms of its political collaboration over the national question and its ineffectual protests about the repression of nationalists (such as meaningless calls for 'public enquiries' in the aftermath of shoot-to-kill murders), but also in terms of the failure of its elected representatives to deal with the day-to-day problems of nationalists in a principled and concerned fashion.

For too long, the SDLP's representatives have got away relatively unchallenged with their horse-trading and wheeling-and-dealing, 'win some, lose some' easy relationship with public bodies in the North such as the Housing Executive, DHSS and DOE, whose bureaucracy and indifference to



● Republicans are eagerly gearing themselves towards the Westminster elections; (clockwise) Sinn Fein's Owen Carron, Martin McGuinness, Gerry Adams and Joe Austin discuss strategy

people's needs has involved a social and economic oppression of nationalists every bit as real as political and military oppression. That has to change.

A useful indicator of just how much Sinn Fein can hope to eat into the SDLP's electoral base of support, come the Westminster elections, may be seen on March 24th in Carrickmore, County Tyrone, where Sinn Fein, the SDLP and a range of other nationalist and unionist candidates contest the Omagh Ward 'D' council seat left vacant by the resignation of the SDLP's disillusioned Brendan Martin.

Should Sinn Fein win the by-election, it will be an historic event marking the first council seat in the North taken by the party.

For now, with the Westminster elections looming, and the SDLP formally pledged to contest all 17 seats

in a desperate gamble to prevent Sinn Fein boosting its percentage of the vote, it is up to republicans to continue the work broadening the base of support for their uncompromising resistance to the Orange state, and for their radical alternative to the SDLP's craven opportunism.

* * *

IN the twenty-six counties, the general election at the end of November provided a telling portrait of the stagnation of Free State politics.

The Fianna Fail government collapsed not because of any ideological trauma in Leinster House, but merely because of an opportunistic move by the Coalition parties following the death of one government back-bencher and the illness of another.

The election campaign offered no

VIEWPOINT



● FITZGERALD ● HAUGHEY

choice to the voters, with both sides promising economic hardship, and the debate fell into a meaningless beauty contest between Tweedledum Charles Haughey and Tweedledee Garret FitzGerald. The failure of the capitalist political and economic system was not up for debate and was not debated.

In the event, the Fine Gael and Labour Coalition came out on top this time. And it was cruelly ironic that their first budget, introduced this February, was even more brutal than the one which had seen them plunge from office only twelve months previously.

The abject betrayal of its voters by the Labour Party, which its full support for this latest assault on living standards represents, was breathtaking in its effrontery — even though it can not be described as in any way unexpected, going on that party's track record.

The real political, social and economic battleground — if a battle is to be fought at all — is, by necessity therefore, outside the Dublin parliament.

The extra direct taxation placed on the overburdened PAYE taxpayer; the extra indirect taxation placed most heavily on the least well-off; the real cuts in social welfare payments; the wage freeze planned for both public and private sector workers; the un-

employment figures only a breath away from 200,000; the jailing of workers who struggle to salvage their jobs; the coming re-introduction of local rates, and the continuing run-down of public spending in the most vital social areas, all represent a massive repression of a majority of the people.

The fact that the wealthy minority has been asked to make nothing approaching such a sacrifice is a measure of the contempt in which the people are held by the capitalist politicians.

It rests therefore on political activists outside the parliament — and, in particular, within the trade union movement — to mobilise now, as never before, against the present direction of such policies.

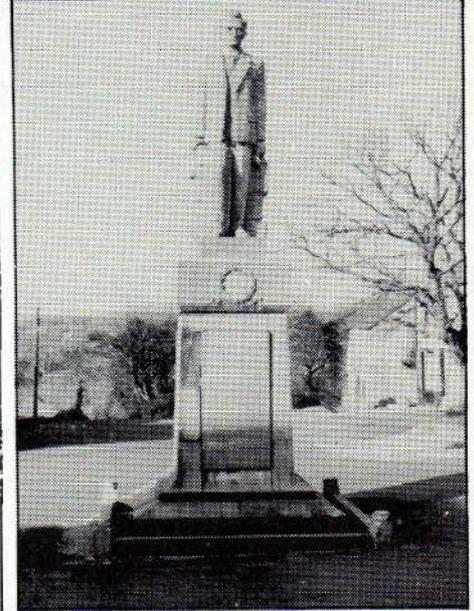
The extent of republican involvement in this struggle will be a measure of the level of political development which has been so clearly rising in recent years.

* * *

THE traditional symbolism of rebirth associated with Easter has a double significance for Irish republicans, for whom it is also the time we recall the birth in arms of the 1916 Republic and dedicate ourselves once more to the re-establishment of the integrity and unity of that Republic.

The gombeenmen of Leinster House, for all their 'verbal republicanism' resurrected at this time of year for public consumption, have nothing in common — nor did they ever have — with the ideals of national freedom so vigorously espoused by those 'violent men' of 1916.

It is interesting to note in this con-



● Outside of his native Leitrim, and the pages of 'An Phoblacht/Republican News', the 60th anniversary of the birth of Sean MacDiarmada went largely ignored in the Free State

text that, outside of his native Leitrim — and the pages of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* — the 60th anniversary, last January, of the birth of the 1916 revolutionary, Sean MacDiarmada, one of the founding fathers of the Republic, went largely ignored, certainly by the Free State government. MacDiarmada would doubtlessly have considered the omission from that quarter as entirely appropriate.

Once again this Easter Sunday, April 3rd, those republicans who have not forgotten MacDiarmada and his comrades, or their ideals, will be assembling in their tens of thousands across the length and breadth of Ireland and abroad; those with their liberty and those who are imprisoned in Ireland and England; large crowds, and individuals alone, separated by distance (and in some cases by bars) but united in an unashamed political goal: Irish freedom.

Their allegiance, and their very real ability to bring about peace with justice in this country, will be pledged to that Republic and to the Republican Movement, the only non-partitionist 32-county national organisation in Ireland, and the genuine inheritor of the mantle of 1916.

* * *

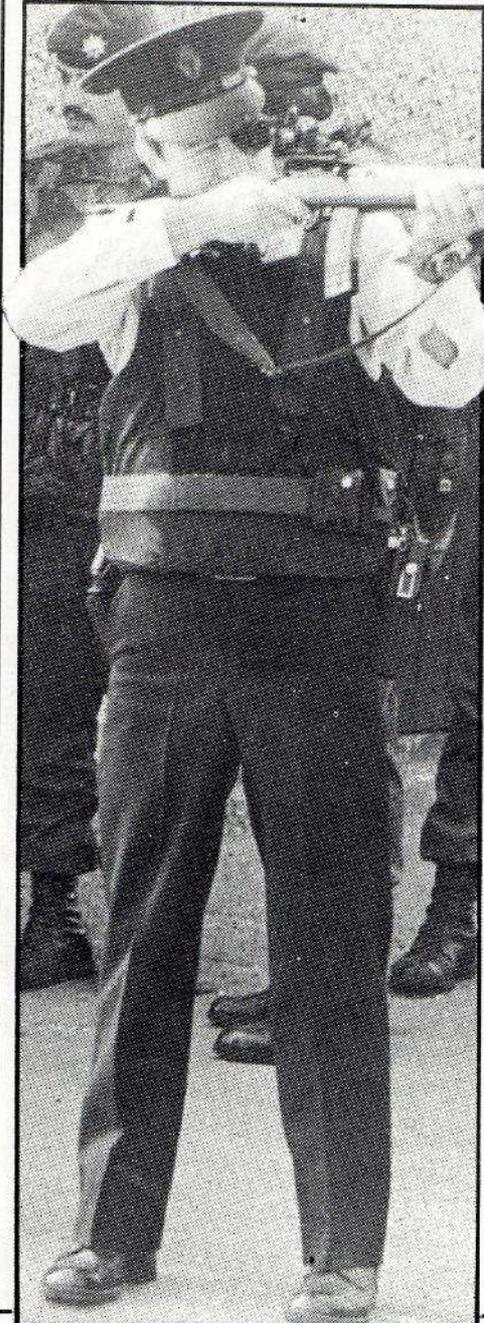
IN line with our policy of making *IRIS* — the republican magazine a vehicle for fresh ideas and debate as well as research and analysis, we have opened our columns in this issue to two contributions from outside the usual orbit of Irish republican viewpoint. We will continue to do so. We welcome the contributions from GLC councillor Steve Bundred and Irish solidarity activist in France, Michele Bonnechere, and while not necessarily agreeing with all of their comments, believe they fulfill a useful purpose in stimulating republican thinking and discussion around the issue of building solidarity abroad. ■



● The working class will bear the brunt of Alan Dukes' Free State monetarist budget



● Relatives of the six nationalist victims of the shoot-to-kill policy in Armagh lead a protest march through Lurgan on February 6th



SHOOT TO KILL

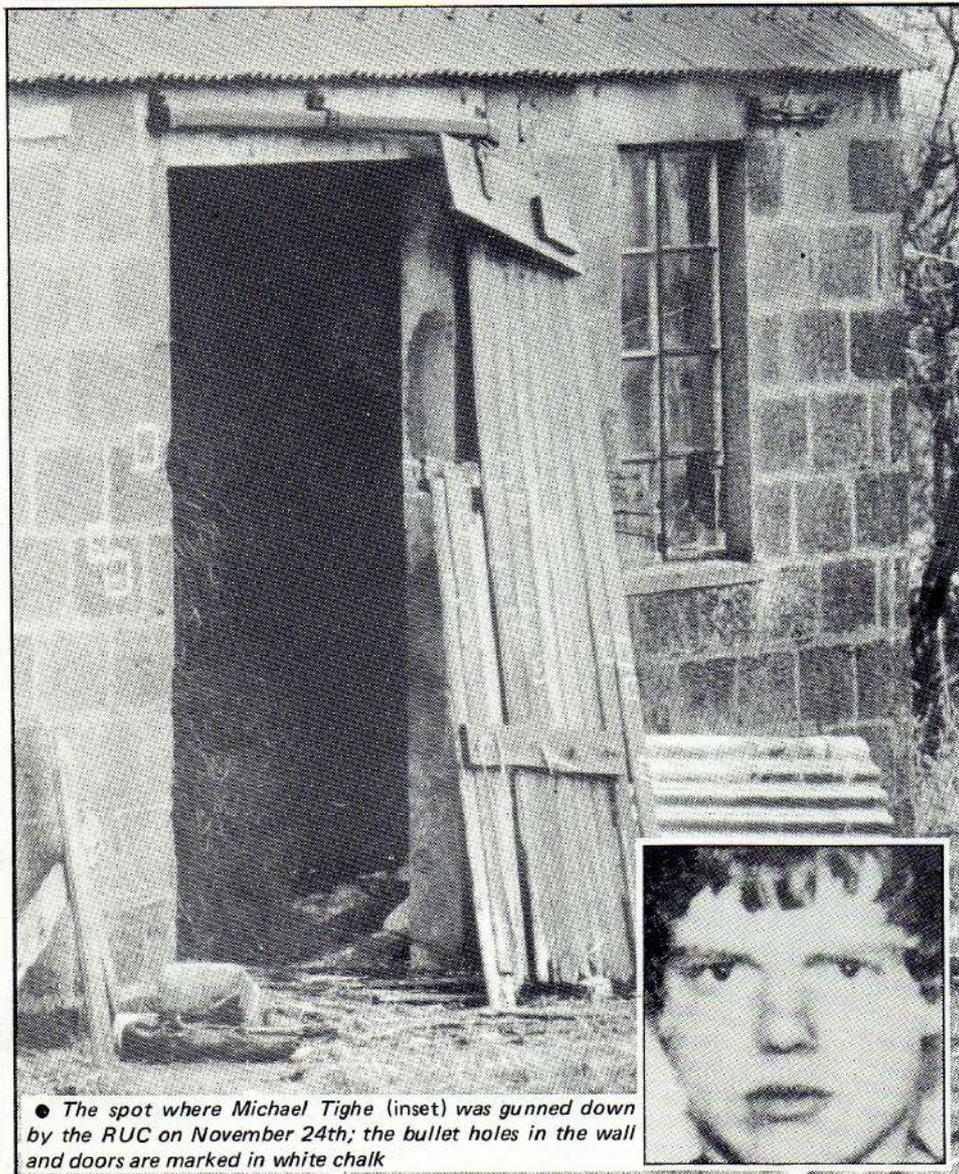
The unchanging face of repression

PETER HAYES examines reactions to the latest shoot-to-kill deaths. Elsewhere in the magazine, on page 18, Liz Curtis examines media response at the time to an earlier case of deliberate shoot-to-kill, Bloody Sunday in Derry on January 30th 1972.

AT AROUND 9.35pm on the night of Thursday, November 11th last year, 31-year-old Gervase McKerr left his home in Lurgan's Teghnaven estate accompanied by Eugene Toman and Sean Burns, both aged 21. All three were IRA Volunteers in the North Armagh Brigade, all three were unarmed. Less than 10 minutes later they lay dead or dying on a darkened road less than half-a-mile away, Gervase's Ford Escort car riddled

with more than 50 bullets in an RUC ambush.

Less than two weeks later on November 24th, not far away from the scene of the earlier killings, at a farmhouse between Lurgan and Craigavon, 17-year-old Michael Tighe was shot dead and his 20-year-old friend critically wounded in a second RUC stake-out operation. Neither were members of a republican organisation, yet the RUC claimed that a routine patrol had opened fire when the youths had pointed weapons at them. The weapons



● The spot where Michael Tighe (inset) was gunned down by the RUC on November 24th; the bullet holes in the wall and doors are marked in white chalk

the RUC produced were *three* 60-year-old rifles of German and Italian origin, believed to have belonged to the late husband (a republican veteran of the Tan War) of the elderly woman who lived at the farmhouse. There was no ammunition with the rifles and considerable evidence that an RUC unit had staked out the farm for some time before the shooting. Martin McAuley, wounded in the attack, was subsequently charged in his hospital bed with 'conspiracy to murder', in a transparent attempt to cover up the RUC's cold-blooded killing.

On December 12th, at the Mullaghcreevie estate in Armagh city, two INLA Volunteers, Roddy Carroll and Seamus Grew, were gunned down in a third RUC ambush that bore all the hallmarks of the November 11th attack. In both cases the RUC claimed the cars involved had burst through a road checkpoint before they opened fire. All the evidence confirms that there were no checkpoints, only RUC men lying in wait. In neither case were the Volunteers armed.

In Roddy Carroll's case, he had only recently been released — to the RUC's considerable annoyance — after

an informer retracted 'evidence' he had initially agreed to give against him.

INCONTROVERTIBLE PROOF

Since those six County Armagh slayings in the space of a month, there has been further incontrovertible proof of a shoot-to-kill policy operating right across the six counties, aimed specifically at known republican activists but affecting also other members of the nationalist community found in what the RUC or British army regard as suitably compromising situations.

Two men engaged in petty theft have been shot dead in Belfast: Patrick Elliott on December 27th by soldiers of the Black Watch regiment as he ran unarmed from an Andersonstown chip shop he had just robbed, and Francis McColgan on January 19th, shot dead after a car chase by the RUC, following a petrol station robbery by McColgan and two friends using an imitation pistol.

In Donagh, County Fermanagh, Kieran Leonard, a Sinn Fein election worker, was shot and wounded on December 29th near his home by an undercover British army unit, and later charged with possession of explosives

found several hundred yards away.

Finally, so far, on February 2nd, unarmed INLA Volunteer Neil McMonagle was shot dead, and a friend, Liam Duffy, wounded, by an undercover British soldier in Derry's Shantallow estate. In none of these cases was there any evidence that the dead or wounded men had been armed or that they had been engaged in acts of republican resistance.

CRAVEN RESPONSE

The response to these cold-blooded killings from the constitutional 'leaders' of the nationalist community has been predictable in its bleating ineffectiveness. Despite Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein declaring that the time for calling for 'independent' public enquiries was over, and that they had achieved nothing in earlier cases of legalised murder by the British state, the SDLP's only contribution — expressed by party deputy leader Seamus Mallon — was to call for just that.

John Hume's own craven belief in the right of the RUC and British army to repress nationalists as long as it is done within the 'extraordinary' legal framework of the Orange state, was well expressed early in December:

"No-one objects to any person being arrested for any crime for which they are suspected, charged and brought before the courts. That is the due process of law.

"But to authorise their instant execution or attempted execution, as has now happened on five separate occasions in recent times, is in effect to abandon the rule of law completely..."

The Catholic hierarchy also made meaningless calls for public enquiries, which the Northern Ireland Office — treating these appeals with deserved contempt — refused to heed, instead instituting internal RUC enquiries to be carried out by those direct-ruler James Prior glibly referred to as 'independent people from the police force'!

Those 'enquiries', meaningless as they are, have yet apparently even to reach the six-county Director of Public Prosecutions, in strong contrast to the alacrity with which the DPP in England received the report into the Metropolitan Police shooting of Stephen Waldorf in London during December, and which resulted in two detectives being charged with murder.

MORALLY INCAPABLE

Dr. Francis Brooks, the Catholic Bishop of Dromore, speaking at the Requiem Mass for Michael Tighe on November 27th, demonstrated to what extent the hierarchy has deliberately cut itself adrift from the sentiments and fears of the bulk of the nationalist population, and has rendered itself logically and morally incapable of unequivocally condemning the deliberate shoot-to-kill tactics employed by the RUC. He said:

"The police have a most difficult

and dangerous responsibility placed on them restoring law and order in the province.

"An impartial enquiry, irrespective of its findings, would strengthen the credibility of the police and foster confidence among all fair-minded people."

Six weeks later, the Catholic hierarchy was to go even further in signalling its political support for the RUC, and its total lack of real sympathy even for the relatives of the RUC's victims.

Arriving in the North on January 4th for a two-day visit for talks by leading members of the Catholic hierarchy in England with their Irish counterparts, Bishop James O'Brien from Hertfordshire said that he was satisfied with British government denials that a shoot-to-kill policy existed. *"I accept the sincerity of the British government,"* he said.

The following evening, when relatives of the six Armagh shoot-to-kill victims gathered outside Ara Coeli, Cardinal O Fiaich's residence in Armagh where the bishops were meeting, to talk to Bishop O'Brien about the uninformed stupidity of his utterances, he callously refused to see them, while the Cardinal's secretary, Fr. James Clyne, told the relatives they were trespassing on private property and that the RUC would be called to move them if they did not leave!

'VOICES OF MODERATION'

Having refused to listen at first-hand to the anguished voice of relatives who knew only too well what 'the rule of law and order' meant to them, the text of the bishops' press communique after the two-day conference — *"it became clear that far more attention should be paid to voices of moderation in all sections of the Northern Ireland community"* — was clear in its call for acceptance of the *status quo* in the North, including the RUC and their shoot-to-kill tactics, and was absolute in its rejection of those who daily experience that *status quo*, and that 'moderation', and all the poverty, repression and death it entails.

The reaction of loyalists has been as predictable as that of the SDLP and Catholic hierarchy, the shoot-to-kill policy answering the demands they have continually made for SAS-style assassination campaigns.

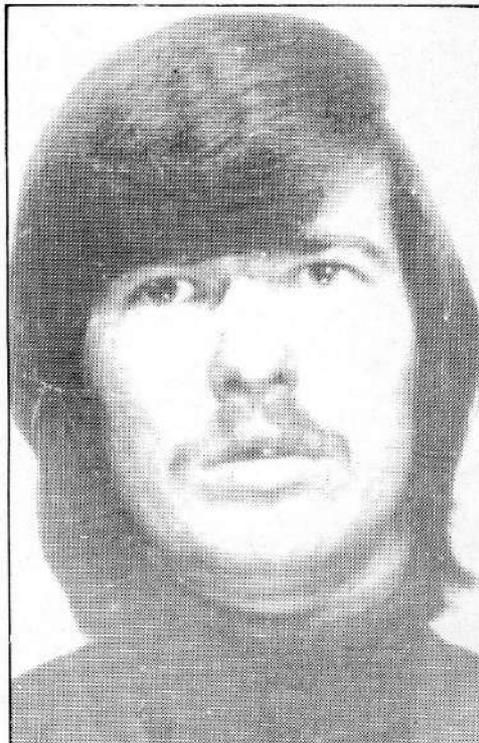
Orange Order leader Thomas Passmore said: *"I call upon the secretary of state to remove the political shackles from our security forces. It is now high time for a review of the whole 'yellow card' procedure..."*; while DUP leader Ian Paisley called for shoot-to-kill actions to be *"repeated across the province."*

NOTHING NEW

It needs to be said, however, and is a commonplace for Northern nationalists, that the shoot-to-kill tactic is nothing



● First of the recent shoot-to-kill victims was Eamonn Bradley, an unarmed republican, shot dead in Derry city in August 1982 — three months before the first Lurgan shootings



● IRA Volunteer Peter Cleary was assassinated on April 15th 1976 by SAS men in South Armagh

new in the arsenal of British repression in the six counties, and that — although it has been an ongoing tactic at one level or another throughout the whole course of the present resistance in the North — it is, like sectarian assassination campaigns, a tap that can be turned on and off to suit British and loyalist needs in particular political situations.

Bloody Sunday in 1972, when British strategists tried unsuccessfully to 'draw out' the IRA and teach civil rights protestors a sharp and brutal lesson in the process, provides one major illustration of this.

Nothing fundamentally has changed since this, except perhaps that the British are generally prepared to let loyalist gangs carry out random attacks on Catholic civilians, while themselves

preferring to engage in specific political assassinations against republican activists.

Even so, it has generally been the SAS' role — as seen particularly in the South Armagh area during 1975 and 1976 when they assassinated IRA Volunteers John Green and Peter Cleary and (mistakenly for a republican) Seamus Ludlow — to carry out covert killings with few or no questions asked, rather than regular British soldiers or the RUC.

What has altered then is the political circumstances. The British government correctly believes that the main body of Northern nationalist opinion is now, in the wake of the hunger-strikes and as seen partly in the Assembly elections, so totally alienated and polarised from British 'solutions' that it cannot be further polarised nor can it be wooed by velvet glove tactics.

FURTHER REPRESSION

In those circumstances it believes that its present tactical interests are served by satisfying increasingly outrageous loyalist demands for 'greater security' — which means further repression of nationalists — and for more drastic methods, and by attempting to sicken and terrify nationalists with a revamped 'tough image' RUC. It also no doubt hopes, foolishly, to inflict a psychological wound among republican activists by creating the impression that, given an opportunity, they will be shot on sight — in an attempt to intimidate them.

Yet their own analysis should perhaps best teach them of the shortcomings of such a strategy against a nationalist people that has grown up in the face of such repressive terror tactics and has been hardened and steeled by them.

The killings in Lurgan and Armagh of republican activists had emotional repercussions right across the usual spectrum of nationalist opinion in those towns, and elsewhere in the North, arousing an anger that the transparently futile calls for more Widgery-like whitewash enquiries did nothing to allay.

If British strategists hope that an assassination campaign against republican activists specifically, will be accepted by nationalists as a logical outcome of those activists' military opposition to British rule, then they're sadly mistaken. Republican military resistance, as has been shown so often before, is too deeply a part of nationalists' rejection of the Orange state to be regarded as anything other than entirely legitimate, both politically and morally, and for the deaths of those activists to be anything other than a deeply-felt tragedy.

And if the shoot-to-kill tactics persist, the Catholic bishops will have even fewer 'voices of moderation' left to talk to. ■



INFORMERS: The RUC's psychological war

BY SEAN DELANEY

1982 was a remarkable year for the republican struggle in two respects. On the positive side, the hard lessons and reappraisals that followed the hunger-strikes produced an increased politicisation among the nationalist community and a growth in political maturity among republican activists. The fruits of this, in terms of reflecting popular support for republican resistance and a significant rejection of SDLP constitutional 'reformism', were seen by the October 20th Assembly elections which marked a real advance politically for the Republican Movement, posing yet another threat to the British administration's grip on the North.

Less fortunately on the other hand, 1982 was also memorable for the large number of paid RUC informers whose

testimony has resulted in lengthy imprisonments on remand for scores of nationalists and some loyalists, has prompted widespread raids and house-wrecking across the North, and has left the usual catalogue of trauma and family suffering in its wake. The RUC's use of the 'informer tactic' has been facilitated by the enticement of massive financial rewards and immunity from prosecution for informers and by fundamental changes in legal practice in the six counties.

As the trial of 38 north Belfast people on the evidence of informer Christopher Black draws to a conclusion, *Sean Delaney* takes a look at recent informer cases and argues that they should be viewed in terms of a massive psychological propaganda offensive against the nationalist community by the RUC, and as part of a tactical change in the way that community's political resistance is repressed. Failing to understand that, or becoming demoralised, is dangerously to swallow that propaganda.

WHEN the RUC's Chief Constable Jack Hermon said on March 24th last year that the IRA "*is reeling from these blows and becoming desperate*", he was undoubtedly giving voice to a new-found optimism shared by other six-county 'security advisors' that the IRA's back, which contrary to British government expectations had been strengthened not weakened by the hunger-strikes, might finally be

broken through the demoralisation among republican supporters which they believed the use of informers would provoke.

That optimism proved ill-advised, and Hermon received a rap on the knuckles from fellow loyalists for his bravado, when the IRA struck devastatingly next day in west Belfast, shooting three British soldiers dead in an M60 machine gun ambush. Since then, the IRA has proved effectively time after time — maintaining earlier

levels of military operations — that whatever internal problems have been posed by the RUC's use of informers, the tactic is far from being a winning card, and that its structure and operational personnel remain intact.

Neither the large-scale arrests on the evidence of Christopher Black or those on the evidence of Raymond Gilmour and Bobby Quigley have prevented the IRA in Belfast and Derry operating with considerable success over the past year.

Nevertheless the RUC has continued its use of paid informers with undiminished enthusiasm precisely because the primary thrust of the tactic was not to cripple the IRA *organisationally* (which from bitter experience the RUC believes to be an unrealistic proposition), but has been geared to inflicting a *political* defeat by creating a crisis of confidence in the Republican Movement among its active supporters — demoralising them and making them afraid of giving support or assistance to IRA Volunteers, in case — so the propaganda goes — they should later be informed on.

In many cases the RUC has also consciously used informers to arrest and remove key political personnel in Sinn Fein who have been involved either locally or nationally in reorganising the party since the hunger-strikes.

INTERNING BY REMAND

Well over 250 men and women — mostly nationalists — have been remanded, many for long periods in custody awaiting trial, on the uncorroborated evidence of a string of informers, beginning with Christopher Black, who have been bribed with offers of immunity from prosecution for their own alleged involvement in republican or loyalist activities, and with promises of huge cash payments and a new ID in return for giving evidence in court.

In addition to interning on remand large numbers of suspected republicans on the flimsiest of evidence, the British administration has also successfully used the previously almost defunct Bill of Indictment in an unprecedented manner to bypass judicial preliminary enquiries, after several informers took the opportunity of their first appearance in open court — temporarily freed from RUC isolation tactics — to retract incriminating statements made against those they had accused.

As well as severely embarrassing the RUC, and exposing the coercive methods they had used to recruit informers, these retractions threatened the whole basis of their use. The Bill of Indictment, with the collusion of magistrates and the half-hearted opposition of a small number of lawyers, effectively saved the day.

To secure convictions in informer trials, the British administration must — assisted by the RUC, the Orange judiciary and the Diplock non-jury courts — secure another fundamental change in law, removing the previous unwillingness of judges to accept the evidence of an alleged accomplice against an accused without corroborative evidence. The outcome of the Black trial will undoubtedly have a critical bearing in this respect, although by no means a conclusive one.

NO CHANGES

The use of informers is not a new



● Hermon's claim that the IRA was 'reeling' from the use of informers has been effectively disproved by continuing republican military successes

phenomenon, either within Irish history, the present phase of the liberation struggle, or within any comparable liberation movement. (In fact it should be borne in mind that the IRA itself has frequently recruited informers with-



● The use of informers such as Christopher Black, 'schooled' in their evidence, indicates the RUC's determination to jail republicans and supporters by whatever means are necessary

in the enemy camp.) It is the *use* of informers, not their mere *existence* (which is constant) that determines the danger they pose.

Nor is the enactment of 'extraordinary' legislation or the arbitrary reinterpretation of existing legislation a new phenomenon in the context of British efforts to crush nationalist resistance since 1969.

Internment at the secretary of state's pleasure, in 1971, underwent a change of name but not of substance in response to international outcry, to the less draconian-sounding 'detention' on the authority of a judicial 'tribunal': British embassies throughout the world propagandised that internment was ended.

When the Gardiner report finally argued *pragmatically* that internment (or 'detention') was unproductive as a means of reducing republican resistance, it was phased out to be replaced by Diplock courts sentencing on the basis of torture-extracted statements in Castle-reagh: Long Kesh internment camp underwent a cosmetic name change too, becoming 'Her Majesty's Prison Maze'. 'Special category' status was replaced by an attempted process of criminalisation.

Eventually, what had become known with good reason as the H-Block conveyor belt, shipping hundreds of republicans into jail on little or no evidence, was undermined to a significant degree by Amnesty International's torture findings on Castlereagh interrogation methods in 1978, and by the Bennett report in 1979. Deprived first of the 'soft option' of internment and then of the luxury of a comprehensive and unhindered policy of interrogation using torture, and faced with republicans who, successfully for the most part, adopted a policy of strict silence while under interrogation, the RUC and their political overlords were forced to examine other methods to ensure the imprisonment and sentencing of suspected republicans.

As always in the six counties, the 'primacy' of the 'rule of law' came a distinct second to the entirely pragmatic business of using whatever methods necessary to 'lock up republicans'.

OTHER PROBLEMS

The RUC Special Branch faced other problems. Over the years they had successfully operated a number of low-paid informants within nationalist areas, keeping them supplied with low to high-grade information, reporting the movements of known republicans etc. In addition, when occasionally the RUC did succeed in 'breaking' an IRA Volunteer under interrogation, he was sometimes persuaded, in return for non-prosecution, to return to active involvement within the IRA and to pass on information on a regular basis.

In one notorious incident, a north

Belfast Volunteer, Maurice Gilvarry, who had 'broken' and been recruited by the RUC in 1977, passed on information about a planned operation which resulted in the stake-out assassination of several of the Volunteers involved.

The IRA however had established an internal security department which had largely succeeded in stemming the flow of high-grade information and discovering existing leaks. Over a fourteen-month period during 1980 and 1981 the Belfast Brigade was forced to execute six informers, from among a number it had uncovered, who had passed on information to the RUC. Four of them were IRA Volunteers, including Maurice Gilvarry.

By mid-1981 the IRA was sufficiently in control of the internal security situation within the nationalist ghettos to have decided to call an amnesty which would allow informers — most of them initially recruited by the RUC using a mix of physical and psychological terror — to come forward to the IRA without fear of punishment.

