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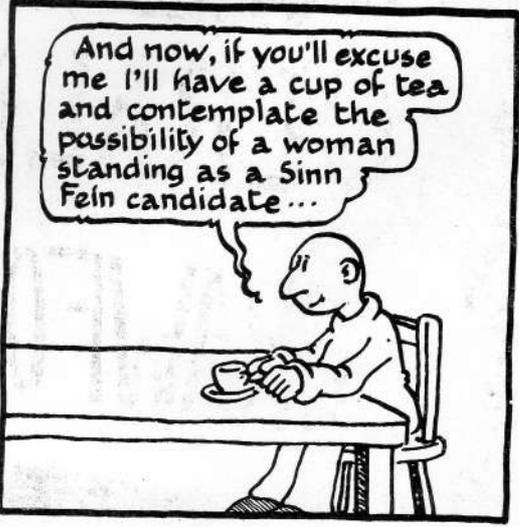
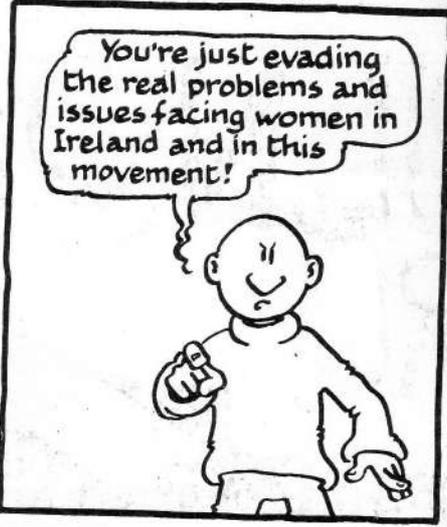
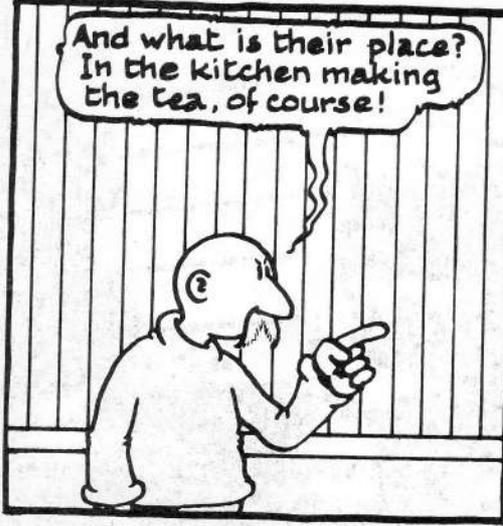
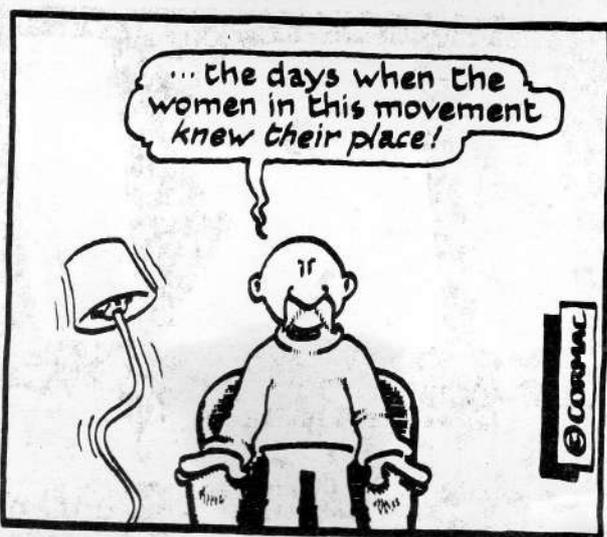
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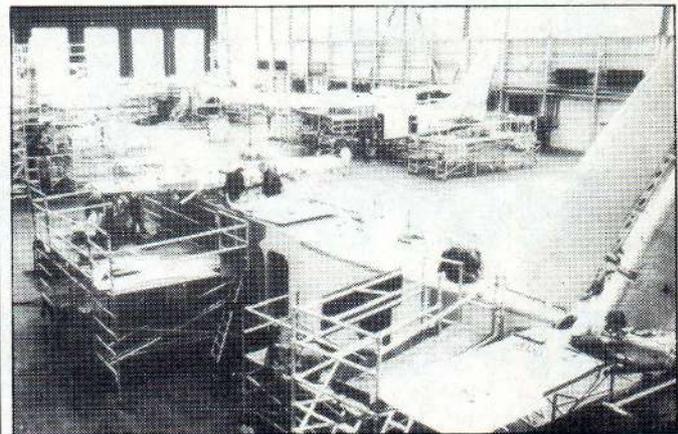
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Harmonising political and military strategies

THE EVENTS and revelations of the past several months have been too engrossing for anyone to have noticed a slightly overdue *IRIS* No. 8. Political representatives moralising. Moral leaders politicking. Crown forces acting like loyalist paramilitaries. Loyalist paramilitaries doing the work of the crown forces. All-too-mortal judges aspiring to appointments in the 'highest court'. A by-election here. One there. A Euro election. A referendum. And a plethora of visiting colonial dignitaries and royalty the likes of which haven't been seen since the 1981 hunger-strike.

All very complex. But yet, not very complicated. All of those events find their roots in the ongoing refinement of policy by the British government and the collaborative response to that policy by the supporters of the status quo in Ireland. And in the contradictions that, equally, are inherent in that policy and in that status quo.

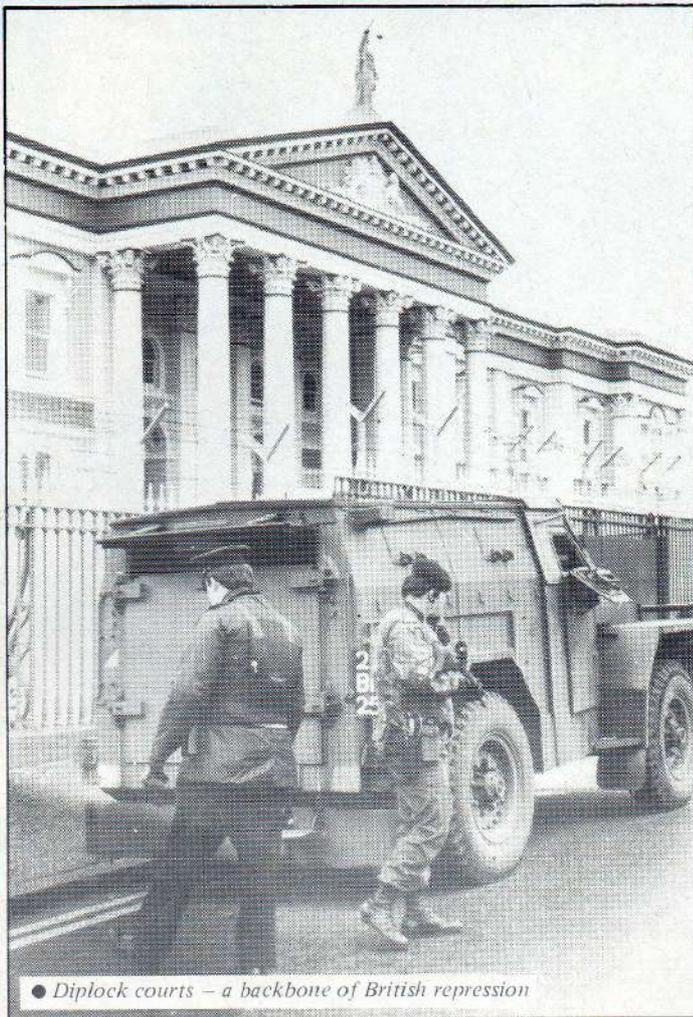
The basis of that refinement is found in the British government's attempt to 'harmonise' its political and military policies, the common denominator in those policies being the *reassurance* of unionists and middle-class Catholics, the *deterrence* of increased nationalist support for Sinn Fein, and increased *attrition* against republicans. Their common objective: the defeat of republicanism.

In the six counties — since the setting up of the Stormont Assembly in 1982 — that has meant a relative lack of political activity on the part of the British government. Attempts have,

of course, been made to cajole the SDLP into attendance — abstention having been forced on them by Sinn Fein — while the integrationists and devolutionists in unionist circles have been more or less left to sort themselves out. The threat posed by Sinn Fein's electoral advances has, naturally, forced colonial ruler Prior to be more overtly supportive of the SDLP. In an interview on November 13th 1983, he stated: "*We must do all we can to support constitutional nationalism.*" But while SDLP collaboration and participation is essential to any long-term stabilising initiative, in the short term the SDLP remains — from the British point of view — no more than the representative of a section of a minority.

The British government's attention has therefore had to concentrate itself on a political and psychological reassurance of the bedrock of its continued presence in Ireland — the unionist population. Hence the visits. First the arch-conservative herself, Thatcher. Then in fairly quick succession, the English queen's husband, Philip, her sister, Margaret, her cousin, Michael. Throw in a couple of woolly-headed labourites — Archer and Kinnock — and the British establishment's patronising contribution to solidarity with, and reassurance of, their 'fellow British subjects' is complete.

Intangible reassurance, of course. A more tangible variety would only make the already intransigent loyalists even more unlikely to comply with the Brits' long-term political designs for them. For that intransigence — confidently based on the loyalist veto — is literally so blind that it cannot recognise, in the joint sovereignty proposal of the Dublin Forum, a ploy



● Diplock courts – a backbone of British repression

to defeat republicanism by trying to make it irrelevant, and without changing the unionist status by one iota.

Thus, British political policy at present comes down to an intelligent reassurance of the loyalists while courting the middle-class nationalists and Catholic unionists.

Their parallel military task has been to 'contain' revolutionary force as part of this process of reassuring loyalists and in a manner which does not prohibit nationalist middle-class collaboration. The crown forces' backbone in that campaign has been provided by legislation passed at Westminster and implemented by the Diplock court judges.

Deterrence – or at least so the theory goes – comes in the form of savage sentences doled out on the fabricated evidence of paid perjurers – *Kafkaesque* at its best. And for the undeterred, execution by crown forces in circumstances which are credible or are made to look sufficiently credible to salve the middle-class conscience and prevent its active condemnation in the form of a withdrawal of political co-operation.

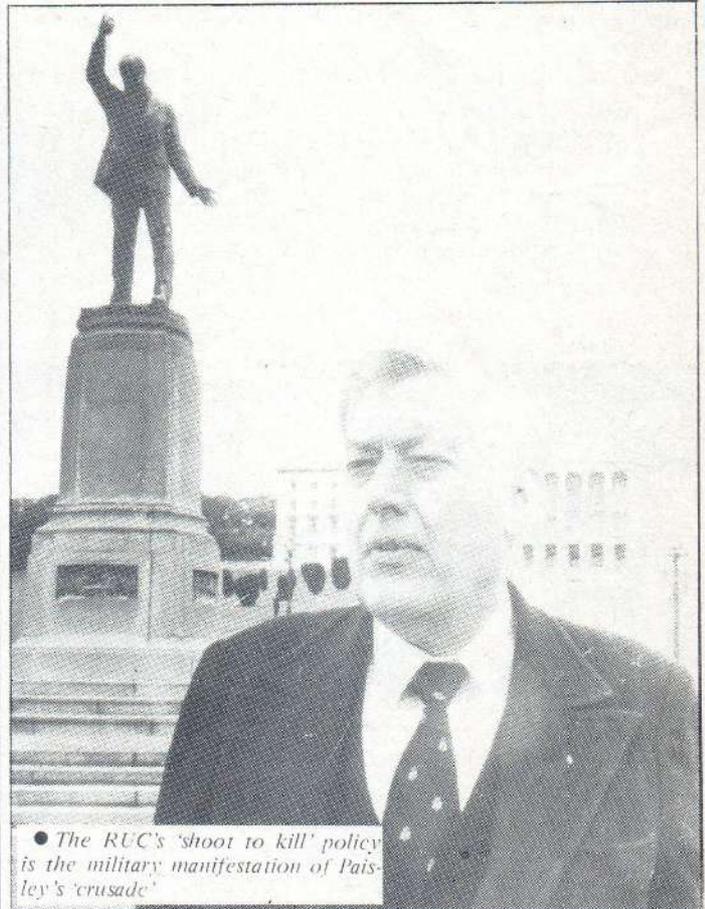
But, because of the 'low intensity' nature of the struggle in the six counties, all operations (both IRA and Brit operations) have the potential for minute scrutiny by the media and the population, even a media which is favourably disposed to the British government. That is when some of the contradictions appear. The baker's dozen of RUC/UDR butchers who have appeared in the Diplock courts this year charged with murdering nationalists hardly reflect the 'harmonisation' of politico-military policies needed to suppress militant republicanism. Even Seamus Mallon of the SDLP finds himself forced to condemn their activities.

Nor indeed do the revelations made by former British intelligence officer Fred Holroyd assist that 'harmonisation'. His disclosures of the direct involvement of British army personnel in murder, blackmail, and officially-sanctioned cross-border operations echo strongly the covert involvement of British intelligence (who, at the very least, had foreknowledge)

in the attempted murder of Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams and several other members of Sinn Fein in March of this year.

But the Diplock judges know the judges' rules where crown forces are concerned. On-duty murders will be acquitted. 'Off-duty' murders – with due consideration given to the strains of the job etc. – will be convicted. "The law," after all, says Kitson, is no more "than a propaganda cover" for the activities of the crown forces.

But from that contradiction inherent in the double standards of legal practice in the North – the inevitable deviations from the attempted politico-military 'harmonisation' – arises a basic political contradiction. The RUC/UDR perpetrators of the 'shoot to kill' policy are the murderously concrete embodiment of those who symbolically waved their gun licences on an autumn hill at the behest of Ian Paisley a few years ago. At least Roy Mason's murderers attempted to set up beforehand a seemingly credible set of circumstances for their murderous activities – even if 50% of their victims were civilians. The zealots of the RUC, who now command 'primacy over security', are even more innovative. They kill first and only afterwards bother to create 'credible' circumstances. They number themselves in deed, if not also on the ballot paper, with the 230,000 loyalists who voted for Paisley on June 14th.



● The RUC's 'shoot to kill' policy is the military manifestation of Paisley's 'crusade'

HOWEVER, the British government can find little solace in the outcome of the European parliament elections. Paisley's vote was too big – an indication that the British government will never be able to gather about it enough nationalist and unionist middle-class sycophants with sufficient influence to bring about the political situation which its long-term interests require.

Even if the OUP regains its majority percentage of the unionist vote in future elections, that 230,000 will stand rock solid, guns and all, with Paisleyite loyalism in any perceived 'constitutional crisis' in the future. And the loyalist siege

VIEWPOINT

mentality requires little provocation to perceive a 'constitutional crisis'.

That is the barrier to any future initiative the Brits now have in mind which bases itself on an agreement between Hume and pragmatic unionists within the OUP who realise that the old Stormont is gone forever.

Nor can there be any substantial satisfaction in the Brits' camp with the 151,000 votes gained for John Hume. Despite the smugness displayed by some members of his party – some indeed became quite overtired and emotional – the vote was not an SDLP party vote which can be maintained. Rather it was a conglomeration of several votes – the John Hume vote, the SDLP vote, the combined Catholic unionist vote which previously voted Alliance and Fitt, as well as a simple anti-Sinn Fein vote. In other words, a vote which cannot possibly be sustained outside a Euro election, on even a short-term basis, by any individual or party.

The Sinn Fein vote in the North did not, of course, meet the expectations of many. But as Gerry Adams commented in a recent AP/RN interview: "I consider it a victory that our vote (percentage) held, that it is a republican vote, clearly anti-imperialist and anti-F.E.C, a republican vote as opposed to a nationalist or a Catholic vote"; and importantly, "that it is not going to fluctuate, that it can be built upon."

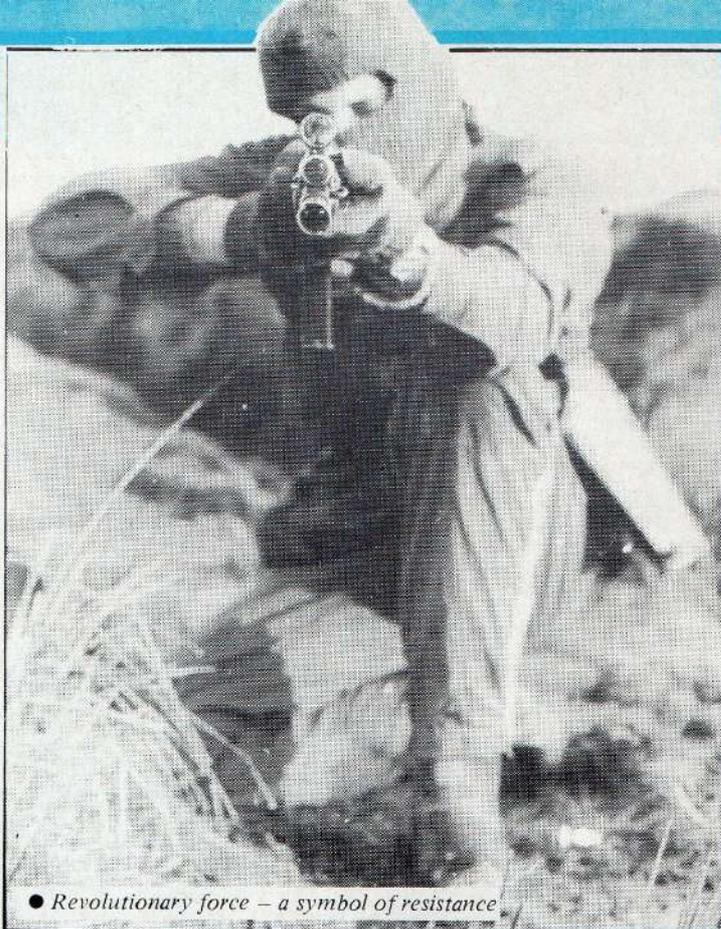
Ninety-one thousand votes are a substantial base on which to build and it is no boast to state that Sinn Fein is the only party with the potential to expand both its organisation and its share of the poll. Hume's vote, with its several inherent contradictions, can only diminish. The unionist vote has been consistent since the inception of the Orange state, while the DUP vote itself, by its very size, must force the Brits into either ignoring it (a wholly unlikely proposition), or into an over-concentration on their repressive military policy with the attendant erosion of the balance which is a vital ingredient of politico-military 'harmonisation'.



● A substantial platform to build on

ALL THIS is not to suppose that republicans can merely sit back and wait for British repression to increase republican popularity. Such support is always transient, and eminently poachable by verbal nationalists and verbal republicans.

Adams correctly pinpointed Sinn Fein's Euro-vote as 'ideologically sound'. Later, in the same interview, he went on to say: "But there is another factor in our election results, and that is that there are a number of people who, while they voted for us in June 1983, may not have been able to tolerate some aspects of IRA operations. I think it is fair to say that there are varying degrees of tolerance within the nationalist electorate for aspects of the armed struggle. What we took out... for Danny Morrison was a straight republican vote. What we failed to take out was the vote of those nationalists, who, while they voted Sinn Fein in June '83, as I said, were fiercely



● Revolutionary force – a symbol of resistance

targeted by the Catholic hierarchy, the most powerful political force in Ireland, by the media, and they themselves may have had misgivings about IRA operations in which civilians were killed or injured. I think there is a need to refer to what I said at the 1983 Ard Fheis. That is that revolutionary force must be controlled and disciplined so that it is clearly seen as a symbol of our people's resistance."

The success of our struggle depends entirely on how it is perceived by our people. As Robert Taber correctly says in his book on revolutionary warfare, *The War of the Flea*: "The population is the key to the entire struggle." Certainly there are sections of the Irish population who can never embrace Irish republicanism because its socialist republican ideals run contrary to their vested interests. But that does not apply to the vast majority of the population.

As in all struggles, the strategy of one of the protagonists determines the strategy of the other. Republicans too, like the Brits, need a 'harmonisation' of politico-military policies. One which, unlike theirs, minimises contradictions. In the six counties, Sinn Fein has defeated the major British strategy of a decade or more – the attempt to politically isolate the Republican Movement. But to be successful in its objective of Irish reunification that isolation has to be broken on an all-Ireland basis.

In the twenty-six counties, isolation still remains the major policy tenet of Leinster House politicians. Sinn Fein's electoral advances have only served to harden their endeavours in that direction. In the wake of Sinn Fein's electoral advance in the Dublin Central by-election last December, the Coalition government went on the offensive.

Their crude tactic was to attempt to portray Sinn Fein members as political and social lepers, Brookeborough style: "wouldn't have one about the place". Ironically, the smart caused by Christy Burke's 7% poll in that election, pushing the Labour Party into fourth place with 6%, caused them to target Sinn Fein's democratically elected members of local councils.

The excuse extended for this redefinition of democracy was the unfortunate deaths of a Free State army soldier and a garda outside Ballinamore in December.

The 'democrats' of the Coalition government – unofficially to begin with, then officially as of February 20th – would



● Elected representatives like Eddie Fullerton have been excluded from council delegations

henceforth have no truck with any local council delegation which included a Sinn Fein representative.

In quick succession Free State ministers refused to receive delegations from Buncrana, Longford, Gorey, Galway and Leitrim until the Sinn Fein representative was ushered out or left. Free State army units and bands were barred from participation in St Patrick's Day parades where Sinn Fein representatives were present on the reviewing stand.

Sinn Fein's vice-president, Phil Flynn, the acting general secretary – now the elected general secretary – of the largest local government union in the Free State, was also unsuccessfully targeted in a witch hunt of Sinn Fein personnel which would have done credit to Senator Joe McCarthy. Suggestions



● Events at Ballinamore were cynically manipulated by the Free State government for repressive ends

of proscribing Sinn Fein received Charles Haughey's unconditional support. We even had the revolting spectacle of Coalition minister Patrick Cooney calling for a moral ban on Sinn Fein from the Catholic hierarchy, and the public rebuking of Cardinal O Fiach for failing to oblige in sufficiently absolute terminology.

The use by the Free State establishment of the two unfortunate Ballinamore deaths as the pretext for this witch hunt is an act of consummate political hypocrisy. It is the panic reaction of political bankrupts who fear the potential for radical change which exists in a rejuvenated and relevant Sinn Fein organisation throughout Ireland. That panic will not be lessened by the results of the Euro election in the twenty-six counties. Given the dismal Labour Party showing, it might even become paranoia.

Overall, Sinn Fein gained 54,672 votes in the Free State, representing just under 5% of votes cast, and outstripping the Workers Party by over 6,000 votes. On an all-Ireland basis the Sinn Fein total of 146,148 votes represents 8.09% of the entire poll. A healthy basis on which to build for the local government elections throughout Ireland next year. But the major advance for Sinn Fein is that, despite Section 31, the political witch hunt, Special Branch and crown forces' harassment and intimidation, and Bishop Cahal Daly's instruction not to vote Sinn Fein, the political isolation is being broken throughout Ireland.

UNDOUBTEDLY Leinster House will continue to attempt to develop its policies and actions to meet the mutual needs of the British government and the Free State parties in their efforts to maintain the status quo.

Taking his strategic line from the Brits, Garret FitzGerald has taken the step of attempting to woo what he perceives as 'moderate' unionists into an alliance with the SDLP. In an effort to retrieve something from the moribund Forum report he has delivered via the unionist *Belfast Telegraph* – a patronising message to Northern unionists. As in the Forum report itself, British army, RUC and loyalist paramilitary murders and repression do not exist, only 'IRA terrorism'. The 'unitary state' option is kicked out the window. Lavish praise is heaped on the OUP's *The Way Forward* document which proposes for Northern nationalists what the English Queen Victoria's patronage did for Scottish culture and nationalism, plus a few salaried positions for the SDLP.

FitzGerald continued: "...We have the will to co-operate with the people of Northern Ireland and the British government in a common endeavour to root out terrorism and to reconcile the conflict of identity by accepting in an adequate way the equal validity of the nationalist and unionist identities." At rock bottom what FitzGerald is suggesting is a further dilution of even the 'joint sovereignty' proposal outlined in the Forum report. 'Joint authority', meaning 'joint security', is the goal, and both he and the British government are still trying to float a variation – but with a similar crew – to that which the loyalists scuppered in 1974. He concludes: "Let me... take this opportunity to appeal to all those, North and South, who genuinely seek peace and stability above anything else... to recognise that North and South are interdependent partners in the vital search for peace and stability."

It's not that FitzGerald and Thatcher are so unintelligent that they do not fully recognise the unbending nature of loyalism. Quite the contrary. But to confront it means a united Ireland – a state in which their interests cannot be guaranteed. At the end of the day, that British inability to negotiate pragmatically with loyalism, even while it professes its 'loyalty', is the contradiction that cannot be harmonised.



SHORTS-FEA:

A union of convenience

IN THE MIDST of a crumbled Northern economy, the recent success in gaining lucrative commercial contracts by one Belfast company – the planemakers Shorts – has been heralded as cause for optimism among the six counties' unemployed. Behind this illusion, however, lies the reality of an employer that has one of the worst records for sectarian discrimination in employment anywhere in the North. By far the most prestigious of its contracts (which have included orders from Aer Lingus) was the US airforce deal finalised in March, only after intense lobbying on Shorts' behalf by the British government, loyalist politicians, John Hume and the much-discredited Fair Employment Agency.

Under pressure, in the wake of gaining the contract, for its continuing failure to recruit Catholics, Shorts announced – on June 25th – that it was considering opening a further factory site, possibly on the former De Lorean site at Dummurry, in a gesture of 'affirmative action' to increase prospects for Catholic employment within the company.

However, Patrick Dempsey has been looking at Shorts' recent track record in the field of 'equal opportunity', and at the FEA's ineffectuality. He concludes that fair employment opportunities for Catholics will remain a pipe dream in a company that remains almost as intractably sectarian as before.