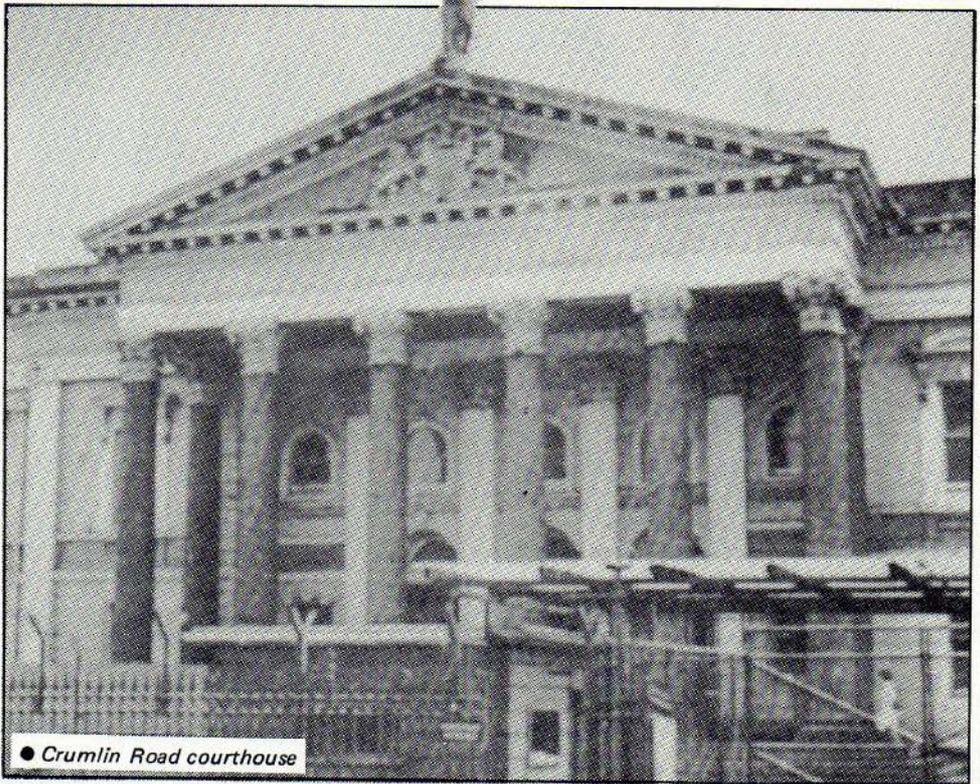
HUNGER-STRIKES

However, because at that time the hunger-strikes were taking place, the IRA — so as not to allow the media an opportunity to divert attention away from that — delayed calling the two-week-long amnesty until the end of January 1982.

By that stage Christopher Black had himself 'broken' under interrogation and agreed to turn 'queen's evidence' against an eventual total of 38 north Belfast people he incriminated in statements. Nevertheless, the IRA pointed out (*An Phoblacht/Republican News, January 28th 1982*) that although Black's effect was dramatic in terms of the number of nationalists he was prepared to testify against, a year or two earlier he would have been told to 'report back' to the IRA and subsequently to pass on information over a long period of time that might eventually have caused considerably more damage.

The IRA's January 1982 amnesty, therefore, despite its timing, was not, as media pundits speculated, a hurried response to a 'new breed' of informers, of which Black was the first, but had been decided on prior to Black's arrest to obviate the unfortunate necessity of dealing harshly with informers remaining at large within the nationalist community.

Notwithstanding, therefore, the serious new use to which informers, from Black onwards, were being put, the increasing effectiveness of the IRA's internal security procedures had heavily reduced the ability of the RUC Special Branch to operate high-grade informers secretly within the nationalist community, as they had done previously, in some cases for years.



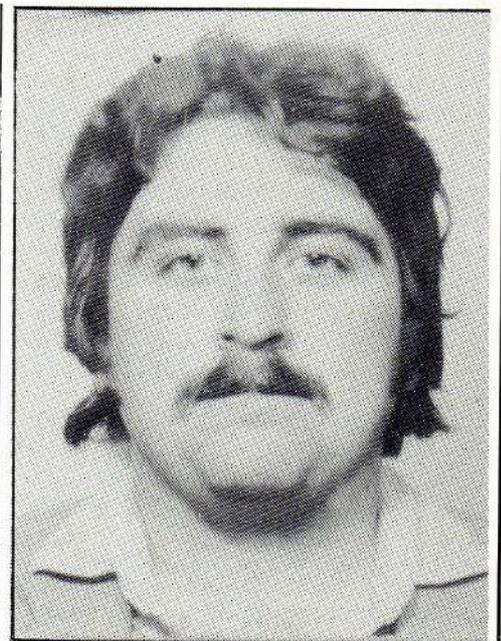
● Crumlin Road courthouse

The McWilliams/Kennedy affairs

BUT while changing circumstances were forcing the British administration to look to new methods of getting a flow of information from the nationalist ghettos, it was the McWilliams and Kennedy affairs that provided the 'dry run' for the later more widespread use of informers recruited to give evidence in court.

In March 1980 the trial of four men, including leading north Belfast republican Martin Meehan, took place, accused of conspiring to kidnap Stephen McWilliams from the New Lodge Road on July 11th 1979 and holding him against his will. McWilliams, a petty thief caught in the act of robbing a bar, had been recruited by the British army some time earlier (in return for cash and not being prosecuted) to report on the movements of suspected local republicans, including Meehan.

At the trial, McWilliams' testimony constituted the only evidence for the prosecution, while monetary gain was shown to be his primary motivation for informing. Nevertheless, despite the evidence of defence witnesses, three of the men — Meehan, Chris Doherty and Patrick Burnside — were convicted and jailed for twelve years. Meehan was later to protest his innocence in the H-Blocks by embarking on a 66-day



● JAMES KENNEDY

hunger-strike that brought him close to death.

In November 1982, McWilliams, abandoned by his British army paymasters and in hiding in England, and apparently remorseful at his role in framing Meehan and the others, wrote a letter to the *Sunday World* confessing that he had deliberately perjured himself on British army instructions to obtain the convictions.

The fourth defendant in the McWilliams trial, Kevin Mulgrew, then aged 24, was acquitted, but remained in custody on separate charges. He had faced a long concerted effort by the Brits and RUC to put him behind bars.

Arrested in 1973 and charged with the ludicrous offence of 'attempted membership of the IRA', the charges were quickly dropped. In October 1976 he was again arrested and held for five months on remand on charges of carrying out a bombing, but once more the charges were dropped. A third time, in November 1977, he was charged with a bombing and held for 15 months on remand before being acquitted at his trial in February 1979. Five months later he was again arrested, on the McWilliams charges, and although acquitted in March 1980 he was not released until after a third trial on October 24th, in which he was acquitted of possession of a weapon with intent.

Ironically for Mulgrew, despite having faced and beaten no less than five frame-ups and spent almost three years out of seven remanded in custody, he was again to be arrested in November 1981 on the evidence of another paid informer, Christopher Black, and held in custody, in what for him had become most definitely a process of internment by remand.

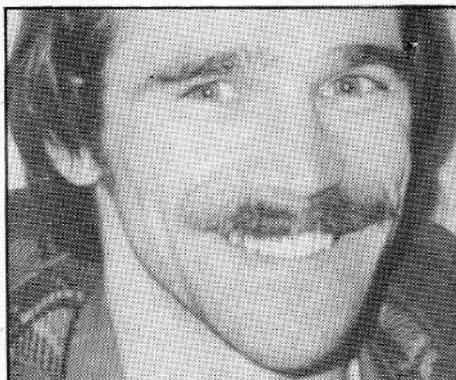
Indications that Christopher Black was deliberately slanting his 'schooled' evidence against Mulgrew in particular, while testifying in January 1983, in order to portray him as the prime instigator of acts of republican resistance in north Belfast, made it certain that the RUC was determined that this time Mulgrew would not escape its clutches, and provided an insight into how the RUC cynically views the role of its informers.

JAMES KENNEDY

In at least one important respect, the treachery of a 23-year-old Andersonstown taxi driver, James Kennedy, provided a closer parallel than the McWilliams affair with the RUC's subsequent deployment of informers.

Kennedy, as well as receiving immunity from prosecution for his alleged role in providing a car for moving Volunteers and arms on a number of occasions, was recruited to testify in court against 12 republicans on major charges, and a number of others on lesser charges, after being promised £25,000.

It was this readiness — undoubtedly decided on at a senior political level — to provide relatively (and later, extremely) large sums of money, along with immunity, that hallmarked the way the British would subsequently convince informers, who had first been psychologically 'broken' during interrogation and incriminated themselves, to go through with their evidence



● KEVIN MULGREW

in court.

RUC propaganda, on the other hand, and prosecution counsels, would try to suggest that the motivation of informers was not self-interested and was based on a 'moral' disillusionment with the activities they were allegedly involved in!

The Kennedy trial — also known as the M60 trial because of the involvement of some of the accused republicans in earlier successful machine gun ambushes — took place in June 1981, some ten months after Kennedy had agreed to testify. But some of the verdicts were forestalled by the timely escape at gunpoint from Crumlin Road jail of the seven main defendants, and another man from Ardboe in County



● MARTIN MEEHAN

Tyrone ('the Crumlin Road eight'). Six of the eight were subsequently arrested in the Free State and sentenced under the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act to ten-year sentences. Two men are still uncaptured.

Those of the remaining defendants in the Kennedy case who had not signed statements incriminating themselves were later acquitted, making the whole affair a grave embarrassment to the RUC. Nevertheless, the precedent which had been initiated in the McWilliams case and followed up by James Kennedy's testimony, had firmly set the stage for future attempts to gain convictions against republicans and supporters on the uncorroborated evidence of paid informers.

'Black' propaganda and the 'psy-ops' war

THE arrest and subsequent 'breaking' of Christopher Black in November 1981 came therefore at a time when the objective political framework in which informers could be used to testify in court had been prepared.

The British administration was prepared to sanction the granting of immunity to informers who had implicated themselves in activities of a serious nature. This was undoubtedly a powerful motivation in the case of Black, who after being 'broken' in Castlereagh faced a long jail term only a year after being released from Long Kesh.

But the willingness to pay informers huge sums of money (sums mentioned by informers who later retracted, of £50,000 and £75,000, have undoubtedly been exceeded in many cases), and the RUC's tactic of holding an informer in isolation from contact with family or friends (or, as in some cases, abducting members of his family to be with him), has also gradually succeeded in psychologically 'turning' some informers, including Black, so that they have increasingly acted out

of a sense of identification with the RUC, and have allowed their evidence to be concocted and 'schooled' by the RUC in such a way as to maximise the chances of convictions being secured.

(A similar sort of psychological disorientation tactic, since refined, was of course used against American GIs during the war in Korea.)

In addition, the restrictions imposed on Castlereagh methods of torture by the Amnesty International and Bennett reports have made the British administration amenable to sweeping changes in the practice and interpretation of existing 'extraordinary' legislation, involving the use of the voluntary Bill of Indictment to bypass normal judicial preliminary enquiries, and generally attempting to lower the threshold of the calibre of evidence needed to secure a conviction, to allow the uncorroborated evidence of an alleged accomplice.

POLARISED

In a broader political context, it seems likely that following the end of the hunger-strikes the British took a decision to mount a massive psychological offensive against those sect-

ions of the nationalist community that gave tacit or active support to the Republican Movement, and which had been further polarised by the Thatcher government's intransigence towards the hunger-strikers.

This 'psy-ops' strategy involved a series of large-scale indiscriminate house raids across the North, mostly in Belfast and Derry, during which considerable damage was done to homes, and in which the Brits and RUC usually claimed they were 'acting on information received'. Other aspects of the strategy included black propaganda operations such as the deliberate British army detonation of unprimed IRA explosives in Springfield Avenue in west Belfast in June 1982 which wrecked scores of nationalist homes and which the Brits attempted to blame on the IRA; and, in September 1982, a blatant propaganda ploy in which the RUC launched a 'campaign' against 'protection rackets', primarily aimed at discrediting the IRA.

But undoubtedly the most important component of the 'psy-ops' strategy has been the use of informers to create a sense of fear and demoralisation among the nationalist community, and to create an illusion that the resistance struggle is riddled with informers — although in overall terms the numbers involved are small.

The use of informer evidence as a means of securing convictions of suspected republican and loyalist activists has not however been without hitches, and without on some occasions considerable embarrassment to the RUC.

McCORMICK

In a reserved judgement given in the Belfast crown court on April 2nd 1982, Justice Murray sentenced RUC sergeant Thomas McCormick to 20 years' imprisonment for the armed robbery of a north Antrim bank — a charge for which there was corroborating evidence — but he **acquitted** McCormick of a further 23 charges against him, including the killing of a fellow RUC sergeant, Joseph Campbell, in 1977,



● THOMAS McCORMICK



● Part of the British army's black propaganda strategy, aimed at discrediting the IRA, was the detonation of unprimed IRA explosives in west Belfast's Springfield Avenue in June 1982, wrecking scores of nationalist homes

because the only evidence was that of an RUC informer and alleged accomplice, Anthony O'Doherty.

McCormick had recruited O'Doherty in 1971 as an RUC paid informer to report on republican activities, but gradually the two of them were alleged to have engaged in a series of bank and post office robberies to finance their lifestyles, eventually killing sergeant Campbell when he became suspicious. Shortly afterwards, McCormick and O'Doherty fell out, with O'Doherty being charged in 1980 and sentenced to 18 years.

Justice Murray however, refusing to accept O'Doherty's uncorroborated testimony at the 1982 trial, argued that: *"O'Doherty has to be treated as an accomplice and it is dangerous to convict McCormick on all the offences on the evidence of O'Doherty alone."* He went on to criticise the regular visits made by the RUC to O'Doherty in jail to go over his evidence and to 'school' him in giving it.

Another problem for the RUC in subsequent informer cases was that several of those who initially broke under interrogation and incriminated others, subsequently refused to give evidence and retracted their original statements once either they were in jail, and freed of the RUC's isolation tactics, or, even when they had been spirited away to a hiding place in the North or in England, after they had had time to consider the enormity of their intended actions.

One of these was IRSP informer Jackie Goodman, who had incriminated a total of 21 people following his arrest in March 1982 and had been taken with his wife into 'protective custody' in England. He returned to the North in mid-September and re-

tracted his earlier statements.

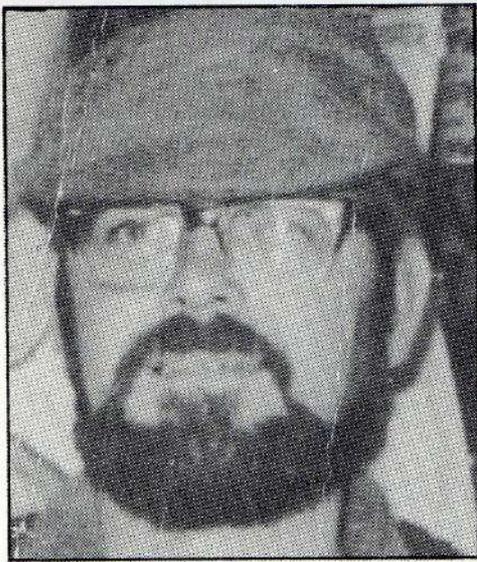
PRELIMINARY ENQUIRIES

A far greater problem for the RUC was posed in the cases of UVF informer Clifford McKeown and IRSP informer Sean Joseph Mallon. At the preliminary enquiries into charges against the individuals these two had incriminated, in July 1982 and September 1982 respectively, both McKeown and Mallon — coming for the first time since their arrests into contact with members of their families in court — retracted their statements and refused to give evidence.

Furthermore, McKeown revealed that during his period in protective custody he had been kept in a luxurious London flat and had been promised £50,000 if he gave evidence. The RUC have denied at all times that they have offered cash sums in return for individuals turning informer.

Following Mallon's retraction, two of those he had incriminated, and against whom there was no further evidence, Armagh men Roddy Carroll and Oliver Grew, were set free. The other side of the RUC's determination to use every conceivable means against those they believed to be republicans was to be seen shortly afterwards, when — on December 12th 1982 — Roddy Carroll and Oliver's brother, Seamus Grew, were shot dead by an RUC patrol in a stake-out that formed part of the grisly shoot-to-kill policy which — in Armagh alone — resulted in six men being shot dead by the RUC in the space of one month.

After the chaotic ending of the Clifford McKeown and Sean Mallon preliminary enquiries, and desperately anxious to prevent the premature collapse of their informer tactic, the



● Informers Patrick McGurk (above) and Christopher Black, on his wedding day (right)

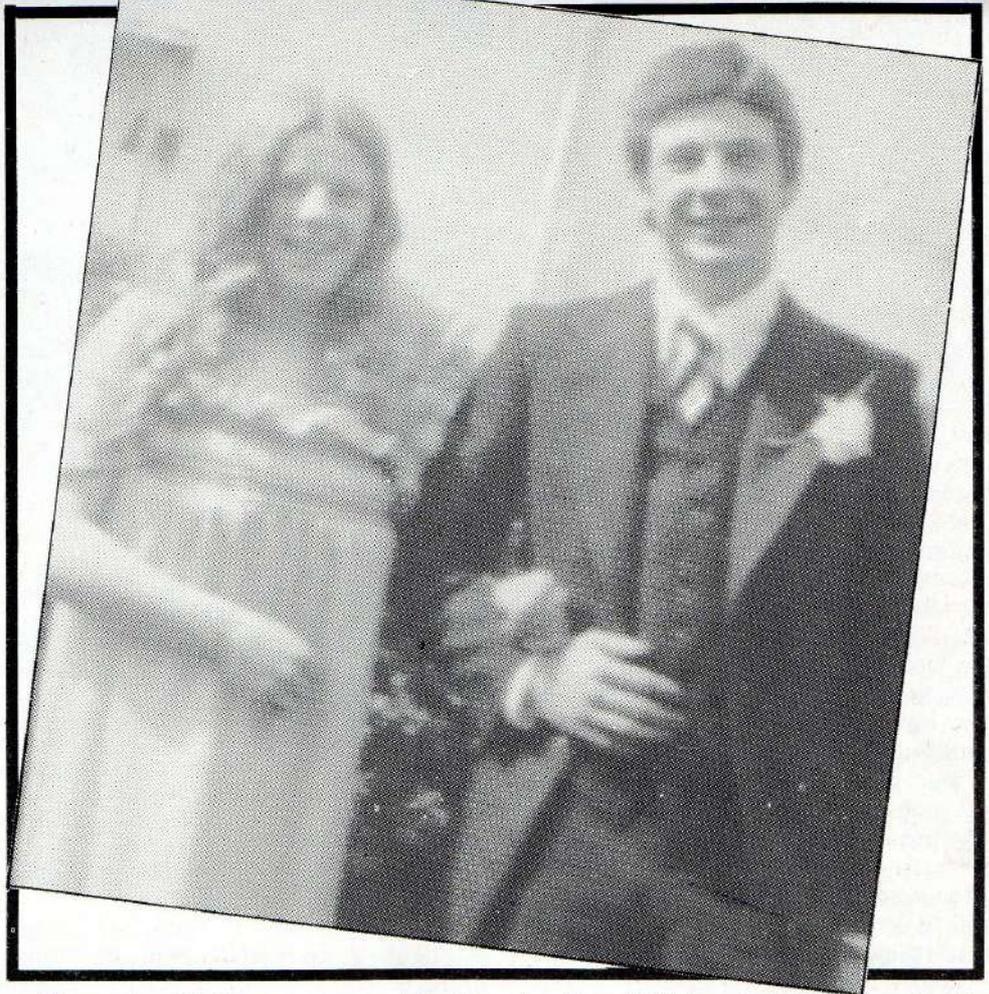
RUC acted swiftly in collusion with the six-county Director of Public Prosecutions and the Orange judiciary to resurrect the almost obsolete Bill of Indictment. This legal ploy, against all precedent, disposed with the preliminary hearing altogether, preventing defence counsels properly enquiring into the evidence against the defendants they represented until the commencement of the trial itself, and enabled the RUC to maintain the isolation of their informers, where necessary, for significantly longer periods than would otherwise have been the case.

To date, the Bill of Indictment has been used on two occasions: on September 21st in the case of nine Duggannon men incriminated on the evidence of informer Patrick McGurk, and subsequently in the Christopher Black case. Black in fact, although his trial commenced on December 6th 1982, was only obliged to be in court for the 13-day period in January during which he actually gave evidence, and then was whisked back to his hide-out in 'protective custody' in England.

After its use in the McGurk case a number of solicitors and barristers protested briefly and ineffectually against the Bill of Indictment, but there is at present little evidence other than that most members of the legal profession in the North are so compromised by their acceptance of the Diplock court system that they are incapable and unwilling to mount any effective protest.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY

There is no doubt that if, as must be thought likely, the Orange judiciary shows a willingness to further reduce the minimum safeguards remaining in the legal system in the North and accept the uncorroborated evidence of paid informers and alleged accomplices, the RUC will enthusiastically try to use the informer tactic as part of a long-term strategy against nationalist resistance.



Even should they prove unable to consistently gain convictions against suspected republicans, they may well continue to use the tactic both for its value in effectively interning large numbers of suspected republicans on remand for lengthy periods, and for any value they may try to squeeze out in terms of demoralising the nationalist community.

It should also be viewed as significant that this co-ordinated 'psychological operations' campaign against nationalist resistance — of which informers are a part — comes precisely at the time when Sinn Fein and the republican struggle in general is mounting an intensified *political* challenge



● JIM GIBNEY

to the British administration in the North and severely threatening the reformist approach of the SDLP. The arrest of former Sinn Fein national organiser Jim Gibney on the falsified evidence of informer Kevin McGrady is only one aspect of that political attack by the British.

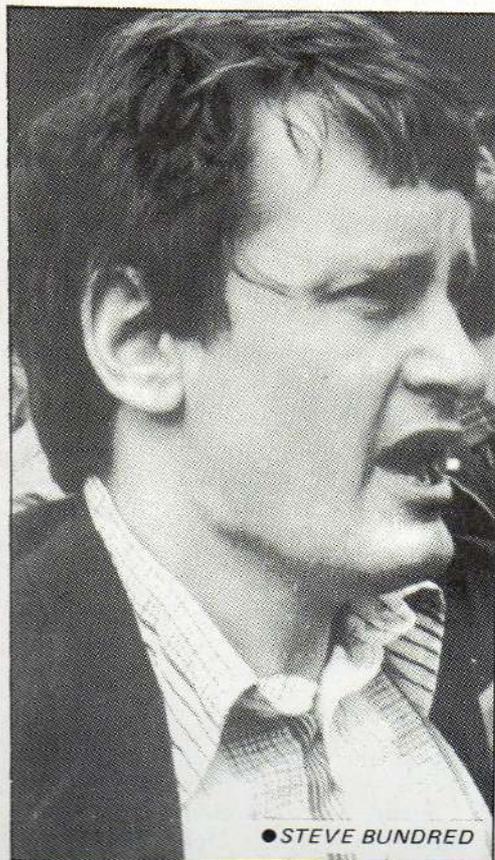
It also needs to be emphasised however, and re-emphasised, that the RUC's use of informers, and the manipulation of the Northern legal system to suit their ruthless and pragmatic ends, is not a new phenomenon but simply a new face on the unchanging nature of British repression in Ireland.

Republican resistance — which despite the use of informers in a few cases to date against loyalists, is the primary target of the RUC — has shown itself well able to counter all those aspects of repression over the past 12 years and more: internment, Castlereagh, Diplock courts, H-Blocks, assassinations, and to continue its war of revolutionary attrition.

The nationalist community as a whole, which has borne the brunt of British army and RUC military and political repression over the same period, can and should mobilise now to counter this further attack on the freedom struggle in Ireland and, as can almost certainly be done, make the British use of paid informers — with all of their sordid retinue of bribes, immunity and 'schooled' evidence — too expensive a tactic, in terms of its political consequences, to be worth the effort. ■

The British Labour Party and the republican struggle

THIS article has been specially written for IRIS by Steve Bundred, the member of the Greater London Council who initiated the invitation by 26 Labour Party councillors to Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison to visit London last December. Steve, aged 30, and born in Liverpool, is the GLC member for the borough of Islington North and is the vice-chairperson of the GLC Police Committee. He has been an active member of the Labour Party for 13 years



● STEVE BUNDRED

CONNOLLY's remark in 1916 that "the British Labour Party won't lift a finger to help us" established attitudes and expectations that have shaped republican thinking ever since. Sadly, these expectations have repeatedly been fulfilled. The record on Ireland of successive Labour governments has been nothing short of shameful, and for the most part even the fiercest backbench critics of those governments have failed to cite this record as a cause of their dissent.

But it would be a great mistake to ignore the extent to which attitudes within the party have developed on Ireland in recent years, just as British socialists make a great mistake when they fail to recognise the progressive forces that have been at work within the Republican Movement over the same period. And it would be an even larger error to disregard the importance of encouraging and supporting these developments within the British Labour Party.

For the republican struggle cannot be won in Ireland alone. Sooner or later it will be a British government in London that takes the final decision

to withdraw from the six counties. And given the historic links between Conservatives and unionists the likelihood is that it will be a future Labour government that takes this step, despite the appalling records in office of politicians such as Mason, Rees and Cannan.

The present task of those in the Labour Party who support the demand for Irish freedom and unity must therefore be to prepare the way for such a reversal of policy, by mobilising the strong anti-war sentiment which already exists among public opinion and generating a withdrawal campaign within the trade union movement, which to date has shown the most sterile atti-



● Steve Bundred addresses last year's rally in Belfast to commemorate the introduction of internment

udes, among those on the British left, towards the war in Ireland.

GLC INVITATION

All this is easier said than done. But the invitation issued by 26 Labour GLC members in December for Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison to visit London, and the events that followed, provide both reasons for optimism and a clear indication of the obstacles that remain to be overcome.

It is worth pointing out that this invitation was not the first indication of substantial support within the Labour Party for a united Ireland. Quite apart from isolated expressions of solidarity in the past, the hunger-strikes in 1981 and the publication of a Labour Party national executive committee (NEC) study group report on Northern Ireland around the same time, had prompted no less than 60 constituencies to table resolutions or amendments to that year's Party Conference calling for British withdrawal and reunification. But support from constituency activists is one thing. Support from the Party establishment in the shape of the parliamentary and trade union leadership is of course another, and it is this which has been singularly lacking in the past.

What may have shaken the traditionally solid edifice of bi-partisanship however, and what provided the immediate spur for the GLC initiative, was the outcome of the Northern Ireland

The Assembly election results were clear evidence that the time had come to recognise the permanence and popular base of the IRA campaign and begin the political moves towards withdrawal...

Assembly elections on October 20th 1982. Those who had previously felt that the problems of Ireland are too complex for outsiders to understand, and are therefore best left to front bench spokesmen presumed to know about these things, were quite unprepared for the news of the Sinn Fein successes.

'Have you ever wished you were better informed?', to use the advertising slogan of Britain's most prestigious newspaper, *The Times*, was a question that leaders and rank-and-file alike were asking themselves in the wake of the elections. Yet most were sufficiently well-informed at least, to acknowledge the results as clear evidence of massive popular support for continued armed struggle. And desperate attempts which were subsequently made by the British government to minimise their significance convinced no-one.

POPULAR BASE

Certainly there could no longer be

any credibility given to the official portrayal of republican leaders as moronic murderers, green fascists or mindless thugs terrorising their own communities. The time had clearly come to recognise the permanence and popular base of the IRA campaign and begin the political moves towards withdrawal which are the only way in which the war can be brought to an end.

So if Labour's leaders were not prepared to respect the democratic decision of Irish voters, there were others within the Labour Party who were willing to initiate the political dialogue that the election results demanded.

It was in this spirit that the GLC invitation was issued. The 26 members who signed the invitation do not share a single political outlook. There were prominent right-wingers among them, and equally, there were prominent left-wingers who did not endorse the decision (though in some cases this is because they were not present when the initiative was launched). Nevertheless, virtually the entire GLC and ILEA (*Inner London Education Authority*) Labour leadership did so, and all expressed their belief that Ireland's problems can only be tackled in the context of withdrawal and reunification.

Once news of the visit became known, council leaders in the London boroughs began to express similar sentiments and offered to receive the delegation when it arrived. Islington council voted to permit a planned public meeting in its town hall, even after the council's insurers had refused to provide cover. And despite the outcry being whipped up by the press with the encouragement of some Labour MPs, there were strong statements of support from several London Labour Parties. This was matched by phenomenal interest in the proposed public meeting with television companies offering four-figure sums for exclusive rights to film it.

REPUBLICAN CASE

Had the visit not been prevented (*by exclusion orders served on Adams, Morrison and Martin McGuinness by British Home Secretary William Whitelaw, barring them from entering Britain - IRIS*) there is no doubt that it would have provided a unique opportunity for a receptive audience, accustomed only to government propaganda on Ireland, to hear the republican case at first hand and for the first time. It is for this reason, and not for any fear of public disorder, that the visit was stopped. But among those responsible for the invitation in the first place, there is now a unanimous feeling that it was fully justified, and that despite the exclusion orders it achieved positive and worthwhile results.

Firstly, it generated more public debate on Northern Ireland than there



● The Labour Party's Tony Benn and Ken Livingstone (left and right), who have both expressed support for British withdrawal, together with Arthur Scargill, left-wing president of the mineworkers' union (NUM)

has been in Britain for many years. It was the front-page lead story of every national newspaper for four successive days. GLC leader Ken Livingstone or myself, or both of us together, appeared on television to debate the issues involved, every night for a week. All the London radio stations devoted several hours of phone-in programmes to a discussion on the war in the six counties. Resolutions received from constituency Labour Parties indicated that there had been considerable debate within the Party itself. And the publicity generated a stream of invitations to address meetings on Ireland which are still being dealt with.

Secondly, the response demonstrated once again the strong desire among ordinary British people to see the war brought to an end by pulling the troops out, and revealed a deep public instinct that the cause of Irish unity is a just one. Normally, politicians receive letters only from those who feel they have something to complain about. Yet, between us, Ken Livingstone and myself received over 600 letters on Ireland in December and half of these were messages of support and appreciation. An analysis of the calls broadcast on radio phone-ins showed the same level of support, and radio producers to whom I spoke confirmed that callers who did not get 'on the air' were also divided in equal proportions. Incidentally, these producers also reported that public interest was so great that switchboards were frequently jam-

... the demand for the establishment of a Labour Party organisation in the six counties... is a recognition of the dwindling base of support for the SDLP...

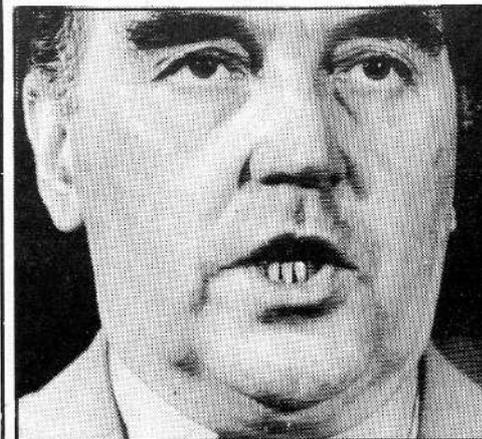
med. Less than three weeks after the exclusion orders, Ken Livingstone was voted runner-up to the Pope in the BBC's *Man of the Year* poll, ahead of Colonel 'H' Jones and other Falklands 'heroes'.

TONY BENN

Thirdly, the degree of public interest forced some sections of the Labour Party which had previously remained silent on Ireland to declare themselves. Tony Benn, for example, in what he admitted was his first parliamentary speech during a Northern Ireland debate, expressed his support for British withdrawal, endorsed the GLC invitation and condemned the PTA and the exclusion orders. *Tribune*, which despite its recent difficulties (*attempts by some so-called Labour 'moderates' to oust its more radical editor - IRIS*) is still the most influential and widely-read paper on the Labour left, carried the full text of Benn's speech, a front-page article from Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison, and an editorial which supported the views of the 26 GLC members and condemned the hypocrisy of Labour's front bench.



● MERLYN REES



● ROY MASON



● DON CONCANNON

Fourthly, the exclusion orders themselves did more for public understanding of the nature and purpose of the PTA than months of street campaigning could have done. Michael Foot claimed in the House of Commons that it was an 'anomaly' in the Act that people who were free to walk the streets of Belfast could be banned from visiting London. Perhaps he did not understand the Act when he was a member of the government which introduced it, but he will hardly be able to claim this defence again. For the use of legal strictures to stifle legitimate political debate was seen to be so blatant that even MPs who had opposed the visit from the outset were willing to condemn the exclusion orders.

Finally, the episode succeeded in highlighting some of the most glaring inconsistencies in the government's position. It exposed the fact that Mrs Thatcher does not rule over a single 'United Kingdom' but over two quite separate countries with restricted access between them. It also destroyed any lingering British faith in the Assembly as an avenue for a solution. Although Jim Prior was still urging elected republicans to take their seats at Stormont, and arranging for his junior ministers to meet with Sinn Fein members on constituency matters, when these same representatives were considered by the Home Secretary to be unfit for meetings with local councillors in London, the Stormont Assembly was revealed as an empty diversion. And the British government was clearly seen to be refusing to accept the results of the election.

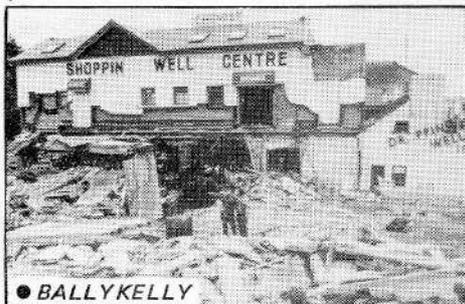
OBSTACLES

But against these achievements we must also recognise the real obstacles that still stand in the way of a broad-based anti-war movement in Britain, and which again came to the forefront in December.

Principal among these is the lack of any activity on Ireland within the trade union movement. A few unions have now adopted positions opposed to the PTA or the use of plastic bullets, and most of these have also called for reunification as a long-term policy objective. But there is still wide acceptance of the unionist veto on constitutional change and there are strong pressures within trade unions against any moves towards supporting the republican struggle.

Several of the British trade unions, especially the larger ones, also organise in the six counties. Since, by definition, union members are in employment, and since unemployment is much greater in republican areas, it follows that most of these union members will support the continuing link with Britain. While small advances will still be made in future nonetheless, it must be expected that trade

Coming as it did at such a sensitive time, the Ballykelly bombing was a political disaster in Britain. It shifted the focus of the debate... to a sterile argument about attitudes to violence.



unions will not take the lead in demanding a change which will not only reduce their income from contributions, but which will be against the wishes of their own members most directly affected.

Another major obstacle to building an anti-war campaign in Britain, which was again brought out last December, is the power of the media to intimidate those most directly involved. Following the Ballykelly bombing, pressure was applied on individual GLC members, not just by journalists but also in some cases by employers. This pressure was resisted. Although two members were reported to have withdrawn their support for the invitation, neither in fact did so. The reports were based on confused remarks which had been made at 4am after newspaper reporters had woken these members from their sleep to tell them of the bombing and to demand a reaction. The confusion was corrected later in the day by the members concerned, but not by the newspapers or TV stations who had misrepresented them. Nevertheless, the knowledge that this type of pressure will be applied may deter others from similar initiatives in the future.

POLITICAL DISASTER

Coming as it did at such a sensitive time, the Ballykelly bombing was a political disaster in Britain. It shifted the focus of the debate from one about the right of elected representatives to present their case at public meetings to a sterile argument about attitudes to violence.

It also greatly raised the emotional atmosphere in which this debate was conducted. One macabre Tory MP, for example, arrived at London's County Hall on the night after the bombing with shoes and other items that had been picked from the rubble.

Thus it created a political climate in which it was possible for Whitelaw to intervene with exclusion orders.

This was not the case earlier in the week, when after an initial meeting with the new Metropolitan Police commissioner, Sir Kenneth Newman, the Home Secretary had felt unable to act.

BUT if the reticence of trade union leaders to lend support for the republican struggle, and the power of the press to intimidate individuals, are problems for the future, they are by no means insuperable. This much has already been demonstrated by CND and similar campaigns. Of more concern is the stimulus given by recent events to those who seek to lock the Labour Party into a unionist position by such potentially persuasive devices as the demand for the establishment of a Labour Party organisation in the six counties.

DWINDLING SUPPORT

On one level this is a welcome development, since it is a recognition of the dwindling base of support for the SDLP, which has fraternal links with the Labour Party through the Socialist International, and which most Labour Party members would therefore be reluctant to offend. Yet if the Campaign for Labour Representation in Northern Ireland were to achieve its objective, however pathetic Labour organisation in the six counties subsequently proved to be, the effect would be to impose another British institution on Ireland and to place further obstacles in the way of a clear decision to withdraw.

In particular, it would provide an opportunity for Labour Party members in Northern Ireland to play a similar role to that of six-county trade union members with commitments to the loyalist cause.

Such attempts to neutralise the Party's emerging conscience on Ireland will of course be resisted. Meanwhile fresh efforts will be made to develop public understanding in Britain of the role its army plays in Ireland, and to transform the existing sentiment for withdrawal into an irresistible political demand.

But republicans must play their part in this process as well by sustaining and strengthening the links which have already been established. It is natural that the oppressed communities within the six counties should look to the United States as their main source of assistance and support. It would be wrong however, in doing so, to dismiss British socialists as stooges of the ruling class or ignorant apologists for the oppressors.

To do this would be a failure of understanding in the light of significant developments which are taking place within British politics and which the Irish public is shielded from, just as the British working class is kept in the dark about Ireland. ■

Sunday

Bloody Sunday



*Well it was Sunday Bloody Sunday
When they shot the people there
The cries of thirteen martyrs
Filled the Free Derry air
Is there any one amongst you
Dare to blame it on the kids?
Not a soldier boy was bleeding
When they nailed the coffin lids*

Chorus:

*Sunday Bloody Sunday
Bloody Sunday's the day!*

*You claim to be majority
Well you know that it's a lie
You're really a minority
On the sweet Emerald Isle
When Stormont bans our marches
They've got a lot to learn
Internment is no answer
It's those mothers turn to burn*

Chorus:

*You Anglo pigs and Scotties
Sent to colonise the North
You wave your bloody Union Jacks
And you know what it's worth
How dare you hold to ransom
A people proud and free
Keep Ireland for the Irish
Put the English back to sea*

Chorus:

*Yes it's always bloody Sunday
In the concentration camps
Keep the Falls Road free forever
From the bloody English hands
Repatriate to Britain
All of you who call it home
Leave Ireland to the Irish
Not for London or for Rome*

Chorus:

John Lennon



LIZ CURTIS of the Information on Ireland group looks at how the press media assisted the British establishment cover-up of the civil rights march massacre, just over 11 years ago

How the British media reported Bloody Sunday

A CENTRAL problem for the British authorities in the North of Ireland has been how to use sufficient force to subdue nationalist protest without, at the same time, alienating 'moderate' nationalists, shattering the British public's faith in their government's policy and undermining Britain's democratic image internationally.

Repeatedly — as with the torture and troop brutality in the early seventies, Bloody Sunday, the use of torture to obtain confessions, plastic bullets and the recent shoot-to-kill policy — Brit-

ain has resorted to a level of force which clearly violates democratic standards. Consequently, in every such instance, the British authorities have attempted to minimise the damage to their image by using various cover-up devices: pretending the incident had not occurred, lying about what had happened, blaming it on someone else (usually republicans), saying it was a creation of enemy propaganda, or advancing justifications for the action.

INFLUENCE

Within the six counties it is impossible for the authorities fully to conceal what is going on, because the people have direct experience of events. Such

concealment is also, to some extent, undesirable from the government's point of view, since violence has its uses both in intimidating nationalists and placating loyalists.

But beyond the borders of the North, and especially in Britain, the authorities are able to exert a big influence on how the public perceives events. The British media have, by and large, promoted the establishment's version, mainly voluntarily but sometimes under pressure, though a very few journalists have stood up for the right to report events as they saw them.

Thus it is that while Bloody Sunday, 30th January 1972, has burned deep into the Irish consciousness, to British people it means little. Many still need reminding that on that day British paratroopers gunned down 13 unarmed demonstrat-



ors in Derry and wounded 17 more, one of whom died later.

EYE-WITNESSES

Some British journalists who were on the spot, conveyed something of the panic and grief of that terrible day. Simon Winchester told in the next day's *Guardian* how, just as the meeting at Free Derry Corner was getting under way:

Four or five armoured cars appeared in William Street and raced into the Rossville Street square, and several thousand people began to run away... Paratroopers piled out of their vehicles, many ran forward to make arrests, but others rushed to the street corners. It was these men, perhaps 20 in all, who opened fire with their rifles. I saw three men fall to the ground. One was still obviously alive, with blood pumping from his leg. The others, both apparently in their teens, seemed dead.

The meeting at Free Derry Corner broke up in hysteria as thousands of people either ran or dived for the ground.

Army snipers could be seen firing continuously towards the central Bog-side streets and at one stage a lone army sniper on a street corner fired two shots at me as I peered around a corner. One shot chipped a large chunk of masonry from a wall behind.

Then people could be seen moving forward in Fahan Street, their hands above their heads. One man was carrying a white handkerchief. Gunfire was directed even at them and they fled or fell to the ground...

Weeping men and women in the Bog-side spent the next half hour in Lecky Road, pushing bodies of dead and injured people into cars and driving them to hospital. I saw seven such cars drive away with some of the bleeding bodies on the back seats, inert and lifeless. (1)

A national newspaper photographer, who was directly behind the paratroopers when they jumped down from their armoured cars, told *The Times*: "I was appalled. They opened up into a dense crowd of people. As far as I could see, they did not fire over people's heads at all. There appeared to be no warning." (2)

Times reporter Brian Cashinella said that he heard Land Forces Commander General Ford say: "Go on the paras, go and get them." Cashinella also noted:

I found the reaction of the paratroopers in this situation interesting. They seemed to relish their work, and their eagerness manifested itself, to me, mainly in their shouting, cursing, and ribald language. Most of them seemed to regard the Bog-siders and people who



took part in the parade as legitimate targets. (3)

John Graham of the *Financial Times* reported that "there was a great deal of shooting by the army at the crowd while the streets were indeed full of people." (4)

BRITISH ARMY LIES

But these eye-witness accounts, like those from Derry people, did not prompt the British media into an outcry against the paratroopers' actions. For, soon after the shootings, senior British army officers began to put out a succession of lying statements, and the media gave these as much or more prominence as those of the eye-witnesses.

General Ford told BBC TV that Sunday night:

"Paratroopers did not go in there shooting. In fact, they did not fire until they were fired upon and my information at the moment... is that the 3rd Battalion fired three rounds altogether, after they'd had something between 10 and 20 fired at them."

Ford went on to say that the dead "may well not have been killed by our soldiers." (5)

Later that night, after a meeting of senior army officers at the Lisburn HQ, an official statement, approved by Lt.-Gen. Harry Tuzo, GOC Northern Ire-

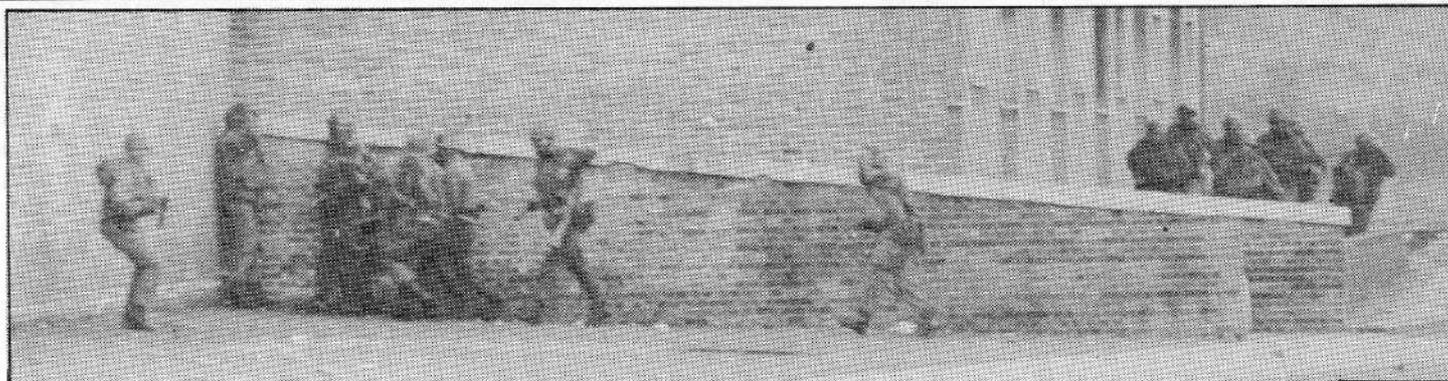
land, was released. This said that after the paratroopers were deployed against rioters:

they came under nail bomb attack and a fusillade of 50 to 80 rounds from the area of Rossville Flats and Glenfada Flats.

Fire was returned at seen gunmen and nail-bombers. Subsequently, as troops deployed to get at the gunmen, the latter continued to fire. In all, a total of well over 200 rounds was fired indiscriminately in the general direction of the soldiers. Fire continued to be returned only at identified targets. (6)

Next day, the Ministry of Defence gave the press what was claimed to be a repeat performance of the 'operational briefing' given to service chiefs. The briefing, given by Colonel Harry Dalzell-Payne and also released internationally through the British Information Service, the government news agency, was a ludicrous catalogue of invented detail.

Seeking to demonstrate that "all the army shooting was at identified targets in return of fire under the terms of the Yellow Card, which lays down when fire may be returned," (7), the briefing listed a series of incidents purporting to show that, during the main 'battle', the paratroopers 'returned fire' at eight nail-bombers and one petrol bomber, killing two and hitting four. The Defence Ministry also claimed that soldiers of the Royal Anglian Regiment had hit two gunmen, and that four of the dead



were on the army's wanted list. (8)

CONFLICTING VERSIONS

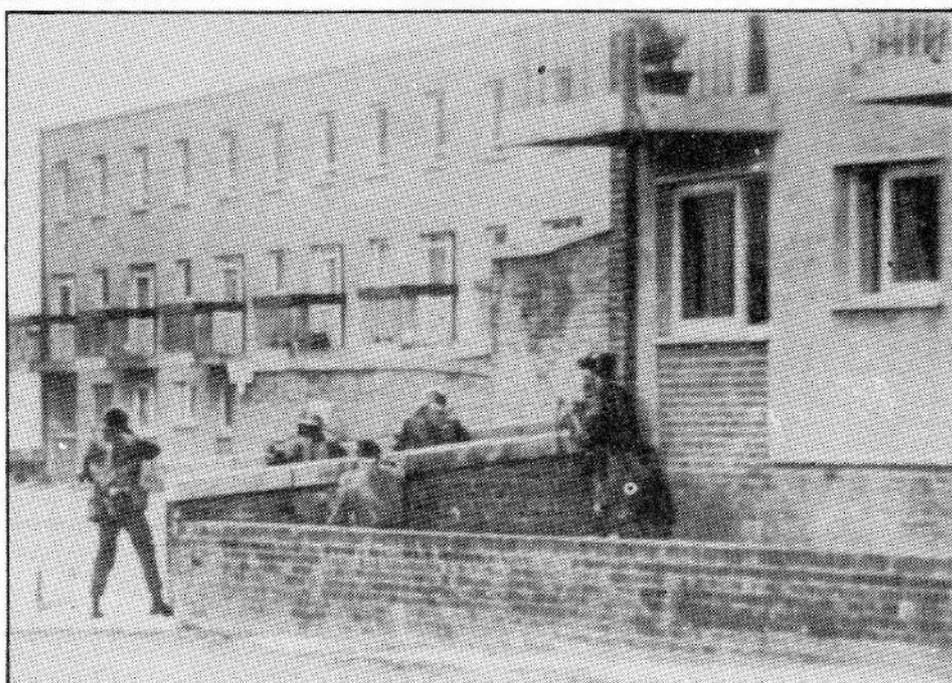
The army's version conflicted totally with the statements of eye-witnesses, including reporters. Virtually all the journalists present testified to the indiscriminate nature of the shooting. None had heard a concerted attack on the army. Simon Winchester said he had heard a single shot some 10 minutes before the paras' main assault. He wrote that this was 'presumably' fired by an IRA man; but it could have been fired by troops, since the army briefing said soldiers had fired at a 'nail-bomber' prior to the major assault. John Graham of the *Financial Times* reported that "nobody who was present heard any nail bombs or the 50 to 80 shots which, the army claims, started the battle." (9)

As it happened, though the army claimed that 'well over 200 rounds' were fired at them, not one soldier suffered bullet wounds. And even Lord Widgery, whose subsequent inquiry went to great pains to accommodate the army's view, was unable to prove that any of the dead had been handling arms; nor were any of the wounded prosecuted.

In fact, as Winchester reported: "The Provisionals had been under strict local orders to keep their guns at home." (10)

Derry writer Eamonn McCann later recounted that both the 'Official' and 'Provisional' IRA had taken almost all their weapons out of the Bogside and into the Creggan estate, since they feared it would be attacked by the British army when deserted during the demonstration. McCann reported that altogether only six shots were fired by both IRAs in the area where people were killed: two while the British soldiers were shooting, and four later. All missed. (11)

Yet despite the fact that the British army's statements were transparently fictional, they strongly influenced the media coverage. In the headlines on the



Monday morning, there was little trace of the army's responsibility for the deaths. **13 civilians are killed as soldiers storm the Bogside**, said *The Times*, following this with **March ends in shooting**; the next headline to meet the eye read, **IRA told: 'Shoot as many troops as possible'**, a reference to an 'Official' IRA threat of retaliation.

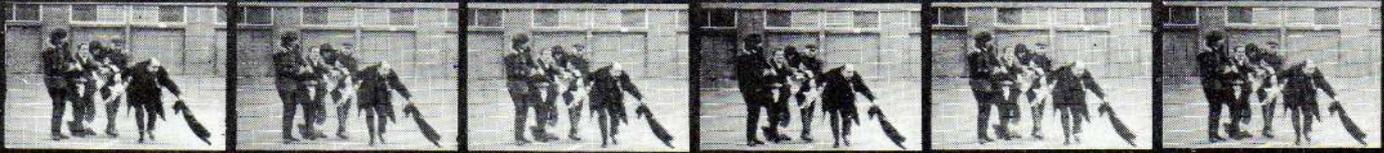
The Guardian, too, puts its headline in the passive voice and left ambiguous the question of responsibility: **13 killed as paratroops break riot**, it said, noting in smaller type, **Soldiers were returning Derry sniper fire, says Army**. These headlines contradicted the spirit of Winchester's report, which began by telling how 'soldiers, firing into a large crowd of civil rights demonstrators, shot and killed 13 civilians,' and went on to take issue with the army's version.

CAPTIONS

The impression given by the headlines was reinforced by the choice of pictures. While the *Telegraph*, the *Mir-*

ror, the *Mail* and the *Express* showed pictures of the wounded or of a priest giving the last rites to a victim, both *The Guardian* and *The Times* chose a photo taken from behind the army vehicles. *The Times'* caption read: 'Troops in Londonderry taking cover behind armoured vehicles as they come under fire while dispersing demonstrators with CS gas.' There was, however, an interesting discrepancy between the *Guardian's* London and Manchester editions. While the London edition's caption was similar to the *Times'*, saying the photo showed soldiers 'under sniper fire', the Manchester edition said instead: 'Troops shelter behind armoured cars when attacked by rioters throwing stones in Londonderry yesterday.' (12)

The Daily Telegraph's headline on the Monday was **13 SHOT DEAD IN LONDONDERRY**, accompanied by **Banned march erupts into riot and IRA fired first says Army**. Its report began with wording which, like that in virtually every paper except *The Guardian*,



again omitted to mention that the killing had been done by British troops: 'Thirteen men and youths were shot dead yesterday in Londonderry as a banned civil rights march turned into a riot on the edge of the Roman Catholic Bogside.' Like most other papers, the rest of its report balanced the army's version against the statements of eye-witnesses and nationalist politicians. (13)

The front page of the *Daily Express* proclaimed **GUN FURY**, sandwiched between **Paras face 'fusillade' then open fire and 13 shot dead in Bogside.** The *Daily Mail* had **DERRY'S HOUR OF DEATH** and, above it, **13 killed on Ulster's worst day.** The *Mail's* unidentified reporters told how: "Thirteen men were shot dead in Londonderry yesterday in the bloodiest Northern Ireland battle yet between demonstrators and the Army." The *Daily Mirror* had **ULSTER'S BLOODY SUNDAY** and **13 die... Army accused of 'massacre'**, using judicious quotation marks which were repeated in its centre-page spread, titled **THE DERRY 'MASSACRE'**. While the *Mirror* had come nearest to blaming the army in its headlines, its reporter, Joe Gorrod, took a different perspective:

Thirteen men were killed yesterday as army paratroopers broke up a banned Civil Rights march in Londonderry...

The soldiers said last night that they were forced to open fire when they came under sniper attack...

But last night Civil Rights leaders were calling the incident a massacre.

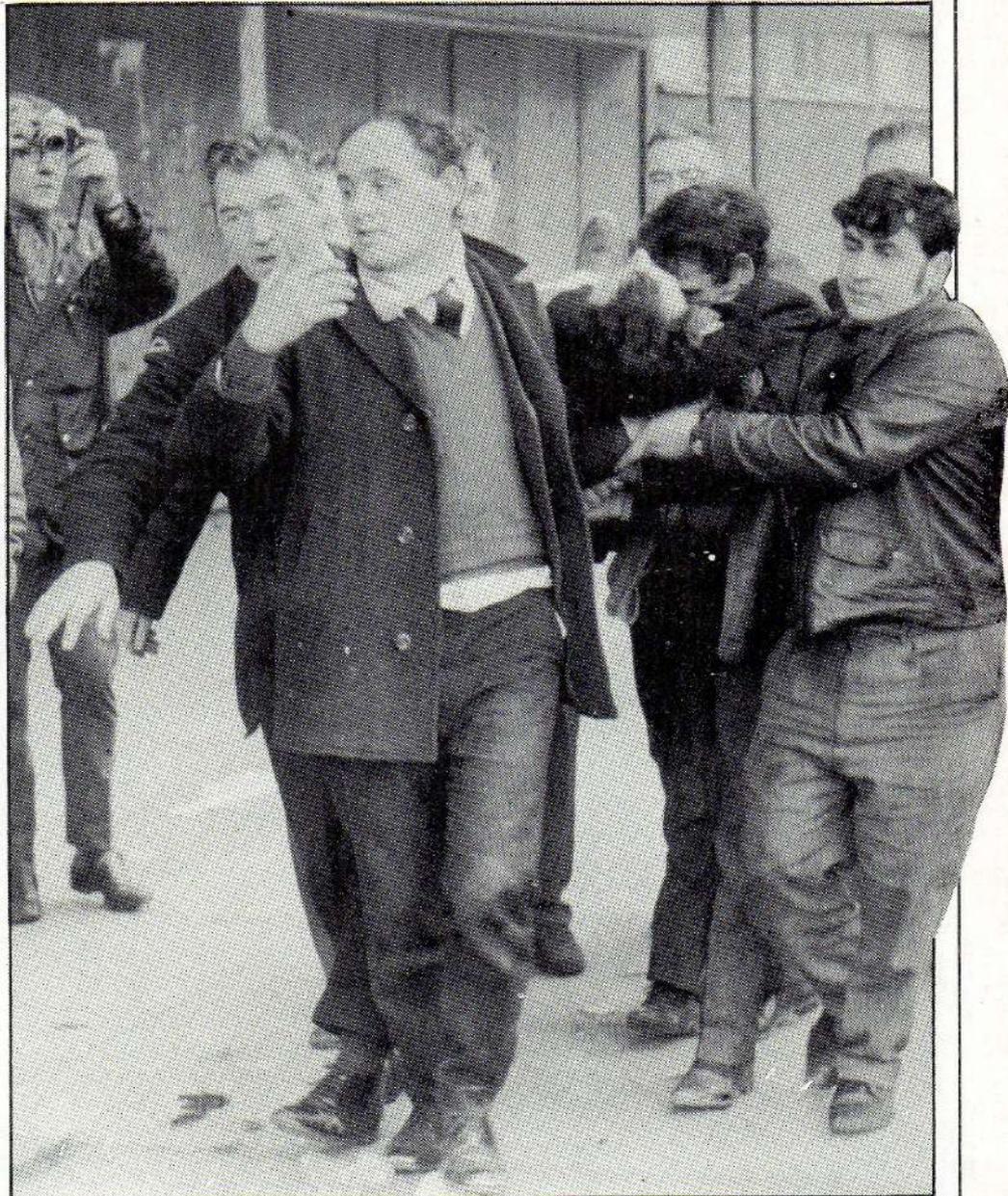
The *Mirror's* second front page story was headed, **'SOLDIERS DIDN'T FIRE FIRST SHOT'**. (14)

MARCHERS BLAMED

The editorial writers spoke almost with one voice, putting most of the blame on the marchers. *The Times*, having noted 'the usual flat contradiction' between the official and local accounts of events, contended:

It must be presumed that those who are inciting the Catholics to take to the streets know very well the consequences of what they are doing. Londonderry had a taste of those consequences last night. The dead are witness to them. (15)

The *Guardian* carried a very lengthy leader arguing for improved security 'to keep the two communities from each other's throats', for talks on political arrangements and for the extension of economic aid. The leader is believed to have been written by John Cole, a



journalist from the six counties who later went to *The Observer* and then became the BBC's political editor. Taking a view very different from that of the paper's reporter, Simon Winchester, the leader began:

The disaster in Londonderry last night dwarfs all that has gone before in Northern Ireland. The march was illegal. Warning had been given of the danger implicit in continuing with it. Even so, the deaths stun the mind and must fill all reasonable people with horror. As yet it is too soon to be sure of what happened. The army has an intolerably difficult task in Ireland. At times it is bound to act firmly, even severely. Whether individual soldiers misjudged their situation yesterday, or were themselves too directly threatened, cannot yet be known. The presence of snipers in the late stages of the march must have

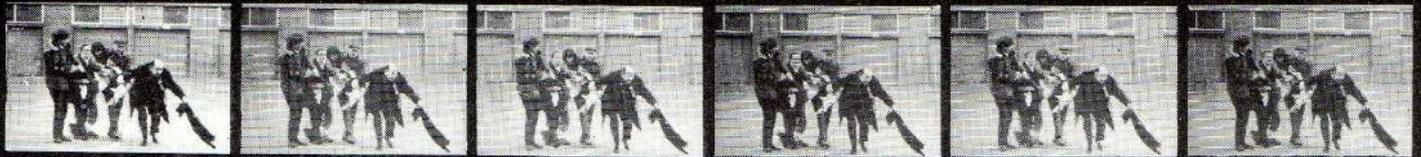
added a murderous dimension. It is a terrible warning to everyone involved. (16)

Next day, leader writer and reporter clashed again. The editorialist argued that: 'Neither side can escape condemnation,' and later: 'Bitter words after Sunday are understandable. They should be treated as irrevocable.' Winchester, on the facing page, asked whether the 'dreadful Bogside tragedy', would:

become a fulcrum, which historians will argue led to fundamental and irrevocable changes in the future and status of Northern Ireland.

Below Winchester's was an article by Harold Jackson arguing with belligerent dogmatism that:

the simple truth can be stated right now: if there had been no march 13 people



would have been alive this morning, and no amount of specious rationalisation can get round that. (17)

But the paper's readers were not so easily gulled. For a week the letters columns were dominated by Ireland, with many writers dissenting from the editorial line. Some attacked the discrepancy between Monday's leader and Winchester's report, and one prophesied angrily:

because Derry is nearer home than Sharpeville, Stormont, Westminster, and the British army will escape with little more than mild tut-tutting from liberal editorials. (18)

CIVIL RIGHTS

Shortly after Bloody Sunday one of *The Guardian's* senior reporters, John O'Callaghan, resigned. He had for a long time been opposed to the paper's uncritical support for the army in the North. Bloody Sunday, he felt, could have been avoided if even a few British papers had sceptically examined the army's behaviour in previous months. (19)

The Daily Telegraph, in a leader titled **DEATH MARCH**, equated the civil rights movement with the IRA, and blamed both for the carnage:

It (*the civil rights movement*) does not

murder; it simply creates conditions favourable to the murders attempted by others and leaves the army in the last resort with no alternative but to fire. Its courage may be less than that of the IRA; its guilt is not. The IRA has promised to avenge the dead. Their blood is on its own hands. (20)

The *Daily Express* took the same line:

Many members of this organisation are neither civil nor right. They simply promote the aims of the IRA. And even those civil righters who do not condone violence provoke it by defying the ban on processions... The bloody battle in Londonderry follows the familiar pattern of gunmen using street protests as cover. The toll is the price of mindless violence. (21)

Again, the *Daily Mail*, in a 'comment' on the front page titled, **The real killers?**, asked:

Who is really responsible for the 13 deaths in Ulster yesterday?

British bullets will be found in most of their bodies... but the blood is on the consciences of irresponsible political leaders and the fanatical IRA.

Nevertheless the 13 died on a Sunday afternoon in a British city under the guns of British troops and a full enquiry must be held.