THE clinching by planemakers, Shorts, of an American airforce order worth potentially £460 million has restored the aroma of success to this East Belfast bastion of sectarian employment, despite repeated exposures of its overwhelmingly loyalist workforce.

Sir Philip Foreman, managing director of Shorts since 1967 and now also chairman, described the news earlier this year that the contract had finally been signed, after months of speculation, as "the most significant order the company has ever received" and "a tremendous boost to Shorts, to Northern Ireland and to Britain as a whole."

To secure the contract a tremendous and protracted struggle was fought, not only against rival manufacturers, CASA of Spain (which already had strong links with the American aviation concern, McDonnell Douglas), who appeared to



● Shorts director, Alex Roberts, pictured with Aer Lingus executive David Kennedy, on the completion of a £7 million contract in March

be favourites on economic grounds, but also against the opposition of groups like the Irish National Caucus and Noraid who argued that to grant Shorts the contract would contravene the spirit of US anti-discrimination employment codes.

Foreman himself subsequently admitted that Shorts would not have won the contract, had it not been able to use a report issued by the Fair Employment Agency in Belfast – which confirmed Shorts as an 'equal opportunity' employer – to refute the allegations made against it. Already the largest manufacturing employer in the North with 6,000 workers, Shorts now say they expect to employ a further 600.

To the uninitiated, the readiness with which the FEA co-operated with Shorts in helping the latter to win an internationally prestigious contract might appear surprising, in view of Shorts' own refusal to co-operate for five years with the FEA's investigation into employment practices in the Belfast engineering industry in the late '70s. The refusal of Shorts, and other firms involved, resulted in the planned *three-month* enquiry in 1977 dragging on for a full six years, and even then being substantially modified to ensure that criticisms by the FEA fell far short of findings of outright discrimination, despite all the statistical evidence to the contrary.

So contemptuous was Shorts of the FEA that it refused right up until 1981 to sign the FEA's 'declaration of a principle of intent' (a pledge not to discriminate), and only finally did so after threats were made to raise the matter in the British House of Commons. Again it was only under threat of legal action that Shorts eventually agreed reluctantly to accede to the FEA's demands for

an enquiry. Even then, they attempted to charge the FEA £2,700 for their co-operation in providing statistical information about their employment patterns.

IT seems quite likely that Shorts only modified their response, insofar as they did at all, because by 1981 they had got wind of the possibility of a US defence contract, even though Foreman has claimed that hard negotiations with the Pentagon didn't start till June 1982.

The FEA's enquiry into Shorts, although a limited affair hampered by internal recriminations within the Agency itself, did confirm that in 1978 only six out of 96 apprentices recruited were Catholic, and that only between 3% and 5% of its skilled workforce were Catholics.

This was no mere legacy of earlier discrimination, since in 1977 alone Shorts had recruited some 800 *new* workers. The report further found that Shorts regularly failed to advertise vacancies throughout the whole community, and that Catholic school careers officers regarded approaches to Shorts as 'a waste of time'.

None of this less-than-palatable side of Shorts' employment practices, of course, formed part of the British embassy's submission to the US Congress on the company's behalf. Instead, as negotiations intensified, Shorts and the British government approached the FEA to provide the company with "a clean bill of health". The FEA agreed without demur, and contradicted even the logical conclusions of the evidence contained in its original report, in meetings held with American delegations from the US Congress and the trade union confeder-

ation AFL/CIO sent to look into the Shorts controversy.

The seven-point programme actually agreed to by Shorts to allay American doubts, and widely circulated by the British ambassador in Washington, Oliver Wright (the senior MI6 officer serving in the North in the early '70s), was remarkable only for its blandness and ambiguity. Essentially, Shorts agreed only to monitor, at six-monthly intervals, the job *applications* it receives, to "continue (sic) by all practical means to encourage job applications from Catholics", and to "continue to use the 'equal opportunity' employers symbol". Hardly a full-blooded 'affirmative action programme', as the term is generally understood in American industrial circles, but in the circumstances sufficient to secure the defence contract (from a US government only too pleased to demonstrate its support for British policies in the North).

WITH such continuing deceptiveness by Shorts there will be little surprise if recent promises of jobs for Catholics at Shorts, perhaps provided through a proposed 'training site' on the outskirts of West Belfast, are treated with more scepticism than optimism.

What is certain is that the FEA has been used, both by the British government and Shorts, once again, as a political dishcloth to wash clean the reputation of one of the North's most notorious sectarian employers. The Agency itself is now scheduled to be the subject of 'critical international scrutiny' by a US delegation this year. Shorts' fortunes may now be flying high, but the credibility of the FEA has further nosedived.

As Inez McCormack, a trade union appointee to the Agency's board, said: "Shorts' anxiety to get the US order gave the FEA the best opportunity they will ever have to persuade both management and workers to accept a real affirmative action programme. They seem to have thrown it away. The Agency has been used by those who have power to effect change as a political excuse for not doing so. By letting employers feel that it can be used to say 'there's no problem here', the Agency itself has become part of the problem."

More indicative of the reality that there is no real change in Shorts – despite the honeyed promises of its management and its coy acceptance by the FEA – is the fact that this July 12th, on the shop floor, the Orangemen's red, white and blue bunting was flying just as usual ■

SPECIAL FOCUS

Women and the republican struggle

Rita O'Hare, the director of the Sinn Fein Women's Department, surveys the progress it has made since the last Ard Fheis. Then, in the following pages, a number of articles prepared by individual members of the department contribute to a special focus on women's affairs in this issue of IRIS.

SINN FEIN Women's Department has been in existence now for four years. The development of the department has been steady, with the involvement of women mainly in the urban areas of Derry, Belfast and Dublin.

The last year and a half has seen a significant breakthrough with, for the first time, many women from rural areas joining the department. Women's committees have now been set up, for instance, in Monaghan and Dundalk, and a conference organised by women from these two areas was held in Dundalk earlier this year.

The excellent papers presented to this conference raised the issue of rural women, and the particular problems that they face. With this involvement of more women from different backgrounds and experiences has come a balance in the Women's Department that is vital if we are to truly represent Irish women.

When the department was first set up, it was viewed with a certain amount of suspicion by some Sinn Fein women. There was the fear that an autonomous group of women within Sinn Fein would become separate from the main body of the organisation, and that their activities would not reflect or promote a republican viewpoint.

This fear has however been largely dispelled because it is clearly seen that



● RITA O'HARE

members of the Women's Department are involved in all the other work of Sinn Fein. They work in the advice centres, work for *An Phoblacht*, staff the Sinn Fein offices, work in their cumann, and are active in every campaign, protest and election. As wives, mothers and sisters, and friends of prisoners,

they do the heart- and back-breaking work of prison visits. They bring up families, often alone, struggling to live on a pittance without complaint or recrimination.

THE work of the regional women's committees is dictated by local priorities. Sinn Fein women in Dundalk, for instance, were prominent in the fight to stop the closure of the maternity unit at the Louth Hospital, and in Cork Sinn Fein women opposed the closing of the maternity unit in Bantry. In Belfast, Women's Department members continue to support the Women's Centre on the Falls Road in every way possible. The committee there also organises the International Women's Day events that attract women from all over the country - and abroad, culminating in the annual picket at Armagh prison.

From Belfast also, information about the reality of life under British rule for women is brought to women in Britain. Two Belfast women spent a week in London recently, attending meetings every day, talking about their own experiences of life in Belfast. The tour, organised by women from the Labour Committee on Ireland, was also used to highlight strip-searching in Armagh prison.

In Derry, in spite of some teething problems, the committee is meeting to discuss and prioritise areas of work.



● On the march in Navan – Sinn Fein women are at the forefront of every campaign

Dublin's committee has been active in the area of social welfare, and last year brought out a pamphlet informing people of their rights to social welfare payments. It was distributed at dole offices and health clinics. A follow-up to this was a special information pack for prisoners' wives, available from the Dublin committee and from the Dublin POW office.

NATIONALLY, the Women's Department has made links with other women's groups and organisations. Two members of the Dublin committee are on the committee to publicise the African Year of the Woman, sponsored by the Anti-Apartheid Movement. The department is also affiliated to the Association for the Improvement of Maternity Services, and local members are active in demanding improved services in ante- and post-natal care, and health services generally.

The Armagh women prisoners are a national priority, and the Women's Department has organised a conference on the conditions in the prison and particularly on strip-searching, scheduled for the end of July.

Women from the Department have travelled to national conferences in several countries. For instance, two women – one from the Women's Department, one from the POW Department – were on the delegation to the Labour Party conference last year in Britain, speaking at the fringe meetings there.

The Women's Department has also prepared information packs, relevant to the 26 counties, on health, social welfare, unemployment, housing and drug abuse, and is taking on the job of disseminating the information to Sinn Fein community and advice workers.

Two important resolutions were passed at the 1983 Ard Fheis. One was that the department's name should be changed from the 'Department of Women's Affairs' to the 'Women's Department', and the other guaranteed a quota of eight women on the Ard Chomhairle.

The name change was important as it emphasises that the department is not concerned only with women's issues but is actively involved in all aspects of Sinn Fein work, though of course women's issues are of primary importance. The second resolution is a recognition of the fact that although women have advanced in Sinn Fein, with increasing numbers of women

joining the organisation and many women in positions of responsibility, they still are not represented at leadership level in numbers reflecting their work and ability. Because of the years of conditioning – conditioning that enforced an attitude on women that their proper place was in the background, supporting not leading – women still have little confidence in themselves and so don't put themselves forward for important positions with the ease that men do. The quota was necessary to push women forward, to encourage women to see themselves as being just as capable, intelligent and positive as men.

The Women's Movement has done much to encourage that confidence, and our links with other feminists have in the main been positive ones. However, there is a distinct difference. Republican women realise that the fight for women's liberation can only be won for all women through the fight for freedom from imperialism. There are still many feminists who regard the republican struggle with indifference, if not hostility. As well as making the policies of the Women's Department increasingly relevant to the women of Sinn Fein, there is a lot of work yet to be done by republican women in showing the necessary connection between both struggles. ■

WOMEN IN SINN FEIN

IRIS interviews two Sinn Fein women who have each made their mark on the republican struggle in an outstanding way. *Gretta Reel*, aged 82, has been a tirelessly active worker for the republican cause throughout the present struggle and remains a committed member of the Clonard/Colin cumann in West Belfast. She was involved in the establishment of the Sinn Fein women's department in Belfast and supported the initiative which led to the opening of the Falls women's centre

two years ago. *Mary McTear*, aged 26, in little more than three years of involvement in Sinn Fein, has already made her mark, first as the party's organiser in County Mayo and more recently as a Sinn Fein candidate in the EEC elections — the first woman to represent Sinn Fein in a national election since 1927. Mary is currently facing charges before the Special Criminal Court in Dublin, in connection with assisting three men allegedly involved in the IRA's kidnapping of Don Tidey.

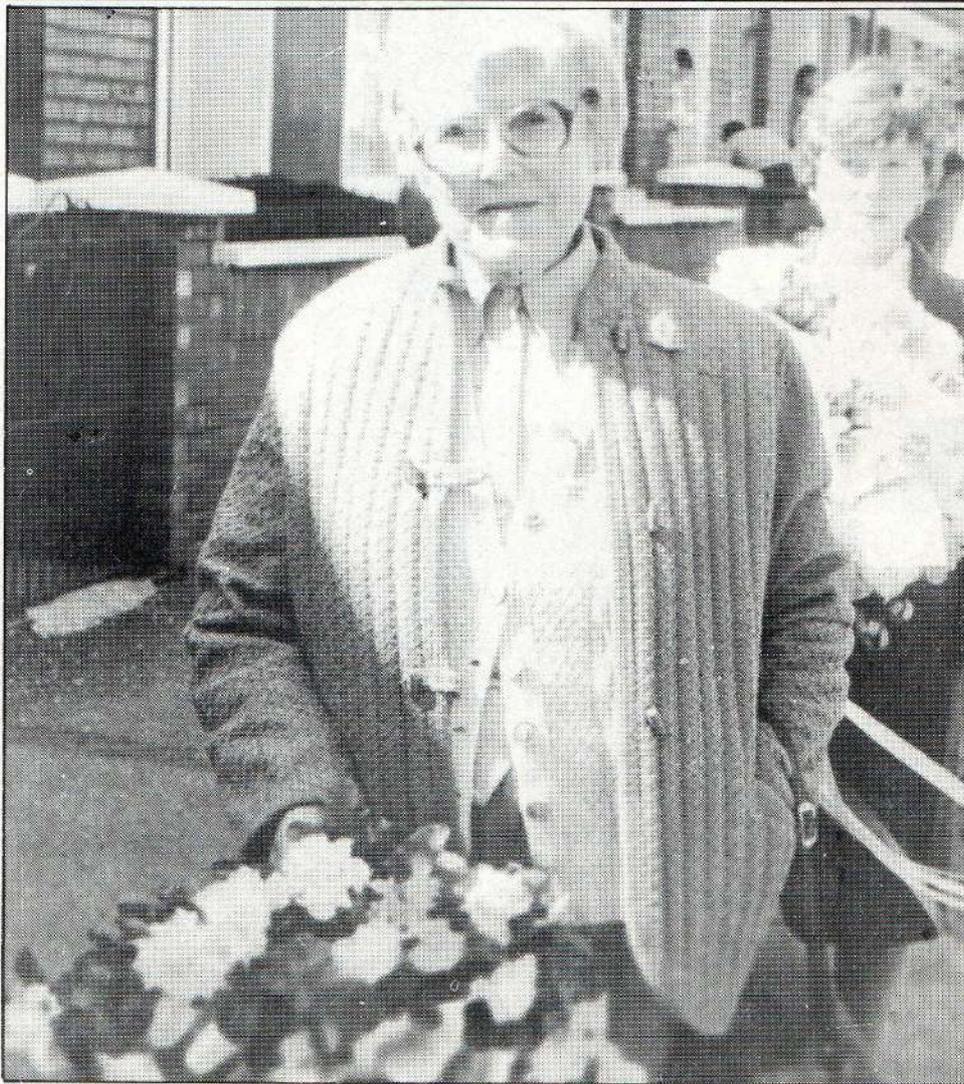
Gretta Reel:

'You have to be consistent to make things succeed'

THINGS were very hard for people at the turn of the century. My mother was from Newbliss and my father from Corcaghan in County Monaghan, but they were forced to emigrate in search of work. My father worked as a miner in Glasgow, where I was born, but he was killed in a mining accident not long after. My mother packed up everything then, she wanted to come home.

My family were always republicans. Two of my brothers were very active in the Movement, one of them was sentenced to death but later reprieved — he was held in Crumlin Road jail. My mother also played an active role, she worked with the Cumann na mBan nursing corps from 1916 through to the '20s. Our home was always welcome to republicans. I can remember my grandfather — I must have been 10 or 11 at the time — taking boys on short cuts across the fields.

I remember selling flags for Sinn Fein. It was 1918, Ernest Blythe was standing for election in North Monaghan. Another early memory I have is when Matt Fitzpatrick was shot dead in Clones. The 'B' Specials were going from Enniskillen to Belfast and the IRA opened up on their train. A lot of 'B'



● Carrying a wreath at the Easter Commemoration in Belfast

Specials were killed that night, their bodies were taken away in a lorry: Matt Fitzpatrick was the only Volunteer killed – he was O/C at the time.

I grew up on the old farm in Newbliss. I could have told you anything about farming. After I left school I decided to come and live in Belfast though. There wasn't enough work for all of us at home. Even though I liked the country, the work which there was – picking potatoes or walking behind a pair of horses – didn't appeal to me anyway.

I came up North in 1932 to work as a children's nanny. It was shortly after that I met my husband, he was also from Monaghan but we decided to stay in the North because there was no work to go home to. I enjoyed my work, I had always had an inclination for nursing and working with children. I always liked doing things with my hands too: cooking, knitting, crocheting. I wasn't the type of girl who cared much about clothes as long as something fitted me, I was more the practical type.

But despite the enjoyable work, it took me a long time to get used to living in the city. I felt very insecure being closed in, having been so used to the country.

AFTER getting married we moved to this house in the Cavendish Street area of West Belfast. It was 1937 – shortly after the Eucharistic Congress.

I used to travel to work in Park Grove, and at times I also 'lived in'. Work would begin at 6am and, having looked after the children all day, I had to cook the family's evening meal. For all that I got 30 shillings a month, though I must say I was well fed.

During the Second World War, I worked in a nursery attached to the munitions factory. A lot of women with children had jobs at that time,



● Gretta (front right) with other nursery workers during the Second World War

in fact they were encouraged to work, although as soon as the war was over the nursery was closed down and it was back to the home! We worked among Protestants then, there was a Protestant girl living with me at that time who worked in the aircraft factory. Although our area was predominantly Catholic there were a few mixed marriages.

There was internment during that time too. I remember my Frank coming home one night and saying 'this town's going to go up in a blaze' – a lot of

young fellas had been lifted.

It wasn't till the '60s though that things really changed around here – especially after the loyalists burned down Bombay Street.

I was never pleased to see the British army, even though we were very vulnerable then. I knew that they were not about to protect us from loyalist attacks. Catholics were being gunned down and burned out of their homes by gangs of loyalists and 'B' Specials. It was a time when the IRA weren't strong – it couldn't happen on the same scale now.

Many people believed that when the Brits came in '69 it was to protect the Catholic people, when in fact all they were doing was defending their own interests. I remember clearly seeing the first patrol of soldiers in our streets, it was 6.30am and I was going to mass in Clonard. The first I saw of them they were walking up Clonard Street nine abreast, with their guns at the ready. I thought to myself 'this won't work'.

The morning of internment I could-



● Family members on the farm at Newbliss

Features

n't sleep. I got the whole street up. All the women came out to rattle bin-lids and went up to Springfield Road barracks, rattling everything under the sun. There were thousands of women, and I'm not exaggerating when I say thousands.

A lot of well-known republicans were lifted at that time, including older men who had been involved in earlier campaigns. No street went untouched. It was at that time we began to organise locally: we put up barricades, set up 'no go' areas, organised 'hen patrols' of women.

All those families who thought they were getting protection from the soldiers the year before — within two years they'd had their homes raided or had someone belonging to them interned.

I remember the Falls curfew as if it were yesterday. It was July 3rd 1970, and it was us women who broke the curfew.

The people of the lower Falls were starving — they had been held prisoners in their own homes, many of which had been wrecked by the Brits in raids. They took a real delight in smashing up the furniture and especially the holy pictures on the walls. Deliveries of food had not been allowed to the shops in the area, and soon the people were without bread and milk. On the Sunday morning, thousands of women gathered with food and marched down the Falls defying the curfew, which then collapsed.

One protest I particularly remember was when Michael Farrell was on hunger-strike in the Crumlin Road. It was a Sunday afternoon and we were going across to the prison for a picket. The rain was beating down on us, it was bucketing. We reached Divis Street and the Brits turned water cannons on us. I remember us cutting up side streets. We ended up marching down to the city centre to protest outside the Grand Central Hotel. It housed the Brits at that time. On our way there we met the hoses for a second time, at Castle Street, and when we reached King Street the Brits and the RUC were all lined up ready to attack us. We had our protest all the same.

I miss the protests now. There is not so much activity on the Falls today as there was when Bobby Sands died. Does something have to happen before we can get ourselves together? This is something that bothers me, because you have to be consistent to make things succeed, I think there is a lot of apathy about right now.



● Gretta (front left) marching in all weathers



● Gretta (aged four) with her mother

THE role of women has changed a lot over the years, I think. Of course there were women who were politically active in the '40s and '50s and before that too. There have always been women Volunteers who were active members of Cumann na mBan and active in supportive roles like my mother was. She could have tied a bow wound, and there were always many just like her.

This war could never have continued without the involvement of women. I think the young women of today are marvellous.

When I joined Sinn Fein there was only the odd woman member, there are

far more now. I was involved in helping to set up the Women's Department in 1979. There were about five of us in Belfast. We did all sorts of things to raise money to get ourselves started. We didn't get much help either. Even during the hunger-strike we kept going; we felt it was important to continue to organise as women, as well as all the other commitments that most of us had at that time. We would also meet together and hold a series of discussions. It was small then but it was a start. Then some local women got together to start a women's centre and I got involved in that too.

I have been selling the papers and doing the Green Cross since 1973. It's no good unless you are consistent. I collect the Green Cross on a Friday and Saturday night. Before the Green Cross started back in '73 it was the PDF (prisoners' defence fund). I sell about 50 papers a week in Springfield Road, Hawthorn Street, around the Cavendish Street area — in rain, hail or snow!

I went to the first picket outside Armagh women's jail and I've been to every International Women's Day protest there since. I think the women in Armagh were the most forgotten people — but not now, we have started something we are not going to stop.

When we went up to Armagh this year for the protest, the prison walls had been raised so that you couldn't even see the roof. That really annoyed me. The year before, we were able to see the girls waving their hands out between the bars and hear them calling

back at us. I thought it so vindictive, that even once a year they would not let those women see the support that exists for them.

I have been on visits to the Kesh and to Armagh too, but I know myself I am no good on a visit. I am a weepy person and I am no good to the prisoner. I feel so bitter within my heart and soul to think that she or he is shut up behind bars, and they are such fine people. The girl I went to see in Armagh was from Derry. I could hardly utter a word to her and that nearly killed me. I came home and cried myself sick. So I thought there was no point going up to see anybody, there are other things I can do. I don't want to see young people shut up behind bars.

THE hunger-strike was a terrible time for us all. People would keep the information centre on the Falls Road open 24 hours a day. They would work on a rota basis. I used to make food and bring it down to the centre. I liked to keep them going in food as best as I could.

I had my wireless on at my bedside when Bobby Sands died in the small hours of the morning of May 5th. I came down the stairs and went to the centre, the tears were blinding me. I came back on up home and made more sandwiches and took them down for the workers and didn't speak to anyone. I was so full of grief, such young lives, so many young people have had to die.

I hope we never forget what they have done. I am very afraid we will. Some people already say that's a long time ago. It's never a long time ago if anyone dies for a cause they believe in.

I may not be around, but I hope and trust in God that the next generation will remember what those young lads died for. I hope we never have to go through another hunger-strike.

I never wanted any praise or glory, that's not what you join an organisation for. There is no glory for anyone when you are fighting a battle against the enemy, and the British state is our enemy. The ordinary Protestant people have nothing to fear from us.

At the end of the day there is no glory for anyone, only maybe anger and a lot of sadness. I would love to see — though I doubt I shall now — the start of a united Ireland. With the Brits out and the RUC pushed into the River Lagan — at the deep end, not the shallow! ■



● Marching against Reagan in Galway, last June

Mary McGing

'No justice without removing the causes'

Iwent to school in Colaiste Muire, Tuar Mhic Eada, where I developed a sense of nationalism, and in particular a love of the Irish language. I had a great interest in Irish history, particularly of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

In 1975, I went to University College Galway to study for a degree in civil engineering. I wasn't particularly conscious of entering into a male-dominated profession at that time, I just saw the course as a different sort of challenge. Now, in my job, I don't experience direct discrimination by men, but there is a patronising attitude by senior male engineers that's hard to take.

While at UCG, I had very little in-



terest in politics and wasn't involved with any political group. In 1980, I decided that I wanted to become a voluntary worker in Third World countries. Rather naively at that time, I believed that these countries needed help to develop infrastructures on which to build independent economies to safeguard against foreign exploitation. It was only later I realised that much of this type of voluntary work – however well-intentioned – is in fact paving the way for increased exploitation by multinationals.

My attempts to become a voluntary worker were frustrated anyway, as most of the recruiting agencies maintained that my being a woman would raise cultural 'obstacles' in Third World countries – men would resent taking directions from a woman engineer. I was to find out that this applies in so-called developed countries too!

At any rate, I was becoming disillusioned anyway with the whole concept of voluntary aid and, for the first time, I began to examine the causes of deprivation and inequality, rather than their symptoms. I realised that there could be no justice without removing the causes. Voluntary aid in many ways perpetuates that injustice by preventing people from maintaining their self-reliance and creating a dependence on outside help that leaves their society open to exploitation.

I became involved with Sinn Fein as I realised that only through a *revolutionary* struggle of people to achieve the power to correct the evils and shortcomings in their society, themselves, could real progress be made.

AFTER a while, I was appointed Sinn Fein organiser for County Mayo, and set about two things – creating an organised structure in Mayo and starting a programme of education for Sinn Fein members.

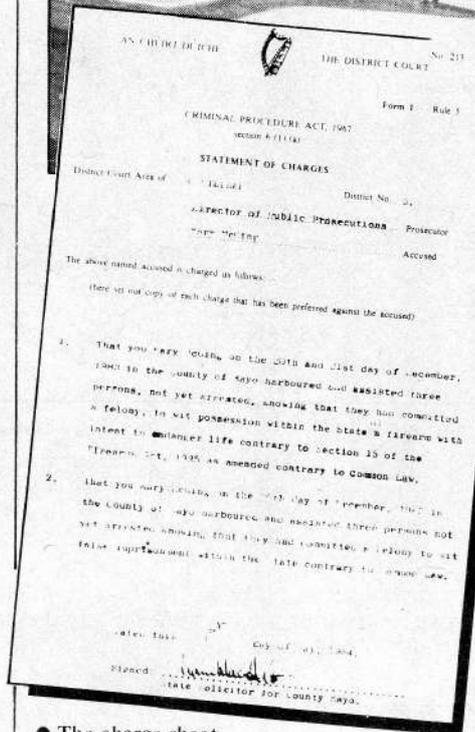
Initially, I felt there was a certain resentment against me in certain quarters, but not because I'm a woman; rather because I come from a Fine Gael family background and was a total newcomer to the Republican Movement.