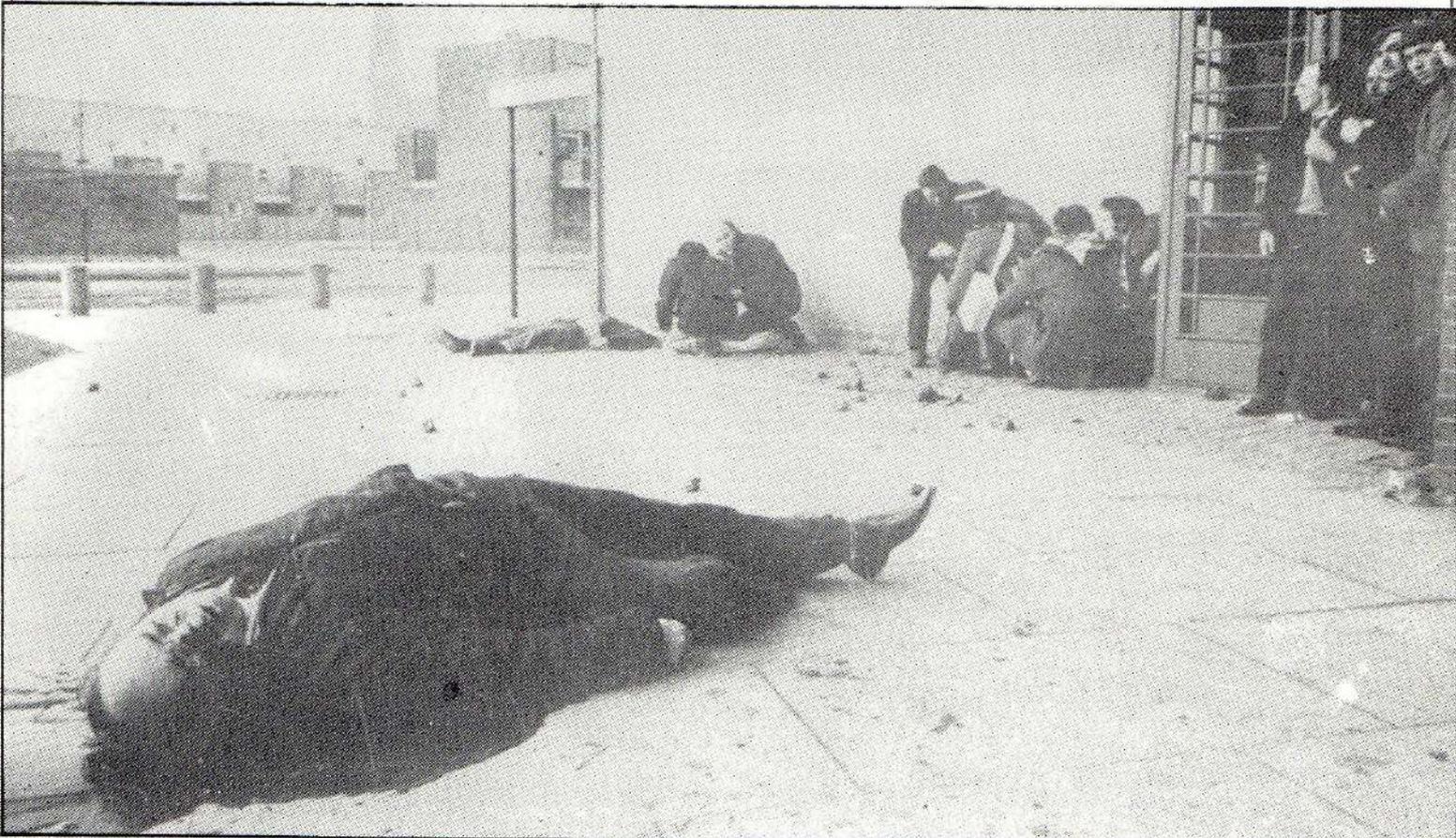
On an inside page the *Mail* fulminated: *'those who died were not martyrs to civil rights... Whether terrorists, hoolig-*

ans or innocent civilians, they are all victims of the bloody lunacy that convulses Northern Ireland.' (22)

DAILY MIRROR

The *Mirror's* commentators, however, refrained from blaming the marchers. On the Monday, the paper proffered no opinion. On the Tuesday, it carried a lengthy piece by John Beavan asking: **Was there a blunder?** After criticising Home Secretary Maudling for giving 'not a word of sympathy' for the dead, and claiming that till Sunday the British army had 'a golden record', Beavan questioned the army's account in some detail. This was, however, partly negated by the centre-page spread. Proof of the media's susceptibility to army statements, this did a classic balancing act. The headline right across the top asked, **Was the Army to blame for Bloody Sunday?** The left hand page announced **GUILTY, Bogside accuses troops**, while on the right the verdict was **NOT GUILTY, 'Four of the dead were wanted men'**. Between the two was a cartoon showing a grave with two wreaths on it: one wreath carried a label reading **BLAME THE BRITISH**, while the other was labelled **BLAME THE IRA**. (23)

On the Thursday, the *Mirror* departed radically from the line taken by other dailies. A massive editorial, cover-





ing pages 1 and 2 titled **HOW TO END THE KILLING IN IRELAND**, put forward a 'five point plan'. First, 'Bring back the British troops': *'Like it or not, it is believed throughout Ireland (North and South) that the soldiers are there simply to bolster up the Stormont Protestant majority'*. Bloody Sunday had 'irrevocably hardened that belief', making the army's task impossible. The paper then called for the introduction of UN troops, the ending of internment, talks on the constitutional future perhaps leading to a redrawing of the border, and the appointment of a special minister 'to start and maintain the impetus of political effort.' (24)

But the *Mirror's* reportage was not consistent. Like other papers, it directed more venom at Bernadette Devlin for hitting the Home Secretary — **Murder! she screams — then hits Maudling**, was one headline (25) — and at the 'mobs' who burned the British embassy in Dublin, than it had directed at the troops who had killed 13 civilians.

BERNADETTE DEVLIN

On the Wednesday its front page cried **THE FLAMES OF HATRED**. The accompanying picture was captioned, **'WALL OF FIRE — a huge wall of flames engulfs the front of the British embassy in Dublin after demonstrators hurled a vicious barrage of petrol bombs in a night of bitter mob fury'**. Inside was a half-page leader headed **The Song of Bernadette**. Describing her as 'Miss Bernadette Devlin of the long, lank hair and nasty left hook', the editorial went on:

Miss Devlin is entitled to protest about what she says happened in the Bogside in Londonderry...

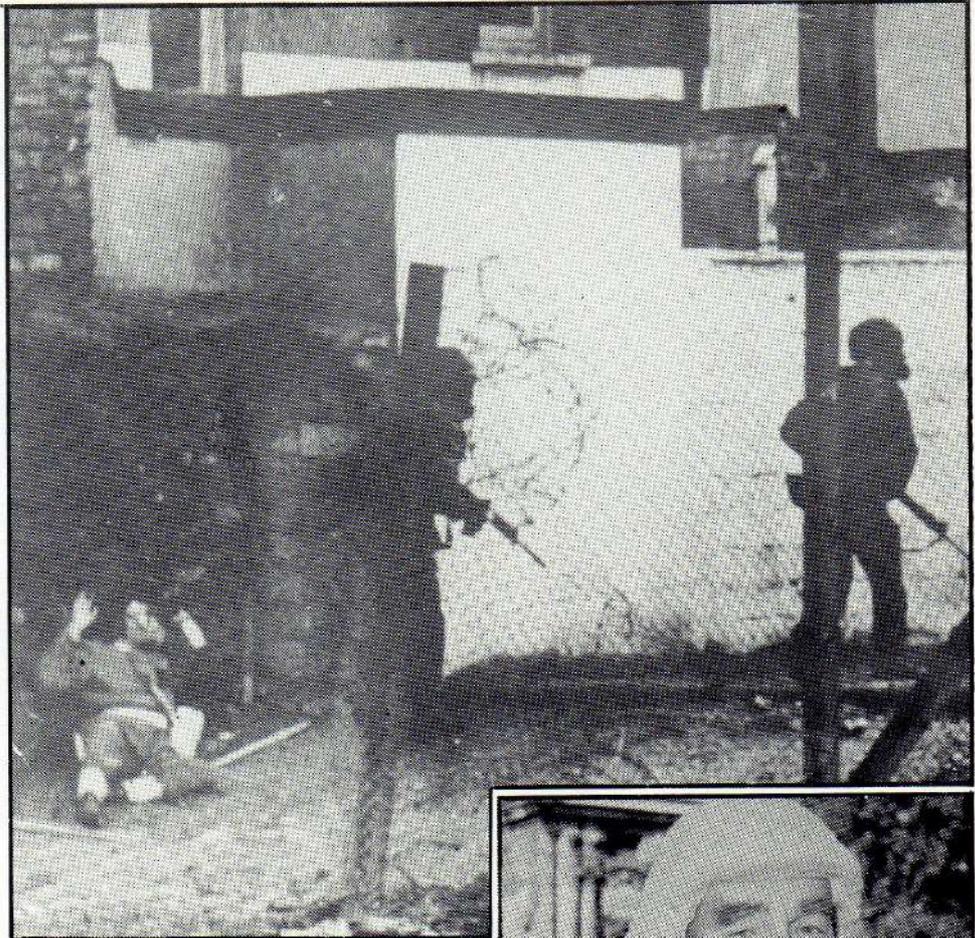
But Miss Devlin, who protests about violence, is not entitled to import violence into the House of Commons...

Bernadette the Member of Parliament sings her own song of cruelty. Exults about vengeance. Is dry-eyed about coffins. Equates protest with death and destruction...

Bernadette, MP, is not singing a song. Or a lament. Or a protest. She is singing a dirge. (26)

While on Thursday and Friday the front page was devoted to the plea for troop withdrawal, on the Saturday the *Mirror* fell for a blatant piece of British army propaganda. **FAKE TROOPS PERIL IN ULSTER** and **Army warned of an 'IRA murder plan'** were the front page headlines. Reporter Chris Buckland told how:

Army chiefs were warned yesterday



of an IRA plot to start fresh bloodshed in Ulster.

They were told that terrorists disguised in stolen uniforms will be in Newry, County Down, for tomorrow's illegal Civil Rights march.

They fear that the IRA men may try to start a new bloody battle by firing on the crowds of marchers.

A tip-off about the fake soldiers was given by a woman who telephoned the Army commander in the province, General Sir Harry Tuzo.

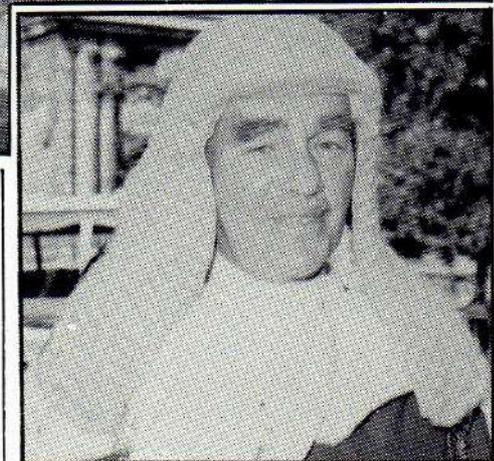
She said her son and son-in-law — both IRA members — had been issued with British uniforms and told to wear them in Newry tomorrow...

Security chiefs took her warning seriously because of the theft of 157 Army combat suits from a Londonderry dry cleaner's a month ago.

It was not till the end of the story that Buckland noted briefly: *'Civil rights leaders in Newry dismissed the story as 'propaganda' to clear the army of responsibility for last Sunday's thirteen killings in Londonderry.'* (27) In the event, the Newry march passed off without incident.

WIDGERY TRIBUNAL

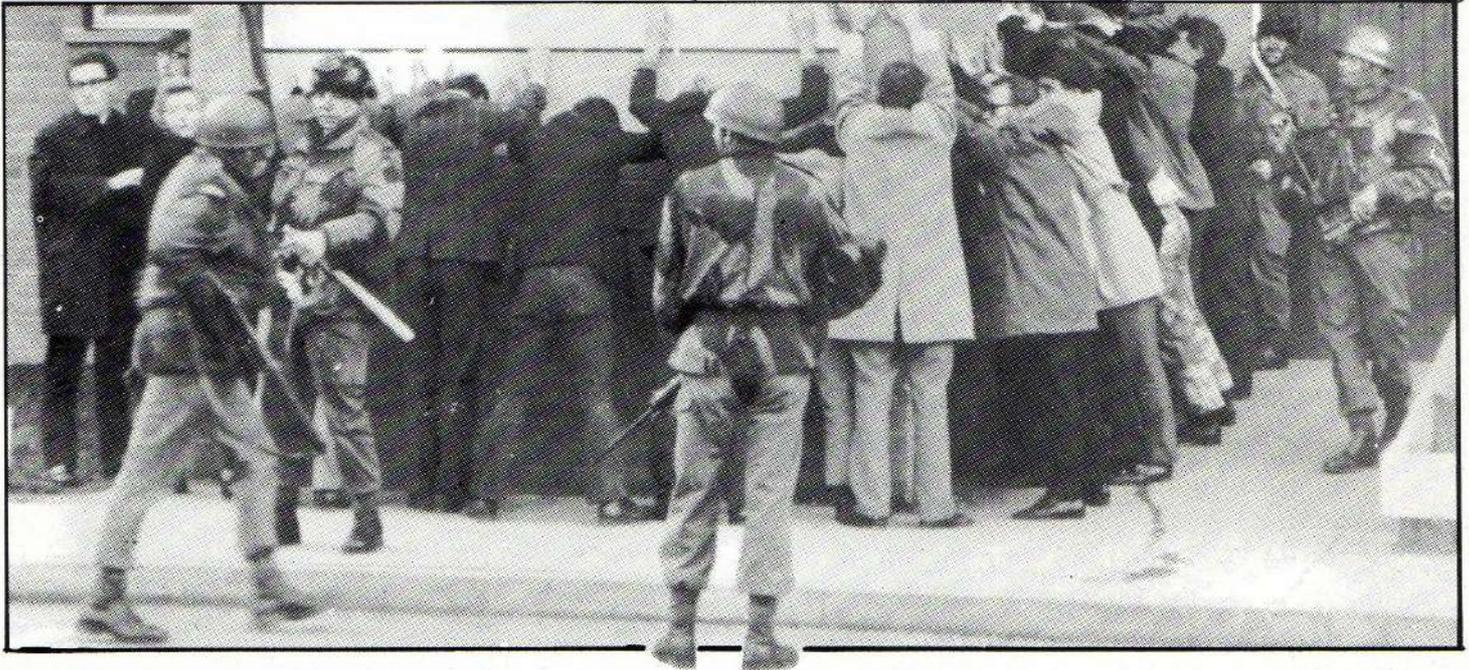
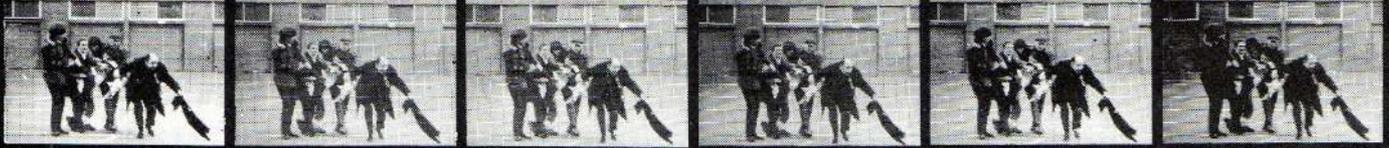
In Britain at least, where the ideolog-



● LORD WIDGERY

ical ties between the media and the army are strong, the army's lies had helped to stave off condemnation of their actions on Bloody Sunday. The authorities' second diversionary thrust was the immediate setting up of a tribunal of inquiry under Lord Widgery. The 'tribunal' was misnamed, for it consisted of just one man, Lord Chief Justice and former army officer Lord Widgery. It was to prove a valuable means of hindering investigation and, finally, of getting the army off the hook.

Taking advantage of the vagueness of the contempt laws, the Press Office at 10 Downing Street was quick to seek a blanket ban on coverage of Bloody Sunday. (28) They claimed



that anything which anticipated the tribunal's findings could be in contempt. But in fact there had never been a prosecution over media investigations of issues that were the subject of tribunals of inquiry. Though technically the contempt laws do apply, legal opinion would consider that contempt in such cases would involve not journalists' investigations into what had occurred, but attempts directly to influence the progress of a tribunal, such as intimidation or bribery of witnesses, or abusing members of a tribunal and trying to influence them improperly. Legal opinion would not support using the contempt laws to stop the media investigating a matter of public concern just because a tribunal had been set up.

The Sunday Times and Thames TV nevertheless used the entirely hypothetical possibility of prosecution as an excuse to suppress accounts of Bloody Sunday which would have been very damaging to the army's case. *The Sunday Times* suppressed an investigation by their Insight team, which according to one account would have revealed that the army had planned to draw out the IRA and shoot them down and then, when the IRA did not surface, shot down unarmed civilians instead. (29) *The Sunday Times* claimed: 'The law is that until the Lord Chief Justice completes his inquiry nobody may offer to the British public any consecutive account of the events in Derry last weekend.' (30) *The Observer*, too, suppressed a 'detailed reconstruction' of the day's events, maintaining that its

publication was 'precluded by the law of contempt of court'. (31)

Thames TV were preparing a programme piecing together the events of Bloody Sunday. After the Downing Street warning, they consulted the IBA and their own lawyers, who felt the risk should not be taken despite the fact that there was no precedent for prosecution. The lawyers apparently thought that even editing the filmed interviews would be prejudicial, because it would mean selecting certain evidence for presentation. In the end Thames compromised by choosing two of the rolls of film they had shot, and transmitting them on 3rd February unedited. One roll was the eye-witness account of a Welsh ex-warrant officer, who lived in the immediate area of the shootings. This was 'balanced' by the second roll, which consisted of interviews with paratroopers. The paras harmed their case by contradicting one another; but other, much more damaging material, was left out in the 20 or so rolls of film that were not used.

One of the paras, a lieutenant, said in the televised programme that he had seen a gunman: he later admitted to the Widgery Tribunal that this statement was a lie. (32)

WHITEWASH

Thus the media were effectively silenced till April, when the Widgery Report came out. The report was so self-evidently a whitewash that 'to widgery' became a new verb to describe the process. Widgery began with the

spurious argument, already advanced by the press, that there would have been no deaths if there had been no march. Not only was this proved fallacious by the fact that the subsequent, equally illegal, Newry march passed off peacefully, but also, as some commentators noted, it could equally well be argued that there would have been no deaths if Northern Ireland had never been set up, if Catholics had been treated decently, if the army had not been sent in, and if there had been no internment policy. (33)

Widgery gave far more credence to army evidence than to evidence from other sources, resulting in conclusions based on wishful thinking rather than fact. He concluded, for example, that 'There is no reason to suppose that the soldiers would have opened fire if they had not been fired upon first,' and that 'The soldiers escaped injury by reason of their superior fieldcraft and training.' His conclusions were self-contradictory: 'Soldiers who identified armed gunmen fired upon them in accordance with the standing orders in the Yellow Card,' he wrote, and 'There was no general breakdown in discipline.' Yet he also concluded that 'None of the deceased or wounded is proved to have been shot while handling a firearm or bomb.' Further, in one incident, at Glenfada Park, where four civilians were killed, Widgery found that on the balance of probability: 'When these four men were shot the group of civilians was not acting aggressively and that the shots were fired without justification.'

In this incident, Widgery found,



'Soldier H' had fired 19 shots which were wholly unaccounted for. (34)

MINISTRY MANIPULATION

But Widgery's findings, bland as they were, were themselves whitewashed for presentation to the British public. The first front-page reports scarcely referred to even the limited criticisms Widgery had made, let alone offered a serious probe of the report. Simon Winchester later explained:

The report itself was to be issued on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 19th. In fact, the astute press officers of the Ministry of Defence telephoned the Defence Correspondents of the national newspapers the night before — the Tuesday night — to 'leak', in highly selective terms, the Lord's conclusions to be published next day... Those who read their front pages on Wednesday morning would have had to have been very short-sighted indeed to have missed the results of the PR work. (35)

Widgery clears paratroopers for Bloody Sunday, announced *The Daily Telegraph*. Bloody Sunday Paras 'clear', said the *Daily Mirror*. Widgery blames IRA and clears the Army, said the *Daily Express*, with reporter Gordon Greig telling how:

The Army was not to blame for Londonderry's Bloody Sunday. This is the crucial finding of Lord Widgery...

The main guilt is fixed firmly on the IRA.

But the Army is not completely cleared. (36)

But the Ministry of Defence had not finished. The day the report was published, 19th April, they held a press conference. To ensure a sympathetic hearing, the Ministry's PR people refused to allow in any but 'accredited defence correspondents'. Winchester, who had been in the thick of events on Bloody Sunday, was refused admission. "I was furious," he wrote. "None of these accredited correspondents had been in Derry on the day in question, save for the elderly Brigadier Thompson of the 'Telegraph', who admitted in print next day 'that he missed the entire story because he was parking his car.'" (37)

WIDGERY ACCEPTED

The day after publication, *The Times* and *The Guardian*, both of which had forborne to carry the advance leak, did at least include 'buts' in their headlines. Sniper started Derry shootings but Army underestimated hazard, said *The Times*, while *The Guardian* announced, Widgery clears the army but blames individual sold-

iers. The leader writers of both papers, however, fully accepted Widgery's conclusions: the *Guardian's* editorialist once again clashing with Simon Winchester, who, in an article on the facing page, bitterly condemned the report as 'a profound disappointment'. (38)

Other papers were less equivocal, continuing in the same vein as the previous day. **SNIPER BLAMED FOR BLOODY SUNDAY**, said the *Mirror*. **Army did not fire first, says Widgery**, was the *Telegraph's* version, while the *Daily Mail*, in a leader titled **A myth defused**, bragged sanctimoniously:

Against cynical propagandists the British Government replies with judicial truth.

It is like trying to exterminate a nest of vipers by the Queensberry rules.

Even so, over the past 2½ years of mounting terrorism, the record shows — and it is a record which now includes Lord Widgery's report — that our troops are doing an impossible job impossibly well. (39)

Self-delusion could scarcely go further. The British army had, in effect, been absolved and the British public could rest easy.

In the years that followed, the media continued to write British responsibility for Bloody Sunday out of history. It became the day 'when 13 men died in shootings during a demonstration', as Chris Ryder wrote in *The Sunday Times* in 1977 (40), or, as in the *Guardian's* review of the decade, 'Bloody Sunday: 13 civilians killed during army dispersal of Bogside anti-internment marches, Londonderry.' (41)

The Attorney-General declined to authorise prosecution of any of the soldiers involved and the authorities quietly made out of court payments, to the tune of £95,000 by September 1976, to the injured and relatives of the dead. (42)

The BBC asked writer David Wheeler to edit the transcripts of the Widgery inquiry for re-enactment: but, in Wheeler's words, 'enthusiasm for the project cooled and the script remains in the files.' (43)

In 1978 the BBC made a film about Derry called **A City on the Border**. One scene showed a mother putting flowers on her son's grave, which bore the words, 'Murdered by British Paratroopers on Bloody Sunday'. The woman laying her bunch of flowers on the grave stayed in, but the shot of the tombstone was cut on the instructions of the Controller of BBC1. The British public was not to be allowed to know the significance of the mother's action. (44)

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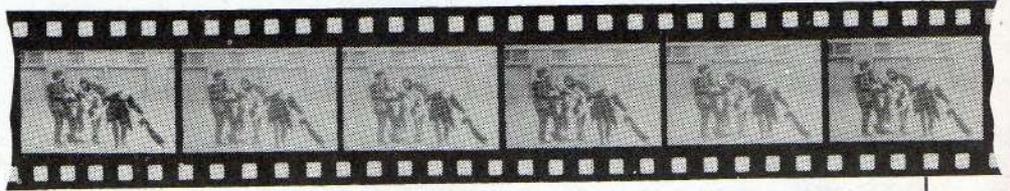
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a poem by Thomas Kinsella,
written after Bloody Sunday

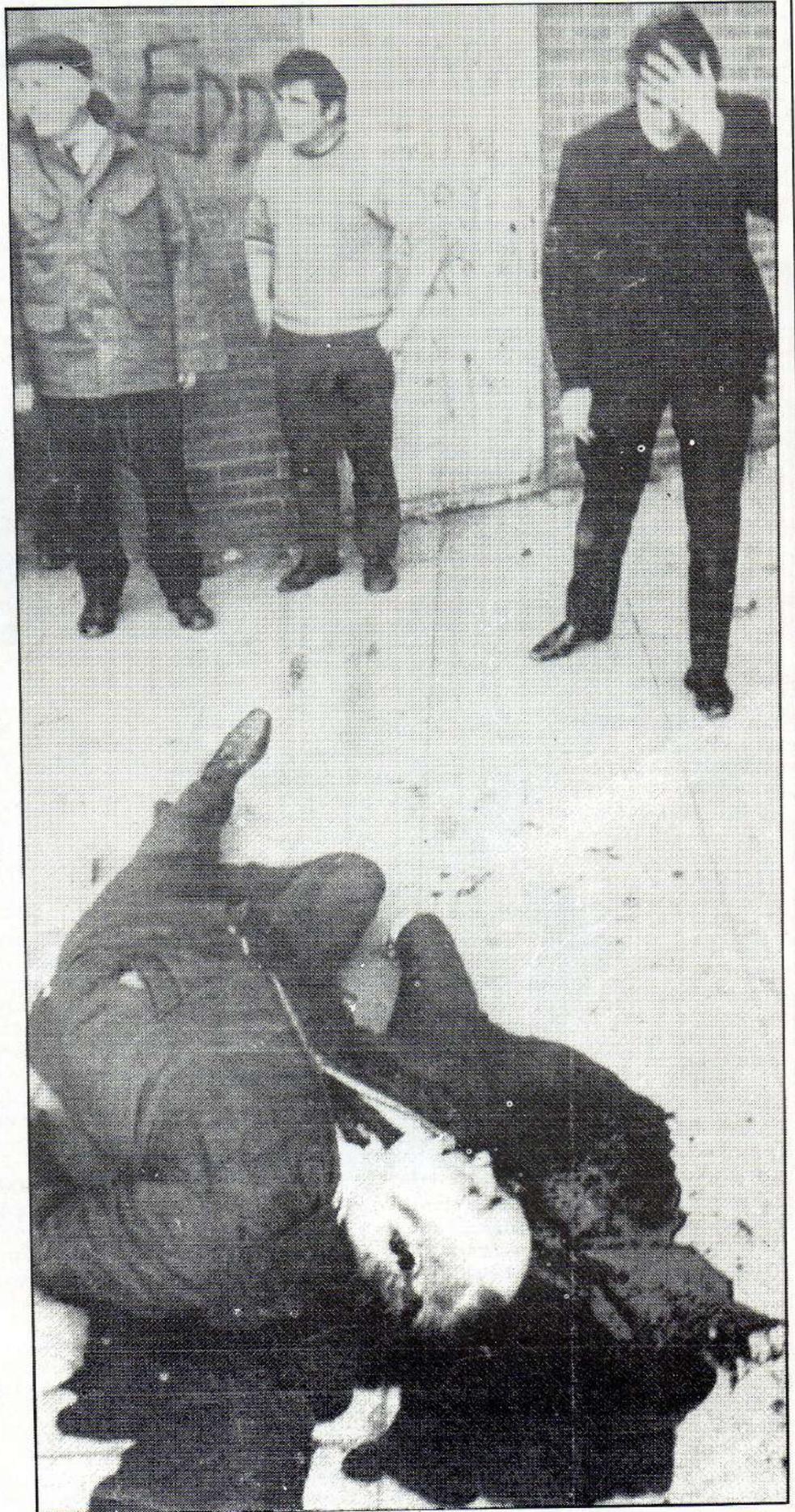
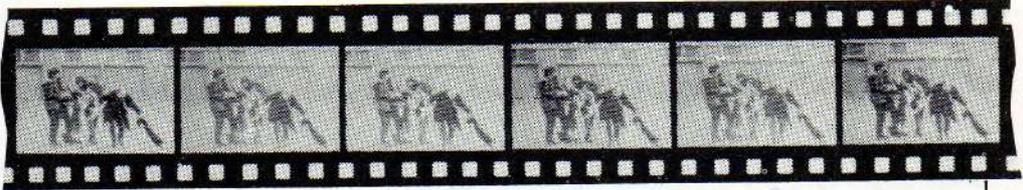
BUTCHER'S DOZEN

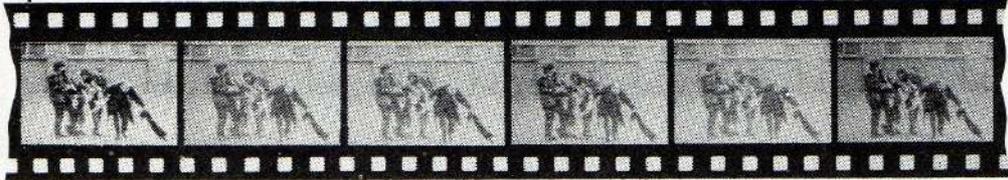
A LESSON FOR THE OCTAVE OF WIDGERY

*I went with Anger at my heel
Through Bogside of the bitter zeal
— Jesus pity! — on a day
Of cold and drizzle and decay.
A month had passed. Yet there remained
A murder smell that stung and stained.
On flats and alleys — over all —
It hung; on battered roof and wall,
On wreck and rubbish scattered thick,
On sullen steps and pitted brick.
And when I came where thirteen died
It shrivelled up my heart. I sighed
And looked about that brutal place
Of rage and terror and disgrace.
Then my moistened lips grew dry.
I had heard an answering sigh!
There in a ghostly pool of blood
A crumpled phantom hugged the mud:
'Once there lived a hooligan.
A pig came up, and away he ran.
Here lies one in blood and bones,
Who lost his life for throwing stones.'
More voices rose. I turned and saw
Three corpses forming, red and raw,
From dirt and stone. Each upturned face
Stared unseeing from its place:
'Behind this barrier, blighters three,
We scrambled back and made to flee.
The guns cried Stop, and here lie we.'
Then from left and right they came,
More mangled corpses, bleeding, lame,
Holding their wounds. They chose their ground.
Ghost by ghost, without a sound,
And one stepped forward, soiled and white:
'A bomber I. I travelled light
— Four pounds of nails and gelignite
About my person, hid so well
They seemed to vanish where I fell.
When the bullet stopped my breath
A doctor sought the cause of death.
He upped my shirt, undid my fly,
Twice he moved my limbs awry,
And noticed nothing. By and by
A soldier, with his sharper eye,
Beheld the four elusive rockets
Stuffed in my coat and trouser pockets.
Yes, they must be strict with us,
Even in death so treacherous!'
He faded, and another said:
'We three met close when we were dead.
Into an armoured car they piled us
Where our mingled blood defiled us,
Certain, if not dead before,
To suffocate upon the floor.
Careful bullets in the back
Stopped our terrorist attack,
And so three dangerous lives are done*



— Judged, condemned and shamed in one.
 That spectre faded in his turn.
 A harsher stirred, and spoke in scorn:
 'The shame is theirs, in word and deed,
 Who prate of Justice, practise greed,
 And act in ignorant fury — then,
 Officers and gentlemen,
 Send to their Courts for the Most High
 To tell us did we really die!
 Does it need recourse to law
 To tell ten thousand what they saw?
 Law that lets them, caught red-handed,
 Halt the game and leave it stranded,
 Summon up a sworn inquiry
 And dump their conscience in the diary.
 During which hiatus, should
 Their legal basis vanish, good,
 The thing is rapidly arranged:
 Where's the law that can't be changed?
 The news is out. The troops were kind.
 Impartial justice has to find
 We'd be alive and well today
 If we had let them have their way.
 Yet England, even as you lie,
 You give the facts that you deny.
 Spread the lie with all your power
 — All that's left; it's turning sour.
 Friend and stranger, bride and brother,
 Son and sister, father, mother,
 All not blinded by your smoke,
 Photographers who caught your stroke,
 The priests that blessed our bodies, spoke
 And wagged our blood in the world's face.
 The truth will out, to your disgrace.'
 He flushed and faded. Pale and grim,
 A joking spectre followed him:
 'Take a bunch of stunted shoots,
 A tangle of transplanted roots,
 Ropes and rifles, feathered nests,
 Some dried colonial interests,
 A hard unnatural union grown
 In a bed of blood and bone,
 Tongue of serpent, gut of hog
 Spiced with spleen of underdog.
 Stir in, with oaths of loyalty,
 Sectarian supremacy,
 And heat, to make a proper botch,
 In a bouillon of bitter Scotch.
 Last, the choice ingredient: you.
 Now, to crown your Irish stew,
 Boil it over, make a mess.
 A most imperial success!'
 He capered weakly, racked with pain,
 His dead hair plastered in the rain;
 The group was silent once again.
 It seemed the moment to explain
 That sympathetic politicians
 Say our violent traditions,
 Backward looks and bitterness
 Keep us in this dire distress.
 We must forget, and look ahead,
 Nurse the living, not the dead.
 My words died out. A phantom said:
 'Here lies one who breathed his last
 Firmly reminded of the past.
 A trooper did it, on one knee,
 In tones of brute authority.'
 That harsher spirit, who before
 Had flushed with anger, spoke once more:
 'Simple lessons cut most deep.
 This lesson in our hearts we keep:
 Persuasion, protest, arguments,
 The milder forms of violence,
 Earn nothing but polite neglect.





England, the way to your respect
Is via murderous force, it seems;
You push us to your own extremes.
You condescend to hear us speak
Only when we slap your cheek.
And yet we lack the last technique:
We rap for order with a gun,
The issues simplify to one
— Then your Democracy insists
You mustn't talk with terrorists!
White and yellow, black and blue,
Have learnt their history from you:
Divide and ruin, muddle through,
Not principled, but politic.

— In strength, perfidious; weak, a trick
To make good men a trifle sick.
We speak in wounds. Behold this mess.
My curse upon your politesse.
Another ghost stood forth, and wet
Dead lips that had not spoken yet:
'My curse on the cunning and the bland,
On gentlemen who loot a land
They do not care to understand;
Who keep the natives on their paws
With ready lash and rotten laws;
Then if the beasts erupt in rage
Give them a slightly larger cage
And, in scorn and fear combined

Turn them against their own kind.
The game runs out of room at last,
A people rises from its past,
The going gets unduly tough
And you have (surely...?) had enough.
The time has come to yield your place
With condescending show of grace
— An Empire-builder handing on.
We reap the ruin when you've gone,
All your errors heaped behind you:
Promises that do not bind you,
Hopes in conflict, cramped commissions,
Faiths exploited, and traditions.'

Bloody sputum filled his throat.
He stopped and coughed to clear it out,
And finished, with his eyes a-glow:
'You came, you saw, you conquered... So.
You gorged — and it was time to go.
Good riddance. We'd forget — released —
But for the rubbish of your feast,
The slops and scraps that fell to earth
And sprang to arms in dragon birth.
Sashed and bowler-hatted, glum
Apprentices of fife and drum,
High and dry, abandoned guards
Of dismal streets and empty yards,
Drilled at the codeword 'True Religion'
To strut and mutter like a pigeon
'Not An Inch — Up The Queen';
Who use their walls like a latrine
For scribbled magic — at their call,
Straight from the nearest music-hall,
Pope and Devil intertwine,
Two cardboard kings appear, and join
In one more battle by the Boyne!
Who could love them? God above...'
'Yet pity is akin to love,'
The thirteenth corpse beside him said,
Smiling in its bloody head,
'And though there's reason for alarm
In dourness and a lack of charm
Their cursed plight calls out for patience.
They, even they, with other nations
Have a place, if we can find it.
Love our changeling! Guard and mind it.
Doomed from birth, a cursed heir,
Theirs is the hardest lot to bear,
Yet not impossible, I swear,
If England would but clear the air
And brood at home on her disgrace
— Everything to its own place.
Face their walls of dole and fear
And be of reasonable cheer.
Good men every day inherit
Father's foulness with the spirit,
Purge the filth and do not stir it.
Let them out! At least let in
A breath or two of oxygen,
So they may settle down for good
And mix themselves in the common blood.
We all are what we are, and that
Is mongrel pure. What nation's not
Where any stranger hung his hat
And seized a lover where she sat?'

He ceased and faded. Zephyr blew
And all the others faded too.
I stood like a ghost. My fingers strayed
Along the fatal barricade.
The gentle rainfall drifting down
Over Colmcille's town
Could not refresh, only distil
In silent grief from hill to hill. ■

REPATRIATION and republican POWs in England

AN EXTRACT from a letter written by Belfast republican Brian Keenan, currently serving 21 years in the Special Security Block at Leicester prison.

SUCCESSIVE British home secretaries and various other Cabinet ministers including Margaret Thatcher have left us in no doubt that we are political hostages. They consider our imprisonment in English jails serves as a deterrent to IRA actions in Britain.

Now I don't believe there is anything on record indicating that Allied prisoners held by the Axis powers during the Second World War had any effect in reducing the massive Allied blitz on German cities and towns. It is most strange that we should be regarded as a deterrent factor in a much lesser conflict.

I am sure that IRA tactics are evolved in the dictates of a war-winning strategy. We are the results of a war, not the cause of it. Our considerations cannot and should not influence republican military strategy geared to eradicating the causes of the war.

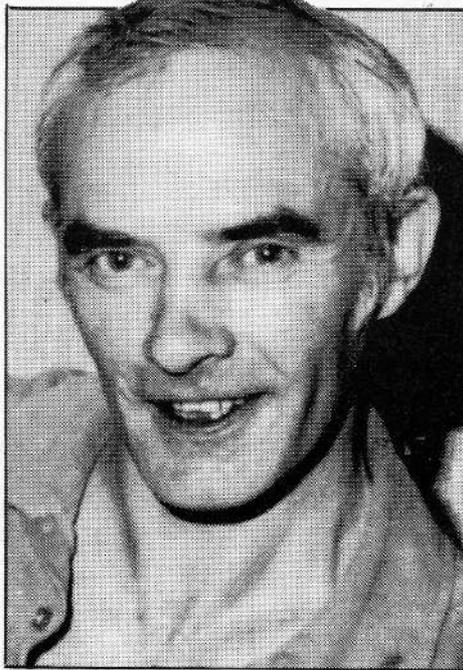
In the past year or so William Whitelaw, the current home secretary, has elaborated his position somewhat on the question of repatriation. Attempting to justify the British refusal to implement its own guidelines and rules (on the convention that wherever practicable prisoners should serve their sentences as close as possible to their families) he has claimed for example that any repatriation of POWs would cause public anxiety in England.

On the contrary, I would have thought that English people living near prisons housing POWs would be relieved to see the back of us.

DETERRENT

Whitelaw also thinks we would be regarded as heroes if repatriated, and so the deterrent value of punishment would be lost to the British state. Now, as far as I can see, Irish jails are full of genuine heroes and I should think that we wouldn't make a lot of impact. He claims we would cause a control problem in prisons in the North, yet English prisons are massively overcrowded while Long Kesh and Maghaberry (once opened) are underpopulated maximum-security prisons. So what's his problem? How could as few as 50 men and women cause a control problem in the police state prisons we all know so much about?

Whitelaw claims, furthermore, that if we were allowed to mix once again with our republican comrades in Ireland we



● BRIAN KEENAN

wouldn't find it so easy to sever our links with the Republican Movement. How arrogant this man is! How little he knows of the Irish in general, and of republicans in particular. Does this mercenary gasbag believe I can be depoliticised in one of his English institutions? He should beware that my comrades and I don't politicise his screws and all the inmates before he can get rid of us!

Finally Whitelaw claims that the 50% maximum remission on prison sentences in the North, as opposed to one-third remission in Britain, would cause legal problems if we were transferred. But surely any government which can effectively disenfranchise 64,000 nationalist voters, in the wake of the October 20th Assembly elections, should find no problem coming to an arrangement on remission with the NIO?

Then, since the repatriation of Irish POWs would be creating no new precedents in the treatment of prisoners by the British state, it is clear that the refusal to do so is a political act of extreme prejudice.

MOBILISING

How can a change be brought about? I believe that, short of waiting for a successful conclusion to the war, it is only by mobilising on the issue of repatriation in such a way as to politically embarrass Britain, due to public and international pressures, to implement the rules and conventions it currently

ignores.

It is clear that any future co-ordinating committee working for repatriation must first produce a formula of intent which will allow public figures of any nationality to push the arguments at international forums on our behalf.

It is just as clear that any formula must also be totally acceptable to POWs, relatives and to our faithful followers. It must allow broad-based support but it must also acknowledge the political issues involved in the discrimination being practised against the POWs. I am happy that the inhumane treatment of our relatives which long-distance separation entails, must be treated on an humanitarian platform.

I feel strongly that all our relatives must be paid more attention to by the Republican Movement in general. They must be brought together more often to forge the bonds of friendship among themselves. They must, if willing, be forged together into a politically aware force for propaganda to their cause. Relatives from the North must be brought into contact with those in the Free State, and all must be given meaningful political work to do on the issue.

COMMUNICATION

They must be given a fast line of communication to any national committee. Sinn Fein could go even further and make sure that each set of relatives and POW were 'adopted' by a local Sinn Fein cumann, ensuring that individual problems could be resolved at local level and that isolated cases of abuse on POWs did not go undocumented.

It is the relatives who suffer most. They must be brought in from the cold. We must cherish our own because no-one else will.

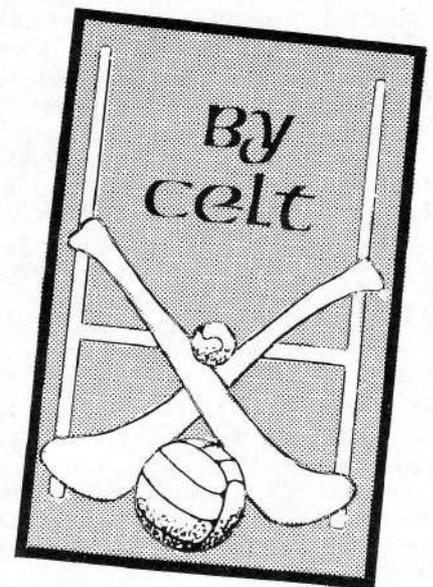
In closing, it needs to be fully understood by any future participants in a campaign for repatriation, that I and my comrade POWs owe our allegiance to the Republican Movement and to no-one else. Our interests are represented by Sinn Fein in the political forum. If a co-ordinating committee produces a position document for a repatriation campaign which we believe is acceptable in general to POWs and relatives and to the Republican Movement, we will then consider that committee to be acting justly on our behalf.

But whether we are in jail in England or in Ireland, we remain what we are: unrepentant prisoners of war. ■



CHANGING THE RULES

A look at the political origins of the GAA



ALMOST 100 years old, the Gaelic Athletic Association — the largest and most influential sporting body in Ireland — has from its inception to the present day been considerably influenced by political events in its ideals and policy.

In recent years, concerted attempts to curb the intensely nationalist beliefs of many GAA members and some clubs have hinged on the demand

that the GAA observe the gulf between 'sport' and 'politics'.

A previous article (*IRIS* No. 4, 'Sporting Nationalism') argued that in the history of the GAA no such gulf ever existed. Here, some of the other attempts to de-politicise the GAA are examined. A future article will discuss the role of the GAA during the 1981 hunger-strike.

TO THE uninitiated spectator the GAA at times presents aspects of itself that are difficult to understand.

On the one hand, the founders of the Association in 1884 — far

from viewing it purely as a sporting body — saw it clearly as a vehicle for their deeply-felt nationalist ideals and separatist political philosophy, through restoring pride in the national games of hurling and

Gaelic football. Having rightly identified the cultural, social and political stranglehold which the British presence was wielding over every aspect of Irish life, one of the basic rules incorporated into

the Association's official guide specifically debarred serving members of the British crown forces from being eligible for membership.

This rule remains in effect to this day, emphasising the GAA's view that it is the British presence which stands directly in the way of its fundamental goal — the strengthening of the Irish identity in a 32-county state.

Conversely, however, it is this very rule that has caused most anguish and embarrassment to the conservative and clerical members of the Association, who turning the political and idealistic origins of the GAA on their head argue blandly that such political discrimination has no place in a sporting organisation. From their camp, at annual congress times, come 'feelers' to gauge support for the rule's removal, but delegates from the Northern counties' GAA boards — with first-hand experience of Brit/RUC plastic bullets, torture and imprisonment, and 'impartiality' — remain steadfast for its retention.

THE 'BAN'

Nevertheless, one of the GAA's other traditional rules has been swept away. The 'ban', which sought to define the character of the Association, and to secure the adherence by members to its fullest ideals, by specifically precluding those people from membership who played rugby, soccer etc. (games which were viewed as part of the anglicisation process in Ireland) has been deleted from the rules after many years. At the 1971 annual congress held at Queen's University, Belfast, only the county boards of Antrim and Sligo voted for its retention.

(Ironically it has been much lamented since its deletion, and even now, in the comments of several county chairmen and even the *Uachtaran*, Pat Buggy, which call for a renewed commitment and first allegiance towards the GAA from members, it seems there might be the basis of a campaign for a re-implementation of the 'ban' rule.)

Rule changes aside, the GAA hierarchy has without doubt hopped, skipped and jumped around the political connotations inherent in the Association's Charter, while many administrators would be only too glad to see it simply involved in the catching of a football and the striking of the *sliotar*. They would be well advised to cast their minds back along the track of the GAA's history....

In 1923 the All-Ireland football final between Kerry and Dublin was called off because of the imprisonment by Free Staters of Austin Stack, a leading republican and chairman of the Kerry county board. Kerry refused to play the game until he was released. In that same year, Cork refused to send a team to play Offaly in the Junior hurling final,



as their county chairman, Sean McCarthy, had been interned. And indeed many of the 99 Irishmen executed during the Civil War by the Free Staters had been lifelong associates of the GAA.

EROSION

The years which followed the Tan War (1919 - 1921) were to herald the erosion of those republican ideals that had inspired the GAA earlier, and with the adoption of more and more English ways its ability to influence Irish social and cultural life waned considerably.

From a very early stage the Cumann na Gaedhael adherents of Cosgrave began political agitation for the deletion of rule 27 — the 'ban' — but it was not until the '60s that this agitation became more concrete, as the image of the Free State as a stable political 'entity' and emergent 'European state' began to take hold, and traditional cultural and political values receded in apparent importance.



● AUSTIN STACK

Initial efforts to revoke rule 27 came, predictably, from the middle-class members of Dublin Civil Service GAA club. Although at the 1962 annual congress the vote was almost unanimous in support of the retention of the 'ban', a mere nine years later the combined influence of leading civil servants, gardai and Free State politicians within the GAA was enough to succeed in removing it, and so at a stroke was to go some way to changing the fundamental direction of the GAA as the custodian of the Irish identity in sport.

REAPPRAISAL

There are perhaps now signs that this 'liberal' anglicised philosophy that has emerged within the GAA is beginning to be questioned. It is indeed time.

An honest reappraisal of the GAA, in the context of its political origins and the continuation of partition, and of its role in Irish life, is called for. A fresh understanding among GAA youth of what the GAA *really* stands for could well lead to the Association playing the same role it did in the early years of the freedom struggle.

A starting point might be an acceptance of the wish of the political prisoners in Long Kesh and Magilligan to play Gaelic football and hurling, currently forbidden by the prison regimes.

Will the GAA campaign for this right on their behalf? And will the GAA organise to secure the removal of the British army from the Crossmaglen Rangers GAA grounds they have occupied for so long? We will see.

With the centenary of the Association only a year away, how would its principled founders view it now? ■

LIAM MELLOWS was born in England in 1892, the son of a British army sergeant who was himself the son of a British army sergeant. He came to live in Ireland in 1894, and through reading and family influences gradually became interested in the national struggle, joining Fianna Eireann and later the Irish Volunteers. In 1914 he was sent from Dublin to Galway as organiser for the Volunteers and stayed to lead them in their contribution to the 1916 Rising. He was a TD for Galway in the First and Second Dails, and taking the republican side against the Treatyites was captured and imprisoned in Mountjoy jail following the surrender of the Four Courts garrison at the end of June 1922.

In the bitterness of the months of civil war that followed, Liam Mellows was taken from his prison cell along with Rory O'Connor, Dick Barrett and Joe McKelvey on the morning of December 8th 1922. All four were shot dead, as reprisals, on the orders of the Free State government.

However, there was more than this to Liam Mellows. The republican socialist author, Peadar O'Donnell, described Mellows as "the richest mind our race has achieved for many a long day." The following text of Phil Flynn's lecture concentrates

on the politics of Mellows in the context of the social, economic and political forces at work in his time.

The early part of the anniversary lecture, omitted here through pressure on space, details the popular growth of republican resistance after the 1916 Rising and British imperialism's use of the Treaty to destroy the Republic by exploiting class contradictions among the republican leadership. In particular, Flynn argues that from the signing of the Truce in July 1921 de Valera could no longer be described as a republican, and moreover that from the signing of the Treaty de Valera did little or nothing to hinder Michael Collins' efforts to establish the Republic.

In the text printed below, Flynn first examines the class differences that existed in the 26 counties in 1922 and how these affected the ability to win of the anti-Treatyite forces. Next he looks at Mellows' own contribution in this period and quotes Mellows' crucial Notes from Mountjoy, written months before his execution. As should become clear, both Mellows' life and his radical political writings retain an eerie relevance for the present struggle.

Liam Mellows and the Irish Civil War

THIS is the bulk of a public lecture given at University College, Galway, by Sinn Fein ard comhairle member and deputy general secretary of the Local Government and Public Services Union, Phil Flynn, on December 8th 1982, the 60th anniversary of the Free State's execution of Liam Mellows.

BRITISH imperialism destroyed the Republic by exploiting the contradictions that existed within the national movement. These were class contradictions.



The Republic, as it existed from 1919 to 1921, was a one-Party state. Sinn Fein was the Party of the state, and according to its leaders was a classless Party which was fighting purely in the interests of the nation. The reality however was that many classes were to be found within Sinn Fein and the IRA. Medium-sized Irish businessmen (national bourgeoisie); small businessmen — shopkeepers, tradesmen, etc., (the petty bourgeoisie); peasants, large and small; and workers, both urban and rural.

From 1918 to 1921 no nationalist group of any significance existed outside the Sinn Fein / IRA organisation. All nationalist groups — the Citizen Army, the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the old Sinn Fein, the Gaelic League, the GAA, etc. — had merged to produce the Sinn Fein/IRA organisation. The most significant merger was that of the Citizen Army — the army of the Irish working class — with the Irish Volunteers — the

army of the Irish nationalist bourgeoisie, to form the IRA.

(The party which Connolly had formed to be the political arm of the working class — the Labour Party — stood aloof from the national struggle and thereby condemned itself to a barren existence.)

In the second rank of Sinn Fein leadership there were many whose republican idealism made them genuinely thoughtless of class questions, and who, when the crisis came in 1922, would have gone with any class which stood clearly for the Republic. But the Sinn Fein leaders, the men who held the power, were bourgeois. Arthur Griffith had never concealed the fact that he represented the interest of the large Irish bourgeoisie. He had sided with the Dublin employers against the Dublin workers in 1913 when almost every other nationalist had criticised the employers. De Valera had in 1918 coined the famous phrase, "*Labour must wait*".

It is often denied that Collins represented the capitalist interest, but it is clear from his book, *'The Path to Freedom'*, that he never envisaged an Ireland which was not capitalist. Writing of the land struggles of 1880 he said that: "*the killing of landlords would have been murder*" if it had not furthered the national cause. And writing about his 'New Ireland' he said that Labour would be an "*element in the life of the nation*", and would be free to "*play the part that belongs to it*".

BOURGEOIS PARTY

Sinn Fein, therefore, while nominally a non-class, national Party, was in fact a bourgeois national Party. The fact that it included the bulk of the advanced workers did not make it any the less bourgeois in character. It represented bourgeois interests. Its non-class appearance, carefully cultivated by de Valera and Collins, was a piece of camouflage behind which a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie was established.

The contradictions which British imperialism exploited were those between the various classes in the national movement. The various classes were attracted to the national movement because the national movement served their class interests. But the interests of the different classes required different degrees of national independence than the interests of the smaller property owners. The class interest of the working class and small farmers alone demanded the total break with the Empire.

The Anglo-Irish property owners never abandoned the imperialist side. After the Treaty they supported Collins and Cosgrave. The biggest Irish property owners did not as a rule support imperialism actively, nor did they support Sinn Fein although Griffith represented their interests. After the Treaty they gave their active support to the Free



● Michael Collins, Eamon de Valera and Arthur Griffith, whilst enjoying the support of the working class, represented the propertied interests of the bourgeoisie

State.

The medium-sized Irish bourgeoisie deserted imperialism, joined the national movement, and took control of it. They had never asked for more than a modest degree of Home Rule. They were now satisfied with the imperialist concession of Dominion Status which would permit them to become the ruling class within Ireland. On the other hand, the nationally conscious workers and small farmers, who had done most of the fighting demanded an independent Irish Republic and they were willing to resume the war if the British did not meet that demand. The British offered Dominion Status, and combined the offer with a threat to resume the war if Ireland continued to demand an independent Republic.

The offer satisfied the larger Sinn Fein property owners and failed to satisfy the workers and smaller peasants, and the threat of war gave the big property owners, anxious to safeguard what they had won, a direct interest in quelling the republicans, whose continued activity against imperialism would put what they had won in jeopardy. The Sinn Fein bourgeoisie were joined by the Anglo-Irish and the large Irish bourgeoisie.

CLASS SPLIT

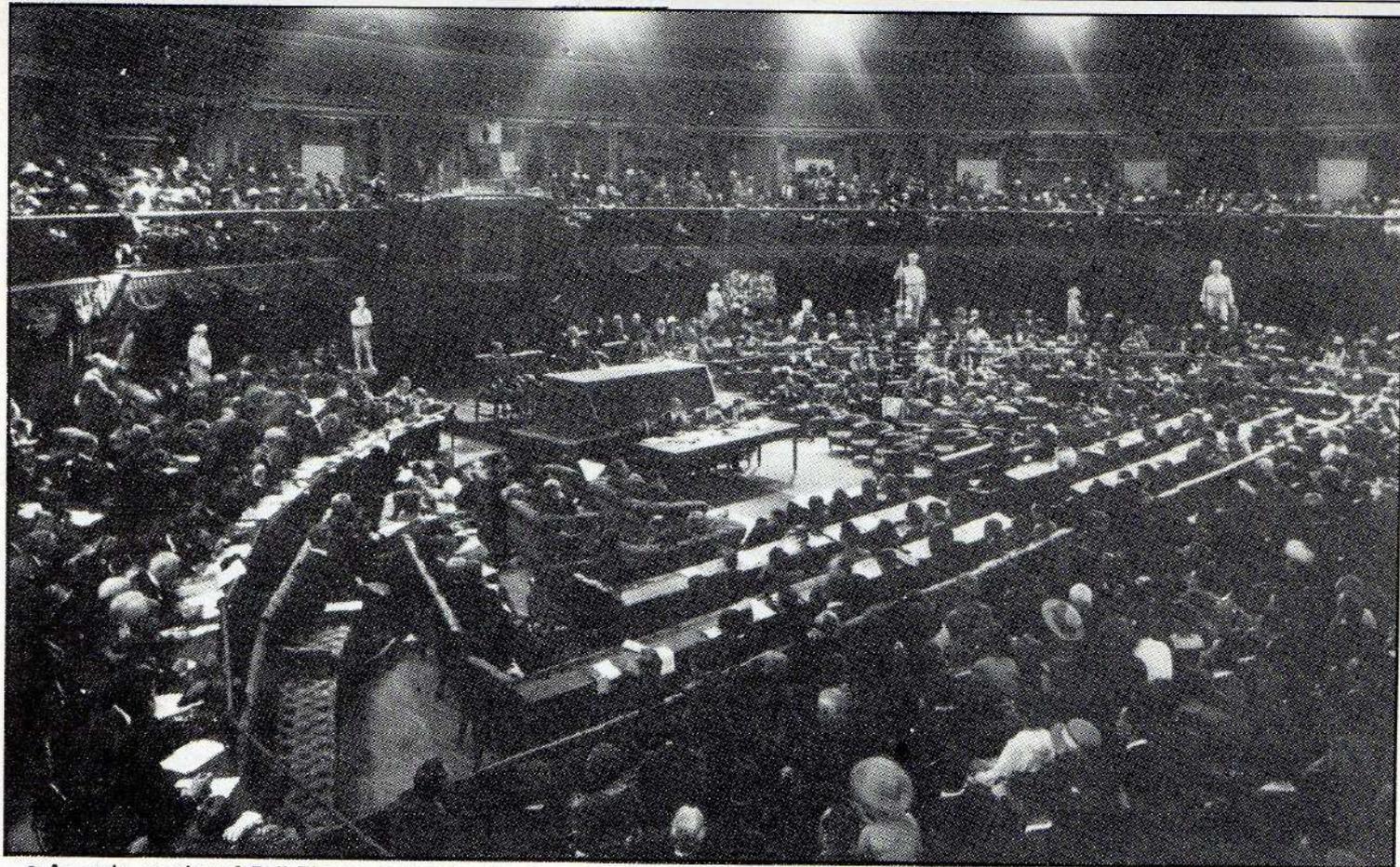
Thus the nearness of victory split Sinn Fein and the IRA, and split them along class lines. Civil War followed. One section of Sinn Fein and the IRA, supported by their recent British enemy, made war on another. The Irish upper classes made war on the Irish lower classes. The class interest of the Treaty faction, their greed, their determination to establish themselves as the ruling class in Ireland, their dread that the republicans, by angering the British, would bring about a resumption of the Anglo-Irish war and so prevent them

from becoming the ruling class, led them to commit atrocities against the republicans in the republican stronghold of the South and West, especially in Kerry, of a kind and on a scale that the British had never attempted.

When the Dail of the Republic divided on the question of the Treaty in January 1922 the pro-Treaty faction had a majority. The pro-Treatyites represented the Irish bourgeoisie in the 26 counties. The anti-Treatyites, however, did not represent the working class, but the small property owners, the petty bourgeoisie.

And so although the opposing sides in the Civil War represented different class interests, they did not represent antagonistic class interests. Accordingly, the Civil War was not fought to a finish but was called off halfway through, and the main body of the republican side adopted peaceful methods which brought it to power ten years later. The Civil War, tragically for the future history of Ireland, did not develop into a clear-cut class war between exploiter and exploited. It was a squabble between two property owning factions. De Valera, then and later, was supported by the workers, but he, no less than Collins and O'Higgins, represented a propertied interest.

When the Citizen Army was marching to the GPO on Easter Monday, Connolly told his men to hold on to their rifles after the British had been driven out, because they would need them in the war against Irish capitalism. But, when the time came for the Irish workers to fight a war against the Irish capitalists, class-conscious workers with rifles were few and far between. Connolly was dead. The party he had organised to lead the workers in the fight for the workers' republic had degenerated and fallen into the hands of a mild



● An early meeting of Dail Eireann in the Mansion House, Dublin. Dail members sat in the chairs around the podium, pressmen and spectators occupied the balcony and desks around them

English reformist called Thomas Johnson who supported the Treaty, boasted that the Labour Party stood aloof from the violence that was going on in the country, and joined the Free State parliament four years before de Valera did.

The Transport and General Workers' Union, which under Larkin and Connolly had put guns in the hands of the workers, now supported de Valera, and tried to disarm the workers. And Jim Larkin was in jail in the United States, and had been in jail there during de Valera's triumphant tour, accused of plotting to overthrow the government because he had taken part in the founding of the Communist Party of the USA.

POLITICAL DEGENERATION

The Civil War was fought by republicans against the Free State, but due to the degeneration of the political organisation of the workers this was not a war of the working class against the exploiting class. The working class sympathised with the republicans, many politically conscious workers fought on the republican side, but the republican movement was not led by the working class. This caused grave damage both to the cause of the Republic and to the cause of the working class. It damaged the Republic since it meant that the class differences on which the Civil War was fought were not antagonistic class differences. The war for the Republic could only have been fought to a finish if the interests of the class which led the republican struggle were irreconcil-

able with the interests of the class which led the Free Staters.

In class terms it was a war of small property owners against large property owners: of petty bourgeoisie against bourgeoisie.

In Ireland in 1922 the smaller property owners were potentially a greater social force than the largest property owners. This was due to the specific historical development of Ireland which caused those Irishmen who had become large businessmen under British rule to look towards Britain as towards the sun, and caused them to be regarded as an alien, anti-national force by the great majority of the people of Ireland.

De Valera, the political leader of the republicans in the Civil War, based himself on the small property owners. He took responsibility for, but discouraged, the military actions of his followers. He ended the Civil War at the earliest possible moment. He organised a political party based on the small property owners, who brought him to power within ten years. The small property owners grew bigger, their interests came closer to those of the Free State/Fine Gael Party, until today they are almost identical.

SOCIALISM OR CAPITALISM?

In 1921 Ireland could have achieved either an independent workers' state or a dependent bourgeois state: either a workers' republic or a capitalist neo-colony.

A capitalist state could not be independent since Irish capitalism did not



● Liam Mellows at Bodenstown in 1922

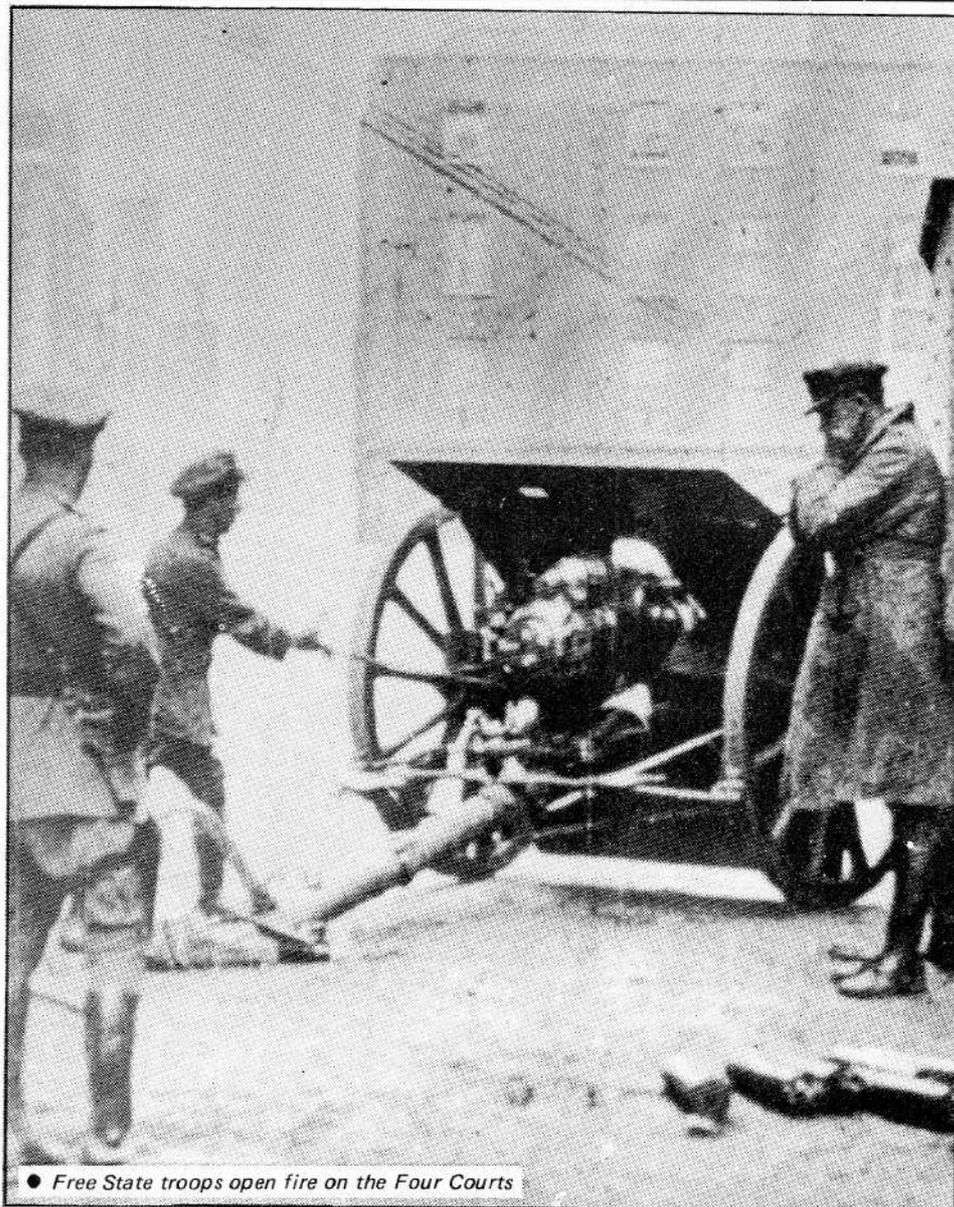
have within itself the potential to establish itself as a capitalism independent of British imperialist capitalism. Irish capitalism could have become independent of British imperialism only by becoming imperialist itself. But the development of Irish capitalism had been retarded for so long by a stronger British capitalism that it had become incapable of ever reaching maturity. It was pathetically weak against full-blown British imperialism. It was weak even against its own working class. It could survive only as the agent of British imperialist capital against Irish labour.