Before long, though, I established a good relationship with those I was working with and, as far as I know, any initial resentment no longer exists. I had no difficulty as a woman – in fact I was heartened to find that it is accepted within Sinn Fein that women have as important a role to play as men in the Movement.

I was glad that the work we did in



● Mary McGing at a Sligo women's group meeting during the election campaign



● The charge sheet

the Mayo comhairle ceantair during 1981-82 on reorganisation reached some degree of fruition in the recent Euro elections, when the county director of elections was able to call up an organised and willing election workforce.

I see education as being of prime importance in a county like Mayo. It could easily happen that within the Movement different areas of the country could develop politically at such differing rates that some areas might be left behind altogether.

IN 1983, I was elected as a representative from Mayo/Galway to the Ard Chomhairle.

This has been of enormous benefit to me personally, and I hope I can translate it into an advantage for the areas I represent. The tie between leadership and Sinn Fein cumainn is essential and has sometimes been allowed to deteriorate. Misunderstandings and rumour can be devastating in an area where there is infrequent contact with that leadership. I would hope that my efforts as Ard Chomhairle representative

would improve the relationship between Dublin and Mayo/Galway.

When I was selected as one of the three Sinn Fein candidates in the Euro elections for the Connaught/Ulster constituency (the others being Eddie Fullerton and Caoimhghin O Caolain), I was very apprehensive, believing that it would be difficult enough to present a radical policy to conservative rural areas without having to overcome the traditional resistance to women politicians in rural Ireland.

Looking back, however, that is not how it proved to be. I enjoyed having the opportunity to stand outside churchgates and stand at public meetings and present our policies to people at last. I felt that it went some way towards breaking down the air of secrecy and mystery which Section 31 and press misrepresentation erect around Sinn Fein. Maybe my being a woman made people more curious to hear what I had to say – if so, good!

The campaign impressed deeply on me the overriding importance of **credibility**. Romantic nationalism no longer appeals to the electorate, especially women. On the other hand, the underlying nationalism of people is stronger than, for example, the opinion polls suggest.

Throughout the election, naturally enough, it was our national policy that aroused most interest, our defence of armed struggle, etc... and, ironically, it was the Free State that ensured that the electorate would be sure where I stood on these matters by charging me, before the election campaign got underway, with harbouring and assisting three armed persons in County Mayo.

The charges against me related to an alleged incident in Ballycroy, County Mayo. It was also in Ballycroy, on June 14th, that I topped the Euro poll! ■



● Protest outside Armagh prison

The undaunted women in Armagh

1970-1972: First signs of trouble

ARMAGH women's prison: A Victorian granite building in the loyalist centre of Armagh city. Before 1969 virtually unknown, yet it had housed 18 republican women internees during the Second World War, and one during the Border campaign of 1956-1961. By 1969 however, Armagh jail's population consisted of a few destitute women, some short-term male prisoners and borstal boys.

Bernadette Devlin brought Armagh jail into public focus when she was sentenced to six months for rioting in Derry's Bogside. She lost her appeal and started her sentence on June 26th 1970, a month after having been elected

A look at the prison's history since 1969

THE FULL STORY of the republican prisoners in Armagh jail has yet to be told. It has yet to be sung, and properly described, other than as an after-thought in public speeches – “and of course the women in Armagh...” Republicans have a right to be proud of those women who, from the Divis Flats grandmother doing six months for what an Orange judge called ‘riotous behaviour’ to the young IRA Volunteer inside for the second time and not yet 25-years-old, have managed, whether they numbered 12 or 120, to maintain their resistance to the most vicious prison system in Europe. The words that follow, says Patricia Collins, were written to encourage more of those women to come forward and tell their story. They are based on conversations with several ex-prisoners, and on visits and letters from those women presently imprisoned. They were written in the hope of jogging the memory of all those women who wrongly think their contribution to Ireland's future peace is not worth mentioning.

MP for Mid-Ulster for the second time in two years. Until her release in October of that year, having served four months of her sentence, she was treated

in effect as a political prisoner, and made a few representations to the Governor on behalf of ordinary prisoners.

By the beginning of 1971 more nat-

ionalist women came to be sent to Armagh, usually on six-month sentences. 'Riotous behaviour' was the usual label affixed by the judge. "Assaulting a Brit patrol with an offensive weapon - a yard brush," is how Anne Maguire from Ballymurphy describes her 'offence'. She recalls that, at the time, a 60-year-old granny from Divis Flats got six months for hitting a Brit with a bin lid.

On February 26th 1971, 38 women and six men were arrested outside Chichester Street court in Belfast on one of the 'combat jacket' pickets, organised to protest at the arrest of republicans who had been wearing uniforms at Volunteers' funerals. Another similar protest was to take place two days later in Beechmount Avenue, Belfast. All those arrests resulted in a dozen women being sentenced to six months.

The stance taken by those women was based not so much on a family tradition of republicanism, as born of the Civil Rights marches, the ensuing backlash of the loyalists and the increasingly threatening presence of thousands of British troops. Yet there was no special status for those women.

Therefore, in 1971, women like Rose MacAllister from Ardoyne, Rita O'Hare from Andersonstown and Anne Maguire from Ballymurphy had to wear the prison uniform. For the first-timers it was blue: blue tweed skirt, blue sweater and polka-dot blouse. Prisoners under 21 wore red, and green for those who had been in before. Women prisoners, political or otherwise, were put in 'A1' Wing. They were entitled to one visit a month. Prison work was for all: laundry, cleaning, sewing. Yet those nationalist women were quick to stand up to the system and to assert their dignity, refusing to be institutionalised.

The Governor then was Stanley Hilditch, who was to torture the blanketmen some years later in the H-Blocks. Hilditch at first didn't know how to cope with the new situation posed by women political prisoners. Anne Maguire recalls: "When the Governor comes into your cell, you're supposed to stand up. We just sat down, anywhere, on the bed, on the chair. The same in the exercise yard. The Screws would get flustered, the other prisoners would stare at us."

After four or five weeks, Hilditch cottoned on. The women weren't allowed to talk to other 'classes' of prisoners: juveniles in red, or the ones in green. But two of the young ones were republican too: the women would not comply. Their 20 'Park Drive' ration of cigarettes would then be held up, and a lot of petty harassment took place.



● An emotional rally outside the jail in March 1980 - a month after the start of the 'no wash' protest



● STANLEY HILDITCH

Strip-searching was used in a few instances. The prison 'front' had been opened.

In July, Maire Drumm joined the women in Armagh. Earlier that month, she had made a fiery speech at Free Derry corner: "It is a waste of time shouting 'Up the IRA'... the important thing is to join." She was bound over to keep the peace for two years on a surety of £500, refused to sign and got six months for 'promoting the objects of the IRA'.

A few days after Maire Drumm came in, internment broke out. Hundreds of men were thrown in jail, most of them after severe beatings, some after horrific torture. Some internees were put in Armagh jail. By mid '72 however, all

internees had been transferred to Long Kesh or Magilligan. On the outside, women began to take a more direct part in the armed struggle and in 1971 two republican women received long sentences for taking part in bombings: Margaret O'Connor, 9 years, and Susan Loughran, 12 years.

In May and June 1972 sentenced republican prisoners went on hunger-strike for political status in Crumlin Road and Armagh jails. Their protest was successful and sentenced women POWs were to insist successfully that those hard-won rights be extended to them.

However their conditions improved more dramatically after the arrival of the first women internees at the beginning of 1973.

A Company

LIZ McKEE, then aged 19, was arrested in Andersonstown on December 29th 1972 and transferred to Armagh jail on New Year's Day 1973. She had been served with a 28-day 'Interim Custody Order', the new euphemism for detention without trial. Internment and the Special Powers Act were, in name at least, no more. Stormont had collapsed in March '72 and the British direct-rulers had been quick to vote the same repressive laws in under new names.

The 'Detention of Terrorists Order' of November 1972 enabled the Brits

to intern, and this they did wholesale. About 650 people would be interned between November '72 and the end of '73, over 60 of them women.

The news of Liz's detention was received with emotion. On January 7th several hundred women marched in protest through Andersonstown and were addressed by Maire Drumm. A few weeks later Teresa Holland was to join Liz, soon followed by Margaret Shannon and Anne Walsh. At first they were put in the remand Wing, then 'A1', along with twelve remand POWs and about eight ordinary prisoners. It is from 'A1' that, one Sunday night, March 4th 1973, five republican women attempted to escape, over the wall to freedom.

Teresa Holland: *"Liz McKee and I were in one cell, three remand POWs in the next - Cathy Robinson, Marie Maguire and Evelyn Brady. We got hacksaws in our parcels and started on the bars. We also made ropes out of brown nylon wool. We had three cell searches that week. On Sunday night, about midnight, we finished the bars and came out."* Having reached the sentry post the women started to climb, but the alarm was raised by a Screw who had noticed a bar gone in Teresa's cell window. The attempt ended with the women being put 'on the boards' and sentenced to nine months. Military police searched the cells and a full-scale riot developed. The Screws hosed the prisoners down.

A few months later the four women internees secured from the Governor, then Hugh Cunningham, their transfer upstairs to 'A2' with the sentenced POWs. The sentenced wing was at the time totally isolated from the rest. While sentenced prisoners only got one visit a week, internees got three, and the women felt they could help their sentenced comrades communicate with the outside world. They knew, too, that if they stayed downstairs, soon the remand prisoners would get sentenced and move to 'A2', leaving them isolated. Early on, the women POWs were aware of the need of building a strong position by keeping the maximum number of women together.

With swoops all over the North numbers grew quickly, and in March '74 'B' Wing was cleared for the POWs, who soon occupied 'A2', 'B1' and 'B2'. Most of the women internees came in from March '74 onwards. *"It seemed,"* one woman recalls, *"that the Brits had suddenly realised that the women were active."* Inside Armagh, republican POWs had worked to establish a military structure since the beginning of 1973. After selecting an O/C and a full staff, including an adjutant, PRO and Wing O/Cs, the women worked out their own routine, avoiding all contact with the prison staff. The O/C had a meeting with the Governor every morning and would pass on her comrades' requests. The system was effectively railroaded

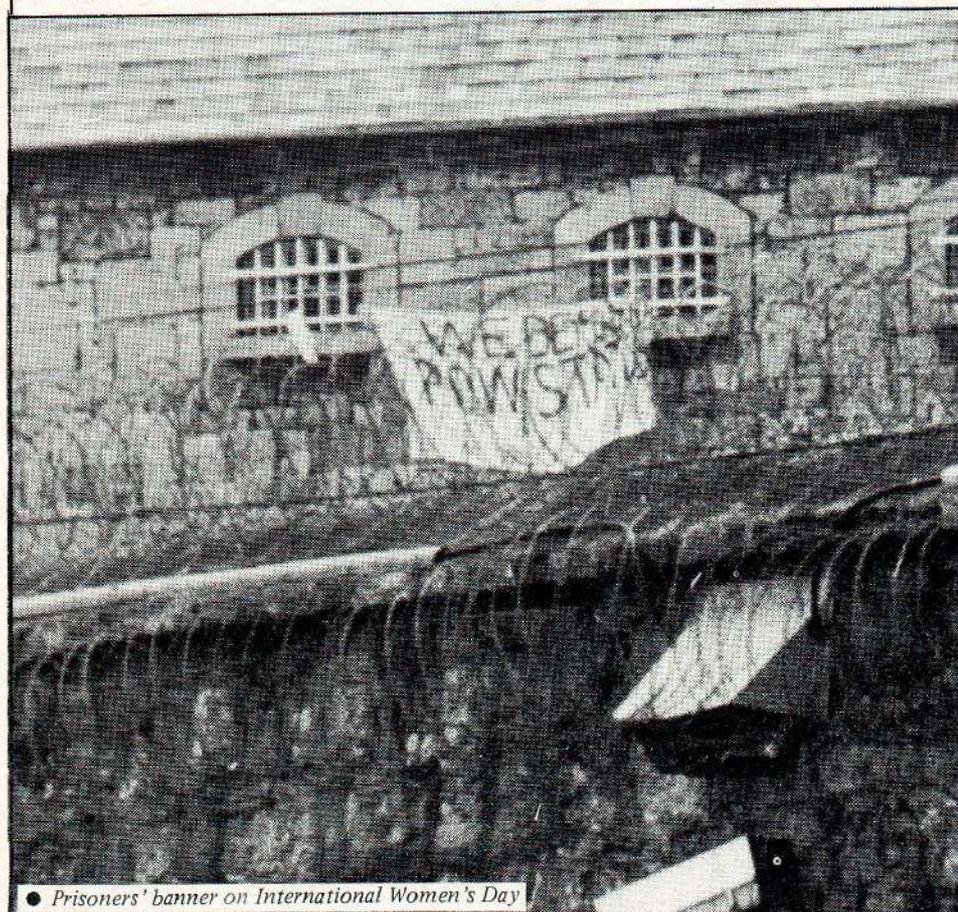
into working along with the prisoners' structure.

The women as a whole formed 'A' Company. The company was eventually divided into three sections, one for each Wing, and named after dead Volunteers: Ethel Lynch from Derry, who had died in 1974, Vivienne Fitzsimmons from Downpatrick, who had died in August 1973, and Julie Dougan from Portadown, who had died in August 1972 - all three killed on active service. Before 10am the whole Wing had to be cleaned, bins taken down, cells tidied up. After inspection by the O/C at 10.30am, the women had a 15-minute to half-an-hour military drill in the exercise yard. Classes were organised, with quite a few prisoners taking official exams. Irish classes were taken by six of the women who were themselves receiving tuition from Sean O'Boyle, an old Gaelic scholar from Armagh. One of the POWs, Marie Dillon, taught Irish dancing.

Every Sunday the POWs would parade in the yard in full uniform: black skirts, black sweaters and berets that the women had crocheted themselves with black wool. *"It was very important,"* ex-POW Eileen Hickey recalls, *"in keeping the women together. It kept them aware that they were soldiers. In Armagh you could feel so far removed from the Movement, from the struggle outside."* Special parades were organised on Easter Sunday and St. Patrick's Day.

The women organised debates on controversial issues. Teresa Holland: *"We discussed how we thought the struggle was going, how we saw things developing in the long term. I remember a heated discussion on whether the commission should be recognised. The 1975 truce was debated of course. So was 'UDI'. The women were unanimous on rejecting any idea of an 'independent' six counties. Another debate was on young people, delinquency, joy-riding."* While the women were on the whole very politicised, women's issues however were rarely, if ever, discussed. *"We never saw ourselves as different from the men in Long Kesh"* is a common remark. Around '73-'74 many men had been arrested and a lot of responsibilities had fallen to the women on the outside. The release of hundreds of male POWs later in 1975 would reverse the trend somewhat.

Medical care in Armagh was primitive, and still is. Dr Cole - 'Doctor Death' or 'pill pusher' as he is referred to by the women - and his aides were quick to dish out pills: Valium, Panadol, and Distalgesics ('DGs'), now taken off the



● Prisoners' banner on International Women's Day

Many women who had dental care while in Armagh developed abscesses. However three of the POWs were nurses and were able to advise their comrades on the type of medication they were given. Nonetheless, four women at least developed Anorexia Nervosa. Women suffering from bad injuries as they came in, like gunshot wounds or severe burns, were not properly looked after.

Unity and strength

WHILE the women POWs had Armagh jail well in control, their male comrades in Long Kesh were regularly being attacked by the Brits stationed around the camp, constantly subjected to searches, and their privileges gradually eroded.

Tension had been mounting throughout the summer of '74 in the compounds of Long Kesh. On Tuesday night, 15th October 1974, republican POWs burned their huts. They were savagely attacked by Brits in full riot gear, and at dawn a statement was read on the radio by a British official announcing the burning of the camp and that all privileges and visits had been suspended.

A lot of women heard the radio that morning, the news was not entirely unexpected. Most, if not all, of the women POWs in Armagh had brothers, fathers, boyfriends in Long Kesh. They were besides themselves with anguish.

On Wednesday morning, October 16th, the Armagh prison administration refused the women's request for a Sinn Fein spokesperson to come in and give them news of their loved ones. Kate McGuinness: "We had a company meeting, and decided that we should organise a big riot, and cause as much damage as possible to the jail." The women decided to barricade themselves in 'B3' using dismantled cell doors. By some fluke, while all this was going on, the Governor, Cunningham, his deputy, Simpson, and two Screws happened to come up to the wing. The POWs bundled them up, threw them into an empty cell and locked them up with their own keys.

The loyalist prisoners came along, thinking at first that the loyalist compounds had been burnt too. Having later been told otherwise, they nevertheless sat the protest out with the republicans.

The POWs had drawn big slogans on bedsheets: "The Armagh women support the men in Long Kesh - give them their demands," and hung the sheets from the cell windows where they could be seen from the street. By the evening the kidnapping of the Armagh governor

by the women was big news. Journalists congregated outside the jail and shouted questions across to the barricaded women, who replied likewise. The Screws turned off the water and the electricity, and Brits in riot gear started to move in around the jail. The stalemate lasted until the early hours of Thursday, when the prison chaplain, Fr Raymond Murray, brought the women an assurance from British direct-ruler Merlyn Rees, and that no action would be taken against the women. The Armagh POWs had by then achieved their objective which was to highlight the plight of the men. The next day they made the front page of most papers.

In March '73, seven men and three women, including Marion and Dolours Price, had been charged in London with the Old Bailey and Whitehall bombings. After being sentenced to life imprisonment the Price sisters embarked on a hunger-strike for repatriation. Their

hunger-strike was to last 206 days, during which they were forced in support of the women in Armagh started having a token 24-hour hunger-strike every Friday. Those prisoners on remand would also use the opportunity of court appearances to make speeches from the dock about their comrades on hunger-strike.

The Price sisters were finally transferred to Armagh on March 18th 1975. Their transfer had been announced much sooner and the Armagh women didn't expect them on that day. Teresa Holland: "We had been practising for weeks, with flags, uniforms, the lot, and they hadn't come. And then suddenly there they were. So we got out the flags, the uniforms, and had another parade just for them. They were lost, they couldn't believe their eyes. Everybody felt brilliant. For a full week, every time they went into someone's cell, the girl would make them a big

● The last batch of women internees being released from Armagh prison



feed. It actually took them a long time to settle in, with all the fuss."

During those two years, from 1973 to 1975, the women POWs had almost full control of the jail. The numbers had risen above the 120 mark. While they came from all corners of the six counties, and from all age groups, from grandmothers to teenagers – indeed in one instance mother and daughter were interned together – most of them however came from the nationalist ghettos of Belfast, were aged between 18 and 24, and single. Most were inside for the first time.

Those months in Armagh would leave their mark on the women: for many experiencing at first hand the repressive nature of the Orange state, but also discovering the strength that lies in being united and organised, the warmth and solidarity of the struggle.

An ex-POW says: "Quite a few of them have now dropped off, got married, had families. But you will still see them at marches. They're still there. Of the 40 on my Wing, I can only think of five that disappeared from the scene completely." And some of the women were of course to experience jail again – still in Armagh, but in totally different conditions.

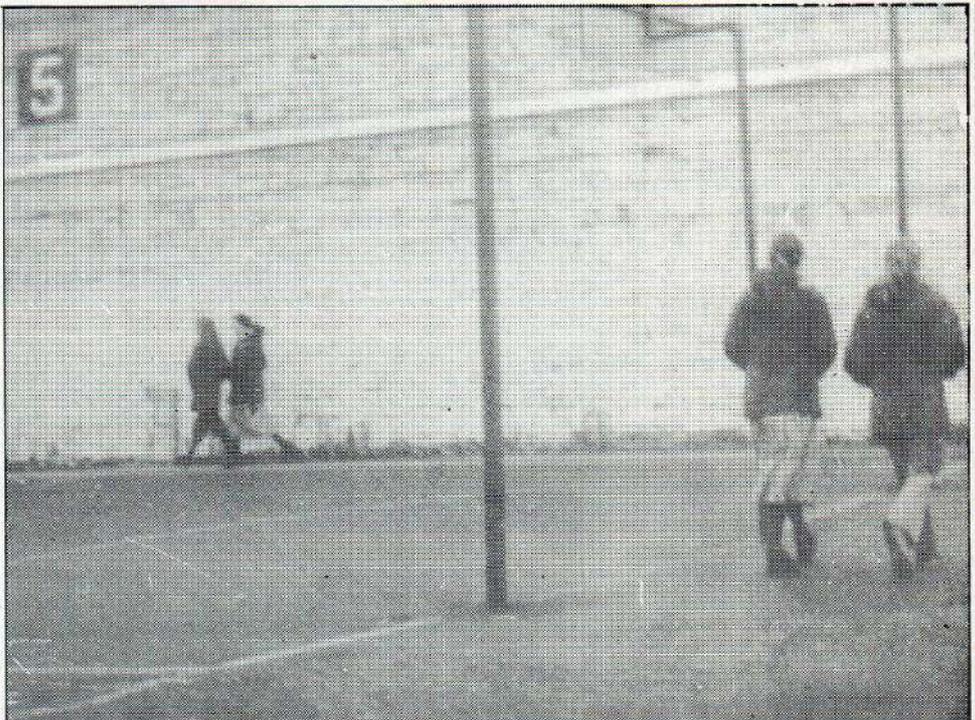
Phasing out 'status'

AFTER the last internee left in mid-'75, between 60 and 70 sentenced republican prisoners were left in Armagh jail. They were all moved to 'B' Wing while 'A' Wing was closed off and made ready for those prisoners coming in after March 1st 1976 – the date on which special category status was no longer applicable. One or two women had been arrested just before that date and were brought to Armagh at the beginning of April. The POWs with status fought hard to get them in with them. Pauline Deery was one of those women, and is now the last POW to receive special category status in Armagh, where she is in a unit on her own in 'B1'.

As status prisoners were being released their numbers rapidly dwindled. In August '79 there were only 7 left; a month later 4: the Price sisters, Chris Sheerin and Pauline Deery. The first three were eventually released on compassionate grounds for extreme ill health. As the women got fewer, the Screws got more aggressive: "They were trying to get us to give up status," says



● These two photos were taken by the women with a smuggled camera, during the 'no wash' protest, and then smuggled out; above: Mairead Farrell in her cell, and below: republican prisoners in the exercise yard



Kate McGuinness, released in August '79. "In petty ways they were trying to take away our rights."

Pauline Deery writes: "By 1980 education classes for republican prisoners were almost non-existent. Exercise time has also been substantially reduced from 1976. In 1976 we could stay in the yard all day. By 1980 it was down to two hours in the morning, two hours in the afternoon. In 1983 I was moved to a unit on 'B1' on my own, and my exercise time was halved. Food parcels are now strictly limited, so are hand-crafts. Political papers and film shows have been stopped. Cell searches in my absence have been introduced, and strip-searches. I am unable to see my brother or my fiancée, who are both in Long Kesh, because I won't take the strip-

search. A remand prisoner was charged for talking to me through her window last year, and she was locked up for it."

On the protest

MARCH 1st 1976 was the beginning of the battle of wills between republican POWs incarcerated in six-county jails and the British government. The first woman to be charged under the new system was Mairead Farrell from Andersonstown.

Arrested on April 5th 1976, she was sentenced to 14 years after several months on remand, most of it spent on her own. However Mairead was not the first to experience criminalisation. In



● International Women's Day 1984, outside Armagh prison

ON TUESDAY 20th December last year, I had to appear in Armagh court for a remand hearing. When I returned to Armagh prison I was taken to the reception area and told to strip by a member of the prison staff – Mrs Fowler. As I had my period I asked for a member of the medical staff.

By the time the Medical Officer came down to reception I had removed all my clothing and was completely naked except for my pants. The M.O. gave me a fresh sanitary towel and a bag. I had to remove the sanitary towel I was wearing, put it into the bag, and put on the fresh sanitary towel. This I did and returned the bag. Fowler then told me to remove my pants. I was horrified at this request and refused to do so. I asked her had she not seen enough of my naked body. Her reply was: "Remove your pants".

Again I refused. I told Fowler my pants were supporting my sanitary towel. She told me to remove my pants and hold my towel in place with my hand. I was totally appalled and told her I would not carry out this disgusting request. The M.O. and Fowler then stepped towards me. I was extremely agitated and felt very vulnerable. They both grabbed each side of my pants and forced them down. I started to struggle and shouted at them to stop but they just kept tugging my pants down until they were at my knees. After they looked over my naked body they went out. I was completely shattered. I thought then that I knew how a person feels after she has just been raped. My body had been grossly violated and every fibre in me rebelled at this indecent assault. That night my period stopped.

Strip-searching in Armagh — an indecent assault

IN a letter smuggled out of Armagh, republican remand prisoner Marie Wright, from Belfast, graphically describes the shock and humiliation of forcible strip-searches arbitrarily inflicted on republican women leaving or re-entering the prison as a result of court appearances. Despite the Northern Ireland Office's assertions that strip-searching has decreased, it is still very much a regular and traumatic feature of life in Armagh prison.

On Wednesday 21st December, I went to see the Governor to complain about my treatment down at reception. In an attempt to sidestep the issue he went on about my 'behaviour' on the Wing on the 16th December. I didn't know what he was talking about. He said my behaviour had been noted by the prison staff. I asked him what he meant. He said I was either drunk or on drugs. I knew this was a blatant lie but asked him was this the reason why I had been strip-searched on Tuesday. He said no. I then asked him had my behaviour concerned the prison staff. He said no. I asked him why he was telling me this ludicrous story when I was there to discuss strip-searching, but he had nothing more to say.

On Thursday night, my period

returned although it was very light. On Friday 23rd, I had to appear in court on a bail application. I was taken to reception and again told to strip by Prison Officer Fowler. As I was wearing a sanitary towel I asked for a member of the medical staff. It was the same procedure as Tuesday. While I waited for the M.O. to come I took off all my clothes except my pants. All the while my mind was filled with the ordeal in front of me and I kept telling myself there was no way I would have to go through that nightmarish experience again. I tried to reassure and calm myself but how can you do that when you're standing with not a piece of clothing on but a small pair of pants?