A workers' state would have to be independent since British imperialism would not tolerate it on any terms. It could only establish itself against the total opposition of British imperialism. Britain gained definite advantages from the Treaty: if it came to it she could tolerate the political unity and independence of Ireland as a capitalist state since she would have the ruling class under her thumb economically (as Churchill pointed out at the time). But a workers' state in Ireland would be a challenge to the existence of British imperialism which would necessarily lead to the destruction of one or the other of them.

The struggle for national independence became at a certain point a struggle for socialism (the struggle for socialism had always involved struggle for national independence). The point was reached in 1921/22. From this point no further progress could be made towards the achievement of an independent Republic on a 'classless' basis (which of course meant a capitalist basis). All further progress depended on the proletariat becoming the leading force in the republican movement.

Collins had become the political representative of Irish capitalism in December 1921, from which time his influence on Irish affairs was reactionary. De Valera also decided for capitalism and subjection to Britain, but his fall into deep reaction was delayed for a few years by the fact that his desire for independence, or his political ambition, carried him beyond Collins (who became the representative of the Anglo-Irish and the bigger Irish bourgeoisie) to become the representative of the small businessmen and the aspiring peasants.

The working class did not become the leading force in the republican movement, cursed as it was with a reformist and subservient leadership. But some republicans came to an awareness that their struggle was no longer a national struggle of all classes against the British, and that the success of the fight for the Republic depended on its being transformed into a war of Irish workers against their class enemy, the Free State, and its imperialist master. The most clear-sighted of these republicans was Liam Mellows.



● Free State troops open fire on the Four Courts

Notes from Mountjoy

LIAM MELLOWS was among the leaders of the republicans who occupied the Four Courts. He was captured when the Four Courts fell to the Free State artillery (on loan from the British) at the end of June 1922 and jailed in Mountjoy. In August he smuggled out two documents comprising notes and observations on policy. Later these fell into the hands of the Free State and were published in a Free State 'Blue Paper' with the title *'Correspondence of Eamon de Valera and others'*. The others are Mellows, Austin Stack, P.J. Rutledge, Ernie O'Malley, Robert Brennan, Patrick Little and Charles Murphy. The core of the 'Blue Paper' is Mellows' *'Notes'*. The point of publishing them was to brand the republicans (including de Valera) as Communists.

Mellows' notes, which were addressed to Austin Stack with a slightly abridged version to Ernie O'Malley, are contained in full in the excellent book *'Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution'* by Desmond Greaves.

The first document dated 26th August 1922 read as follows:

GENERAL SITUATION: We are as much in touch with this as the 'news-papers' and *'Poblacht'* and *'Bulletin'* permit. I am strongly of the opinion that the republican political and military outlook be co-ordinated. No doubt this has been done, but I mention it because during the past six months we suffered badly because responsible officers, in their desire to act as soldiers, and because of an attitude towards 'politicians' acquired as a result (in

my opinion) of a campaign directed towards this end by old GHQ, could only judge of situation in terms of guns and men. Even from a military point of view it ought to have been apparent to such men that every situation and advantage — no matter of what nature — should be availed of to gain victory. However, I am not going to write an essay on this.

Naturally we are thinking hard here, though the place and atmosphere is not conducive to thought. However, the net results of my cogitations are:

1. A Provisional Republican Government should be set up at once even if it is unable to function, or to function only in a most limited way. This to be done apart from the question of the Dail. The advt. in today's paper regarding postponement of Dail is inserted by Provisional Government. The impression the Press and the Provisional Government want to create is that the next Dail is the 'Provisional Government' called for by the terms of the Treaty. If at meeting of Dail this is not cleared up, and it is of 'Provisional Parliament' and not the Government of the Republic — then the necessity of a Provisional Republican Government is most urgent.

2. The programme of Democratic Control (the Social Programme) adopted by the Dail coincident with Declaration of Independence, January 1919, should be translated into something definite. This is essential if the great body of the workers are to be kept on the side of independence. This does not require a change of outlook on the part of republicans or the adoption of a revolutionary programme as such. The head-line is there in the declaration of 1919. It is **ALREADY** part of republican policy. It should be made clear what is meant by it. Would suggest, therefore, that it be interpreted something like the following, which appeared in the *Workers Republic* of July 22nd last:

"Under the Republic all industry will be controlled by the State for the workers' and farmers' benefit.

"All transport, railways, canals, etc. will be operated by the State — the Republican State — for the benefit of the workers and farmers.

"All banks will be operated by the State for the benefit of industry and agriculture, not for the purpose of profit-making by loans, mortgages, etc.

"That the lands of the aristocracy (who support the Free State and the British connection) will be seized and divided amongst those who can and will operate it for the nation's benefit, etc."

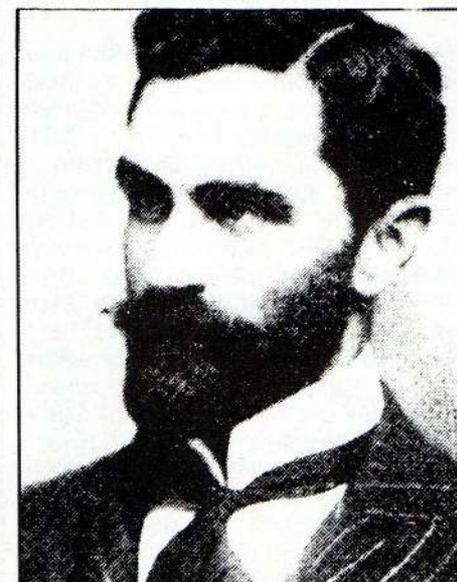
Regarding the last paragraph in above programme — land — it is well to note that the IRA Executive had already taken up the question of the demesnes and ranches and had adopted a scheme for their confiscation and distribution. This scheme was mainly the work of P.J. Rutledge. See Ernie O'Malley,



● *"We are back to Tone — and it is just as well — relying on that great body, 'the men of no property'." — MELLOWS*

Thomas O'Deirig and P.J. Rutledge about this. In view of the unprincipled attitude of the Labour Party, and because of the landless and homeless Irish Republican soldiers who fought against Britain, it might be well to publish this scheme in whole or part.

We should certainly keep Irish Labour for the Republic: it will be possibly the biggest factor on our side. Anything that would prevent Irish Labour becoming imperialist and respectable will help the Republic. As a sidelight on Johnson, O'Brien, O'Shannon and Co., it will interest you to know that when they called on us in the Four Courts last May, they (particularly



● **ROGER CASEMENT**

Johnson) remarked that no effort had been made by An Dail to put its democratic programme into execution. In our efforts now to win back public support to the Republic we are forced to recognise — whether we like it or not — that the commercial interest so-called — money and the gombeenman — are on the side of the Treaty, because the Treaty means imperialism and England. We are back to Tone — and it is just as well — relying on that great body, 'the men of no property'. The 'stake in the country' people were never with the Republic. They are not with it now and they will always be against it — until it wins.

We should recognise that definitely now and base our appeals upon the understanding and needs of those who have always borne Ireland's fight. Even though the decision of the election 1918 stands; even though the Declaration of Independence remains a fact; even though the election of 1921 re-affirmed that Declaration; even though the election of June 1922 was an 'agreed election' at which no issue was put or decided; because of the interpretation put upon it by the Treatyites (and used broadcast by the British), it is essential that the Republic be once again re-affirmed by the people by vote as soon as possible. When that may be no one can tell, but we cannot look too far ahead. In the meantime the Provisional Republican Government should endeavour to 'carry on'.

3. **PROPAGANDA (a) Imperialism:** What the rejection of it by Ireland means. What its acceptance by Ireland means. This should be fully explained. What imperialism is; what Empires are — what the British Empire is — its growth. How it exists and maintains itself. Colonies (Irish Free State as a Colony) — India, how oppression and possession of it essential to maintenance of British Empire, Money, Trade, Power, etc. (Curzon on India). Extracts from Roger Casement's articles on *'Ireland, Germany and Freedom of the Seas'*, published first in *Irish Review*, 1913 or '14. What Ireland's connection with imperialism (however much the apparent material gain) means to her future. No use freeing Ireland to set her up as a state following in the footsteps of all the rotten nations in Europe today — what Ireland's rejection of imperialism means, etc.

(b) Work of the Republic: To show it was — and is — a reality. This is an antidote to the hypocrites who now pretend that it never existed. Some pamphlets have already been published by direction of Dail last year showing how Republic functioned, Courts, Land Settlements, etc. Decrees. These were sold for 6d each I think. They could be reproduced or used again. The *'Bulletin'* published by D/Publicity all through war up to signing of Treaty does, I think, contain heaps of dates.



● Following an outbreak of fighting between pro and anti-Treaty forces in Kilkenny, officers from both sides came together and negotiated a truce; (left to right): Sean MacEoin, Sean Moylan, Eoin O'Duffy, Liam Lynch, Gearoid O'Sullivan and Liam Mellows

(c) **Hierarchy:** Invariably wrong in Ireland in their political outlook — against the people in '98. Frs. Murphy (2), Roche, Kearns, excommunicated by the then Bishop of Ferns — against Emmet, "condoning outrage" — against Young Ireland, "Godless young men", support of Sadlier and Keogh — against Fenians: Dr. Cullen, Bishop Moriarty: "Hell not hot enough or eternity long enough" — against 'Plan of Campaign' — against Sinn Fein (early days when it was milk and water) — against Irish Volunteers — supported England in European War, 1914 — morally to blame for the deaths of thousands of Irish youths in France, Flanders, Mesopotamia, Gallipoli, Macedonia, etc. Nothing can condone this. European War a hideous holocaust on altar of Mammon; a struggle between Europe for power.

Irish hierarchy blood-guilty. Hierarchy against Easter Rising 1916, denunciation of Pearse, etc. (Pearse the great example of Christian idealism.) Hierarchy only opposed Conscription when forced to do so by attitude of people. Against IRA during Terror. Bishop Cohalan's excommunication decree of December 1920. Hierarchy's abandonment of principle, justice and honour by support of Treaty. Danger to Catholicism in Ireland from their bad example — their exaltation of deceit and hypocrisy, their attempt to turn the noble aspect of Irish struggle and bring it to the level of putrid politics; their admission that religion

is something to be preached about from pulpits on Sundays, but never put into practice in the affairs of the Nation; their desertion of Ulster, etc.

'Sceilg' could, I think, do the above best.

Excuse change of writing. I had to get the above copied by someone else from a letter I am sending to Sighle, lest anything should happen to this one. I will close up now, but will continue ideas on propaganda and other things tomorrow.

Regards
Signed L. O'M.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

The ideas developed under 3. (a), (b) and (c), were continued in a further letter despatched on 29th August 1922:

Continuing mine of 26th inst. (No. 1). Before doing so, however, I wish to point out that the matter of establishing a Provisional Republican Government has become imperative because of the probability of the English taking a hand sooner or later. No doubt they will continue to make use of Irishmen as long as the latter can be duped or dazzled by the Free State idea; but even to this there will be an end, and then the British will, by using the arguments against the republicans that the Free State now use, cloud the issue greatly.

For the British to calumniate republicans and belittle their cause by be-

smirching them is one thing, but for Free Staters (and supposed potential republicans) to do it is another — and different, and worse thing. Because the British will not use British arguments to cloak their actions, but Irish ones "out of our own mouths", etc. Therefore an object — a target — must be presented for the enemy (Free Staters or British) to hit at — otherwise it becomes a fight (apparently) between individuals. Hence the necessity of getting the Provisional Republican Government established at once.

Resuming his thoughts on propaganda he wrote:

(d) **Dev's Work in America:** The time has now come for informing the Irish people what miracles de Valera accomplished there. The attempt to belittle his work for Eire both here and abroad must be defeated. Dealing with America is a stupendous work, and tons of data is needed, but it will be labour well worth performing. Show how it was the Republic (and the Republic only) that gained such sympathy for us there: that no other cause would have got the slightest hearing — that de Valera changed an ignorant and either apathetic or hostile people into genuine sympathisers in two years. He made the name of Ireland respected where it was despised, and the Irish Cause an ideal where it had been regarded as a political humbug. Fr. Magennis of the



● Two Cumann na mBan officers stand guard over Cathal Brugha's body

Irish movement in America and the attitude generally of America and Americans towards Ireland at the time of Dev's coming.

(e) **Life of Cathal Brugha:** A brief (but not a scrappy) account of above would, I think, do a lot of good. The account in *'Bulletin'* (Catholic) by Sceilg is splendid, but not detailed enough. The underlying idea should be that of 'Principle', a word that at one time meant everything to (and conveyed everything of) the IRB.

(f) **Cardinal Mercier:** As an offset to their Lordships, a fine pamphlet on the example set for Ireland by Cardinal Mercier — his acts and his words — could be written.

(g) **South Africa:** The danger to Ireland of Irish allowing their work to be patterned on example of South Africa. After Treaty of Veer and later formation of United South Africa (all Boers still saying they were republicans at heart) the real republicans found an obstacle stood between them and the British — their own. Parallel with Ireland, Smuts and Botha, Collins and Griffith, Cathal Brugha, De Wet, etc., 'five years' fallacy of Free State Republic.

4. **Courts:** Except for the Supreme Court, the Republican Courts should be maintained. Nothing conveyed proof in America of existence of Republic so much as the establishment of Courts.

5. **Fianna:** We must concentrate on youth — salvation of the country lies in this — both boys and girls. Fianna never got proper help or encouragement. Fianna ideal can save the future. The reason for so many young soldiers going wrong is that they never had a

proper grasp of the fundamentals. They were absorbed into movement and fight — not educated into it. Hence no real convictions.

6. **Food Control:** Food supply will present a serious problem soon. The obstruction of roads, railways and communications will be intensified; towns will feel it the worst. Some plan of rationing will have to be thought out and some person (a Labour man for preference) put in control. If the Republic is to win out against the Free State and British we shall have to face the idea of people suffering many privations. If scheme worked out ahead it will not be so bad; in fact, it would compel a change from present wretched economic outlook and make them rely on own resources. Many things that are now looked on as necessities would have to be done without — tea, sugar, foreign flour, etc. — but oatmeal, oatflour, barley and other wholesome food would be used.

As a matter of fact, Ireland suffered nothing (comparatively speaking) either during the Great War or our war. English people (and English women) cheerfully put up with severe deprivations and we Irish think our Cause worth putting up with anything. But do we? Judging by the whines and grumbles, one is tempted sometimes to say "*Certainly not*".

7. Communications

(a) **Abroad:** Routes and men must be sought out and maintained, at all costs, for the following: England, Scotland, America, Germany, Belgium, France, Russia, Italy.

(b) **Home:** Very essential.

8. **Foreign:** India: Isn't the time ap-

proaching when we should be in closer touch?

9. **By-elections:** Don't suppose these can take place under present conditions — but we must keep our eyes open.

10. **Bishops:** Can anything be done by a number of clergy coming together?

In a modified version of these documents addressed to Ernie O'Malley there are added two further sub-sections, one suggesting the immediate drafting of a Republican Constitution, presumably as an alternative to the Free State constitution, and the other headed *'Military'* which declares the outstanding important questions to be intelligence, arms and ammunition, communications, and England.

Mellows wrote a further letter to Austin Stack on the 11th September:

"A propos to what I wrote to you sometime ago: the events of the last few days have, I think, made it more clear that what I suggested should be done — it has done more, it has made it imperative. The Free State has shown by Saturday's performance that it was the Provisional Parliament provided by the Free State Act, and not the third Dail that met. Therefore the question arises at once — where is the Government of the Republic? It must be found, Republicans must be provided with a rallying centre, and the movement with a focussing point.

"The unemployed question is acute. Starvation is facing thousands of people. The official Labour Movement has deserted the people for the flesh-pots of Empire. The Free State government's attitude towards striking postal workers makes clear what its attitude towards workers generally will be. The situation created by all these must be utilised for the Republic. The position must be defined: FREE STATE — Capitalism and Industrialism — Empire; REPUBLIC — Workers — Labour."

NEO-COLONIALISM

There is strong evidence that Mellows was very influenced by Connolly and certainly they had a lot in common politically as is clear from these documents; for example, the connection between the national and social struggles and the sense of internationalism. As Desmond Greaves points out in his book: "*In his analysis of the character of the proposed Free State he must surely have been one of the first to discuss the new methods of imperial domination*" (subsequently christened 'neo-colonialism'). His insistence on politics, his demand for a return to the masses as the basis of the revolution, for the political education of republican soldiers, and for the establishment of a new revolutionary government, show him to have been as Peadar O'Donnell justly remarked "*the richest mind our race has achieved for many a long day.*"

While others saw only the symbol of the oath of allegiance to a foreign king he understood that the purpose of British policy was to create a political garrison in Ireland to replace the military garrison whose position had become

untenable. He saw too that out of the revolutionary movement itself, a political party had been formed whose existence was bound up with retaining intact the British system of law, politics and social relations: that the old colonial relationship was preserved in a new form.

CONTINUING RELEVANCE

The significance and continuing relevance of Liam Mellows is well expressed in the following extract from an article on his life and aims published by Cumann na mBan in December 1933, the 11th anniversary of his execution:

"Under the Fianna Fail government, industry is organised for the benefit of the British combines or for the British or Irish capitalists. The Fianna Fail government actually boasts of industries being set up under these conditions. Recently it is rumoured that three foreign firms are about to start the manufacture of cement in three different parts of Ireland. Imagine a government of men professing a love of, and an interest in, their country permitting the private ownership — at this stage of the world — of such a vital necessity as cement! It is no wonder England is not

disturbed at the prospect of losing political control of part of this country while she is assured of the economic domination of the whole country."

"Writing of transport and the banking system, he wrote:

All transport, railways, canals, etc., will be operated by the state — the republican state — for the benefit of the workers and farmers. All banks will be operated by the state for the benefit of industry and agriculture, not for the purpose of profit-making by loans, mortgages, etc. That the land of the aristocracy (who support the Free State and the British connection) will be seized and divided amongst those who can and will operate it for the nation's benefit.

"Eleven years have passed since Mellows was silenced forever by a British bullet. Eleven years of native rule! In those years our pillar boxes have changed from red to green; our enemies' uniforms have changed from khaki to green, and may become grey; our coins have changed from king's heads to pigs and hens; and our very name has changed from Ireland to the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, and may shortly be christened a Republic. Yet fundamentally the organisation of the people's lives has remained unchanged.

"The same hunger, want, insecurity and man-made misery stalk through the length

and breadth of Ireland. The same, small owning class is still as powerful as ever. It commands our land, our industries, our means of wealth, and well may it sneer at the colour of our pillar boxes.

"Its chief concern is to distract our attention from the power it possesses over our land and our liberties. It rejoices at every issue we raise, at every action we take which does not challenge its power.

"In the North religious prejudices are inflamed. In the South political rivalries are encouraged, minds are excited and passions are aroused on issues, the outcome of which does not interfere with its undisputed domination.

"The Fianna Fail cabinet (some members of which were the comrades of Liam Mellows years ago, but who can never have shared his views) have failed to avail of their opportunity to weaken the power of our enemies.

"It remains for us to define the sort of freedom we are working for, in order to ensure that the coming of the Republic will mean the changing of the whole social system: the organisation of the production of food and industry for use instead of profit, the ending of oppression and exploitation of man by man — in short, the happiness of all the people of Ireland for which Liam Mellows fought and died."

It might have been written today! ■

Mellows on Irish freedom

FURTHER EVIDENCE of the depth of the political consciousness of Mellows is apparent in the following extracts from an article by him entitled 'Labour and Irish Republic' published in 'Voice of Labour' on 23rd December 1922, two weeks after his execution:

"When one talks of freedom for Ireland, one should have clearly in mind what is meant by Irish freedom. Freedom and independence, as used at present, are terms so ambiguous as to mean anything, or nothing. The mere act of setting up a Republic is not a panacea for all the ills that trouble Ireland. Measures more far-reaching than that are required if Ireland is to enjoy real freedom.

"The revolution going on in Ireland has a threefold aspect: it is intellectual, it is political, it is economic. Of the intellectual aspect, it is sufficient here to say that Ireland, to be free, must be Irish, must be as free from the domination of alien thought as from alien armies of occupation. The end of the political struggle, the withdrawal of the British army and British officials from Ireland, and the international recognition of the Irish Republic, will be the means of solving many of the present economic and social problems there, enabling the Government of Ireland to de-



● Seamus Robinson and Liam Mellows on their way to Helvic Head, March 17th 1921, to arrange for an arms landing

vote its entire attention to the internal matters of the country. Industries will receive encouragement; employment will increase; the natural resources of the country tapped; emigration stopped; education put on a proper basis, and direct contact with the outside world established.

"Yet all this, resulting as it would in the country being richer and more prosperous, would not mean that the free-

dom of Ireland has been attained if the economic system remained unchanged. A political revolution in Ireland, without a coincident economic revolution, simply means a change of masters. Instead of British capitalists waxing rich on the political and economic enslavement of Ireland, as at present, we would have Irish capitalists waxing rich on the political freedom, but continued enslavement of Ireland.

"Ireland does not want a change of masters. It would be foolish, surely, to free Ireland from foreign tyranny today, and less than twenty years hence to have to free it from domestic tyranny. Therefore, the Irish Republic must have for its foundation the people. It is they who must own Ireland. It is they who are freeing Ireland; and it is for the people — all the people — that it is being done, not for any section or group.

"The Dail Eireann had this clearly in mind when, at its first session, in January 1919, it issued its 'Programme of Democratic Policy'. In this programme it laid down that the soil of Ireland and all that grew upon it and lay under it, as well as all the wealth and wealth-producing processes in the country, should belong to the people.

"In the last analysis, the fight between the Irish people and the British government is not alone one between two nations; it is more than that; it is a struggle between two systems of civilisation, between the feudal system of England under its present guise of industrialism and the democratic system upon which the old civilisation of Ireland was built. A vestige of that civilisation remains in Ireland today. It is growing, expanding, and the end of foreign rule in Ireland will usher in not alone a new political era in Ireland, but a new economic one as well."

A REVIEW OF IRA MILITARY OPERATIONS DURING THE PERIOD OCTOBER 27th 1982 – JANUARY 31st 1983

THE WAR GOES ON



All operations referred to were claimed in supplied statements by the IRA

FOR those staunch supporters of the republican cause who feared, however mistakenly, that the republican success on the political front last October would result in a downturn in military resistance, the IRA's performance over the three and a half months under review represents a high level of proof, once again, that its Volunteers retain the will, the resources, and the undiminished capability to wage revolutionary war in the six counties.

From the first major attack after the Assembly elections, when three RUC men died in a massive landmine near Lurgan, to the spectacular execution of loyalist multiple killer Lennie Murphy, and right up to the last operation reviewed, which saw the total destruction of an RUC barracks at Sion Mills, the IRA has signalled loud and clear that

neither the use of selective shoot-to-kill tactics against republican Volunteers, or the wholesale imprisonment of republican activists and supporters on the bribed 'evidence' of paid informers, can deter or prevent the continuation of that revolutionary war.

The IRA, in relying on the support and encouragement of the nationalist people whose rejection of the Northern state is complete, is too deeply rooted in popular resistance to be fundamentally weakened by tactics like this, and the nationalist people themselves are too wise to the changing faces (but unchanging nature) of Brit/RUC repression to become demoralised, whatever the setbacks from time to time and whatever the endless tragedies.

That lesson will undoubtedly be learned sooner or later, the hard way, by the British. Meanwhile, the war goes on.

OCTOBER

THE Irish Republican Army's first military operation after the Assembly elections in the North was to abduct and subsequently execute a UDR sergeant in South Armagh. Tragically, the loyalist paramilitary UVF were to use this act of war as a pretext for kidnapping, torturing and

finally sadistically killing a west Belfast Catholic man in a random sectarian attack.

The IRA operation took place outside the village of Markethill on October 22nd when a South Armagh active service unit captured UDR sergeant Thomas Cochrane on his way to work, and took him away for questioning. At the time of his capture Cochrane was armed with a .38 revolver.

Later that day, a civilian, 48-year-old Joseph Donegan, from the Whiterock district of Belfast, was kidnapped by the UVF as he left a social club in the lower Falls. The UVF announced they were holding Mr Donegan 'hostage' against the safe return of sergeant Cochrane.

In those circumstances the IRA's GHQ staff despatched a courier to the South Armagh Brigade ordering the soldier's release, but the heavy saturation of British and Free State forces on both sides of the border prevented the courier from making contact. Unaware of the order from

GHQ, the IRA in South Armagh executed Cochrane on October 23rd – the day after his capture – but then, learning of the kidnapping in Belfast, withheld news of his death in an attempt to buy time for Joseph Donegan.

The UVF gang, however, with apparently no intention of releasing their victim in any circumstances, tortured and then killed him on October 24th, before dumping his mutilated body in a Shankill Road entry. The following day, October 25th, the UVF struck again, this time in Armagh city, when they

gunned down and killed 47-year-old Peter Corrigan, who had been prominent in the run-up to the Assembly elections as a Sinn Fein election worker.

Shortly after the Joseph Donegan killing, the notorious 'Shankill Butcher', Lennie Murphy, was arrested and questioned by the RUC over several days. Despite overwhelming circumstantial evidence of his being behind the killing (and of more than 19 other killings) he was released without charge. However, just over three weeks after Joseph Donegan's brutal death, the IRA brought a final abrupt end to Murphy's bloody sectarian trail (see elsewhere: *Death of a Butcher*).

TYRONE UDR ATTACKS

Following the Lurgan ambush (see below), three separate attacks against members of the loyalist UDR were carried out by IRA Volunteers in County Tyrone over a five-day period at the end of October and into November, unfortunately failing to result in casualties.

At Pomeroy, on October 29th, a booby-trap bomb connected to a UDR soldier's garage door was spotted and eventually defused. Two days later, at the Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital in Omagh, Volunteers opened fire on another

UDR soldier. One bullet ripped through the sleeve of his coat but he escaped injury. Then, in the early hours of November 2nd at Coalisland, Volunteers again opened fire, this time at a UDR vehicle patrol leaving the local barracks. The ASU did not claim any hits, however.

RPG7 ROCKET ATTACK

Belfast Brigade Volunteers struck a side-long glancing blow on a Brit saracen armoured vehicle in west Belfast on October 30th, simultaneously opening fire from a number of positions with automatic weapons. The rocket failed, however, to penetrate the saracen's armour-plating on this occasion.

NOVEMBER

THE month was to open with a welcome upsurge in the frequency of IRA military operations, with no less than four separate attacks on enemy personnel by Volunteers in Crossmaglen within the space of six days — resulting in two serious injuries to a British soldier and an RUC officer. Other IRA attacks during November were to result in the deaths of two UDR soldiers and one RUC man, but

undoubtedly the IRA's most spectacular achievement was to execute leading loyalist sectarian killer, Lennie Murphy. So spectacular was this operation that the anti-republican *Irish News* concocted a weird 'exclusive' claiming the execution was the product of an internal UVF feud, rather than admit the IRA's ability to strike in the heart of loyalist strongholds, in defence of nationalists from sectarian attacks.

Tragically, November also witnessed the deaths of three IRA operational Volunteers in Lurgan, in an intensification of the RUC's shoot-to-kill policy, and the death of a woman civilian caught up in an attack on the RUC.

CROSSMAGLEN ATTACKS

A British soldier was seriously wounded on November 3rd, when an IRA booby-trap bomb concealed in a derelict building on Crossmaglen's Newry Road exploded as his patrol passed by. The large 100lb bomb hurled the soldier more than 30 feet from the point of impact.

Four days later, on Sunday November 7th, Volunteers operating from four separate firing points am-

bushed a joint Brit/RUC patrol at Mounthill, near Crossmaglen. One RUC officer suffered serious injuries in the initial burst of automatic fire, during the exchange of fire which lasted for up to half an hour, and in which several hundred live rounds were fired.

The third South Armagh attack came the next day, November 8th, only a short distance from the previous day's ambush, in the Tullyard district of Crossmaglen. Several high-velocity shots were fired at a Brit patrol but no hits were claimed.

Then, on the night of Tuesday November 9th, a Brit patrol in the village again came under fire from an IRA sniper. Three shots were fired but no hits were claimed.

SWATRAGH AMBUSH

IRA Volunteers in the South Derry village of Swatragh fired several shots at a UDR patrol around 11pm on November 8th. No hits were claimed.

RUC MAN KILLED

An RUC man was blown up and killed instantly when a booby-trap bomb placed beneath his car by the IRA detonated, as he drove away from Enniskillen's Lakeland Forum leisure centre on November 9th.

(continued on page 43)

Three RUC men killed in landmine attack

A MASSIVE 1,000lb landmine planted by the IRA's North Armagh Brigade ripped through an armour-reinforced RUC patrol car, killing its three occupants, on the outskirts of Lurgan on October 27th.

It was the IRA's biggest single attack on enemy personnel since a similarly-sized landmine claimed the lives of five British soldiers at Altnaveigh in South Armagh on May 19th 1981.

The force of the blast sent the unmarked patrol car flying 35 yards into a nearby field, and left a crater 25 feet deep and over 40 feet in diameter.

IRA Volunteers, keeping watch on an overlooking hill, had lured the RUC to the spot after anonymously telephoning a 'tip-off' that car batteries were being stolen from a council dump at Kinnego embankment, which runs along the M1 motorway by the southern shore of Lough Neagh.

The RUC patrol turned off the M1 at the Lurgan interchange and was driving along the narrow Derrymacash Road when the bomb was detonated, killing them instantly. Seconds later, two IRA Volunteers made off on a commandeered motorbike which they abandoned on the edge of the Shan-

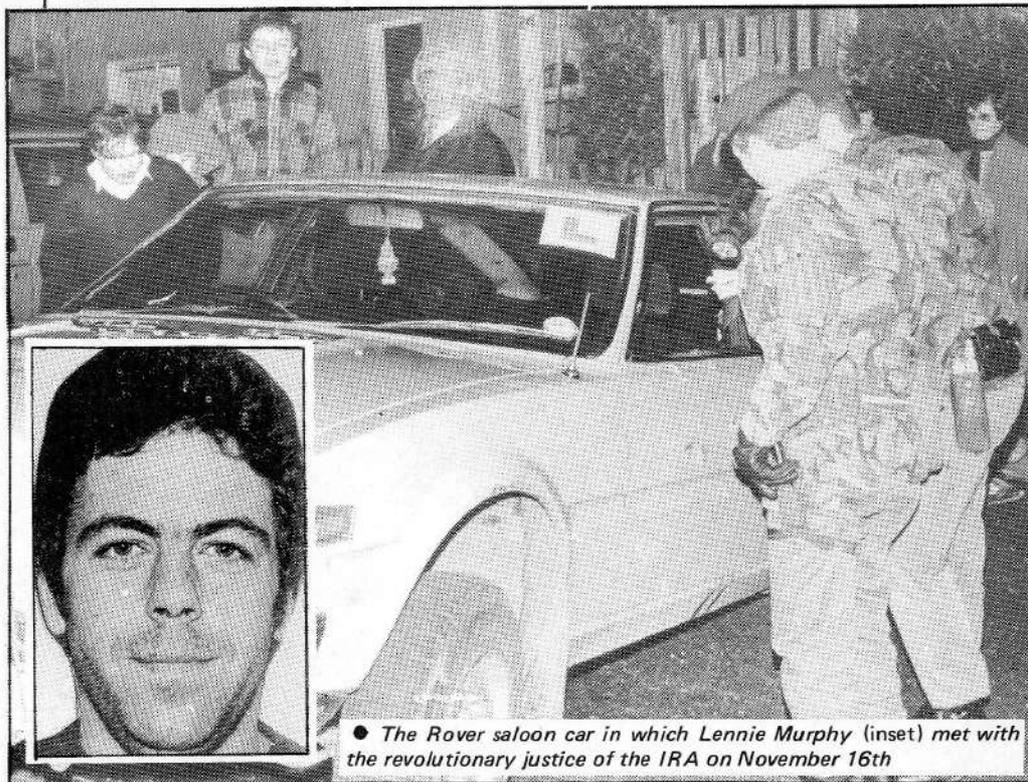


● The scene of the successful IRA landmine attack on October 27th which killed three RUC men — the enormous crater left by the explosion can be seen in the background

kill housing estate before returning to base.

One of the first on the scene after the attack was RUC Chief Constable Jack Hermon who hypocritically bleated that the patrol had been "responding to a normal call for assistance from the community" when the attack occurred. The irony of Hermon's empty

claim to command anything resembling a normal 'police force' did not fail to impress itself upon those nationalists who are only too well aware that the RUC's normality includes the shooting dead of nationalists, the indiscriminate use of thousands of plastic bullets, and blatant sectarianism!



● The Rover saloon car in which Lennie Murphy (inset) met with the revolutionary justice of the IRA on November 16th

Death of a Butcher

OF ALL THE operations carried out by the IRA during the period under review, the one which undoubtedly best illustrates the planning and expertise of its Volunteers — and also the one which brought the greatest sense of relief to the Belfast nationalist community — was the dramatic execution of the 'Master Butcher' Lennie Murphy, who led the notorious 'Shankill Butcher' sectarian gang responsible for at least 21 killings during the '70s, and who just three weeks before the IRA caught up with him had ritually murdered a 48-year-old Catholic, Joseph Donegan.

Shortly before 7pm on November 16th, three IRA Volunteers drew up alongside Murphy as he climbed out of his distinctive Rover saloon car to enter his girlfriend's house in the loyalist Forthriver Park area. The IRA's vehicle was a blue Marina van which had been bought in east Belfast some time earlier for such an operation.

Two Volunteers, armed with a 9mm sub-machine gun and a .38 Special, quickly jumped from the van and opened fire, hitting Murphy at least 20 times and killing him instantly. They then drove off, abandoning and setting fire to the van in nearby Glenside Park before making a safe escape in a car commandeered earlier in west Belfast.

Initial RUC and media speculation focussed on the belief that Murphy's

death was the result of an internal loyalist power struggle. Since his release from the H-Blocks (where he had been O/C of the UVF prisoners) in August 1982, Murphy had been ruthlessly engaged in winning back control of the UVF, and in one incident in September had ambushed and shot dead a dissident UVF paramilitary.

Although the authenticity of the IRA's claim that it had killed Murphy, issued through the Republican Press Centre in Belfast 16 hours after the execution, was accepted by the RUC, loyalist paramilitaries and the media, the hysterically anti-republican *Irish News* was so irked by the idea that the IRA had carried out an operation that was so extremely popular among virtually all shades of nationalist opinion, that it subsequently concocted a clumsy

'exclusive' story alleging that loyalists had killed Murphy with weapons supplied by the IRA (*Irish News*, 6th December 1982).

This squalid attempt, reminiscent of British army black propaganda, to link the revolutionary IRA with loyalist sectarian killers, was strenuously denied by the IRA and rejected by nationalists.

Who then was Lennie Murphy, the 'Master Butcher'? His first known victim was Francis Arthurs, from Fallswater Street, whose body was found in July 1972, almost unrecognisable from stab wounds and bullet holes. A month later, Thomas Madden from Cliftonville Avenue, was found dead, strangled and with approximately 150 stab wounds.

In September 1972, William Pavis, a 32-year-old Protestant suspected of befriending nationalists, was shot dead at his home. Murphy and another loyalist, Mervyn Connor, were arrested and charged with the killing. Connor agreed to testify against Murphy but in April 1973 he died in his cell of cyanide poisoning, having first been forced to leave a letter withdrawing his statements against Murphy, who was subsequently acquitted.

By November 1975, Murphy had formed a UVF gang that came to be known as the 'Shankill Butchers' because of its preference for ritually torturing and mutilating its victims with, among other implements, a number of butcher's knives. After Murphy's imprisonment in March 1976 for possession of weapons (although his involvement in several sectarian slayings was well known), he continued to direct other gang members — including William Moore, Robert 'Basher' Bates and a serving UDR soldier, Eddie McIlwaine — to continue the catalogue of death. At least 21 victims — mostly Catholics — were to meet grisly deaths at the hands of these maniacs before they were eventually arrested in 1978. At their trial they were given a total of 2,000 years' imprisonment, including 42 life sentences, but although they had implicated Murphy in statements, they refused to testify against him.

Immediately on his release in August 1982, having served six years of a twelve-year sentence (with full remission), Murphy set about regaining control of the UVF and reforming a murder gang on the lines of the 'Shankill Butchers'. Between August 1982 and his execution in November, he was known to have been behind the killing of Brian Smith, a UVF dissident, on September 5th, and the brutal murder of west Belfast Catholic, Joseph Donegan, who was kidnapped on October 22nd.

The killing of Joseph Donegan, however, was probably Lennie Murphy's last. For on November 16th the revolutionary justice of the IRA caught up with him, and then for him — as for his unfortunate victims — there was no escape.

Unfortunately, a young woman civilian, unexpectedly travelling in the car with him, was also killed by the force of the explosion. IRA Volunteers had watched the RUC officer arrive alone by car at the leisure centre and planted the bomb there, knowing it was his custom to leave alone. On this occasion however, he left accompanied by a staff member at the leisure centre.

Regretting the unforeseen civilian fatality, the IRA's Fermanagh Brigade reiterated the frequent warning to civilians to "stay well clear of RUC/UDR/British army personnel whether on duty or off."

UDR SOLDIER KILLED

Volunteers of the IRA's First Battalion, North Armagh Brigade, ambushed and shot dead a UDR corporal in Armagh city on November 10th. The 44-year-old soldier in the UDR's Second Battalion was getting into his car at the customs post on the Monaghan Road, around 6pm, when IRA Volunteers approached and fired several shots, killing him instantly.

GOLF CLUB BOMBED

The IRA in South Down carried out a successful bomb attack on Newry golf club on November 10th. Armed with automatic rifles, Volunteers planted the bomb at the clubhouse on the Forkhill Road and cleared the area of civilians. It detonated, as planned, 40 minutes later, causing extensive damage.

TYRONE 'NARROW ESCAPES'

A 35-year-old UDR soldier in Donaghmore, County Tyrone, was lucky to escape when Tyrone Brigade IRA Volunteers ambushed him on November 16th. The soldier was climbing out of his car when the IRA opened fire, but he managed to jump clear and suffered only slight injuries.

Two days later, the IRA in Tyrone was similarly unlucky, when a bomb it had located just outside the village of Carrickmore detonated as an RUC foot patrol passed by, but narrowly missed inflicting enemy casualties.

STRABANE AMBUSH

Elsewhere in Tyrone, IRA Volunteers had better luck. On November 17th they ambushed and wounded a UDR soldier in the town of Strabane. The 40-year-old soldier was struck by gunshots in the arm and leg as he climbed into his car outside the Adria nylon factory.

UDR COMBATANT KILLED

Volunteers of the IRA's First Battalion, North Armagh Brigade, again struck effectively against the sectarian UDR on November 28th, shooting dead a member of the regiment close to the city centre. After the attack the RUC predictably indulged in a bout of black propaganda claiming the man was a



● British soldiers outside Belfast's Springfield Road barracks following the RPG7 rocket attack on an RUC patrol on December 1st

civilian who had left the RUC three years earlier. They nonetheless omitted to mention the pertinent fact that, having done so, he went on to join the UDR!

BELFAST BOMB HOAXES

In the first of two major attacks on successive days, the Belfast Brigade IRA carried out a major exercise in disruption of the city centre on November 30th, planting two bombs and subsequently alerting the RUC to these and to a further 19 hoaxes, bringing city-centre traffic to a grinding halt and tying down enemy personnel for hours. The two real bombs were at Starline Furnishings — where substantial damage was caused — and at the Carlton restaurant, where unfortunately it was eventually defused.

DECEMBER

AT least two RUC men were seriously injured in west Belfast during the first IRA attack of December, when an IRA Volunteer stepped out from the junction of Crocus Street and Springfield Road and fired an RPG7 rocket at an RUC landrover, as it slowed down close to the entrance of the nearby RUC barracks.

The rocket scored a direct hit on the driver's door of the land-

rover but failed to fully penetrate the armoured plating. Nevertheless, all five patrol members were taken for treatment in hospital, with two known to have been seriously injured.

UDR SOLDIER KILLED

On December 2nd, Tyrone Brigade IRA Volunteers ambushed and shot dead a serving member of the UDR near the town of Coalisland. Volunteers boarded the school bus, driven daily by the soldier as a part-time job, as it came to a scheduled stop at Annaghmore crossroads and shot him several times in the head.

The Volunteers involved had deliberately delayed the attack until the bulk of the bus' passengers had been dropped off, and took stringent precautions to ensure the safety of the remaining few on the bus.

SUPERMARKET BOMBED

IRA Volunteers in Armagh city seriously damaged stock in a leading supermarket on December 3rd, in an incendiary bomb attack. The operation was carried out at Emerson's in Scotch Street and involved two small bombs. Hoax bombs in two other nearby stores ensured the maximum disruption to enemy personnel.

DERRY HOAXES

More hoaxes and more disrupt-

ion followed the next day in Derry city, where IRA Volunteers planted a series of 'suspicious' packages on board six vehicles they had earlier commandeered. In one case, members of an RUC patrol had a very narrow escape when they suddenly found the 'hoax' was in fact a real bomb! Fortunately for them, only the detonator charge exploded and there were no enemy casualties.

GUN ATTACK

More than 20 high-velocity rifle shots were fired at a joint Brit/RUC patrol outside Crossmaglen on December 5th by South Armagh IRA Volunteers. No hits were claimed on this occasion.

FATAL UDR ATTACK

On December 20th the IRA in North Armagh went some way to compensating for the shoot-to-kill deaths of six nationalists in the area in the preceding weeks, when it executed a UDR soldier in Armagh city.

The 44-year-old Catholic, who had been a member of the UDR since its formation in 1970, was ambushed as he returned home from duty at the Drumadd UDR base. On the edge of the Windmill estate, he was shot several times and died instantly.

In a deliberately ironic statement claiming responsibility for the at-



● On January 6th two members of an RUC shoot-to-kill squad were killed and one wounded in an IRA ambush in Rostrevor, County Down



● The rocket-scarred RUC landrover which was hit in the RPG7 attack in Belfast on December 1st

tack, the IRA echoed the bitterly felt rejection by nationalists of the RUC's 'version of events' after recent shoot-to-kill slayings: *"The Irish Republican Army in Armagh city claims responsibility for the shooting of the UDR soldier in the early hours of this morning. He ran through one of our roadblocks and was called upon to halt. He put his hand in his pocket as if to produce a gun and one of our Volunteers shot him in self-defence."*

MORTAR ATTACK

A few hours earlier, on Sunday night, December 19th, West Tyrone IRA carried out a daring attack on the permanent British army checkpoint at the Camel's Hump in Strabane, when mortar bombs were launched from the back of a lorry commandeered earlier. At least six of the mortars exploded in the vicinity of the checkpoint.

CROSSMAGLEN BOMBS

One member of an eight-man British army foot patrol was seriously injured, and a second Brit less seriously wounded, when they were caught in the blast of an IRA bomb, detonated by remote control as they moved along an alleyway in Crossmaglen's Rathview Park estate. Both wounded Brits needed to be airlifted to the military wing of Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast for emergency surgery following the attack, which took

place on December 20th.

Less than two weeks later, on January 1st, not far from Crossmaglen, the British army were fortunate to locate and eventually defuse a 100lb landmine which the IRA had concealed in a stone wall running alongside Finnegan's Road at Forkhill.

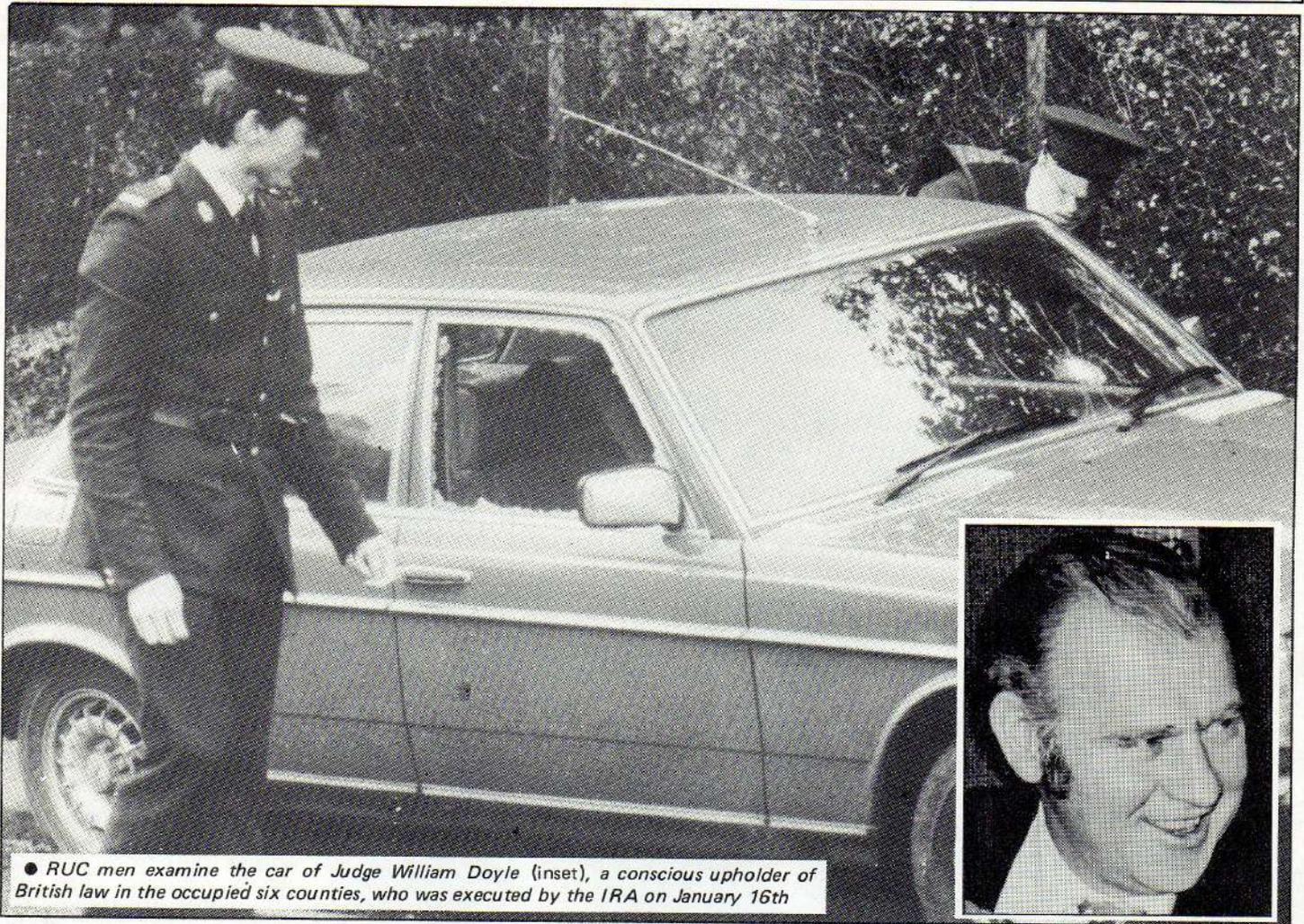
INCENDIARY ATTACKS

Shortly before Christmas, in the two-day period December 22nd/23rd, Belfast Brigade IRA Volunteers caused widespread disruption to the city centre with a well-planned series of incendiary bombs and hoaxes which kept Brits and RUC on their toes in a full alert. Two of the real incendiary bombs detonated successfully, extensively damaging Mands wholesale store in Upper North Street and a Castle Street boutique. Two other incendiary bombs, at Wellington Place and in Royal Avenue, were discovered and eventually defused.

JANUARY

THE opening of the new year was again to demonstrate the IRA's unimpaired ability to strike repeatedly, flexibly, and often in a spectacularly successful way. Among those prestigious operations was the ambush of an RUC shoot-to-kill squad

(continued on page 46)



● RUC men examine the car of Judge William Doyle (inset), a conscious upholder of British law in the occupied six counties, who was executed by the IRA on January 16th

Orange judge executed

THE IRA's execution of Judge William Doyle, a 'token Catholic' in the corrupt Orange judiciary in the North, sent shock waves of anguish and anger through the pro-British establishment in the North, and through the Catholic middle class and Catholic hierarchy who objectively assist the British presence.

Two days after the killing, Bishop Cathal Daly, who had been rather more circumspect in his criticism of recent RUC shoot-to-kill murders of nationalists, was prompted to describe those in the Irish republican tradition as representing "the gravest danger which has been created for Belfast Catholicism for half a century."

Responding to Bishop Daly's denunciation at the time, the IRA said: "Two weeks ago, we asked Bishop Daly to rule on a number of questions which we posed, and he refused to answer because he could not answer without exposing his pro-British sympathies.

"But we pose one of these questions again so that the nationalist people, who will find it outlandish that we

are the gravest threat to them in 50 years, can see who is and who is not afraid of the truth.

"We ask the bishop in plain and simple layperson's language to answer the question: Is the British presence, generally speaking, morally good for the nationalist people of the North?"

"We will see if he is as quick to answer this as he is to condemn us."

The IRA, doubtlessly not to its surprise, is still waiting for Bishop Daly's reply.

CONSCIOUS UPHOLDER

Judge Doyle, a conscious upholder of British law in the six counties, a Diplock judge who had played his full role in railroading republicans and nationalists into jail on forced 'confessions' and perjured 'evidence', died in a carefully planned and carried out attack in the middle-class Malone suburb of south Belfast on January 16th.

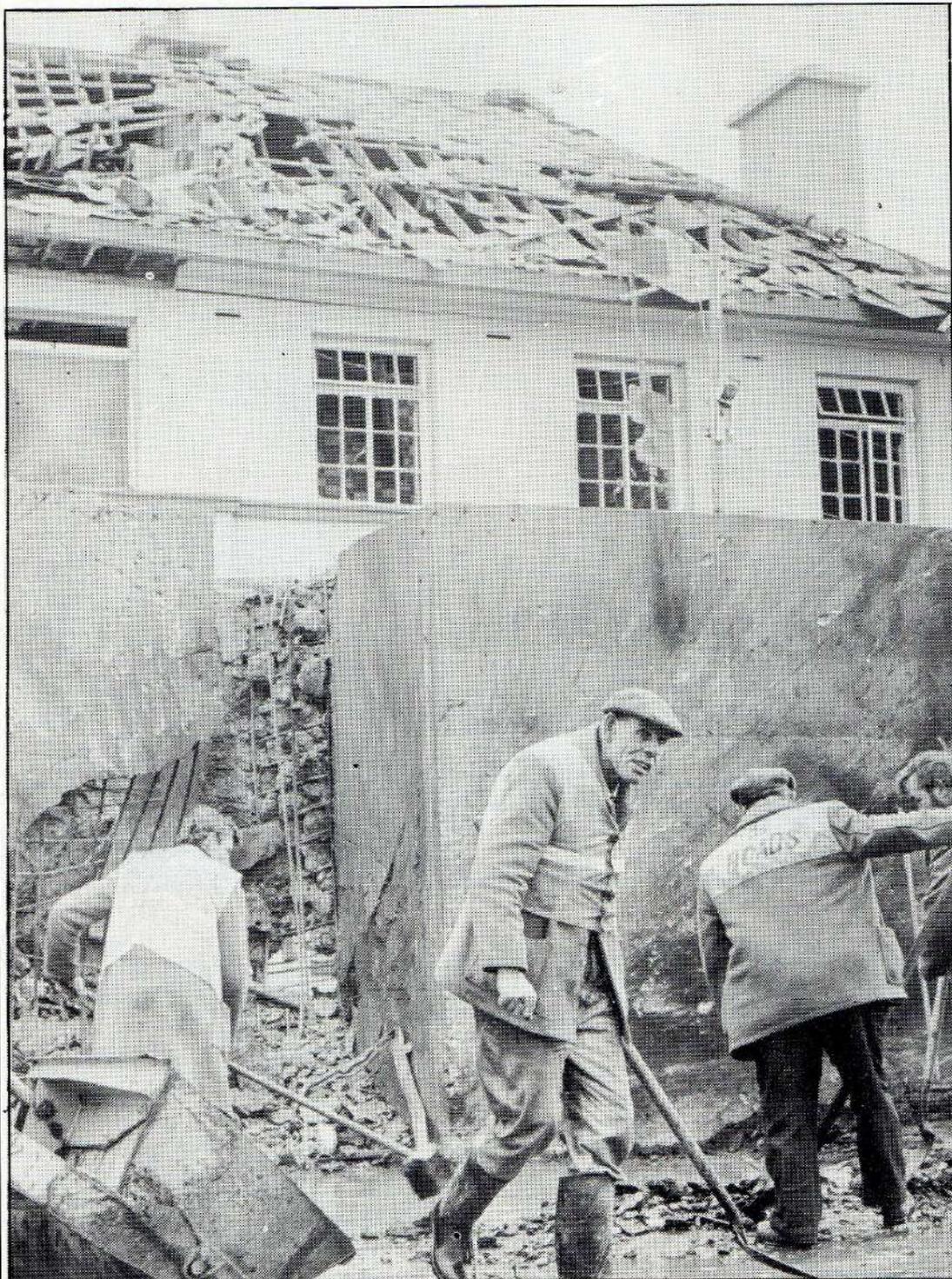
As he got into his Mercedes saloon car after leaving St Brigid's Catholic church in Derryvolgie Avenue, two IRA Volunteers, armed with a .38 Special and a Magnum, and dressed in hats and black overcoats to blend into the middle-class environment, ap-

proached and fired several rapid shots, killing Doyle instantly.

Seconds later, the Volunteers ran off to a waiting car driven by a third Volunteer, which the active service unit abandoned a short distance away before transferring to a second vehicle and returning to base.

The IRA's ability to carry out intensive surveillance and intelligence on a county court judge, normally protected by round-the-clock RUC armed bodyguards, and to mount an elaborate attack on such a prestigious target, proved a major embarrassment to the Brits in the immediate aftermath of Doyle's death, especially since security procedures were supposed to have been tightened following an earlier unsuccessful attack on Lord Chief Justice Lowry by the IRA in March 1982.

It also drew unwelcome attention, for them, to the collaborative role of some middle-class Catholics in the North, in propping up the British administration and so inevitably prolonging the war and the suffering of the nationalist people. It is a collaboration that the IRA will not gladly tolerate.



● Work begins on clearing the debris at Sion Mills RUC barracks, County Tyrone, which was devastated by a massive IRA bomb on January 27th

in County Down which left two RUC men dead, and half-way through the month, the execution of Judge William Doyle — a leading member of the Orange judiciary in the North.

RUC MAN WOUNDED

IRA Volunteers in Derry city shot and wounded an RUC officer in a carefully planned ambush on January 5th. Volunteers approached the RUC Reservist as his car drew up at Key's timberyard in the Pennyburn estate. The RUC man was rushed to hospital with bullet wounds in both arms.

RUC SQUAD AMBUSHED

Two members of an RUC

Divisional Mobile Support Unit — believed to be the specifically-trained units behind recent shoot-to-kill deaths — met more than their match when they were confronted by armed IRA Volunteers in Rostrevor, County Down, on January 6th, who shot them dead. The third member of the patrol was wounded but survived.

The carefully-planned operation followed IRA intelligence reports that a DMSU patrol was in the area. Coolly taking a calculated risk, a South Down republican active service unit drew up in a commandeered car in the centre of Rostrevor and parked conspicuously outside the local post office. When the DMSU came on the scene it predictably noticed the IRA's car, but

incorrectly assumed they were criminals on the verge of robbing the post office.

As one of the RUC patrol approached, the IRA jumped into action, wounding the first RUC member and shooting dead the two patrol members who had remained in the car, before driving off towards nearby Warrenpoint. Despite an intensive follow-up search the ASU safely withdrew to base.

MORE AMBUSHES

Following the Rostrevor operation, IRA Volunteers in County Armagh and County Down carried out three separate ambushes in the space of a day, January 11th.

An RUC Reservist was wound-

ed with a single shot in the neck, in the first attack at 8am, in the Tegnaven estate in Lurgan, when Volunteers fired several shots at him as he drove a minibus. Nine hours later in Armagh city, a 40-year-old UDR soldier suffered minor face and shoulder injuries after several shots were fired at him as he drove along Lonsdale Street. The third ambush was in Dromara, County Down, that night, when Volunteers opened fire on two RUC men as they entered the local barracks. One of the RUC men was wounded in the arm, the other escaping unhurt.

RUC MAN SHOT DEAD

Derry Brigade IRA Volunteers ambushed and shot dead a 39-year-old RUC Reservist in the predominantly loyalist Waterside district of the city on January 18th. Around 1.30pm the Volunteers approached the Nelson Drive supermarket premises owned by the Reservist and fired several shots, hitting him in the head and shoulder and killing him instantly. He was the third member of the RUC to be killed by the IRA during 1983.

CASTLEDERG ATTACK

West Tyrone IRA Volunteers mounted a brief gun attack on RUC men arriving to open security gates, early on the morning of January 18th in Castledearg. After firing several shots from automatic weapons the Volunteers sped off in a commandeered car, again opening fire — as they escaped — at the RUC guard permanently stationed outside the home of local magistrate Robert Porter.

UDR MAN SHOT

Tyrone Brigade IRA Volunteers shot and wounded a UDR soldier in an ambush about five miles outside Omagh, on January 19th. The soldier received gunshot injuries to the back and leg as Volunteers fired several shots at him as he got out of his car near his home at Killcurragh.

RUC BARRACKS BLASTED

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

The impact of the blast ripped through the fortified building shattering windows, demolishing walls and lifting the entire roof of the building from its rafters. Because of the location of the barracks, in the main street of the village close to shops and churches, a 40-minute phoned warning ensured that both RUC personnel and civilians were evacuated from the vicinity, and there were no casualties. The barracks, on the other hand, will need to be demolished. ■

AN IRISH solidarity activist reviews the factors behind the mushrooming of support for Irish freedom among French media and trade unions since the 1981 hunger-strike, and how these gains need to be sustained...

A letter from France

BY MICHELE BONNECHERE

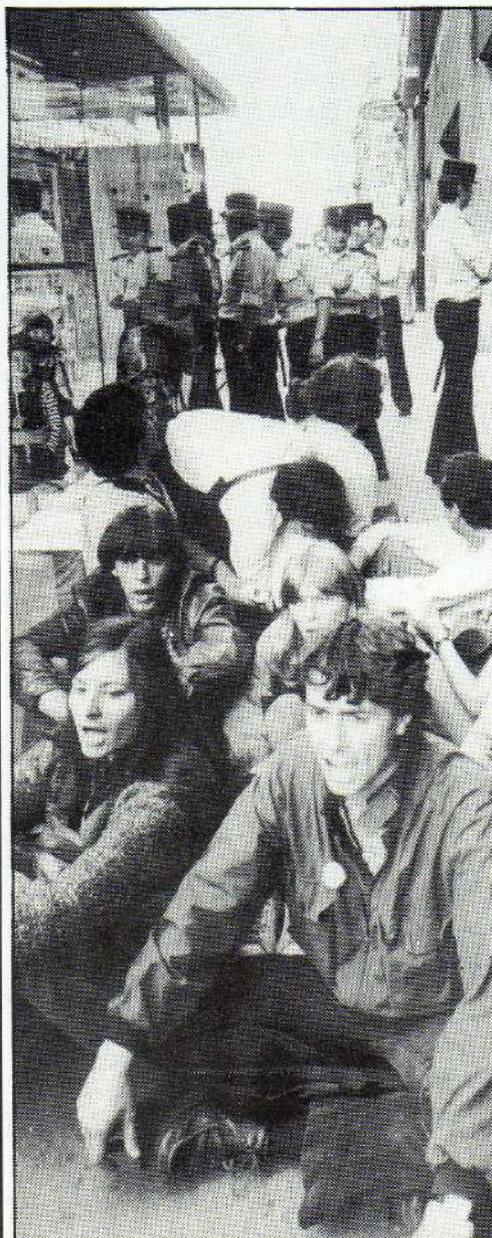
AT a terrible cost, the hunger-strike brought home to many people in France the reality of the Irish struggle. For the first time, support for the republican prisoners spread far beyond the small circle of solidarity groups, to not only humanitarian organisations, but also left-wing parties and trade unions. Unfortunately this was not sufficient to force the French government into taking a public stand. The so-called 'reason of state', and 'European harmony', won the day. Nonetheless, despite that setback, a broad movement of popular support has blossomed, and has yet to be brought to fruition.

POPULAR MOVEMENT

In November 1980, a few dozen of us picketed the British embassy in Paris. On May 5th 1981 four thousand of us were out on the streets of Paris taking part in a demonstration called by the CDPPI (Committee for the Defence of Irish Political Prisoners). On August 27th of that year, we were ten thousand, in the biggest ever demonstration organised about Ireland in France. It had been called for by the CGT (General Confederation of Labour — France's largest trade union federation). A gathering of ten thousand people in Paris, during the Summer holidays, was quite an event: it took the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last Summer to bring similar crowds to the streets of Paris.

Apart from demonstrations and pickets, many other forms of action sprang up in 1981, from many quarters.

Several elements explain the gradual development of this movement. First and foremost it was the courage and strong-mindedness of the prisoners which broke the wall of silence of the media, and touched the heart of many political activists who had experienced



● French protestors occupy the British consulate in Paris on September 10th 1981

other forms of struggle and so were able to identify with the prisoners' struggle for human dignity. Many young French people were also moved by that struggle. Moreover, the five demands, which

were very concrete and basic, and the international petition, helped to increase the awareness of the French public.