The M.O. arrived and handed

me a fresh sanitary towel and a bag. I removed the towel I had been wearing, put it in the bag, put the fresh sanitary towel on and gave the bag to the M.O. I was then told to remove my pants. I refused and I kept telling myself this couldn't be happening again. My mind was in a turmoil. The M.O. and Fowler kept repeating – "Remove your pants," but I still refused.

Then the M.O. and Fowler grabbed each side of my pants and started to force them down. I struggled to keep hold of my pants and cried out for them to stop. But it was no use. They continued to pull and drag my pants off. The sanitary towel I had been wearing fell to the floor. My pants were around my knees, my whole body was naked and exposed. Yet they continued to force my pants down until they had removed them completely and I stood totally naked. My sanitary towel lay crumpled at my feet. No one can quite imagine what it is like to go through an episode like that until you have actually experienced it yourself, but I know the disgusting memory will stay with me always. My period stopped again after this incident.

I was very worried and concerned and I went to see the prison doctor – Dr Cole. I told him about the effect the strip-searches were having on me, both mentally and physically. I told him about my period stopping and that I hadn't been able to eat or sleep for days after it. I also complained about the active role the M.O. on both occasions had played in strip-searching me. Dr Cole told me it was normal for periods to stop and restart! I told the doctor I had very regular periods. They always lasted the full five days and this was the first time they had stopped like that. But Dr Cole just wasn't interested in how I had been affected



● Another smuggled photograph: republican prisoners parade inside the jail, in honour of IRA Volunteer 'Dee' Delaney

December '76, an 18-year-old girl from the Short Strand in Belfast, Brenda Murray, was sentenced to 15 years for her alleged part in the bombing of the Babalu Boutique. The evidence against Brenda was so unsatisfactory that she eventually obtained a retrial and, after over two years spent in Armagh, a judge finally admitted that she could not possibly have done what another judge sent her down for 15 years for.

Brenda was one of many innocent young women who were put through the infamous conveyor belt of criminalisation. Like the many young men who were to fill the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, Brenda was brought to Castle-reagh, threatened and forced to sign a prepared confession, imprisoned for months on remand and finally processed through a Diplock court, where the judge found her guilty, not because of the evidence put forward, but because she was from a nationalist ghetto.

Other very young women would be thrown into Armagh in this way: Rita Bateson, from the Bone, arrested in November '76, then aged 16; Peggy McCormack, sentenced to two years in '78, then aged 14. In contrast to those teenagers, there were also women like Rose McAllister, from Ardoyne, who had done six months for wearing a combat jacket in 1971. Later in 1976 she spent a few months on remand which ended with her charges being dropped, and finally, in 1978, she was sentenced to two years, which she did

on the protest. She was then aged 40 and had four children. With these women a whole community was being criminalised.

Brenda Murray was on her own in the sentenced part of 'A' Wing for 3 or 4 weeks. Eileen Morgan, from Newry, then joined her and the two engaged in a 'no work' protest. As a result they were put on 21-hour lock-up, with only one visit a month, loss of all privileges and loss of remission. Other women were soon to follow: Roisin Rouse from Craigavon, then Mairead Farrell. By February 1977, there were 5 protesting prisoners and two are still inside — Eileen Morgan and Mairead Farrell. By March '79, the numbers were up to 38.

The prisoners write:

"At Easter '78, the then governor, Ernest Whittington, was replaced by George Scott. Unlike Whittington, who held an indifferent attitude towards the non-conforming stance, Scott, upon his arrival, immediately introduced measures to increase the hardships republicans were experiencing. He was determined to break the backbone of republicanism in the jail — the company structure, which was by then firmly established among the increasing number of protestors."

In an attempt to break the protest, Scott decided by late '78 to move most of the protesting prisoners to 'B' Wing, leaving in 'A' Wing four short-term prisoners: Roisin Rouse (3 years),

Roisin Black (2 years), Rita Bateson (3 years' detention), and Maureen Gibson (4 years). They were left in 'A' Wing, along with common law prisoners and some loyalists, while the rest of the protesting women POWs were moved to 'B' Wing along with four long-term loyalist prisoners. However, the four POWs in 'A' continued the protest in spite of their isolation, and, 10 months later, after two had been released, Scott conceded defeat and moved the other two back with their comrades in 'B' Wing.

Charges of 'breaches of prison discipline' were made against the prisoners on the flimsiest excuse. Prisoners were left in their cells for hours after asking to go to the toilets. In May '78 male Screws were used to baton-charge remand prisoners engaged on a protest action against the removal of political status. Such violence was an indication of things to come. Less than two years later, as tension had been slowly building up in the North's jails, the protesting prisoners were savagely attacked by male and female Screws. February 7th 1980 marked the escalation of the protest. The Armagh women embarked on the 'no-wash'.

The prison administration's pretext was a Wing search for black uniforms that had been used some days earlier by the protesting prisoners for a commemoration in honour of dead Volunteer 'Dee' Delaney. The prisoners were set upon as they were queuing up to get their dinner. They were beaten,

trailed by the hair, thrown downstairs, and dragged in front of Scott who dished out punishments to them. The women were put on complete lock-up, and with no alternative other than a complete 'no wash' protest. There were then 32 women in the protesting Wing.

The 'no-wash' lasted 13 months, during which more attention was focused on Armagh jail than at any other time during the decade. The cost to the prisoners was high. In an old jail dirt accumulates far more quickly than in modern Blocks. The women's periods were a particularly dangerous time for infection. Several women developed skin diseases and bowel trouble. Yet their morale was higher than it had ever been. While people on the outside were watching horrified, the women managed to remain completely united, supportive of each other, and determined to carry the protest through to the bitter end. And this they did, inflicting a defeat on Scott's regime in the process.

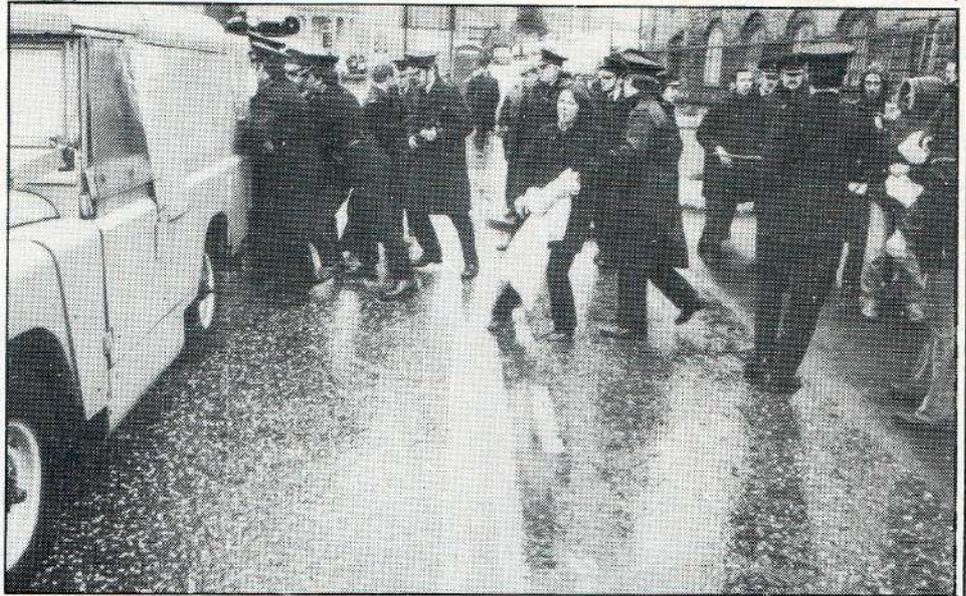
The women's participation in the first hunger-strike further showed their determination. On December 1st, Mairead Farrell, Mary Doyle and Mairead Nugent joined the fast. They remained on the Wing, confined in an excreta-covered cell for almost two weeks, before they were transferred to the Hospital Wing of the jail. Their condition was deteriorating rapidly.

The women ended their protest on December 19th, one day after the H-Block hunger-strikers, only after they had received official confirmation from the Republican Movement that the strike had ended. The three women remained in the Hospital Wing until December 23rd, then were thrown back into their cells, immediately put back on lock-up, with no parcels allowed, and complete loss of privileges. Subsequently the 'no-wash' protest ended in all the jails on March 1st 1981, as Bobby Sands embarked on his hunger-strike. The women were moved to clean cells where they maintained their 'no work' protest.

Unbroken

THE Armagh POWs write: "Easter 1981: Thomas Murtagh was appointed Governor. The anti-republican policy was reinforced with greater vehemence. We were in the coming months to experience greater hardships than those created by Scott.

"When the hunger-strike ended on



● RUC arrest demonstrators outside the jail, March 8th 1979



● English demonstrators outside the jail, March 8th 1984

October 3rd, there followed from the 5th onward a 28-day 'breathing space'. This was enforced by Prior in the hope that within that time we would reconsider our position, end the protest and comply with the system. During the 28 days no loss of remission was to be imposed as a penalty for breaches of prison rules which arose from the protest.

"After the 28-day reprieve period we had decided to continue our protest, but that five women would go into the system. This was an exploratory exercise to discover which position would produce the greatest effect: working to achieve our aims within the system or outside it. It became apparent that the former strategy would enable us to strike at the very heart of the issue. Throughout the following year of '82 a few more women infil-

rated the system while an adequate number maintained the protest. This strategy created even greater problems for the administration.

"They had to contend with the protest, and an even more alarming situation which had been quietly developing under their very noses since the infiltration exercise. Murtagh reacted as we believed he would: lashing out with the heavy-handed treatment. Daily, women were charged with petty offences which ensured solitary confinement, lock-ups, loss of visits, parcels and remission. The women who had ventured into the system received the worst of this treatment. They had consolidated their position, formed a structure and grasped every opportunity to advance company policy. In response, Murtagh not only meted out the most severe punishments to them, but used emotional blackmail.

"In February '82 we ended the protest and moved into the system. Immediately on informing Murtagh that we were available for work, he in turn informed his staff that each and every one of us was to be given cleaning chores until such time as other work was allocated to us. On his assessment we were within a few days designated to orderly duties, laundry and work-room (stitching) — all unproductive and menial tasks.

"Having placed us in the positions he considered suitable, Murtagh then embarked on a campaign of harassment and intimidation. Our ending the protest, rather than satisfying, had in fact increased his hunger to bring republicans not merely to their knees but to grovel on their bellies. His first tactical move was to integrate us with loyalists and ordinary prisoners throughout the jail. During the protest we had been segregated from other prisoners. Our numbers by now had been greatly reduced, many having been released, and this enabled him to maintain us in small

compact groups. This 'unit' network is derived from the fact that smaller groups are more easily controlled and constant vigilance of each prisoner is possible. Every movement, word spoken, or gesture is noted and recorded in the prison journals and daily scrutinised by Murtagh himself.

"The unit theory failed to produce the results presupposed by Murtagh — that division would cause disunity and eventually lead to the collapse of the company structure. This failure caused him once again to resort to intimidation: threats to forfeit remission, punishments, solitary confinement. All have proved equally unproductive.

"In November '82 Murtagh implemented the strip-search. Since his appointment as Governor, almost two years ago, he has sought to discourage, degrade and demoralise republican prisoners. His controlling reign has been spent organising and maintaining a campaign of psychological torture against us. Strip-searches are used not only to humiliate, but as a deterrent of inter-

prison visits. These visits are the only contact with loved ones (brothers, fiances).

"We have since the introduction of the practice 15 months ago repeatedly petitioned the NIO to have the strip-searches regulation withdrawn on moral grounds, but the response has been in favour of Murtagh's decision that the measure should stand 'in the interest of security' — a completely invalid argument. Today strip-searching remains a 'standard practice', punishments continue, psychological maltreatment is a systematic 'must'. But all these we can, and we will, overcome.

"The years have taught us that survival lies in the ability to mentally apply yourself to the situation. What have Murtagh and his administration to show for their efforts to subdue republican prisoners? And while we maintain our stance, such will be the case, because the system is dependent on us in order to function fully — we can exist without it, and we will." ■

Marion Coyle

MARION Coyle has now served nine years of a fifteen-year sentence imposed on her following her arrest in 1975. It had been expected that Marion — who has suffered ill health in recent months, — would, with remission, be released in January 1986, but she has now been informed that the previous one-third remission granted to women prisoners in Limerick jail will in future be reduced to one-quarter, which is the remission rate allowed to male prisoners. She will be the main sufferer from this 'reform'.

Limerick prison — a condemned building since 1948 — currently houses 100 male prisoners as opposed to only 14 women, following the transfer of small groups of male prisoners from Portlaoise. Since this transfer, the women's exercise yard has been halved, leaving only a small pathway for the women to use. Marion Coyle's demand to be allowed access to the yard, and her refusal to use the pathway until then, has led to her being denied any exercise at all since November 1982.

The 'privileges' for women in Limerick are practically non-existent. Marion takes one visit of one hour's duration each fortnight, since she feels it is too much of a bur-

den to impose a weekly visit on her family who have to travel from Derry, and prison authorities have denied access to visitors other than close relatives.

The recreation facilities are pitiful. Even a plan to build a gymnasium/workshop will be confined to use by male prisoners. The women have no cooking facilities either, although the transferred prisoners from Portlaoise do. Her restriction on letters (she is allowed to receive only two each week) has frequently been abused by the authorities who have allowed her crank letters and anonymous letters while withholding letters from close friends.

For a long time Marion



● MARION COYLE — nine years in a Free State jail

received verbal abuse from the Free State soldiers who patrol the prison's perimeter walls and who were able to look directly into her cell. However, the abuse did cease, for a while at least, after a complaint by independent TD, Tony Gregory, to the Leinster House government.

On the ordeal of prison visiting, her mother says: "We leave Derry at 3am and arrive in Limerick at 10am after seven hours of travelling on the PDF minibus. When we finally get into the waiting room it could be an hour before the Screws will search us and bring us over to see

Marion. Then you are under the strict supervision of two Screws and aren't allowed to discuss the conditions in the jail.

"Our Marion has not been out for exercise in well over a year and because of the ruling I can't even ask her: 'how's the solitary affecting you?' for fear of my visiting being ended.

"At the end of the visit, it's another seven hours back to Derry. We feel no wiser, no happier, but I know in my heart that Marion is suffering an unnatural 'justice' at the hands of a Free State bent on revenge." ■



FALSE SENSE OF TRANQUILLITY

OVERPRESCRIBING of tranquillisers, and tranquilliser addiction, is a cause of growing concern in Ireland as in many other countries. In the six counties, tens of thousands of people – most of them women – are regular users of drugs such as Valium. But, as Nuala Kavanagh points out, the basic problem is not individual women's 'inadequacy' or 'inability to cope', nor the 'troubles' (another alibi popular with doctors and media pundits), nor even primarily the social, economic and environmental problems endured by many in the North – problems which are, nevertheless, a major cause of stress.

Instead, republicans should blame the patronising and sexist practices of the majority of doctors and, more generally, the 'patch and mend' priorities of medicine as it is practised in our profit-based society.

PERHAPS the most widely used tranquilliser is Valium, otherwise known as diazepam or Roche (the name of its multinational manufacturer). It is also marketed under the brand names: Alupram, Atensine, Evacalm, Solis and Valrelease.

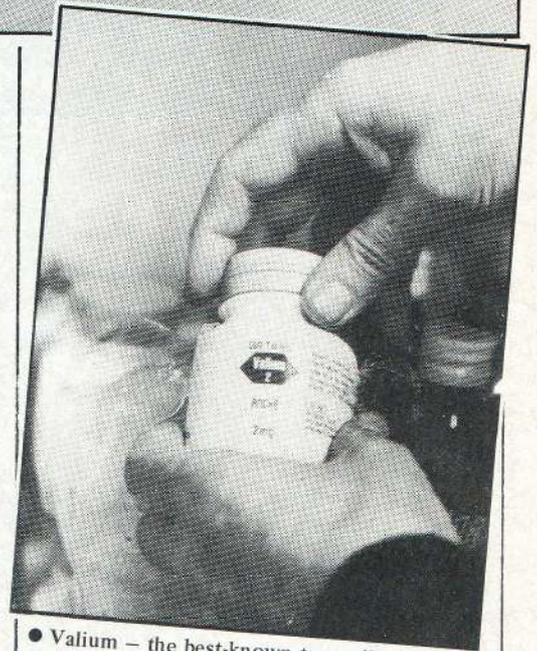
There are a host of other similar drugs, including chlordiazepoxide (Librium), lorazepam (Ativan, Almazine), meprobamate (Miltown, Equanil), oxazepam (Seranid-D) and chlorazepate (Tranxene). Many drugs prescribed as sleeping tablets, including Mogadon, are also in the same chemical category.

In recent years, according to official figures, doctors in the six counties have doled out more prescriptions for tranquillisers and sedatives than they have for minor painkillers. In 1982, general practitioners in the North wrote a staggering 749,000 prescriptions for tranquillisers and sedatives. The total value to the drug companies was over £1 million. Taken together, tranquillisers and sedatives were the fifth most prescribed category of drug in 1982 (in a 'league table' of over 100 types), beaten only by penicillins, skin preparations, cough medicines and – unlike the previous year – by minor painkillers.

GPs in the North also wrote nearly 200,000 prescriptions for anti-depressants at a cost of £800,000. Librium, the first of these tranquilliser drugs to be marketed, went on sale in 1960 and

sales quickly rocketed in many western countries. In the North itself, this escalation coincided with the upsurge of nationalist resistance to British rule from the late '60s onwards. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the so-called 'troubles' were singled out as a convenient scapegoat.

During research for this article, one



● Valium – the best-known tranquilliser

doctor in the North described how, in the early '70s, a variety of pundits beat their way to his door, almost demanding to be confirmed in their belief that the high use of tranquillisers was a direct consequence of a shocked and war-torn population.

CLOSER examination reveals that such assertions are by and large spurious, since there is strong evidence that Valium is often prescribed on a long-term basis, when it can do absolutely no medical good.

Although tranquillisers can be of short-term use in alleviating crippling

anxiety and tension, for example after bereavement, a 1980 British government-sponsored report found that there is little evidence that tranquillisers have any effect against anxiety after four months of continuous use. The report — by the Committee for the Review of Medicines — also cited American research that suggests that, used as sleeping pills, these drugs lose their effectiveness after three to fourteen days of continual use.

Yet many patients are prescribed Valium continuously, year after year, when it is unlikely to have any effect — except possibly to dull the user's emotions.

In Britain, where almost 40 million prescriptions for tranquillisers were written by GPs in 1980, at a cost of close on £30 million, an estimated 250,000 people have been on tranquillisers for seven years or more — many of them for around 20 years!

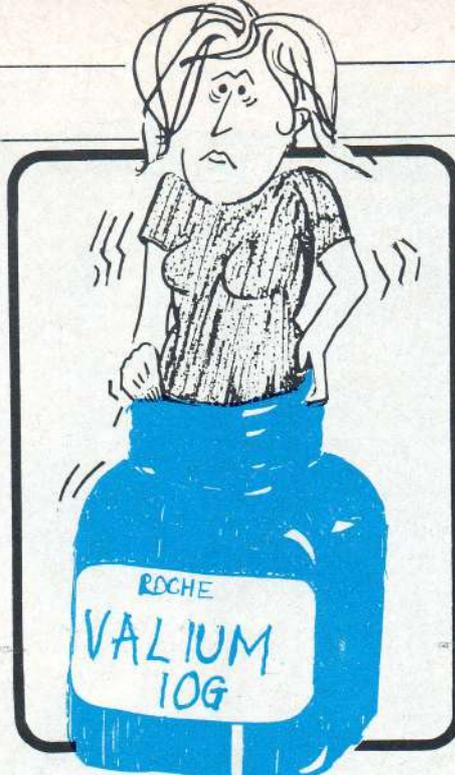
Interestingly, the country with the highest degree of tranquilliser addiction is not Ireland at all, but Iceland — which tends to dismiss the notion of the drugs' usage in the North being primarily related to the existence of a war.

Though research on their usage in the six counties has been inadequate, small-scale surveys have suggested that relatively large numbers of women living in deprived areas such as Divis Flats are regularly prescribed with tranquillisers. Doctors in West Belfast routinely prescribe these 'tranx', aided and abetted by chemists who dole out restricted drugs on request to customers, only later obtaining the necessary prescription from the GP.

Such shortcuts mean that few women are likely to be warned by their doctors of the possibility of addiction and may risk a wide spectrum of harmful side effects from long-term usage without medical checks.

For instance, usage during early pregnancy runs an increased risk that the baby will suffer a birth defect. Alcohol and also, it is believed, the low-dose oestrogen contraceptive pill, increase the side effects of tranquillisers, which commonly include dizziness, headaches, nausea, drowsiness and slight loss of co-ordination. The last of these may put users, particularly elderly people, at risk of falls or accidents. And according to the British charity, Release, some elderly people have mistakenly been thought to be senile because of problems associated with drugs like Valium.

While some people experience few problems when they stop taking the drugs, others may suffer even more severe anxiety symptoms than when they first started taking them. Mistaking these withdrawal symptoms for a sign



that they still need the tablets, many become trapped in a vicious circle of drug dependence.

Common withdrawal symptoms include anxiety, panic attacks, palpitations, aches and pains, insomnia, shaking, and sometimes fits and hallucinations.

THERE ARE apparently several related reasons why doctors have prescribed tranquillisers so heavily.

Most fundamentally, the drugs are an extension of our society's theory of mental illness, which sees the individual's 'inadequacy' as the problem, rather than social factors.

Tranquillisers of course do nothing to change the repressive social conditions which are major causes of stress — including, in the North, harassment by the Brits/RUC, poverty, unemployment, slum housing, marital violence, etc. — but, instead, the doctors' aim is only to enable their patients to cope, by dulling their awareness if needs be.

Effectively then, tranquillisers are a means of social control, and as such are used extensively in prisons both in the six counties and in the Free State.

In Armagh jail, shortly after the strip-searches began in November 1982, a group of remand prisoners appealed to the prison doctor, Cole, to oppose the practice on medical grounds. Cole replied that he could do nothing, cynically adding that it was 'normal' for a woman to strip in front of other people. When the women returned to their Wing, they were offered tranquillisers on his orders, but indignantly refused them.

Republican prisoners have consistently refused to take such drugs, even though prison medical staff have attempted to prescribe them as a cure for skin rashes, headaches, and more serious complaints. But tranquillisers and more powerful psychiatric drugs

are doled out extensively to non-republican prisoners incarcerated in Armagh.

OUTSIDE the jails such repressive attitudes are mirrored, though in a less extreme form, by general practitioners throughout the North who, because of their social position, have maintained a discreet silence about the oppressive social conditions suffered by many of their patients.

These are reflected not least in the high incidence of such environment-related conditions as bronchitis, as well as in the North's scandalous perinatal mortality rate, which is higher than in any region of Britain.

Moreover, doctors inevitably share generally accepted sexist stereotypes, identifying women who do not 'conform', because of stress or depression forced on them by their roles as wives and mothers, as 'inadequate' or 'unable to cope', and as being therefore in need of drug 'treatment'. On sexist grounds, therefore, doctors are likely to assume that symptoms in a woman for which they cannot find any other cause are 'psychosomatic' in origin.

Additionally, since GPs in the British NHS are paid according to the number of patients on their 'list', the premium is put on the quantity rather than the quality of medical care. This is especially the case in areas of high unemployment where doctors have little chance to boost their income through lucrative private practice.

Crowded waiting rooms in areas such as West Belfast (reflecting in part also the high illness rates) encourage a conveyor-belt approach to medical care, where doctors dole out pills as a matter of convenience.

Recently, however, there has been a growing awareness of the dangers of tranquillisers, and last autumn the first self-help group in the North on stress and tranquillisers was set up by women living in the lower Ormeau district of Belfast. Such initiatives should be welcomed by republicans because of our understanding that such drugs, and the pro-establishment, sexist attitudes which promote their use, are valued by the Brits as a means to diffuse and divide opposition to Britain's oppression in Ireland.

Discussion on issues such as this is vital both to increase women's knowledge and ability to challenge the social forces which oppress us, and also as part of the process required to establish, in a Britless Ireland, a democratically controlled health service which will truly reflect the needs of all the people of Ireland ■

Anne and Eileen Gillespie were arrested in April 1974 following an explosion in a Manchester house where IRA Volunteers were preparing incendiaries, and were sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment for earlier bombing attacks in which they had no part — serving the bulk of their sentence in the maximum security wing of Durham jail. Released at the end of last August, they talked to IRIS about their experience, at their home in Gweedore, County Donegal.

Ten years in English jails



THE FAMILY emigrated to England from Donegal on August 18th 1962. We were children (Anne was twelve and Eileen was nine). Our father had gone to England about two years earlier to look for work, so rather than split the family up we all went to live in England together.

After we left school we both worked in a hospital, one of us as a nurse, the other as a receptionist. We were working in that hospital up until our arrest.

The day that happened we were detained at the docks at Holyhead as we were driving on to the boat, and held by the Welsh police before being taken to Manchester where we were held for three days and then charged.

It was all a very frightening experience. In Manchester they stripped us, they hardly let us go to the toilet, we weren't allowed to wash, and we didn't get anything to eat or drink

until the third day. During those three days we were constantly interviewed. When one interrogator ended another would start up. At night they played a radio outside our cell doors so that we couldn't get any sleep.

As soon as we arrived they tried to force us on to an identity parade, but we were determined not to do so before we had seen a solicitor, and physically resisted them. Eileen was struck on the head by a police officer while resisting and cut on the forehead. Eventually, having seen a solicitor, we went on the parade. Soon after that we were charged with conspiracy, arson, and possession of explosives. They had absolutely no evidence at all.

We were held at Risley remand centre for nine months before the trial started. From the moment of our arrest we were treated as Category 'A' maximum security prisoners. We were kept in punishment cells there all the time, which had cement floors and beds raised four feet off the ground. We were locked up for 23 hours a day

in solitary confinement, and had to fight and argue with the Screws for the right to exercise, which was the only time we could see one another.

All the rights extended to other remand prisoners were denied to us: for example, we couldn't get food parcels or sets of clothing. We had one set of clothes, and every day at 4pm our cells were stripped of everything for the night and our clothes removed. This went on for the full time we were at Risley.

OUR TRIAL started on February 3rd 1975 and lasted 4½ weeks. We knew we were going to go down, but we thought we'd receive about 7-year sentences. We were taken aback by the severity of them.

Neither of us had ever been away from home before. We had been brought up a very close, tight family, and we had never had to make our own way. Really, we were very sheltered and had no idea what prison was going to be

like. It was a very hard ordeal for us that first year.

Before we were moved to Durham after the trial we were visited by a doctor. He had been sent by the Home Office. He came into our cells and said: "The Home Office has asked me to notify you that if you embark on a hunger-strike you will be allowed to die."

Then we were taken to 'H' Wing of Durham jail. It was the only prison where they could hold Category 'A' women prisoners. Marion and Dolours Price were also there. It was great to see people belonging to ourselves, they really did help to make life bearable for us. They told us what we could and could not do. Of course, we would have survived if they had not been there to give us their support, but they helped to make those first four months bearable.

We kept a very low profile. We never spoke to anyone else at all the first year and spoke only Irish unless we had to reply to a Screw.

'H' Wing was a very new prison when we went there. It had only opened a few months earlier in November 1974 and had only about 15 or 16 prisoners, of which most were women doing short sentences. These women had been sent there to help organise the wing for the numbers of long-term Irish women prisoners who were expected to fill it in time. Thank God they never got them, but that was the intention.

There was always a great deal of hostility towards us, but at various stages of our sentence it got worse. It really depended on the situation outside — how many soldiers were injured or killed, or how many bombs had exploded. If ten soldiers were killed over in the North it mattered to people far less than one policeman being killed in Britain. After Mountbatten was killed we thought they'd finish us off!

One of the worst things the Screws did was to tell other prisoners that if they were seen talking to us they'd lose remission or never get parole. So, from time to time, we really had a hard time. We weren't physically attacked, but the verbal hostility never eased up the whole time we were there.

There was a very small visiting area in 'H' Wing, and Category 'A' prisoners weren't allowed visits at the same time as other prisoners. So that when we had visits, no-one else was allowed a visit that day. This caused enormous tension. Women would come out of the office having been refused a visit because of us and they were angry, they would head straight for us. It was seven years before they changed that rule.



● Arriving home last August

A DAY ON 'H' Wing started with being woken at 7am. They would then unlock us at 8am, after which we had 20 minutes to do everything before we had to present ourselves for work.

It was ridiculous: we had to slop-out, wash in an overcrowded wash-room, have breakfast, collect any medication, and make any applications to the authorities we might have — all in just twenty minutes.

Prisoners had access to all the drugs they wanted, both legal and illegal — a lot of drugs were smuggled into the prison. 'Control drugs' were freely available: you could get Valium etc. whenever you wanted. One of us suffered from palpitations of the heart and they dished out Largactyl.

When we heard about the terrible things that were happening in Armagh we could identify with their situation. They were happening to us as well, although on a smaller scale. In Armagh the women were stronger because they had one another. We were strip-searched and had cell changes in a similar way. If you caused trouble, the male Screws would be called and women were dragged out of their cells naked and screaming.

'H' Wing is in the centre of Durham jail, so that you never see anything other than prison walls. The men are kept all around the area where the women are housed, but what we saw mainly were dogs. They would keep us awake at night howling.

Durham is used as a 'cooling off' jail where prisoners from other jails would be brought for 28-day stretches. It was also used for Irish male POWs. They had these awful cages where we used to watch the Irish prisoners exercising. They were just like cages in a zoo. There was very little communication possible between us, but occasionally we would be able to write to one another.

We always spoke Irish to each other. The prison officers didn't like that at all. They tried to stop us, saying that foreign languages weren't allowed, but we continued anyway, saying that for us English was a foreign language. Lots of the other prisoners picked up odd words, and we would always say the Rosary, so a lot of girls learned how to say their prayers in Irish.

There was one Palestinian girl who didn't speak English very well and we learned some Arabic from her. She was arrested for so-called 'terrorist' offences and was only 17-years-old when she came to 'H' Wing. She's still there, but her worst problems will begin when she's released, because she was from Lebanon and her family is scattered all over the world now. She was very isolated and rarely received visits.

WE WERE moved to Styal open prison a few months before our release. They let us go at 4.30am on the day of our release, because they wanted us out before the press arrived.

The first thing we did was ring home. Our parents had returned to Donegal soon after we had been sentenced. Then we went to the park and played on the swings! It was such a strange feeling: it was as though you had seen these events happening in your mind's eye. We had these new clothes on us, and it was really nice, and these high heels that we couldn't really walk in! And make-up and perfume. We kept looking at ourselves — it was as if you were outside your own body.

The plane didn't leave till later in the morning. When we arrived at Dublin airport we heard screaming. We'd never imagined there would be all these people there — it was overpowering. On the way home there were crowds all along the route, and cars and bands, and people came out to greet us and make presentations to us.

In Bundoran we were met by Owen Carron and Ruairi O Bradaigh and two women in their eighties who had been in the IRA. It was overwhelming: thousands of people came to welcome us home.

Sometimes we still can't believe that we're home. We remember the tree we used to watch changing season out of the cell windows, and we would say to each other: 'another winter gone', and now we are home we can enjoy all the changes in the seasons. We used to think about it all the time. However we also remember that there are so many Irishmen still in English prisons, and they should at least be brought back to Ireland to finish their sentences ■



• A scene from the film 'Maeve'

IRIS: To what extent is your work affected by your being Irish?

Rita: I am English born, but my mother was from Leitrim and my paternal grandfather was Irish. Although English by upbringing, I always had a feeling of being displaced, not so much aware as a child of being Irish in Britain, as of being brought up a Catholic, which means a different education from the majority Church of England orthodoxy. Since the first civil rights marches in Derry, I have felt myself to be an embodiment of the conflict (because of my Anglo-Irish background) with consequent feelings of anger and responsibility. My painting has centred on the six counties since that time and my art work is a process of trying to understand more fully the forces at work, both in the struggle of the nationalist people in the North and the conflict of identity within myself.

Pat: I was born in Dublin and my family finally moved to Belfast when I was fifteen. After school, I went to art college in Belfast for a year before

Culture and the struggle

THE involvement of women in Irish culture almost invariably conjures up images of Feis frocks and dancing competitions, Gaelic recitations and songs. But, of course, women's contribution to Irish culture is far more diverse than that. Trisha Fox talked to two women whose work is making an intervention within the cultural establishments of the cinema and art gallery. Rita Donagh – an artist – and Pat Murphy – whose work includes the televised film Maeve – would both describe themselves as feminists who have chosen to examine the war in the six counties in some of their work. By highlighting different themes, they have raised issues in an arena where republicanism and the implications of the war more generally have, traditionally, not been discussed.



● RITA DONAGH

leaving for London. I worked for a while and then went to Hornsey College of Art. I have never thought of myself as employable within the straight movie and TV industry, but as an artist who was using film. In 1977, I went to New York on a scholarship to the Whitney Museum in New York. I began working with other women on their films and it was not until then that I defined myself as a feminist. Although I was impressed by the strength and visibility of the women's movement there, I didn't want to be a New York film maker if that meant making a certain kind of film with a specific style and subject matter. It would have meant having to construct an identity which I wasn't part of.

IRIS: Why did you both choose to question the situation in the North in your work?

Pat: I had made a short diaristic film about Belfast called *Rituals of Memory*. It used family photographs and a 'voice-over' of letters read aloud. I decided to make a more overtly political film when I was at the Royal College of Art Film School, in 1979. David Glynn ran a course on opposit-

ional cinema which used the "*troubles in Northern Ireland*" as its subject matter. I came out of the course feeling that all the films were 'anthropological', in the sense that it was always outside people going to Belfast and Derry to do *field work*. I think that even the sympathetic oppositional films suffered from the mistaken belief that documentary equals truth. In rejecting the notion of documentary, I didn't want to make a 'Wednesday play' type fiction, which is one of the reasons that *Maeve* is made in a form that questions itself all the time. My attitude to the documentary isn't so negative any more, having seen **Creggan** and the ITV series, **The Troubles**.

Rita: I was aware that the sensational response by the media to the events taking place in the six counties was a limited and suspect source of information. It was difficult to get unbiased facts about what was happening. You have to know where to look for the truth, and that is what I set out to do.

As a teacher in an art school, students who saw my work were responsive, though, in the early '70s, debate about 'Art and Politics' or 'Art and

Society' was fashionable, and my project was seen as part of that. The climate within the art world is very different now and I doubt that there would be the same sympathy today. On occasions when I have shown the work publicly, many people remarked that they liked the 'look' of the work, in other words its form, but disliked the references to the tragedy of the war in Ireland, its content. I do not accept that one can separate the two and always took this to be a veiled insult, because the content to me is the more important thing. It's not the language you use but what you have to say that matters.

IRIS: Do you feel that being women artists, at a time when feminism was becoming an important current, has provided you with space to make statements through your work, that at a different time you would not have had?

Pat: The British Film Institute funded the making of *Maeve*. Around that time they were supporting more progressive projects and funded Irish film makers like Joe Comerford and Thaddeus O'Sullivan.

With me, they got two tokens for the price of one... Irish and a woman. Of course there are two things you can do in response to that. I could have decided not to participate in being taken up in this way, knowing that my work would be dropped just as quickly when Ireland and feminism are no longer fashionable causes for the British left. Or you can say: Ireland and feminism are what my work is about. I am a woman film maker. If there is a fashion for this film, well so be it, because, when that fashion ends, I know I will be still fighting my corner from a similar political position.

Rita: I had my first exhibition in 1972 and I think I did benefit from a change in consciousness towards the work of women. Critics were beginning to ask 'Why don't we see more women artists?' and galleries started looking for a token representation. On the other hand, I was often conscious of an antagonism towards what was perceived as traditionally 'feminine' qualities in my handling of materials and colour. My experience of the women's movement helped me towards an understanding that these very qualities which had been denigrated (by male critics) could themselves constitute a dynamic component in the work. For example, I sensed a dialectic between the harshness of content (paintings about the Talbot Street bombings, or the configuration of the H-Blocks) and the discipline and restraint of their expression. Also, the low-key unaggressive presentation helped to draw people into the work, look more closely, question and think about the meaning of the images.

IRIS: A lot of people would dismiss your work as being 'peripheral' – outside mainstream culture. When you are working, do you have your audience in mind? Do you feel that your work reaches the people that you want it to?

Rita: People often dismiss the work of artists because they see it as a rarified practice, with no relevance to the real world. But it depends upon your vantage point. When we organised the women's show at the Hayward Gallery in 1978, many of the artists who were present at different times in the gallery were surprised at the number of visitors who wanted to talk to them about their work. Organised discussions and performances were well attended. The audience for the visual arts is surprisingly large, as a visit to the Tate Gallery on any Sunday afternoon will demonstrate, and probably growing. If a person is skilled in this field, why should the gallery space not be as effective as any other platform for communicating ideas? I actually never thought of myself as an 'artist'. If asked, I would always describe myself as a teacher – it was other people who began to give me that label.

Pat: I used to think of myself as an artist, but I didn't like how the art scene worked. I do see art as a need in society, like food and shelter. I don't like the way the international art world abuses creative insight by glorifying things as precious and personal on the one hand and then, in the marketplace, reducing that insight to the level of a commodity. The art made within that system is what endures as representing an era, because of the way

dealers and collectors construct and maintain art movements. I know the film business is notorious for those very reasons. Sometimes I miss the immediacy of painting, but I have simply moved away from that way of thinking.

In film making, you have to include so many people in every part of the process – bar writing the script – that the insight becomes communal because the final product is shaped by so many. What you have is a tension between your original ideas and their expression, and then how the audience responds to that.

Maeve as a film was intended to provoke debate, which meant, for a long time, it was necessary for me to travel with it, because I had to take responsibility for arguments it raised. **Ann Devlin**, the film I have just finished is different. It tells the story of her life and is made on 85mm and has to be shown in cinemas. It's paradoxical that, in attempting to reach a wider audience by making a real cinema film, you lose another kind of distribution.

IRIS: *Maeve* raised a lot of issues and promoted discussion. How would you answer the criticism that, for English feminist audiences, it provided a 'cop out' for women who chose to dismiss republicanism as 'patriarchal'. For women in the North, there was no woman they could identify with either. In the film, Maeve states quite adamantly that there is no space for her in Liam's revolution. In other words, for feminists within the Republican Movement.

Pat: I find it worrying because it does pinpoint a failure on my part, although I know by now that I am not responsible for every shade of opinion thrown up at the film. Whenever I have been out with *Maeve*, the question is always asked: 'Who is the film for? Who is the audience?' I know what I wanted the film to do but I was not aiming it at a particular group. That, I think, would limit its usefulness. In a sense, it is intended to become useless. People will look at it, talk about it, then either reject it or use it to get somewhere else. It means different things in different places. A lot of republican women were outraged by the lack of a strong republican woman's voice in the film and resented their views being presented by a man. I accept that criticism but I also think that, whatever way you look at it, the language of republicanism is patriarchal. Women are fighting for their place with that, the way they are anywhere else. The Maeve/Liam dialogues





● A scene from 'Anne Devlin'

are very important, although they don't work for a lot of people. One of the questions raised by the film is: 'What is a hero? What is a heroine?' In a sense, the film is an attempt to transcend gender. I didn't want to create a situation where the audience could say: 'Yes - I believe in this person from beginning to end'. The film consciously refuses this identification. I think it is crucial that feminism and republicanism confront each other in a useful way. Because it is quite possible to achieve a 32-county republic and for women to remain oppressed. Likewise, it is conceivable that women could win proper childcare facilities, equal employment and reproductive rights while Ireland remained divided. In Ireland, their revolutionary potential is in relationship to each other.

IRIS: Rita, as a woman artist, why did you choose to highlight the H-Blocks in your work, instead of producing some work on the women prisoners in Armagh?

Rita: It was seeing the letter 'H' on the wall paintings of West Belfast which drew my attention to its power as an expression of the anger of republican men and women. It was only when I came to Derry for the recent exhibition that it became clear to me that this letter 'H' had a much more profound meaning - one of resistance, rather than oppression. I don't think I properly understood the complexity of it as a symbol until I saw my own work in Derry. At a formal level, the geometry of the figure 'H' had a perfection which interested me, and the drawings are like architects' blueprints of the build-

ings at Long Kesh. I was struck by the contrast between the beauty of the geometry and the horror of the meaning which the configuration carried. In Ireland, this meaning is instantly understood, whereas in Britain even now the letter 'H' might just as easily stand for Hospital or Hydrant. Using the figure 'H' enabled me to work in that area between abstraction and figuration which has fascinated me in painting since my student days, though I think if I had understood how potent it was as a symbol I would have been hesitant to use it.

I did not seek to differentiate between the men at Long Kesh and the women prisoners in Armagh since this symbol seemed to me to go far beyond the particular reference to the H-Blocks. I have always felt strongly about the conditions of the women in Armagh and was particularly moved when Mairead Farrell went on hunger-strike. She has the same name as my mother. When I go back to Leitrim, I am known as Mary Ann Farrell's daughter. Since I am not a figurative artist it would have been difficult for me to formulate my work around the women. That is for someone in Ireland to do. It's important that women are not forgotten or made invisible.

IRIS: Pat, your latest film is about Anne Devlin, a woman who appears in Irish history as Robert Emmet's servant. Why did you choose to make a film about her?

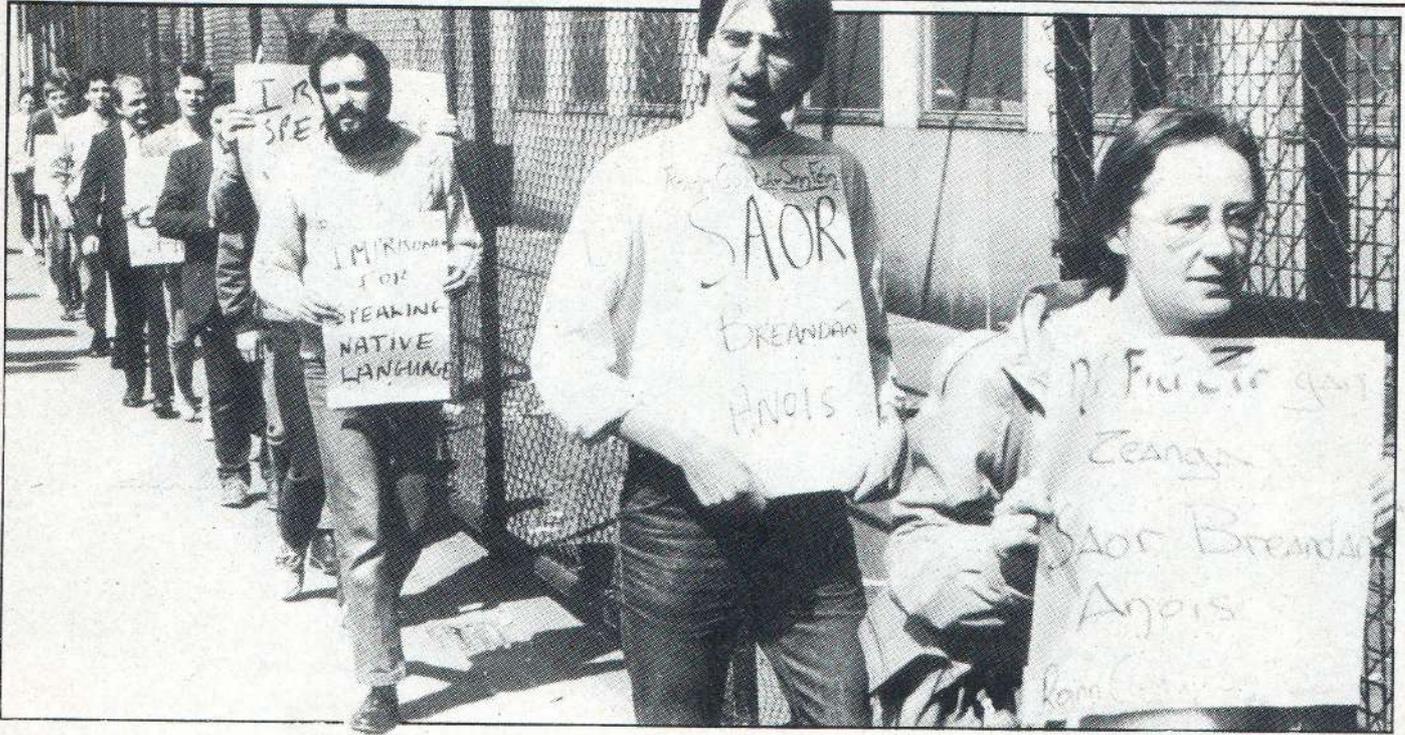
Pat: The women who are remembered in Irish history are the remarkable larger-than-life ones, like Constance Markiewicz and Maud Gonne; the women who were in the centre of the

action and whose memory has accumulated legends. I wanted to make a film about Anne Devlin because she is representative of the hundreds of women who bear the brunt of it afterwards, but who are not there on the day. The film is as historically accurate as I could make it because I want it to give information as much as anything else. A couple of people have said that I've made Anne Devlin out to be more than she was, but that's only because the film attempts to look at historical events through the eyes of someone who most people think of as peripheral.

If Anne Devlin is remembered at all, it is as someone who died for love of Robert Emmet and Ireland, in that order. The film sets out to challenge this accepted fiction. It tells a woman's story in a straightforward and chronological way, beginning when she is 18 and living with her family in Wicklow in the aftermath of the rebellion. It goes through the period of her life she spent working with Emmet towards the 1803 Rising and shows her subsequent imprisonment and torture. Although she may or may not have been in love with Emmet, she was clearly committed to the rebellion. At the close of the film, instead of saying 'The End', a caption says that the film is dedicated "To the women forgotten by history: the women who worked for freedom and are still imprisoned for their beliefs".

Anne Devlin will be on release later this summer and is being distributed by the Irish Film Institute.

A catalogue about Rita Donagh's work on the H-Blocks entitled *Long Meadow* is available from the Orchard Gallery, Orchard Street, Derry ■



Leathnú an chultúir dhúchasaigh i mBéal Feirste 1984

LE DOIMINIC Mac DIARMADA

AN t-Éireannach gan Ghaeilge, ní Gael é. Níl ann ach piteog d'Éireannach. Tá an Gael bródúil as a chultúr, tréan, tarbh-ánta. Is mian leis iomrascáil, slíúchas, spórt, coimhlint. An té ar Gael é, is é is fearr ar fad leis. Tá an duine eile ar nós reithe, é spochta.

"Béarla amach, an Ghaeilge isteach." Scairt na peacaíthe gan ainm d'aon guth taobh amuigh de Chúirt a Dó i mBéal Feirste le déanaí. "An ceadmhach dom mo theanga féin a úsáid i mo thír féin, ar shráideanna na mórchathrach?" Sin ceist a chuir Breandán Ó Fiaich ar an bhreitheamh: cad é an choir a bhí ina choinne? The Free State's Bunreacht clearly states, Irish is the first language of the state: The island of Ireland consists of thirty-two counties. Cá ndeachaigh an seisear bheaga?

Téitear dom gur cóir léiriú a thabhairt ar thimpeallacht chultúrtha ar leith atá beo i dTuaisceart na hÉireann. Tá feall déanta uirthi, ó thuaidh agus ó dheas. Tá an cultúr Gaelach, an cuspóir náisiúnta Éire, í saor agus Gaelach, agus an dúchas, beo inniu. Táid ann

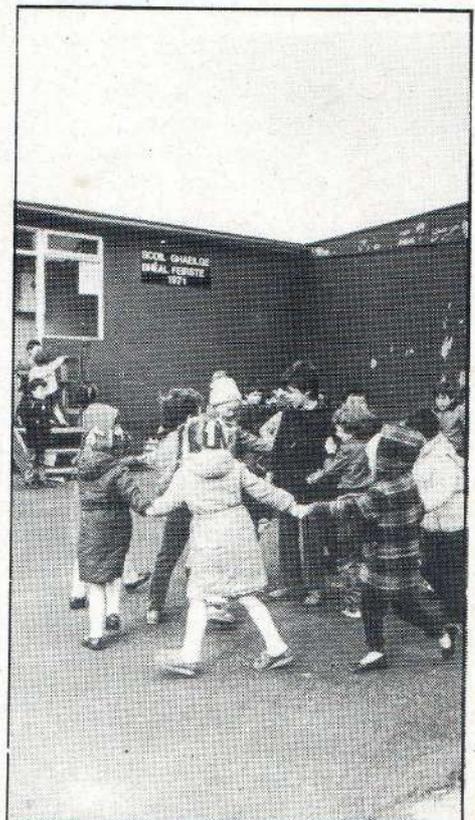
a d'éarfadh gur úrsmaoineamh é an cultúr dúchais a sheachadadh, ach is leor nod don eolach.

Tá an borradh céanna in Iarthar Bhéal Feirste is a bhí i measc ghlúnta fií, bard agus cláirseoirí leis na céadta siar. Tháinig sin anuas chugainn, sna hochtóidí, tríd an Chraoibhín, an Píarsach agus Raidió SaorChonamara.

Tá seanbhallóga ris fós, óir, tá corpus mór cainteoirí Gaeilge ag tarraingt anáil faoin scamall ceanna fanar shiuil Aodh Mac Domhnaill, Somhairle Bryson agus Roibeárd Mac Adhaimh, dhá chéad bliain ó shin. Táid ag gabháil den obair chéanna, táid ag triall ar na cuspóirí ar éag mórán ar a son. Tá an leatrom, an tromaíocht an cos-ar-bolg, an scrios cultúrtha agus an bréantas ann go fóill.

LE blianta sa tír, tá an teanga ina luí ar leaba a báis di, ó bhí Cath Cionn tSáile, an tmeacht Mór agus an tOcras Mór ann. Mar sin de, ní athbheochan atá i gceist i mBéal Feirste mar ní bhfuair an dúchas riamh bas sa tír seo, a bhuf le Dia. B'fhéidir gur fearr caomhnú traidisiúin a ghéirstean di.

D'éag sí minic go leor ar shoithigh anonn chun an Oilcain Uir, dhiultaigh Éireannaigh a bpáistí a thógáil i nGaeilge thall, ach go hannamh, ar eagla go bhfaighidís bás den ocras: "Ní bhfaighidís do chuid Gaeilge níos faide ná Leitir Ceanainn thú." Meon den



● Scoil Ghaeilge Bhéal Feirste

tseort céanna atá ag gabháil do mhuintir na tíre seo ó chéadbhruigh Seán Buí meon na hImpireachta anuas ar shliocht Gael; tugtar aineolas, nóschuma nó eagla air. Ach, féadaim a rá, sin trí rudaí nach geireann isteach ar phobal Gaelach Bhéal Feirste Cois Cuain.

Táthar ag iarraidh ciall na ngnásanna agus an traidisiúin Ghaelaigh a bhrath, ar fud na cathrach. Ar an taobh amháin, ta Gaelu na logainmneacha sraide, caitheamh na bhfainní freastal ar ranganna ag Cumann Chluain Ard, ag Sinn Féin agus ag Conradh na Gaeilge (Craobh Roibeárd Uí Sheachnasaigh go háirithe). Is iomaí cúlra ag múinteoirí ach fagfaidh me sin mar abhar taighde ag Gael óg eile.