GROWING AWARENESS

A fundamental aspect of the campaign waged by the National H-Block/ Armagh Committee was that it respected people's freedom of conscience on the question of support for armed struggle. No mass mobilisation campaign can be successful unless it is built on that respect, and on trust.

Since 1972 there have been several Irish solidarity committees in France. In all fairness, they were the ones which started the ball rolling, but their efforts often met with a wall of indifference. However, as soon as the first hunger-strike started, it became clear that a new base of support was needed. It was no longer enough to circulate petitions or hold pickets with 30 or 40 people. Existing mass organisations had to be brought in, and therefore the first task was to get in touch with them. This implied renouncing elitism. For too long, solidarity with the Irish struggle had remained the preserve of small circles of activists who were convinced that nothing was to be expected from mass organisations.

For instance, organisations like the CGT which some had been saying 'would not move', and yet which became the spearhead of the support campaign as soon as trouble was taken to meet some of its leaders and to spread information on the H-Block hunger-strike with the help of rank-and-file trade unionists.

It also implied renouncing childish practices like shouting (or writing) so-called 'hard-line' slogans, regardless of whether they would be understood by the public. Shouting 'Victory to the IRA' on the streets of Paris is hardly a dangerous operation, but during the hunger-strike it was the quickest way to sabotage the broad-based support which we in France were trying to build step

by step.

SANDS' ELECTION

It finally dawned on many French people that the Irish hunger-strikers enjoyed popular support in their country. The realisation came, first through seeing the size of the H-Block marches, then through the election of Bobby Sands, and it was such that it led vast sectors of French public opinion to completely change their political analysis of the situation in the six counties. Bobby Sands' election helped them understand that what was taking place was not just prisoners suffering under a harsh regime, and resisting it, but in fact a whole people struggling for its freedom.

The nature of the support for the hunger-strikers changed. On April 16th, ten organisations sent delegates jointly to the British embassy, to present a letter of protest. Shortly after Bobby Sands' election, *L'Humanite*, daily organ of the Communist Party, started publishing almost daily reports on the hunger-strike. Those articles, and the regular coverage of *Liberation* (another important daily paper), managed to reach an important number of political activists.

This was extremely important, as the French public had been badly misinformed for years — mostly because of British propaganda, but also because of the image conveyed by a certain type of solidarity work linked exclusively to small marginal groups.

After Bobby Sands' election, the mass media could no longer link Irish republicans with those fanatical groups isolated from the population, like the Italian Red Brigades, or the former Baader-Meinhof group in Germany. The struggle of Irish republican prisoners was no longer 'just' a heroic struggle for human rights, it was a political struggle, and begged political support.

What remains in France today of this outburst of popular support for the hunger-strikers? Quite a lot remains, in spite of a lack of visible mobilisation. The sacrifice of the hunger-strikers is engraved in many people's hearts, in France too. For many political activists, the names of Bobby Sands and his nine comrades are now inscribed in the roll of honour of our collective memory, alongside those of the martyrs of the Paris Commune, and of the resistance against German occupation. There is no doubt that the basis for real political solidarity now exists.

How can it be built? What are the difficulties? Those are the questions which we must answer.

STRUGGLES IN FRANCE

Very important struggles are taking place in France at present, on social and political issues. What is carried out is



● The first anniversary of Bobby Sands' death is commemorated in France

not armed resistance, with its cortege of suffering, but the daily grind of arduous political agitation, on the shopfloor and elsewhere. The objective of those struggles is to impose anti-capitalist values. The present left-wing government of Mitterand must be supported, but also, and simultaneously, be pressurised into bringing more changes. In the face of those recent reforms — however timid — in the face of new laws extending the rights of workers, the Right is attempting to destabilise the country, and the class struggle has become more intense.

In this situation political activists have to work very hard, and cannot be expected to fight continuously on all fronts, in particular on international issues. However, there is also in France a deep-rooted tradition of international solidarity based in the working class, and the Left, for movements of liberation. How can this tradition be harnessed in support of the Irish struggle?

Solidarity work cannot be undertaken today as it was before the hunger-strike. All those mass organisations which came forward in 1980-1981 must be prompted again to take the initiative, each in its own domain. Which organisations? The political choice rests of course with the Republican Movement, but the objective basis for such choice can be stated: in France, class-based trade unionism was always the cornerstone of international solidarity because

the trade unions are the organisations best able to mobilise big numbers of people. The CFTD (second biggest trade union federation in France), very active in defence of Polish workers, has always been very reserved on Ireland, but this may change. The CGT is presently the strongest base of support. It was the only French organisation to issue a statement on the first anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands, and it is the only one which spells out its support of the right to self-determination of the Irish people as a whole. The FEN (federation of teachers' trade unions) can also play a part.

But trade unions can only establish links with other trade unions. Those trade union branches, therefore, both in the South and the North of Ireland, which are critical of the stand taken by the ICTU, and support Irish unity, should make their position known to French and European trade unions.

In return, could republican periodicals not publish, from time to time, besides articles on liberation struggles in Africa or Latin America, articles on workers' struggles in France and in Europe? Last May and June, for instance, big strikes took place in France at Citroen and Talbot car plants. For the first time, assembly-line 'slaves' gained the right to freely elect shop stewards, and won back their dignity. Their struggle, too, is an example.

Among other non-union French organisations, the Communist Party, and the Movement against Racism and



● The October 20th election of Gerry Adams, and other Sinn Fein representatives, showed people in France, as in other parts of the world, that those fighting British imperialism in Ireland enjoyed popular support

for Peace (MRAP) undoubtedly analyse the events in the six counties as a colonial war. As for the French Socialist Party, it has political associations with the British Labour Party.

OBJECTIVES

In order for big European organisations to support the Irish struggle, it is not enough to obtain the agreement in principle of their leaders. Rank-and-file members must, too, understand and support the objectives of the Republican Movement. But so far only a minority of French people do, and misinformation by the media is a serious problem. On that point, it must be said that British propaganda efforts received a spectacular blow with the results of the Assembly elections on October 20th. Widespread coverage of Sinn Fein's successes was given by the French press, and the very serious — and widely read — evening paper *Le Monde* published a long letter from Gerry Adams.

In France, the election results showed clearly that those who were fighting the Brits enjoyed popular support, and they showed all those in France who had taken part in the hunger-strike campaign in 1981 that they had been right to do so, that they had not been fooled, that Bobby Sands' election was not a 'flash in the pan'. A solidarity movement can only exist on a clear political basis, and therefore it is vital to provide information on the political

objectives of republicans.

As for the means, it must be stressed that although a few people recognise Irish republicans as revolutionaries and patriots, there also exists widespread disapproval of any action which causes injuries to civilians. A solidarity movement must be clear on what it is prepared to support. For example the Ballykelly bombing, claimed by the INLA, did untold damage to international solidarity with the Irish struggle, because it made easier the task of those who spread confusion on the theme of 'terrorism'. It is difficult to argue that a pub is a military target. It also prompted comparisons with a certain type of blind actions which took place in Paris last Summer, when bombs went off in a Jewish restaurant, and near a school — those bombings were condemned by the PLO. After the hunger-strike, after the Assembly elections, after some military operations which were well understood, the Ballykelly pub bombing appears, from France, like a total waste.

PUBLICISING REPRESSION

In order to counter black propaganda on the theme of 'terrorism', we in France must speak up about the terrorism of the occupation forces, and the repression which takes place in the six counties. The media speak about the bombs, but remain absolutely silent about everyday repression and 'routine' harassment which nationalist areas are subjected to.

It must be said however that the killing of Judge Doyle by the IRA on January 16th, far from getting the media to shed light on the Diplock court system, on the contrary provoked disastrous comparisons with the methods used by the Italian Red Brigades. While an already converted political vanguard will understand the meaning of such operations, the public at large will be none the wiser as to the way in which the courts are used by the British occupation forces. Everyday repression needs to be publicised and its political significance clearly explained.

It is true that if a solidarity group speaks up about repression in Ireland, only a few will listen. But if that group manages to bring about the situation where a big organisation denounces it, like, say, the League of Human Rights, then the media will be forced to come out. The best way to convince the working class in France, and in Europe, that a colonial war is taking place in Ireland, is by showing them what the forces of occupation are doing there, and how the people support those who resist the occupier.

As I conclude this letter, I am acutely aware of having touched on only a few of the many problems of solidarity work. Of course, the war is fought and will be won in Ireland, first and foremost. And we in France who are lucky to enjoy a more peaceful existence, are indebted to you who are fighting for freedom. ■

Alt Léirmheasa ar 'An Branar Gan Cur' le Breandán Ó Doibhlin. Clódoirí: Gilbert Dalton (luach £5.40)

Úrscéal Ultach

LE MARCAS MacDIARMADA

TURAS traenach is ea an scéal ar a fhíoraíocht, ach turas in intinn Ghaeil is ea é ar a chuma liteartha. Bíonn an t-am ag síorathrú, mar a théann an 'paisnéir eile' seo ó mhionbhaile go mionbhaile tuaithe. An dara pearsa uatha is ea módh inste an sceil: athraíonn an t-am ón aimsir láithreach go dtí an aimsir chaite agus léim mhór arís leis go dtí an faistineach.

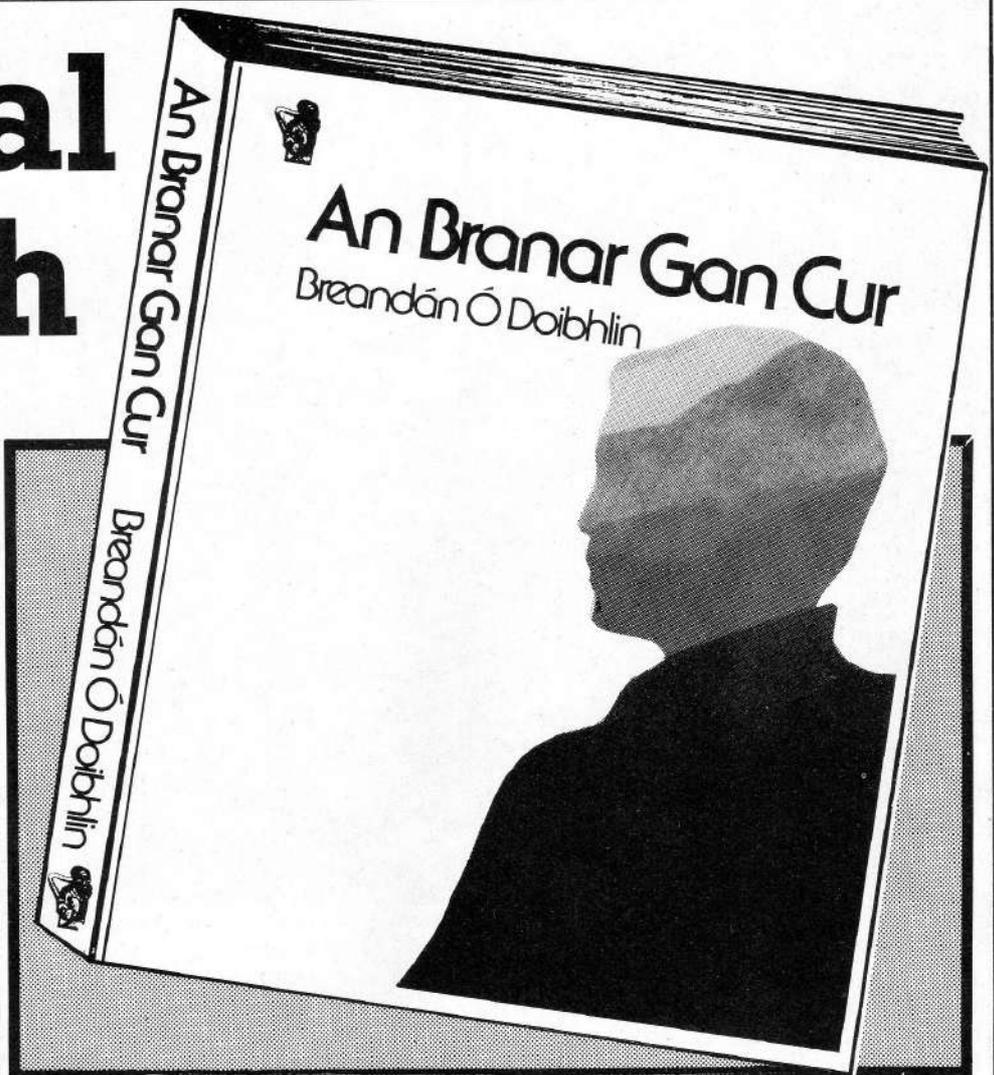
Buaileann idéalachas, gaelachas, spioradáltacht agus an tóraíocht ar lorg na fírinne agus na háilleachta an léitheoir agus é ag gabháil de Branar gan Cur Uí Dhoibhlin. Ní réitíonn sleibhte maorga Thír Eoghain agus tithe Seoirseacha Bhaile Átha Cliath, ó thús deireadh, agus is pianmhar ar an dóigh sin, beatha inmheánach Fhearghais Mhic Ghiolla Chalma.

Ábhar sagairt a bhí i bhFearghas, lá den saol, a chuaigh a dhíol leabhair Ghaeilge, ansin ina leachtóir ollscoile. Tuigtear as nach gnáth Ghaeilgeoir é ach sárGhael den seandéanamh, dalta an údair. Ón chlúdach bhrea sin le Stíofán Hope, is léir go bhfuil coimhlint in intinn an óigfhir áirithe seo, coimhlint choinsiasa. Is Meursault de chuid *Etranger* Chamus é, nó an Díreánach, cráite ag saol an Bhéarla agus ag an dream "a leagfadh cíós ar an mbraon anuas." Tá sé ar an taobh amuigh ina thír dhúchais féin, eachtrannach atá ann.

ÉAN CORR

Is iad cúinsí áirithe i stair na tíre a d'fhág Baile Átha Cliath scoite ón náisiún Ghaelach atá i dtreis sa chúla a thugann an tathair Ó Doibhlin tríd síos an leabhar. Tá an chathair sa 'Phá', neamhairdeallach, neamhgeilliúnach, cathair Joyce, Swift agus Burke í. Éalaíonn an carachtar seo de chuid na Gaeilge, éalaíonn sé aistí, ón chaolaigeantacht, ón chailleadh cultúir agus an dúchais, agus pilleann sé ó thuaidh:

"I'd'éan corr atá tú, a dhuine agus is é an trua nach dtig leat a theacht ar do chéill, ar nós an dara duine, ar nós do chara meánaosta ansiúd laistiar d'fhuinneogín na traenach eile a bhfuil páipéar na maidine tarraingthe chuige agus a shúile ag inghilt anuas na colúnacha d'fhógraí báis agus d'fhógraí díolacháin tho-éadach ban, rud is léir duit d'ainneoin a bheith píosa uait as siocair nach bhfuil ceannlíne mhór spigach ar bith ar bharr an leathanaigh agus é spréite aige chun leas na fuinneoige a ghabháil." Bheadh iontas an domhain ar do chompánach in aice leis an doras "d'ngabhá



do leithscéal leis sa ghlanGhaeilge a tháinig chun do bhéil as ucht a loirgneacha a bhualadh le do mhála anois beag."

Oidhre is ea an Doibhlineach ar Phádraig Fheilimí Laidir agus ar Éibhlín Mháire Bhidí, na cainteoirí dúchais deireannacha i dTír Eoghain, agus a rian sin le sonrú ar an leabhar. Truailíodh aising an Phiarsaigh agus an Chadhnaigh. Tá an Béarla ag brú anuas ar an tír. Tchíonn sé fógra beag in Ard oifig an Phoist, a rá "Labhair Gaeilge le do thoil." Téann sé a smaoineamh, cathair an Bhéarla í, cathair na saoirse í, tá na comharthaí ann i Ard oifig an Phoist, Halla na Saoirse, Teilifís Bhéarla, páipéir Béarla, irisí Béarla, náisiún an Bhéarla. Nuair a imíonn sé as an Ard chathair, tugann sé faoi oilithreacht — fána anam féin.

Tá siombalachas san oilithreacht, óir, cruthaíonn sé an troid idir an saol nua agus an seansaol. Bíonn ar na deoraithe teacht i dtír san fhuarchúis chathrach. Bíonn air cúraimí a ghlacadh — de na luachanna sin a chuidigh le Gaeil a dhéanamh de phóir na hÉireann riamh anall.

SPREAGADH

Cuireann na logainmeacha, cúntaisí staire agus béaloideas le taitneamh a bhaint as an leabhar agus le tuigbheáil gur saineolaí an t-údar ar na gnéithe seo. Tá bá idir é agus iad, nasctar le chéile iad. Tá Mullach an Chairn, Domhnach Chroim Dhuibh, An Bearnas, Gleann Rua, Gleann Iolar, Fionntamhnach, Beal Átha na Mallacht, Domhnach Mór, Maighe lomcláir, Carn tSiadhail, Cnoc an Tuscair, Cros Catbhineach, an Gallbhaile Cnoc na Cluith. Tá stair na mbailte fearainn

seo beo ina chuimhne agus iarrtar orainn cuimhne a dhéanamh go ndearnadh gailldú orthu ar fad ag Sasain.

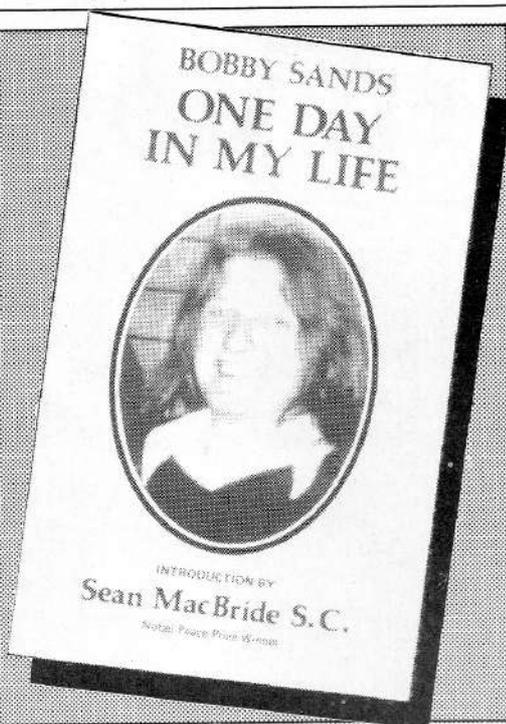
Cuimhnítear, a léitheoirí, gur Gaeltacht mhór a bhí i dTír Eoghain sna triochaidí. Bhí scéalta, seanchas, stair áitiúil beo agus iad le fáil i *Scéalta Mhuintir Loinnigh* le Éamonn Ó Tuathail, Fear léannta an t-údar, agus cur amach aige air seo. Bualann Ó Doibhlin bunfhocal Gaeilge ar gach rud, agus é le moladh dá bharr. Ní scáth fearthainne an Ghaeilge a dtig leat a fhágáil i do dhiaidh. Tá an t-údar ag spreagadh aos óg na tíre in éadan an Bhéarla. Tá an Phoblacht úr seo, sna caogaidí atá sé, bunaithe ar phrionsabal — dearmad a dhéanamh den Ghaeilge, saol an Bhéarla a ghlacadh. Tá sí cosa in airde ag marú na teanga. Saol í a gcaithfear pearsantacht Ghaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm air. Sin bunrúta an úrscéil seo siceolaíochta.

Tá órd agus eagar ar a smaointe ag Breandán Ó Doibhlin. Ábhar dóchais a fhágtar againn ann, mar lucht na Gaeilge. Ná téimis a shodar in aircís an tSasanaigh. Iarrtar orainn a chuimhniú go bhfuil an "Sagart ag paidreoir-eacht sa teanga inar briseadh ár n-altóirí." Nach truaicanta an mhaise sin don phobal Chaitliceach, Gaelach, Eireannach atá in ainm a bheith i muintir na hÉireann.

Úrscéal Ultach atá ann seo. Baineann sé le grá tíre agus le grá daonna agus is fiú a léamh ar mhaithe leo seo agus leis an deá-Ghaeilge atá ann. Molaim do chách é, ach go háirithe don mhuintir nach dtuigeann an difear go fóill idir 'Londonderry' agus Doire Cholm Cille. ■

'ONE DAY IN MY LIFE', by Bobby Sands — published by Mercier, 1982 (Price IR£2.90)

Our day will come



REVIEW BY MARTIN McGUINNESS

THIS harrowing account by Bobby Sands of one day in the life of a blanket man in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh is a story of suffering and cruelty sanctioned by the British government against naked, hungry, cold and lonely Irish prisoners who dared oppose British efforts to criminalise the republican freedom struggle.

It was to be a day, like other days, full of tension, terror, depression, hunger and cold, which began with yet another savage wing shift which, when completed, left Bobby beaten, bloodied and sore.

Bobby introduces us to "three perfect bastards", labelled simply 'A', 'B' and 'C', screws of the worst kind who make the remainder of the prisoner's day a purgatory:

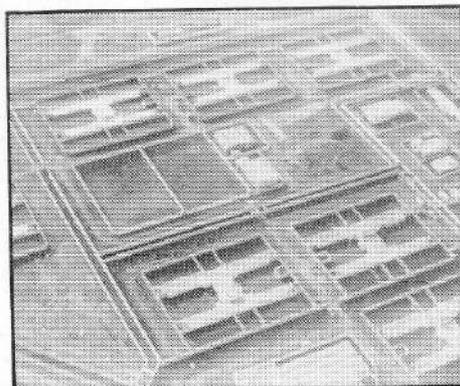
Look around you in the tomb you survive in, and you are engulfed in Hell, with little black devils in the forms of 'A', 'B' and 'C' ready to pounce on you each minute of each stinking nightmare-ridden day.

These three screws are the embodiment of British repression in Ireland. Their sole function is to systematically destroy republican prisoners using a combination of downright brutality and refined psychological torture.

Bobby's description of the beaten blood-stained bodies of his comrades being dragged by their feet along the concrete floor covered by pools of urine makes horrifying reading, as does his account of the searching of Pee Wee O'Donnell's anal passage by screws 'B' and 'C', who then proceed to beat him



● (Above) Martin McGuinness and (below) the H-Blocks of Long Kesh



severely before removing him to the punishment blocks.

Tension hung like a guillotine; no-one dared breathe aloud, fearing it would fall upon them; it was soul-destroying and seemingly endless. A scream came shrieking and hurtling down the wing.

TORMENTS

Then there is the psychological pres-

sure — the pin-pricking accumulative torments designed to drive men insane.

Bobby quietly anticipates fish for dinner, only to find that a screw had eaten the fish.

He describes a visit from his family, prematurely ended by the harassing screws while the tears rolled down his mother's cheeks.

He tells of the drone of the high-powered cleaning machine, maggots in the dinners, the degradation of the prisoners at body searches with black-uniformed screws giggling and smirking while the prisoners stand before them, naked and humiliated.

Refuge from all this was found in thoughts of birds, the Rosary, green fields, Irish lessons, a song and a smoke — which gave him the greatest pleasure because of having to smuggle the tobacco from a visit, which he regarded as a triumph over his gaolers. Pitiful little respites from endless suffering and gloom.

And then, at the end of his day, as he lies down on his filthy soaking mattress comes a remarkable, chillingly powerful thought: **That's another day nearer to victory.**

More than any other sentiment in the book this one surely explains what drove him and his comrades on in the face of tyranny:

I was proud to be resisting, to be fighting back. They couldn't defeat us outside, they are torturing us unmercifully inside their hell holes, and have failed to defeat us. I was frightened but I knew I would never give up. I would face the imperial might of their entire, torturous arsenal rather than succumb.

SHAME

This book should be compulsory reading for all the thousands of Irish people who supported the demands of the republican prisoners in Long Kesh and Armagh.

It should be read by all those respectable and privileged people who to their eternal shame acquiesced in Britain's murderous treatment of Irish men and women.

This is indeed a shocking and a disturbing book. It tells graphically of one man's day in prison, one day out of 4½ years that Bobby Sands spent in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh. It explains the reasons why Bobby and his nine comrades went on hunger-strike to their deaths, not just for the five demands, but also I believe against the illegal British occupation of Ireland — the reason why they were in Long Kesh in the first place.

By their suffering and deaths on hunger-strike they ensured that things will never be the same again.

Tiocfaidh ár lá, Bobby, our day will come. ■

A life of poverty

BY GEAROID MacARDLE

PATRICK MacGILL'S *Children of the Dead End* is, or should be, recognised as one of the minor masterpieces of Irish writing. That is to say, of Irish writing in English. Published first in 1914, it has regrettably been out of print for over 60 years. Semi-autobiographical in form, the book describes in great detail the life of poverty endured by the rural Irish at the turn of this century, and is an important work because it not only charts MacGill's own extraordinary life but provides an accurate and moving social commentary on life and work in Scotland and Ireland at that time.

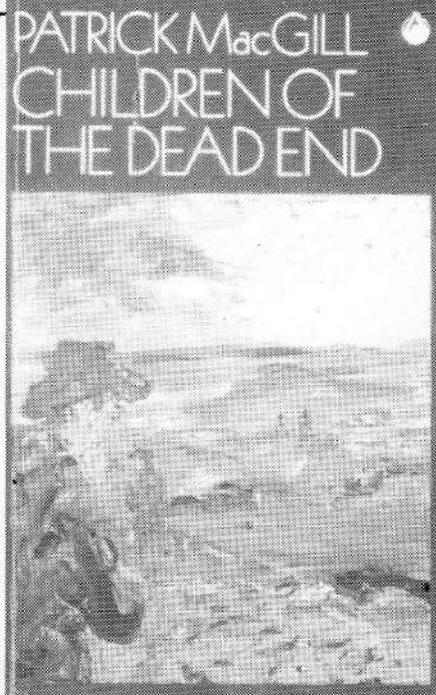
MacGill's 'autobiography' is constructed around the persona of Dermot Flynn. From life on a small, impoverished farm in the Glenties, where he nurtured a hatred for the landlord and priest, to — at the age of twelve — a hiring fair at Strabane and three years working for farmers in County Tyrone, MacGill draws his story together with considerable skill. He takes us, at the age of fifteen, to Scotland for a season's potato-picking (or 'tatie-hoking') and, from there on, the slide into the Dead End as a labourer, a tramp and an occasional navy.

MacGill was, in the end, one of the lucky ones, able to articulate the suffering and brutish conditions of those who were forced to hire themselves out to farmers. His is a story of young boys and girls, old men and women, sending money home to keep the family and dreaming of returning themselves with a fortune. Sleeping rough in cow byres and barns or bothies, we watch as some of the girls slip into prostitution in the streets of Glasgow and the men turn to drink and gambling, their dreams fading slowly into cynicism and despair.

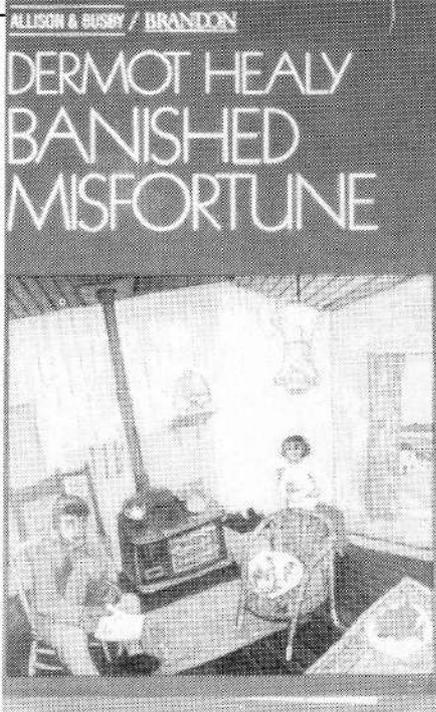
Well not really complete despair, because always the spark of humour remains alight as characters like Moleskin Joe flit across the pages, and young Flynn learns not to judge people by their appearances. How this young man was able, against such a background, to turn to what proved to be a successful literary career was in itself a considerable achievement. He finished his formal education, for what it was worth, at the age of ten, and turned some years later to reading and occasionally writing songs, while working as a navy.

Later he joined the Carnegie library and then the Socialist Party in Glasgow. From there a number of articles in a newspaper highlighting the conditions and dangers endured by navvies led him into work as a journalist, and thus in his early twenties to the writing of the first of a series of published books.

Hopefully, the republishing of this book and the recently renewed interest in his native Donegal will herald a greater recognition of Patrick MacGill and his work. In contrast to the 1920s when many of his books — he wrote a score or more — were selling 30-50,000 copies, he died in ill-health and poverty in America in the early 1940s, having



CHILDREN OF THE DEAD END
Patrick MacGill —
published by Brandon, 1982,
Price IRE4.50



BANISHED MISFORTUNE
Dermot Healy — published by
Allison and Busby/Brandon, 1982,
Price IRE3.75

slipped into obscurity some time before.

It would be both welcome and worthwhile if *Children of the Dead End* were but the first of MacGill's works to be republished.

BANISHED MISFORTUNE is the first collection of stories from the pen of Dermot Healy, whose work before this appeared in various newspapers and periodicals. The title story appears also in David Marcus' *Best Irish Short Stories* and is put together here with eleven others in a compact and enthralling sample of Healy's penmanship. Incidentally, the author, originally from what Brendan Swords describes as the ancient and historic province of Westmeath and now domiciled in London, was in 1974 and 1976 the winner of two Hennessy literary awards. Enough however of the writer! What of his writing?

The way he uses words is fascinating. On a number of occasions I found myself repeating lines aloud, the better to savour his constructions and poetic prose.

Some of his stories are complex and frustrating but because of his gift, or more correctly his craftsmanship with words, at the same time quite brilliant. They deal with widely differing themes. My favourite is *Kelly*. Others I had to read a number of times, in an effort to completely understand all the nuances and under-currents. These are stories dealing mostly with the complexities of human relationships, and Ireland features only in a number of them, with a whisper of our present difficulties surfacing — in fact they don't quite surface but loom menacingly in the depths and in the thoughts and actions of the characters — only in the title story.

At £3.75 for a slim volume, **Banished Misfortune** is fairly expensive, but then this book is one which you will enjoy reading and re-reading. It is a book to be savoured with phrases which deserve turning over on the tongue and in the mind.

McLAVERTY AND POOLBEG

MICHAEL McLAVERTY is one of the best of our Irish writers. Born in Monaghan in 1907, he was educated in Belfast and later taught there — for a period he was headmaster in St Thomas' school. In all, McLaverty has written eight novels as well as numerous short stories. Of his novels *Call my Brother Back* is the best known. Poolbeg Press has done us all a favour by reprinting a number of those — *Call my Brother Back*, *Lost Fields*, *The Three Brothers* and *In this Thy Day* — as well as the *Collected Stories*. They intend, I'm told, to republish all his works.

While this news is rather dated, I'm sure McLaverty admirers who were unaware of Poolbeg's new edition until now will find it *scéal maith*. Those of you who wish to become McLaverty admirers should try one of the above. Start with *Call my Brother Back*. You won't be disappointed. On a final lighter note, although now in his mid-seventies, McLaverty has just published his first children's book, *Billy Boogles and the Brown Cow*. ■



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THE recently published Bobby Sands book 'One Day in My Life' (see review in this issue of *IRIS*), which is presently being translated into several languages and tipped to be a world-wide best-seller, is available from Republican Publications, price £2.90 (plus 50p postage & packing).

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