Tá múnlaí áirithe ar cóir tarraingt astu chun doimhneacht an scéil a aimsiú. Orthu sin, níl an *Irish News* ná aon pháipéar laethúil gallda eile – ní leor a alt seachtainiúil an *Line Chasta*. Tá an páipéar neamhspleách, *Preas an Phobail* a chuirtear le chéile ar Bhóthar na bhFál, tá *Iris an Phobail* (*Nuachtán Bhaile Andarsain*), nuachtán dhá theangach. Tá lear mór fógraí le feiceáil ansin, a insíonn dúinn faoi imeachtaí Gaeilge ar fud an "Iarthair".

MOLAIM an borradh faoin chultúr agus na ranganna céilí agus ceoil ag an CLG atá sasta ranganna Gaeilge agus ceoil a sholáthar, rud nár tharla go forleathan gur thosaigh *Nuachtán Bhaile Andarsain* ar fógraí Gaeilge a chur isteach chun an scéal a bheachtú. Chan dadaidh beagán!

Tá iarchimí poblachtacha le moladh de bharr na ranganna Gaeilge atá ar bun acu sa cheantar. Tá ceacht le foghlaim on mhéid Gaeilge a labhraítear sna H-Bhlocanna agus sna príosúin: ná déantar feall orthu, is cóir an teanga a úsáid ar gach ócáid agus is féidir. Ní cóir dúinn sinn a sliú go leibhéal na nGall ar ár sráideanna – nach raibh oideachas ná léann riamh orthu.

Bunaíodh scoil Ghaeltacht Bhóthar Seoighe i 71 agus níor tugadh "aitheantas rialtais" di go dtí ar na mallaibh. Ach, ina ainneoin sin, níor tugadh pingin rua go foill di. Caithfidh muid bheith faicheallach roimh an Ghall a rá linn: "We respect both cultures now" (an é an ceann dílseach agus an ceann fíordhílseach atá sé a mhaíomh?) Meabhraítear air seo.

Ciallaíonn sin, ar ndóigh, nach bhfuil aon teilifís ná raidió ag gabháil i rith an lae sa tír i dteanga na n-uaisle Gaelacha. Ní féidir céim ollscoile a bhaint amach sa tír i nGaeilge ar fad: (leigheas, meáin chumarsáide, dlí srl.) Cad é is féidir a dhéanamh faoi? Téigh go Béal Feirste, a chara dhil, breathnaigh ar chomh maith agus atá ag éirí leo le scoil Ghaeilge agus trí naiscoil. Ta lion na bpaistí meadaithe: tá intleacht bheo le mothú: tá na hamhráin, na damhsaí agus an ceol acu. Tá tuismitheoirí na bpaistí an-diograiseach agus cheana féin, táid ag gabháil i bhfeidhm ar mheon na Sé gContaetha – sraith úr bhnuoideachais i scoil i nDoire, naiscoil le foscailt in Ard Eoin (tuaisceart Bhéal Feirste) roimh i bhfad.

NÍ thuigeann agus ní fheiceann bunadh na hÉireann cás na nGael sa tuaisceart. Ná bítear ag brath ar fhinnscéalta RTE agus bréaga na nuachtán *Éireannacha* – caithfear dul ann agus an spiorad a fheiceáil duit féin.

Bunaíodh naiscoil (an Tine Bheo) ar an Trá Ghearr agus ranganna fideoige i gcuid dár sólanna (leisure centres). Bhunaigh Sinn Féin



● Seisiún ceoil le togha na gceoltóirí, in Iarthar Bhéal Feirste

ranganna ceoil i dTeach Uí Chonghaile agus Clann Mhic Phéice ranganna póbairreachta agus feadóige i Halla na Mainistreach, Cluain Ard. Tá Gaeilge á labhairt go bródúil ansin.

I dtithe tábhairne, tá "Trath na gCeist" i nGaeilge, i bPáirc Mhic Easmáin, Oíche Chéadaoin (céard faoi Croker agus Páirc Uí Chui?) Ta oicheanta ag an Chonradh sa "Swillybrin", ag Sinn Féin i "gCumann na Méirleach" agus i "gCumann Sóisialta Bhaile Andarsain" agus sa "Sean Mhuileann": iad uilig i gceantar na bhFál!

Is iomaí fógra Gaeilge i dtacsaithe dubha agus i siopaí na bhFál. Cuimhnítear nach ar mhaithe le deontais Ghaeltachta ata seo amhlaidh, ní dalta áiteanna eile Galltachta ar imeall na Mór Ghaeltacht! Níl an pobal anseo aineolach, fuar, beag beann ar a gcultúr. Tá cath ar bun – athghabháil na teanga sin athghabháil na tíre, athghabháil na tíre sin athghabháil na teanga. Cad is fiú brat trídathach againn mas i mBearla Bhaile Atha Cliath agus Westminster atá muid ag gabháil a labhairt?

IN Éirinn, tá na healaíona traidisiúnta ag ealó, níl sin fíor fá Bhéal Feirste. Táthar ag obair ar sparain agus ar chlairseacha agus dearadh Ceilteach orthu. Tathar ag deanamh a leitheid ar fud na Sé gContae: iar chimí poblachtacha is mó. Tá siopa ealaíne ag Sinn Féin agus ag *Preas an Phobail* – leabhair Ghaeilge agus staire is mó a dhíoltar. Tá an damhsa tábhachtach agus na hamhráin. Is ann do mhórán cumann céilí i mBaile Andarsain, Naomh Eoin agus Ó Conchobhair atá clúiteach. Buíochas le Seamas 'Dúcaí' Ó Mealláin, a chónaigh in árasáin Dhuibhise atá sin fíor. Buíochas leis an Bhrathair Beausang ó Scoil Mhuire; Buíochas le Breandán Mac Maoláin agus le Padraig Ó Dónaill, sagairt a bhfuil na hamhráin Ghaeilge sna hAifrinnti Gaeilge i Seipeal Mhuire, Lána an tSéipéil ar a haon gach Domhnach, i lár na cathrach.

In Eaglais Phóil téitear altóir sa stíl ornáidíochta Ceilteach agus brat altóra i nGaeilge a rinne Benedict Wynne, ó cheantar na bhFál.

Le deireanas, bhí cōincartú Gaeilge ann. B'í an chéad uair riamh i nGaeilge sa deoise. Chuir an dáil sin easgab agus pobal ócáid stairiúil i gcumhne: Chéad Dáil Éireann – ócáid Ghaeilge ach nach raibh Gaeilge ann ó shin i leith, ait a bhfuil tabhacht lei. Beifear ag craoladh imeachtaí Theach Laighean amach anseo – nach náireach an mhaise iad bheith sa teanga a bhfuil cuid dár muintir ag fulaingt agus faoi chuing lena ruaigeadh amach as Éirinn?

Bhuaigh Iarthar Bhéal Feirste, ceart a choíche, dhá dhuais i gComórtas 'Ghlór na nGael' le deireanas. Sin in ainneoin breagpholasaithe ó dheas agus neamhpholasaithe cultuir o thuaidh. Ta an RUC, UDR, UVF, UDA in éadan ár gcultúir. Ní fios go baileach cá mhéad eagraíocht, ó dheas, atá báiuil leis an chultúr, Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann, Údarás na Gaeltachta Gael-Linn agus fiche rud eile: Níl aon dream ag cuidiú go foirm-eálta "béasach" le pobal Bhéal Feirste – a mhalairt de chás atá ann!

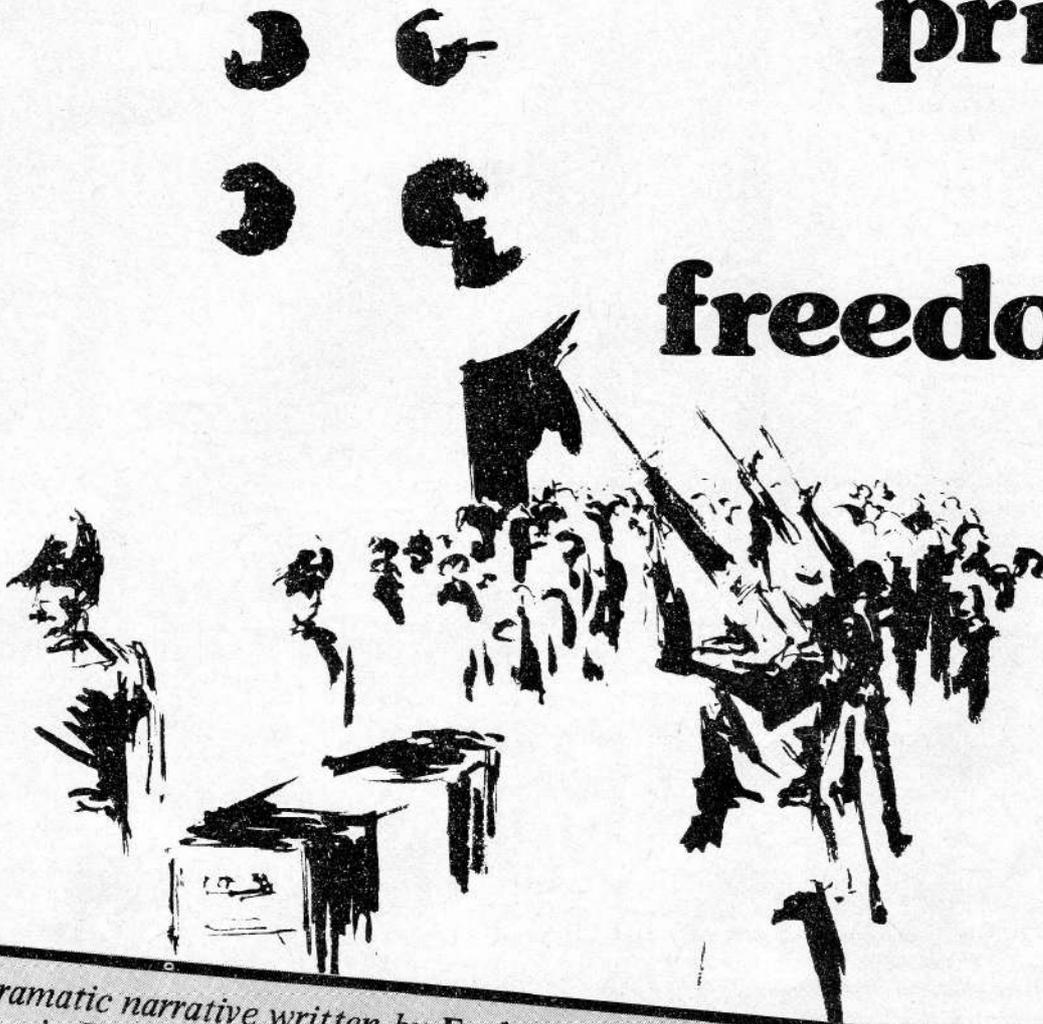
CUIREADH fear Dhoire Seán Ó Canainn i bpríosún Bhóthar Chromghlainne as Gaeilge a labhairt sa chúirt. D'éirigh le Breandán Ó fiaich, fear sean-nois agus muinteoir Gaeilge den scoth, fear teangan bheith aige ina chás – cás ab ea é go raibh sé "ciantach" as Gaeilge a labhairt le fear UDR. Nach dtarlaíonn sin i mBaile Átha Cliath fá cheadúnaisí teilifíse? Cé acu is measa?

Tá oidhreacht chultúrtha ársa anseo in Éirinn, an dara teanga agus an dara litriocht is sine san Eoraip. Ní Gaill ná Sasanaigh sinn ach Gaeil. Is saothriúil gur tógadh Ó Fiaich an lá a cuireadh Seosamh Ó hÉanaí, ní an tsean-nóis. Ní bhfuair ceachtar den dís aitheantas ceart ina thúr féin: Ba choimhthigh iad i mease na nÉireannach. Cén todhchaí atá i ndán do chlanna Éireann?

Bhí ar Ó hÉanaí bás a fháil sula bhfuair sé aitheantas ó na meáin chumarsáide. Ní aithnítear fáith ina dhúiche féin. Níl aon bhaol i mBéal Feirste go bhfaighidh an spiorad Gaelach bás go deo na ndeor. Ná ligtear dó éag ach fás.

Cláraigí leis an ghluaiseacht atá dhá mhíle bliain d'aois: gluaiseacht an dúchais náisiúnaigh ■

The price of freedom



A dramatic narrative written by Eoghan Mac Cormac in H7, Long Kesh, in December 1983, and subsequently smuggled out to IRIS. Illustrations by Fintan O'Hagan.

Narrator:

*On March 1st 1976,
In prisons in the occupied part of the nation,
The British drew from their bag of tricks
The well-worn policy of criminalisation.
It was by this ill-fated plan they hoped
To beat the army of liberation
And many terms were developed
To put the plan in operation.*

*At a stroke they banned the special status
Formerly given to prisoners of war
And introduced a new apparatus
Whereby all prisoners were on a par.
Well almost... for still the Special Powers
And Special Police were to be used
To put unspecial people behind bars
Through Special Courts... it's a bit confused.*

*There were, of course, the Special Laws
Specially written for the Special Branch,
And special cover prevented flaws –
Justice was thwarted in every inch.
So the Special Squads of the RUC
Lifted unspecial people and beat them up.
In hundreds, mind, not two or three.*

*And made them drink the bitter cup
Of torture for days and nights and days.
And forced confessions and barbarity
Was the way it was, for here crime pays,
And the criminals were in control, you see.*

*So with Special Courts to put them inside –
No more than a 'legal' formality –
They built a special place to hide
Those victims who showed disloyalty.
The name they gave this special place
Was H-Blocks, because they were so shaped,
To give the hell a hellplus face,
And in secrecy the Blocks were draped.*

*Before a year had come and gone
The Blocks began to earn their keep
While the sons of Kate Ni Houlihan
Were herded up to the nightmare sleep.
The Blocks were bright and newly built
To designs the nasty Nazis sold,
And stamped with torture's hellish gilt
So all within could be controlled.*

The rules were few but hard and fast
 And disobedience was a fault.
 They brought a vengeance from a past
 Regime, revived to suit the vault.
 Rule one, the Screws are boss;
 Rule two, prison clothes must be worn;
 Rule three, any breach means a loss
 Of every right, all privileges shorn;
 Rule four, prison work to be done by all;
 Rule five, don't rock the boat;
 And God help those who don't play ball,
 The Screws'll have them by the throat.

So into the Blocks men started pouring
 As the Special Courts worked overtime
 And the system set about restoring
 (In modern guise) the bed of lime.

For lime it was to eat the soul
 And burn the mind of rebellious hearts,
 And lime-filled was that prison hole
 From where all sanity departs.
 It burned, it scorched, it ate at men,
 It tore the flesh, it scourged the mind,
 It blistered nine parts out of ten,
 It bit what soft spots it could find.

But in this new baptismal font
 A spirit of freedom came to grow,
 And soon its cause the spirit would haunt
 With resistance, so the world would know
 That the Special Laws and Special Courts
 And Special Blocks and Special Screws
 And Special Police in their Special Forts
 Couldn't break the children of Roisin Dubh.

The prison uniforms unused,
 The prison work redundant made,
 The system by its prey abused,
 Resistance by each one displayed,
 And so in retributive pose,
 The British, with the prison staff,
 Invoked new rules concerning those
 Who in the system's face did laugh.
 They left a blanket instead of clothing,
 They took all human rights away,
 They wore a face of utter loathing
 As they tried to beat the IRA.

But the IRA was far from beaten
 And in Long Kesh and Armagh too
 Was born a new and defiant greeting:
 Tíocfaidh ár lá, Na Gaeil abú!

For five long years in filth and squalor
 They tried to drive the spirit low,
 But the POWs stood with valour
 And would not submit to the British foe.

They called it 'crime' to love one's land
 They spewed their propaganda forth
 But the people stood by the 'cursed and damned'
 And marched throughout the occupied North;
 Until at last all roads were tried
 To force the British to concede
 The five demands, and from inside
 The prisons came a cry of need.

A need for help from all who sought
 Justice and freedom for the Irish race,
 Loyal, committed, who would not be bought,
 Determined the empire's might to face.
 For in Armagh and Long Kesh jail
 Came a decision grave, with danger fraught,
 To hunger-strike, the lie to nail
 That our political fight was a criminal plot.

For fifty-three days the hunger-strike lasted,
 The seven who began it were gravely ill,
 The British myth had been truly lambasted
 As the world looked on and prayed with a will
 That none would die, that all would live,



That the sacrifice be not in vain,
 That the five demands the Brits would give
 To end the suffering, torment and pain.
 Then on December's 18th day,
 The Brits produced a document
 Which gave the room to end the fray
 And signalled better times' advent...
 Christmas was near and the hope was ripe
 That the five demands would be granted soon.

But the Brits began once more to snipe —
 They claimed the document offered no boon
 To hopes of justice in the Blocks.
 They'd changed their mind and double-tracked,
 And quickly announced the final shock:
 No change at all; the cards were stacked
 For confrontation once again
 And every bid to avert it failed.

Signs of 'good faith' by the blanketmen
 Were scorned by those who ran the jails.
 The die was cast, the challenge thrown,
 The Brits demanded surrender in vain;
 For surrender was never by these Ogligh known
 And the battle lines were drawn again.

On March 1st, in H-Block 3,
 Bobby Sands embarked on the second fast
 To shake the Brits' conformity,
 And the Battle Emblem bravely clasped.
 What follows here relates three days
 That took place within that tragedy,
 Three days that in so many ways
 Expose the foes of liberty.

SCENE 1

— Living-room of nationalist
 family's house. Their son is on
 hunger-strike

Mother:

On this night of nights I cannot sleep
 On someone else's wound so deep,
 When this very day, expecting heeding,
 While on my bended knee a pleading
 For the help that could have aided
 The son I lost when soldiers raided,
 In the House of the Free State Dail
 The Taoiseach and his band of cronies
 Standing there with hearts so stony
 From my imploring did recoil,
 Called the gardai to evict
 We who tried there to depict
 The plight that faces Ireland's sons.



*On us they turned their English guns,
Plain refusing to assist them
That's hunger-striking for a system
Where in dignity they'd live.*

*But help the Staters wouldn't give,
'End the strike,' was their advising,
While in my heart was anger rising.
Humanity was never close
To those whose crime was ever gross:
Neglecting their partitioned kin –
That is their immortal sin.*

*Was I really so confused
That when point-blank they refused,
I still believed they'd help our cause?
Until I felt the grizzly paws
Of gardai grabbing me and throwing
Me out the door, division sowing.
Ah, never again to trust a Stater!*

*And now the pain that – sooner or later –
I must tell my boy, 'We failed
To rally help from Fine Gael,
Or Fianna Fail for that matter.
All they gave was idle chatter,
Hopes of what they'd like to see,
But what they'd do is beyond me.
They have no desire or notion
To spell out plain a real solution.'*

*Tomorrow morning I must travel
To Long Kesh and there unravel
To my son this sorry tale
That what we hoped from Fine Gael
Is not to be, and so alone,
Once more, they stand in the steps of Tone,
Emmet, O'Rossa and Pearse. The Gael
Alone must man the Bearna Baoil.
From those who should and could assist,
The hand of friendship was a fist.*

Father:

*You're right, but have hope, for working classes
Offer a help which far surpasses
Any the ruling classes offer.
For our sweat filled their brimming coffers
And can we expect that they'd return
The sweat we spilled, the energy burned?
Their profit is their driving light
And out of mind is out of sight.
So those who stand and will not bend
Could well be future foes, to rend
Their precious power. Hence their fear.
Your plea to them was like a spear
That could have pinned them to a wall
While round their heads their world would fall.*

*Patriotism does not enter,
Nor Taig nor Prod nor true Dissenter;
None of these matter, only wealth,
Theirs they gained in cunning stealth,
So they see in every face
Reflections of their own disgrace,
One who might remove their riches
If by chance allegiance switches.
Insular becomes their thinking
While all the time, their island's sinking.
So they cling to every life-belt,
They give their soul to save their pelt.
They have no friends, but allies plenty,
To protect their Six-and-Twenty
Against those who pledge to share
The wealth in proportions just and fair.
And among those allies standing,
Everyone in turn demanding
Share of what the nation offers,
So they too dip from our coffers;
Some take fish, some take land,
Some take money, some take sand,
Some take the very soul inside –
All take Ireland for a ride!
And there among the clutching hands
Of allies, John Bull firmly stands.
Is it any wonder then a stor,
That FitzGerald threw you out the door?*

SCENE 2

– Long Kesh prison hospital

The hunger-striker:

*Maybe now you'll see the reason
I accuse them all of treason,
That fought but fled from in the fray
And left the battle to another day
And another generation's childer,
Hoping they'd be somewhat milder
Than the seventy-seven men*
They swore would never fight again –
The fight they once together fought
Till power with it bitterness brought
To guard the Twenty-Six they'd taken
And left the other Six forsaken,
For other hands in other times
To free with guns dug from the lime
Where fathers with them met their end
In prison yards where none depend
On mercy from their jailers' eyes,
For those same eyes that now despise
Were once a comrade's eyes that saw
In civil war uncivil law.*

*And such is law that it will bend
In supple shapes to quickly send
A clutching rope that will not break
To choke true sons around the neck.
For hung and shot and blasted high
At Free State hands did brave men die.*

*Should I expect that sixty years
Of passing time removed the sneers
That sent my comrades to their death?
Could I expect a different breath
To issue from the self-same lungs
That cursed the truth in the native tongue?
Nay, nor help would I expect from these,
They'd sooner see me starve and freeze
And steal my body ere my wake
And o'er me pour a concrete lake
To set and harden, and keep sealed tight
The spirit of freedom of Ireland's fight.
For thus they dealt with Proinsias Stagg,
A stolen corpse, they shamed the flag.*

*Seventy-seven republican prisoners were executed as 'reprisals' by the Free State during the civil war.



*Aye, this hunger is at me eating,
Morning and evening an ache is me greeting,
But in this war to be a winner
I must gradually grow thinner
Losing muscle and fatty matter,
So the weak can beat the strong
In a war where rules are wrong.*

*Here our strength is in our weakness,
Here our hope is in our bleakness,
For by this sacrifice and dying
Hope is living. So don't be crying,
This is no place for depression.
Here, where faced with such aggression,
For the dream betrayed in 'Twenty-One
I may die, but by death I've won.
Weep no tears of sadness for me
Do not caoin nor mourn o'er me
But from a hill do three shouts give
To say that in death a warrior lives.*

Narrator:

*Now take the family and their plight
And ask yourself is it any wonder
That when faced with England's assembled might
They start to feel they're going under?
Times they're up with spirits high
Hearing of some fresh intervention,
But after each a weary sigh
On finding out the true intention.
The list is long with different groupings
Who at stages said they cared;
But out of each, the Brits' recoupings
Of lost face – that task they shared:
Euro MPs, Red Cross armbands,
The Pope's monsignor and more besides.*

*As each one gathers another disbands,
In and out like so many tides,
But each one had a common function
To shift the blame from Britain's door,
To the killer – extreme unction,
To the victim – salt in the sore.*

*And all the while the men lay dying,
Weekly, monthly, they passed away
Till the world cried out to highest heaven
That the Brits should show humanity;
But ne'er a tear would be seen a-falling
From the English terrorists at all.
And never a day did they heed the calling,
They guarded close their funeral pall,
For there within the Blocks of anguish
Stood the rock she'd finally stumble on.
On this rock one day she'll finally perish –
Let the tyrant fall before too long.*

*It was in a belief that with the people
United some way could be found
That from Fermanagh's spires and steeples
And Tyrone's mountains came the sound
Of marching and tramping along the roads
Of a people united as never before.
With eager hands they took the load
And cried from in the deep heart's core:
Yes! We support the five demands,
Save his life, our votes protect him.
And more than thirty thousand came
And cast their votes in Bobby's favour.
But Britain cursed, and to her shame
Allowed to die the lad who was braver,
Braver by far than Britain's 'heroes',
In courage steeped from his mother's womb.
But Thatcher sat like a fiddling Nero
And Bobby Sands earned a hero's tomb.*

SCENE 3

– Back in the family house.

Mother:

*From the unity the people displayed
Britain could, I'm sure, be swayed.
What's to lose if now we ask
The SDLR to join this task
Forgetting any different views,*



Surely to God they won't refuse.
After all, they're all still Irish,
I'll go and make a few enquiries,
Ask them to withdraw in protest
From the council seats and contest
England to save our sons' lives.

For democracy through the councils thrives,
Sure isn't it the only token
Of democracy that's left unbroken?
And though I know it's just a show
Where democratic ways be damned
It's on that pretext they convene,
Oath or no oath to the queen.
So surely if they all withdrew
And left it to the loyal few
The last resemblance would be gone
'Democracy' couldn't carry on?

That would make the British think!
That would bring it to the brink!
Internationally they'd tremble
When but one side would assemble.
Total boycott of their system,
Nationalists do not assist them.
They kill our sons in a prison cell
And so their state can go to hell!

That's the way to force the issue,
To tear the mask away like tissue.
That's what I will do tonight
Invite Hume's crowd to join the fight.
The hunger-strike is way beyond
Political bickering, so we'll bond,
Tonight they'll rally to the call...
United we stand, divided we fall.

SCENE 4

— SDLP office

SDLP politician:

Madam dear, you've posed a question
And I hope you understand
That we like your kind suggestion
To support the five demands.
Begod, we will now, that's a fact
Support the lads in search of rights
But, being us, we'll use some tact
To get the credit for their fight.

Now what about this scheme of ours,
Bring an end to this marching fashion,
And then from in our ivory towers
We'll ask the Brits to show compassion.
Compassion! Now there's a handy word,
(And ye's thought I was only joking)
And the political part is fairly blurred,
In case the British think we're helping.
Sure everybody knows already
They're POWs — but that's not a quote —
Admitting that makes things unsteady
And we don't want to rock the boat.
It's easy saying give them letters
And parcels, clothes and all that scéal.
Humanity calls to make things better
For every prisoner in every jail,
There ye are, we're all supporters,
The SDLP would do no less —
Drop us a good word with the reporters,
It always helps to get good press.

Mother:

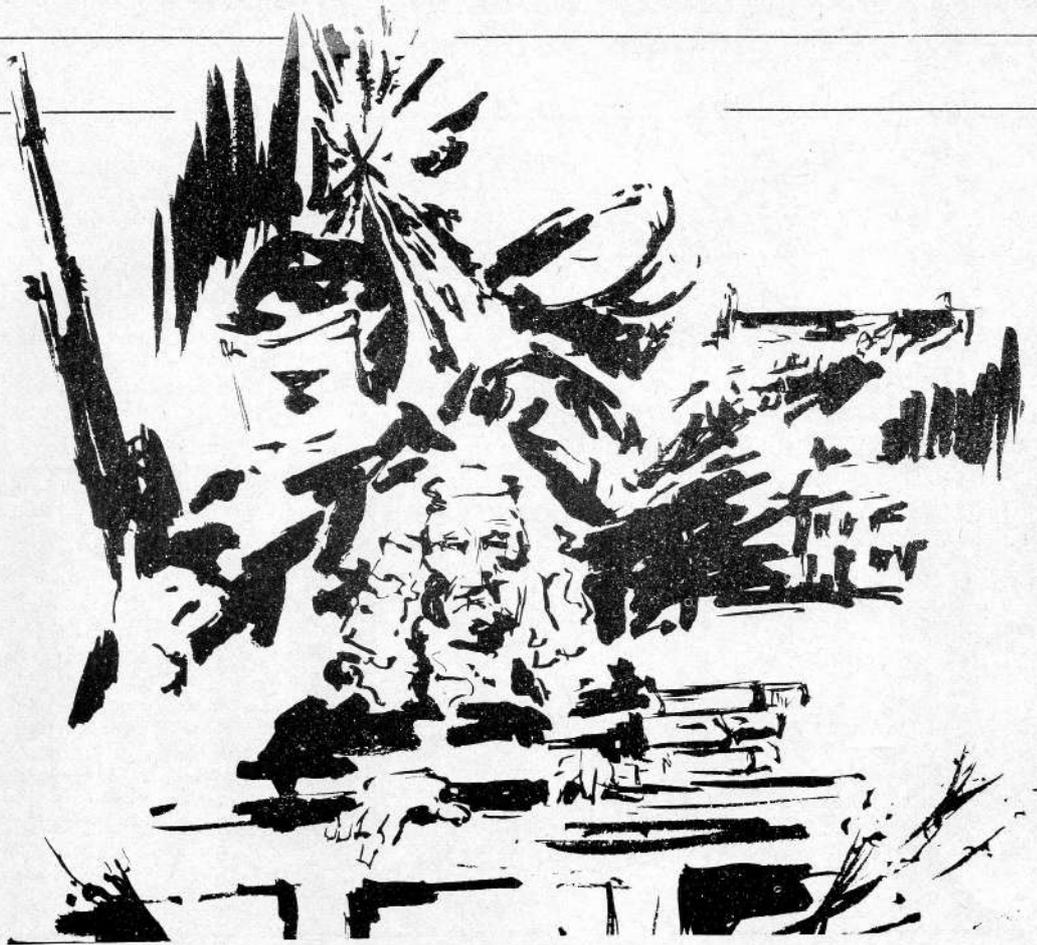
But what about the council meetings,
Will you give them farewell greetings?
Will you say you'll not attend
Until the strike is at an end?
'Til the five demands are in the sack
Will you say you won't go back?

SDLP politician:

Ach, come on now missus, what are ye saying,
Surely you should have more sense,
It's at times like this we have to stay in,
Now that things are very tense.
Who but us would give opinions
To the Brits what things are sound,
And that no matter what the minions
Do, that we will still be around.
Can't ye see that you're devising
A strategy that's falling flat,
For all you're doing is polarising,
We'll never get civil rights like that!

Let us ask our British masters
To relent on these demands,
But I know they'd give in so much faster
If you could get the strike to end.
Ye see, missus, please believe us,
Mrs Thatcher is in a fix;
She's told us so, she wouldn't deceive us
For don't we know all her oul' tricks.





*The fix she's in is rather complex,
The hunger-strike won't let her move:
To put it in a clearer context,
She her manhood has to prove.
She's prepared to let them suffer,
Fast for justice, finally die,
While the MCC will be her buffer
(Middle-Class Catholics such as I).
So to this problem our solution
Is to wring our hands in shock
And try to offer absolution
To those who built the cursed Blocks.*

*You say we should withdraw in a body
From the council seats we hold
Leaving democracy looking shoddy
So the British stand would fold,
But think about the loss of wages
That would force our side to make,
Begod, I'd never face the rages
Our lads would have, for goodness sake!*

*Here's our final offer and tender:
Put the pressure on Sinn Fein
To get a final, lasting surrender —
Then all will be as right as rain.
For didn't John Hume tell us the story
That the bloody Provos are to blame;
If they'd give in it'd be hunky-dory —
So go and blow out freedom's flame.*

Mother:

*So that's your stand for history's pages,
You won't join us in this fight,
You'd sooner keep your seats and wages
Than come and march with us tonight.
Ah! Curse the day you ever sold
Your heart for England's tarnished gold
For money cannot buy a free man
And money cannot bribe what's true,
And sir, to me you're just a wee man
And truth was never known by you.
Your shame will long before you linger
You who wouldn't lift a finger
To help a mother save her son.*

*You'd rather take the queen's grey shilling,
Hard may you earn them every one
For being so cruel and unwilling
To take for once a manly stand
In the cause of your native land.
You blame the Provos for the dying,
But that fine statement you can't explain,
Do you think the IRA aren't trying
To save their lives. You'd be insane
To think they're finding pleasure
In seeing their army wither and die,
But then, that just shows the measure
Of how much on Brit propaganda you rely.*

*D'ye think the boys like the conveyor belt
Of hospital beds and woolly sheep's pelt?
Or fresh spring water by the gallon,
Pain-relieving water with vulture's talons?
D'ye think they're fighting for a place in the queue
To hunger for weeks and die? Would you?
To live on nothing but water and salt
And only death or victory to call a halt?
That is dragging their bodies into the grave
While five demands their spirits crave.*

*Ah! sure, ah! sure, it's a glorious thing
But glory's bell has a deathly ring,
And for every peal of that ominous bell
An Irish rebel that fought till he fell
Is standing once more before the throne
And the Lord will say: 'D'ye tell me, alone
They left ye to fight for justice and right?
Begorrah, that's cruel, a terrible plight.
And did nobody come to visit that place
Except your poor family, that's a disgrace.
And ye tell me that naked they kept you there,
By Heaven, that's an awful state of affairs.
And for justice you finally hungered and died—
Well c'mon up here by me right-hand side,
For my own son said, and Him on the Mount,
That blessed are they on all these counts,
But on my left side there'll be folks a-going
For the things they failed to do a-knowing.
For I was naked and they left me standing,
And I was in prison my rights demanding,
And I was hungry and they gave me a stone,
And I was lonely but they left me alone.'*



*Aye, that's what He'll say, and the death bell ringing,
And up above there'll be angels singing,
But for all the glory that Heaven holds
I'd save my son from being enrolled
In the golden book for another while.
I'm sure the Lord would prefer the smile
Of a mother with her son in her arms
Knowing he's safe and out of harm.*

*That's why I came to ask your assistance
To get me over this patch of bother,
To walk with me a little distance,
But now ye scorn the cry of a mother.
Ye've looked at me with your sorry eyes
As if ye care, but it's all above ye,
As if the favour was a wild surprise,
But the most ye can do is say 'God love ye'.
Well thanks for nothing, I'll take my leave
And knock elsewhere, and hope they'll open.
Some day ye'll live to be sorry, and grieve
The day ye dismissed a mother's hoping.*

Narrator:

*Now there enters in the lurch
Emissaries of the Church,
Seeing the families' fear forboding
They soon begin their shrewd eroding
Of the unity of purpose,
The mystic bond, the Familia Corpus
That held the relatives together,
Kept them firm in stormy weather,
Let them see that they alone
Had power far beyond their own.*

*So the clergy gathered round them
And in misadvice they drowned them
Pulling here and pushing hither
Unity began to wither.*

*Giving false hopes to their heart
Unity soon fell apart,
Clergy, clergy everywhere
Unity began to tear,
From black cassock to hat of red,
Till that unity was dead.*

SCENE 5

— In the family house once more

Father:

*There I am a penitent sinner
Down upon my bended knee
While my boy is growing thinner
Dying for his dignity.
So I'll go unto the chaplain*

*There to lay my poor soul bare
Telling him my soul is grappling
With a bitterness that's there;
Asking him to lead and guide me
And the son of my own flesh —
Father, will you stand beside me
And my son up in Long Kesh?
On hunger-strike he's dying, Padre
For five basic, just demands,
Father, be his friend and cadre
And with him in his struggle stand.*

SCENE 6

— Parochial house

Priest:

*Aye, my son it's so confusing,
To win his rights your son is losing,
And his very life he's using —
And that's a noble thing,
But I fear there's a contradiction
What you see as fact is fiction,
This passive protest is causing friction —
Had e'er a dove a sting?
Didn't our brother Bishop state
That hunger-striking is a fate
That surely leads to Hell's own gate,
And that's an awful place.*

*I know that Bishop was a Brit
And acting on the queen's own writ,
But ne'er the less I think he's fit
To moralise our race.
I can't aid your son's starvation
I can't help the incarnation
Of those who died for our great nation
To give our land its breath.
And what I'll do is undermine
The hunger-strike, the plan is mine,
But you this form I'll give to sign
To prevent your son's death.*

*Let me tell you now in conscience
Of the gift of medical science
That can stop this fatal sentence,
Though you're running out of time,
You're the father, duty's clear,
You must save your son's life dear,
With his decision don't persevere,
Just sign the dotted line.
He has lost his sense of thinking,
In the Long Kesh pit he's sinking,
Loose that arm with which you're linking
Others of your tribe.*





*Take the pen and take control
I am the pastor of your soul
This strike has taken a heavy toll
But you can halt its stride.
You have a duty as a father
To prevent this from going further,
Save your son, you have no other
Choice, you know you can't refuse.
Worry not about the five
Demands, keep him alive,
And like before the Church will strive
To meddle and confuse.*

Narrator:

*On and on the priest berated
The father and mother so frustrated,
Filled with parental love and care
Seeing their son a-dying there.
Slowly, slowly, came the message
From the priestly words of message,
Rubbing in his thoughts to ponder,
Leaving them to think and wonder.
Could indeed they save their boy
From death's grip, and then would joy
Ever ring aloud again?*

*Thought became a throbbing pain,
Is it wrong or is it right
To intervene with death in sight?
Would their son have asked for such
After he had suffered so much?
Surely when the coma comes
He's gone so far as to say he won,
For then his power of decision is gone.*

*The mental argument went on and on,
But constantly the priest returned
And through it all his words they burned:
'Save your son, the choice is yours
Until decisions fade in blurs.
Save your son, now make a choice,
Mourn a martyr or rejoice.'
And day and daily, death grew nearer
And day and daily, obscure grew clearer
Until in anguish, sorrow and pain
The father said he'd intervene.
From March the first until October
The hunger-strike had carried on,
Many a man, in mind quite sober,
Sat and cried with each new dawn.
For day would bring the chilling news*



*Of yet another martyr's passing,
And documentaries carried views
Of the dangers of relentless fasting.*

*By the month of August ten men died
And now the clergy were insisting
That every path had then been tried
And that the hunger-strike was listing.
They vowed to sink the battle ship
By using family interventions,
They preached this course on every trip
Around the hunger-strike conventions.*

*As families already suffering too much
Were coaxed to say they'd intervene,
The clergy kicked away the crutch
Of church support for the cealachán.
And the families came to tell their sons
They couldn't stand by and watch them die
They had tried and fought, they had almost won
But hope was gone, the end was nigh.*

*And pause a while and recollect
How much these families suffered too.
They mourned and prayed, their hearts were wrecked,
They cried and watched the awful view
Of men who lay in a prison cell
And starved for very basic rights
To end what was a living hell
Of tragic days and endless nights.*

*They faced the British government
They asked for justice for their kin
They'd worked till their energy was spent
And now they faced attack from within,
For where a clerical friendly hand should be
They found rebuke and subtle threat,
They all deserve our sympathy
They acted with love and deep regret.
They faced an orchestrated move
From those who sought to end the fast.*

*And now their love they had to prove
And love was never harder cast.*

*So in the prison the news went round
The hunger-strike could not survive.
The grief, for comrades gone, profound,
Sorrow tinged joy for those alive,
And the 'strikers faced with all these facts
Knew that the hunger-strike must end.
For seven months it had stood intact,
A pillar for justice, a dying trend.*

*And so a final plea was spoken
Telling of the decision to cease
But asking not to think that broken
Was the struggle for justice, freedom and peace.
For ten men died for basic rights
And questioned Britain's right to rule
And that objective guided the fight:
Their bodies became their fighting tool.*

*They had tried so hard against all odds
To gain the five demands they sought,
And along that road they trod,
With dignity and suffering the nation taught.
And many, for the soil they cherished,
Made the ultimate sacrifice,
Cold and hungry, ten men perished
Paying freedom's costly price.*

*And so beneath the soil they lie,
The soil they fought so hard to free,
For Mother Ireland many die,
To secure your liberty.*

*Yes, ten men died to achieve an order
That gave a dignity to man,
On the march of a nation put no border,
On the march of a people call no stand.
For in this fight the nation rose
And the people marched in united demand
And faced the foe with earnest pose
Defending the right to free our land.*

A REVIEW OF IRA MILITARY OPERATIONS DURING THE PERIOD NOVEMBER 1983 – JUNE 1984

A war of sacrifice and attrition

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



THE news, as we go to press, of the tragic death of IRA Volunteer William Price in County Tyrone, while on active service, is a sharp reminder of the risks daily – and willingly – undertaken by republican soldiers across the North in the unrelenting war against the Brits.

The 28-year-old Volunteer died when he came under fire from a Brit stake-out patrol close to a furniture factory at Ardboe, County Tyrone, as an IRA unit moved in to carry out an incendiary attack against this economic target on July 13th. It was the third anniversary of the death of another East Tyrone IRA Volunteer, Martin Hurson from Cappagh, on hunger-strike in the H-Blocks.

William Price's death brings the number of IRA Volunteers to be shot dead in the eight-month period covered here to no less than six. Others have been wounded, and many more arrested and jailed in the same period. By any standard, it is a high rate of attrition by a ruthless and undeniably sophisticated British enemy with far greater manpower and technical resources than the IRA has at its command.

And yet, despite the losses and the set-backs, the IRA was able to mount no less than 130 separate attacks across the North in the period covered here, resulting in the deaths of 26 members of the occupation forces (5 Brits, 10 RUC, 10 UDR, and one Territorial Army) and the wounding of over 100 others. Those operations included 40 shootings, almost 40 incendiary attacks, over 30 bombs, nine car booby-traps and six landmines.

Most spectacular among these were the bomb and mortar attacks on the Ulster Polytechnic and Carrickmore barracks last November which resulted in three RUC deaths and no less than 47 injured; the executions of UDR major Charles Armstrong, unionist bigot Edgar



● WILLIAM PRICE

Graham, and Long Kesh deputy governor William McConnell; two South Armagh landmines in January and May which each killed two RUC men in 1,000lb explosions; and the booby-trapping of an unmarked van in Enniskillen, also in May, which killed two Brits and wounded two others.

Less spectacular perhaps, but no less effective, have been the scores of other attacks, many against economic targets – which have cost hundreds of millions of pounds to the British state and continue to thwart its attempted 'normalisation' of the six counties. It was in the course of just such a 'less spectacular' operation that William Price fearlessly sacrificed his life.

In a statement after his death, the IRA spoke of the 'extraordinary calibre' of Volunteers such as him who have the 'courage and determination to continue the struggle for Irish freedom'.

"With such men and women as Volunteer William Price," the IRA declared: "we are assured of victory."

NOVEMBER

3rd – Tyrone Brigade IRA Volunteers opened fire on two UDR soldiers at a filling station at Ballymagarry, just outside Strabane, slightly wounding one of them.

4th – An RUC inspector and a sergeant died instantly when a sophisticated IRA bomb, placed in the ceiling of a classroom at the Ulster Polytechnic, where they were attending a training course, detonated around 11.30am. Fourteen other RUC men were seriously injured by the bomb, which comprised 3lbs of high explosives surrounded by shrapnel, along with a delayed-action firing mechanism.

5th – Shortly after midnight an IRA active service unit opened fire on an RUC man as he arrived home in the County Antrim village of Rasharkin after driving from Ballymoney barracks. Critically wounded, the RUC man died soon after.

That same night, three County Fermanagh ASUs successfully bombed separate economic targets at Lisnaskea, Newtownbutler and Wattlebridge in a co-ordinated attack.

6th – In Lurgan, County Armagh, six Volunteers were involved in incendiary attacks which gutted one furniture store and caused slight damage to another.

In London, a British soldier critically injured on October 26th in a Crossmaglen car bomb blast, died in hospital from his injuries.

10th – A Catholic RUC Reservist died instantly when he was ambushed by IRA Volunteers at his Brackney home in the Annalong district of South Down.

12th – Over twenty IRA Volunteers were involved in a sophisticated mortar-bomb operation which devastated the recently-built Carrickmore RUC barracks, killed one RUC man and injured 33 others. All ten 75lb mortars landed inside the barracks demolishing the administration block and living quarters. The ASU launching the attack –



● Two RUC men died in the Ulster Poly blast in November

possibly the most successful of its type to date – were protected by ten armed Volunteers in the immediate vicinity as well as by several IRA checkpoints on approach roads, in an impressive display of territorial control in South Tyrone.

14th – UDR major Charles Armstrong was killed instantly as he got into his car, which was parked in the security com-

pound (!) of the headquarters of Armagh district council – of which he was the chairperson. Armstrong was a leading member of the Orange and Black institutions and of the Official Unionist Party.

15th – Almost a dozen IRA Volunteers in the Derry Brigade were involved in an ambush on a senior RUC officer in the city, Detective Inspector Derek Martin-

dale, which left him seriously wounded. As Martindale drove out of Strand Road barracks accompanied by a landrover and armoured car escort, heavily-armed Volunteers opened fire on all three vehicles. Martindale had personally recruited Raymond Gilmour and Robert Quigley and was the RUC controller of the perjurer strategy in Derry.

19th – Two Derry Brigade IRA



● LURGAN



● ARMAGH



● Several Brits and RUC were injured by this bomb on Belfast's Falls Road

Volunteers on a motorbike fired several shots at a UDR soldier in a car in Duke Street, but missed their target.

23rd - A UDR soldier suffered cuts and bruises (not to mention severe shock) when a bomb exploded under his car as he was driving home, just outside Portadown in North Armagh. In Derry the same day, an RUC Reservist escaped unhurt when a car booby-trap bomb detonated as he was going to work.

24th - In Belfast, two British soldiers were seriously injured, and two Brits and two RUC men slightly injured, when a 20lb anti-personnel mine was detonated by command-wire as their patrol passed the Beechmount leisure centre's perimeter wall on the Falls Road.

28th - When a similar 18lb mine was detonated in North Belfast's New Lodge district, three Brits were injured, one of them seriously.

DECEMBER

1st - In a daring double-take of the November 15th attack in which Detective Inspector Derek Martindale was wounded, Derry Brigade ambushed another senior RUC man in the city, Detective Sergeant Ivor Semple, as he drove to work over Craigmavon Bridge.

Semple, who had recently assumed Martindale's role as local controller of RUC perjurers, was seriously wounded in the attack.

7th - An IRA Volunteer posing as a student approached and shot dead leading Official Unionist Edgar Graham outside Queen's University law faculty in South Belfast. Graham was the OUP's 'law and order' spokesperson and a leading supporter of the use of paid perjurers.

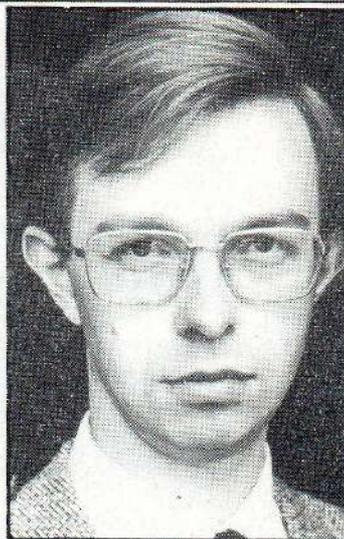
8th - South Down Brigade carried out a successful economic bomb blitz of five Newry premises involving a total of nine incendiary bombs.

That same night, an ASU in Tyrone ambushed a UDR soldier at Loughmacrory, but he escaped unhurt.

9th - Three members of an RUC patrol were injured in the Ogle Street area of Armagh city when a 14lb bomb was detonated behind a wall.

14th - Extensive damage was caused to commercial premises in Newry's Bridge Street when explosives packed into three milk churns detonated, causing a major fire.

16th - Omagh town centre was blasted by a 150lb car bomb planted by the Tyrone Brigade in the town's High Street. Specifically targeted in the attack was the Royal Arms Hotel which is frequently used by enemy



● EDGAR GRAHAM

personnel (and outside which a plainclothes Brit was killed by the IRA last April). The hotel was completely destroyed, and commercial premises in three streets were also damaged.

17th - An IRA car-bomb, planted outside Harrods department store in London, resulted in six civilian deaths, despite a full 40-minute warning having been given.

Expressing regret for the deaths an IRA statement also claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on Woolwich barracks a short time beforehand.

In the North that day, IRA Volunteers shot dead a UDR

soldier in Maghera, South Derry, as he got into his car.

19th - Three shops in the centre of Armagh were the target of IRA Volunteers. Two incendiary bombs were defused, but a third - at Hewitt's men's shop - successfully detonated.

22nd - A UDR soldier in County Fermanagh had a lucky escape when a bomb attached to his car in Brookeborough's Main Street exploded prematurely.

28th - Dozens of shops in Belfast's Upper North Street were damaged by a huge car bomb which exploded around 7pm. Six hoax bombs throughout the city centre ensured maximum disruption simultaneously.

29th - The Belfast Brigade IRA effectively paralysed much of the city from midday onwards, with a widespread series of bomb hoaxes and telephoned hoax bomb warnings.

31st - South Down IRA Volunteers threw a hand grenade at an RUC patrol in Newry's Marcus Street, wounding one RUC man in the leg.

JANUARY

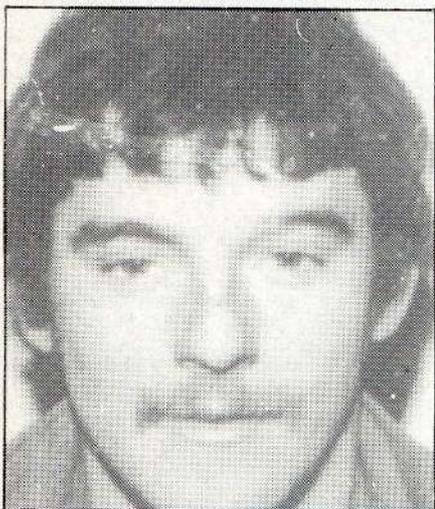
1st - Tyrone IRA Volunteers successfully fire-bombed three commercial targets at Cookstown and Cabra in separate attacks.

2nd - A UDR soldier was shot



● COLM MCGIRR

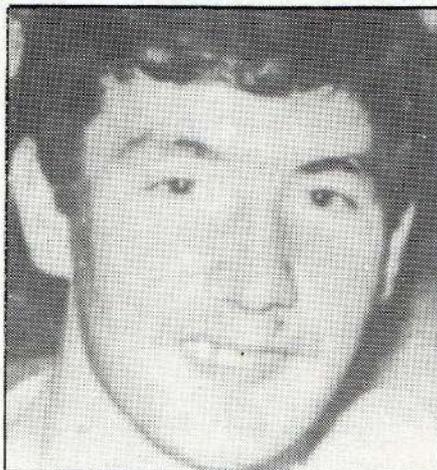
THE TWO unarmed County Tyrone IRA Volunteers gunned down by the SAS near Coalisland on December 4th 1983 were 19-year-old Brian Campbell and 23-year-old Colm McGirr. Both men died in a fusillade of over 50 shots fired at them as they moved towards an arms dump which the undercover squad had staked out. Brian and Colm were well-used to Brit/RUC harassment and had both received death threats a short time before.



● BRIAN CAMPBELL

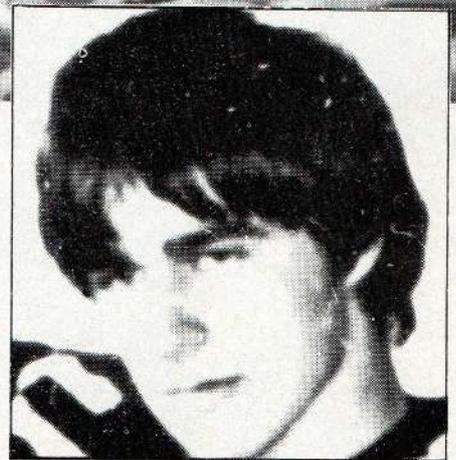
Killed in action

**I measc laochra na nGael
go raibh a n-anamacha**



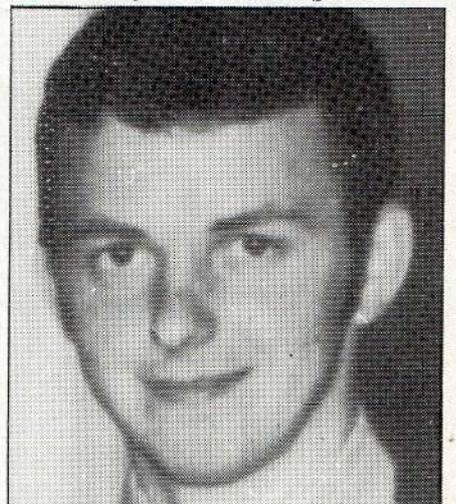
● RICHARD QUIGLEY

DERRY BRIGADE IRA Volunteer Richard Quigley aged 20, was tragically killed a split second after detonating a van-bomb in Derry city centre on April 21st. The bomb caused severe injuries to at least three British soldiers, but Richard himself was struck by flying debris as he stood some 60 yards away.



● DECLAN MARTIN

TWENTY-YEAR-OLD Henry Hogan and 18-year-old Declan Martin died following a shoot-out with an SAS undercover unit in the North Antrim village of Dunloy, on February 21st 1984. An IRA active service unit, including the two, circled behind an SAS unit they had detected staking out the Hogan family home and opened fire, killing an SAS sergeant and critically wounding another. However, as the Volunteers withdrew, they were ambushed in turn by a back-up SAS unit. One of the two Volunteers was in fact shot dead as he lay wounded on the ground.



● HENRY HOGAN



● Wrecked car showrooms in Newry after an IRA bomb blast

dead by IRA Volunteers as he prepared to drive away from his home in Castleberg, County Tyrone.

That night, Tyrone Brigade caused extensive damage to two commercial premises in Dungannon in separate attacks, while in Armagh city the IRA devastated a furniture store with three incendiary bombs.

5th – Belfast Brigade IRA Volunteers successfully planted a booby-trap bomb under the car of a newly-appointed judge outside his home in the Stormont district of East Belfast. Unfortunately, the judge, Robert Carswell, spotted the bomb before driving off, and it was eventually defused.

Later that day, the Belfast Brigade once again paralysed the city centre with a series of bomb hoaxes, as well as with a bomb in Haymarket Avenue which destroyed a jeweller's and damaged several other shops.

9th – Two members of the RUC were injured when a 20lb mine concealed behind a wooden hoarding in Derry's Shipquay Street was detonated.

11th – An RUC Reservist was ambushed and shot dead shortly after leaving the RUC barracks at Warrenpoint where he was permanently based.

Also that day, in County Tyrone, two RUC men narrowly escaped death when IRA

Volunteers marginally mis-timed the detonation of a landmine located on the Plumbridge-Donemana road.

16th – Extensive damage was caused to a furniture showroom in Dungannon, County Tyrone, by an incendiary bomb.

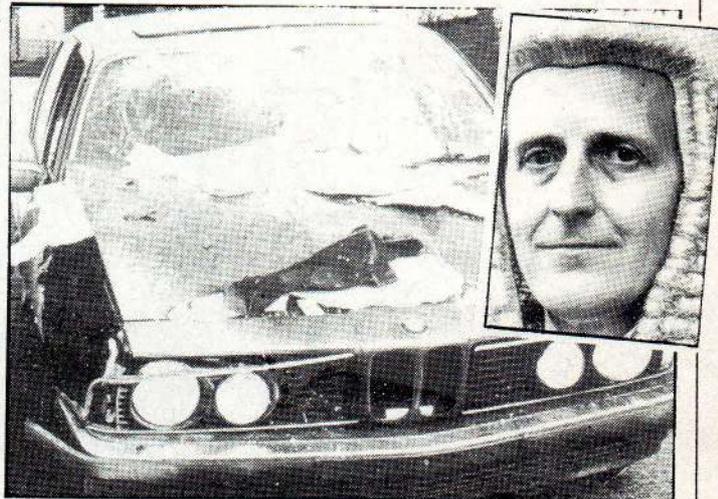
23rd – A British soldier was wounded in the head and arm by a bomb concealed in a semi-derelict building in the Clonard area of West Belfast.

25th – Belfast Brigade IRA Volunteers wounded an RUC Reservist in a shooting on the Springfield Road in the west of the city.

26th – A van-bomb, planted by the IRA in Belfast outside a city-centre furniture store, caused blast and fire damage to the premises and several adjoining shops, as well as destroying the remote-controlled bomb disposal robot sent to examine it.

27th – Two RUC men in Derry city were injured by a 20lb bomb located in a city-centre bakery after the patrol was lured there by the IRA's phoned 'complaint' about a break-in. The Volunteers detonated the bomb from within the bakery before withdrawing.

That night in Newry, County Down, a furniture store was devastated after armed IRA Volunteers planted two blast incendiaries.



● Judge Carswell (inset) was lucky to spot a booby-trap intended for him

28th – An RUC man was shot four times and seriously wounded by IRA Volunteers who burst into a butcher's shop in Killeel, County Down, where he was working.

31st – The two RUC occupants of an unmarked armoured patrol car were killed outright in a massive landmine explosion between Meigh and Dromintee in South Armagh. An IRA active service unit detonated the 1,000lb bomb (which left a 20-foot crater and was heard over seven miles away) shortly after the patrol left its Forkhill barracks base.

FEBRUARY

1st – Armed IRA Volunteers in Lurgan, County Armagh, destroyed furniture showrooms in Malcolm Road after two bombs caused a massive blaze.

2nd – A car showroom in Newry, County Down, was blasted by a beer-keg bomb planted by the IRA.

3rd – Commercial life in Belfast city centre was successfully disrupted by three blast incendiaries planted in three premises



● Commercial bomb attack in Lurgan

in Great Victoria Street (two of which detonated), and by a series of hoaxes in the area.

10th – Four IRA Volunteers ambushed a British army saracen travelling up the Whiterock Road in West Belfast with an RPG-7 rocket. Unfortunately the missile missed and fragments penetrated the gable wall of a local school, causing shock to some pupils but thankfully no injuries.

13th – The IRA executed James Young from Portaferry, County Down, who had been dismissed from the IRA two days earlier, after being found guilty of treachery at his court-martial, and of giving information to the RUC between September 1981 and February 2nd 1984.

16th – A UDR soldier driving a van between Killeel and Rostrevor, County Down, was ambushed by two IRA Volunteers on a motorbike, but escaped unscathed after his van crashed and the Volunteers drove on believing that he had been hit.

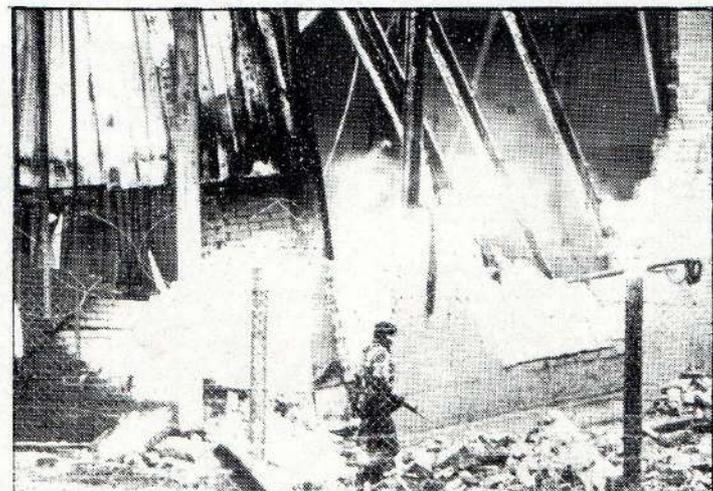
17th – Blast incendiaries at two business premises in Newry destroyed them and caused damage to up to twenty adjoining premises.

18th – In Lurgan, County Armagh, damage was caused to a carpet warehouse when two incendiary bombs detonated.

In Rostrevor, County Down, that night, extensive damage was caused to a garage that regularly traded with local members of the crown forces, when a bomb planted by the IRA's South Down Command exploded.



● Scene of the execution of Long Kesh deputy-governor



● Knitwear factory bombed in Armagh

19th – An IRA bomb attack in Armagh city completely destroyed a knitwear factory and caused several million pounds worth of damage.

bomb planted beneath his van detonated as he drove away from his home.

3rd – North Armagh Brigade IRA Volunteers were responsible for planting a booby-trap bomb at an undertaker's premises in Armagh city, which killed outright a 36-year-old UDR soldier as he arrived to open up the premises, which he jointly owned. Despite predictable claims that the man had no connection with the loyalist regiment, IRA Intelligence had categorically established that, although working undercover, he was indeed a member of the UDR. In addition, he belonged to both the Orange and Black institutions, the Apprentice Boys of Derry and the local Unionist Association.

5th – The IRA's South Down Command placed a bomb at the former Ardmore Hotel in Newry, the intended site for the new RUC barracks in the town. Unfortunately it failed to detonate.

6th – The Belfast Brigade executed a leading prison official in the North, Long Kesh deputy-governor William McConnell, as he left home in East Belfast on his way to work. He was shot several times in the head at short range and died instantly. Subsequently, the IRA, while stressing that this did not herald a new campaign against prison officials, pointed out that McConnell had a long and well-documented history of particular sadism towards, and assaults on, republican prisoners, and that his execution "should come as a salutary lesson to those in the administration

MARCH

2nd – A UDR soldier was killed in Castlederg, County Tyrone, when a booby-trap

Monaghan Road, all of which exploded.

That day in Belfast, a UDR soldier was wounded when a booby-trap exploded under his car in the city centre.

12th — Derry Volunteers fired 14 high-velocity shots at the RUC in the Bogside, but no hits were claimed.

14th — A mobile IRA unit in South Armagh opened fire on a British army foot patrol at Glasdrummond, wounding one of them seriously in the face.

15th — Two blast-bombs were lobbed over the heavily-fortified perimeter walls of Andersonstown barracks in West Belfast, causing interior damage.

16th — In a highly regrettable mistake, Derry Brigade IRA Volunteers opened fire on a local nationalist man, seriously wounding him, as he drove his Datsun car along the city's Strand Road.

In a subsequent public apology, the IRA pointed out that the car was identical to that used by a Brit undercover unit on whom its ASU had been lying in wait.

19th — An IRA sniper in West Belfast fired a single high-velocity shot, wounding a British soldier in the shoulder.

20th — South Down Brigade IRA Volunteers successfully bombed the Warrenpoint golf club, a regular haunt of RUC Special Branchmen and members of the loyalist judiciary.

21st — Several British soldiers were seriously wounded in a massive incendiary van-bomb attack in Derry city. The van-bomb, comprising concrete blocks and 45 gallons of petrol, engulfed two Brit landrovers as they drove by. Tragically, an IRA Volunteer involved in the operation was killed by flying debris.

23rd — One Brit was killed and several seriously wounded when at least nine IRA Volunteers from the Derry Brigade ambushed them with petrol bombs and high-velocity fire at Bishop Street. Almost 40 shops and offices



● Brits seal off Beechmount in West Belfast after an IRA sniper seriously wounded one soldier



● Part of the damage in Lurgan after an IRA bombing

in a town-centre arcade in Lurgan were damaged, when North Armagh Volunteers detonated a large bomb that night.

MAY

5th — Four UDR soldiers were slightly injured when an IRA unit detonated a 100lb bomb at Sixmilecross, County Tyrone.

Two British soldiers were injured in West Belfast when Belfast Brigade IRA Volunteers detonated a 10lb bomb as an armoured landrover drove by on the Monaghan Road.

8th — A UDR soldier was shot dead instantly as he arrived for work near Cookstown, County Tyrone, by two Volunteers armed with an automatic rifle and a shotgun.

9th — One member of the Territorial Army was killed, and the other two soldiers travelling in the car were wounded, when a booby-trap bomb planted under the vehicle by Volunteers in Newry detonated.

12th — A UDR sergeant was shot dead at his farm near Aughnacloy in County Tyrone.

A short time later, in South Fermanagh, Volunteers engaged a two-car RUC patrol in a lengthy gun battle on the Lisnaskea-Donagh road, but the cars' armoured protection saved the occupants any injury.

16th — Three RUC men narrowly escaped death when a 1,000lb landmine only partially exploded on the Cathedral Road in Armagh city.

A few hours earlier, a bomb planted by the IRA's Tyrone Brigade destroyed a garage and shop on the Ballygawley-Omagh road.

18th — In the first of two devastating attacks during the day, a 1,000lb landmine on the Crossmaglen-Camlough road tore apart an armoured RUC car, killing



● Two RUC men died in this massive landmine blast at Camlough, South Armagh

IRIS

two occupants and critically wounding the third.

Only a few hours later, outside the Lakeland Forum in Enniskillen, Fermanagh IRA Volunteers booby-trapped an unmarked van being used by four soldiers taking part in an angling tournament on Lough Erne. As the Brits drove off later in the day, the bomb detonated, killing two of them outright and injuring the other two.

19th - During a ten-minute gun battle at Mounthill in South Armagh, one British soldier was shot and wounded.

21st - A Belfast Brigade sniper fired a single shot at a British army foot patrol on the edge of Ballymurphy in West Belfast, but no hit was claimed.

25th - Active service units in Belfast city centre caused major damage to two commercial premises with a series of incendiary bombs.

30th - One Brit was killed outright, and a second critically injured, when the IRA in South Armagh detonated a culvert bomb at Mounthill.

JUNE

3rd - A former UDR soldier, who was in the process of joining the RUC, was shot dead by Tyrone IRA Volunteers near Omagh.

4th - In an elaborately well-planned attack, Lurgan IRA Volunteers first shot dead a UDR soldier at Dollingstown, County Armagh, and then detonated a previously-located 200lb bomb at the scene, when Brits and RUC arrived in the aftermath of the shooting, wounding two RUC men and four Brits.

6th - An IRA landmine at Belleek, County Fermanagh, blew an unmarked RUC car 25 yards off the road, injuring its two occupants.

9th - Belfast Brigade IRA Volunteers executed a leading criminal, 32-year-old James Campbell, as he sat drinking in a social club in the lower Falls.



● Scene of a partially-exploded 1,000lb landmine in Armagh

11th - Commercial premises were gutted in Strabane, County Tyrone, in a series of incendiary attacks.

16th - The IRA in Belfast, Newry, Armagh and parts of County Tyrone carried out a co-ordinated series of bomb hoaxes which almost brought commercial life to a halt in those areas.

17th - An IRA active service unit, using two Ruger semi-automatic rifles, fired several shots at a British army mobile patrol in West Belfast, but claimed no hits.

20th - West Tyrone IRA Volunteers successfully bombed the Strabane golf club, recently reopened after a bomb attack two years ago.

22nd - A Belfast Brigade active service unit fired several shots at a British army mobile patrol on the Whiterock Road, hitting one soldier in the neck.

25th - At Ballygawley in County Tyrone, IRA Volunteers ambushed an RUC armoured patrol with an RPG7 rocket and automatic gunfire.



● Brits follow up (too late!) after Mounthill culvert bomb



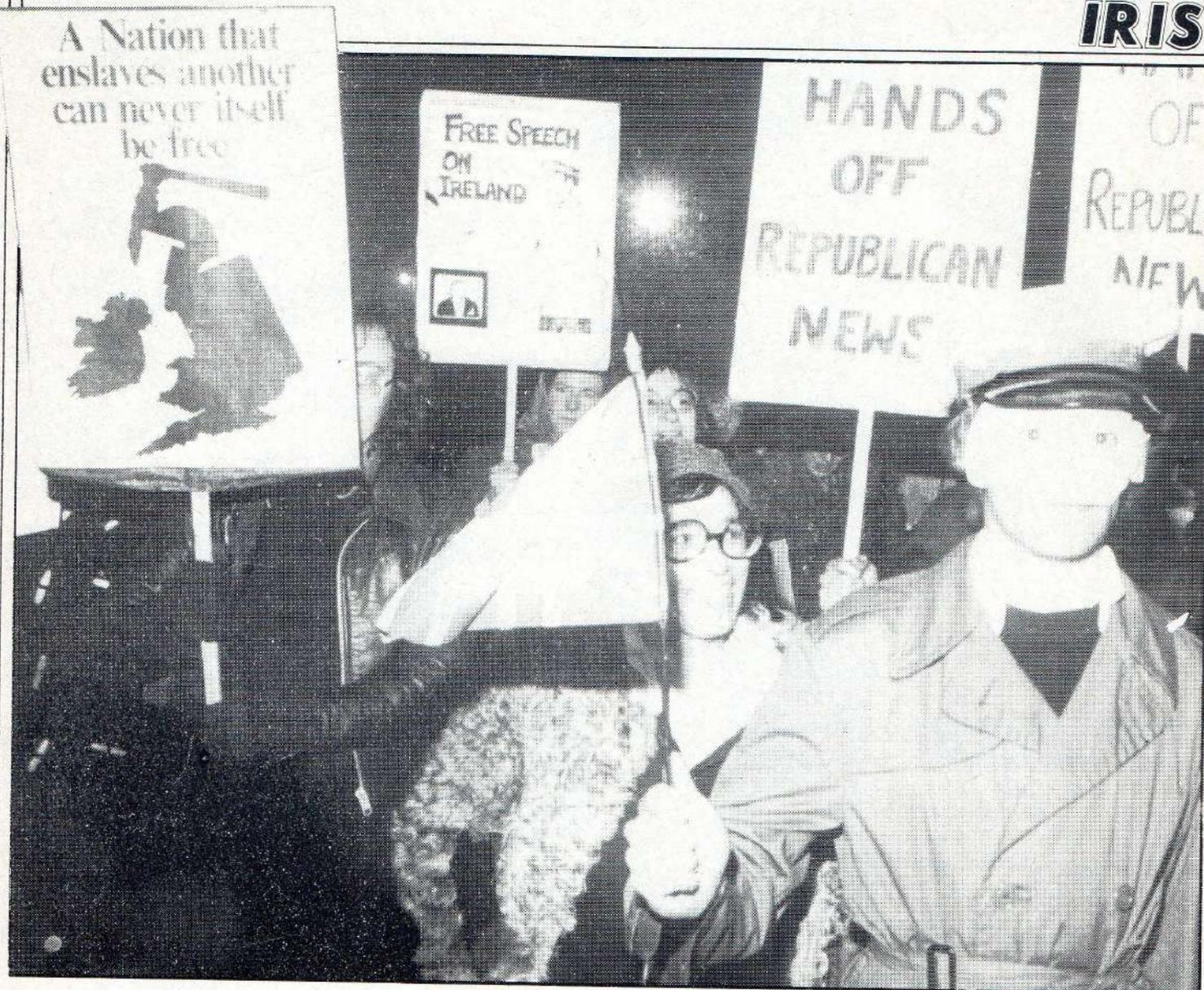
● A UDR soldier was wounded in this Belfast booby-trap



● Lakeland Forum, Enniskillen - two Brits died



● Scene of the UDR soldier's execution at Dollingstown



A BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS

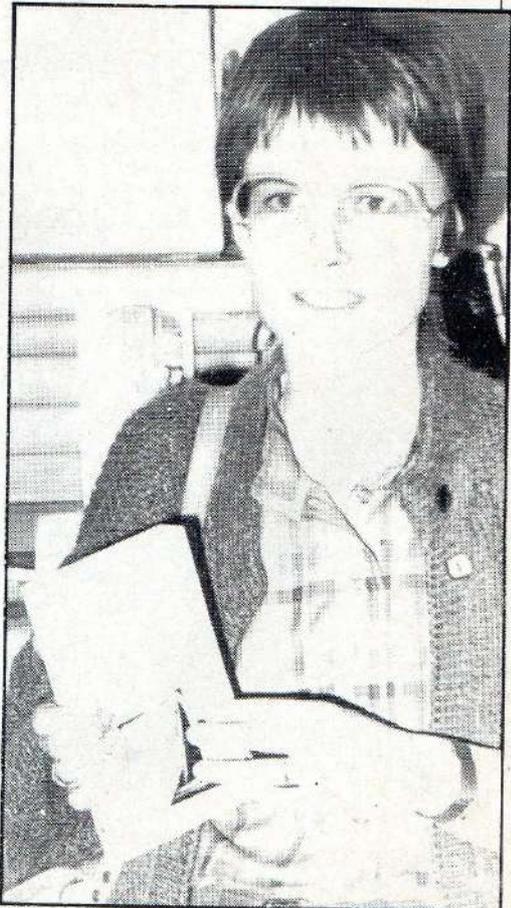
-a look at issues raised by Liz Curtis' recent book

BY TRISILA FOX

PUBLISHED earlier this year by Pluto Press, Liz Curtis' *Ireland: The Propaganda War* sold out within six weeks and is now being re-published. For anyone interested in examining Britain's relationship to Ireland and how the media represents that relationship, it is essential reading, catalog-

uing how the British government uses censorship as part of a concrete strategy to maintain ideological control of the struggle in the North as it is perceived by the British public and abroad.

The manner in which this strategy is achieved is typified in journalist Mary Holland's remark: "For every programme that gets



● LIZ CURTIS



● Liz Curtis (left) on 1979 picket, calling for free speech on Ireland

banned there are about twenty that don't get made."

In the early '70s there had been discussions within the BBC's hierarchy and the British government about introducing legislation allowing 'direct censorship' of material broadcast in relation to Ireland, but the implications of shattering the BBC's 'balanced' and 'impartial' public image would have been too obvious a form of political censorship. So, as Liz Curtis explains: "Instead a system of hidden censorship was brought in, which the public remains generally unaware of. This system is known as 'reference upwards' or 'managerial censorship', all items on Ireland have to be checked from the ideas stage onwards."

While a handful of TV producers such as Colin Thomas – who resigned from the BBC in protest at cuts made to his 1978 documentary about daily life in Derry – have taken a protest stance, most consciously choose to work within the system and to get their material transmitted, while acknowledging the limitations of their practice.

Acceptable Levels, a recent film made for Channel 4, dealt with this issue of 'self-censorship' by TV producers. The film's storyline is about a crew making a liberal documentary about the effects of 'the troubles' on children from both communities. Towards the end of the crew's film-shooting, a nationalist child gets shot with a plastic bullet and the crew are thrown into a dilemma as to whether they should incorporate this material into the final film, which would change the original (and pre-conceived) concept of the documentary. Inevitably they decide to omit it.

Ian Stuttard, the producer of Thames TV's series *The Troubles*, who has consistently striven to avoid emotive rhetoric used by so many reporters – such as 'murderers' and 'terrorists' when referring to the IRA – described the depiction of the crew in *Acceptable Levels* as "wickedly accurate" (they spend most of their time in the sanctuary of the Europa Hotel, indulging in drink, food and chatting up women on expense accounts while they knock up over-time). The strongest part of the film is that it does illustrate powerfully the process of self-censorship practised by people within the media as a semi-conscious act, motivated by self-interest and a class/ideological allegiance to the British establishment.

In a recent paper produced for a GLC-sponsored conference on the media and imperialism, Liz Curtis wrote: "It is scarcely surprising that, contrary to the widespread view that the media in Britain are the basti-

ions of free speech, the national media reflect with rare exceptions the view of the world held by the 'establishment'. The bulk of national papers are owned by a handful of millionaires – Rupert Murdoch alone owns *The Sun*, *The News of the World*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. Most media workers are, by comparison with the bulk of the population, highly paid... many of the staff in key positions in the broadcast media are university-educated white males."

THE censorship debate is not only about what does or does not reach our screens, but about the context within which the republican perspective is presented.

In documentaries, sparse interviews with republicans are cut, distorted and overlaid with particular music which creates an effect of something sinister or clandestine. All these elements are part of a method, often received unconsciously by the viewer, of creating a specific and highly adverse reaction.

One programme which used these methods in the crudest possible way was the Granada TV 'World in Action' programme transmitted last December: *The Honourable Member for West Belfast* – a profile of Gerry Adams made by John Ware and Ed Vulliamy.

Ware was already well known to Sinn Fein for his unethical standards of journalism. Several years ago he interviewed Danny Morrison for 'World in Action', in a programme on which direct-ruler Humphrey Atkins was also to appear. When, however, Atkins insisted that Morrison's interview be withdrawn as a precondition for his appearance, Ware agreed to this.

Two years later he got another opportunity. In Ware's own words to his colleagues in London, the programme was conceived as a 'hatchet job' on Gerry Adams: "I'm going to screw Sinn Fein and stitch up Gerry Adams," he said.

Visiting Belfast however, Ware told Adams and Morrison that the programme's aim was to produce "an in-depth analysis of the rise of Sinn Fein and the allied politicisation of the Republican Movement." But Sinn Fein had previously been warned by Ian Stuttard of Ware's unethical intentions, and therefore declined to take part.

The film uses clips from earlier films of bombs, shootings and funerals, and overlays them with sound-tracks from other footage, producing a totally distorted perception of

the Movement and a malicious profile of Gerry Adams.

Leading Workers Party spokespersons (whose political affiliations are not revealed on the programme) are allowed free rein to malign Adams, while being portrayed as 'balanced' commentators; Seamus Lynch recounts – unchallenged – a fictitious conversation he alleges he had with Adams in which the latter claimed he was "prepared to wade knee-deep in Protestant blood."

Elsewhere in the programme, a photograph is shown of a solitary standing hut in the Long Kesh 'cages' after the camp burning in 1974. The programme alleges that Adams had refused to burn the cage of which he was OC, lacking the courage to do so. The actual fact, however, is that Adams was not OC of his cage at the time, did take part in the camp burning, and that the hut shown was in fact occupied by UVF prisoners!

JUST occasionally, a programme slips through that portrays oddly favourable points of view in some respects, though they might not be the primary intent of the programme-maker.

'A' Company, a recent programme in the BBC 'Real Lives' series, directed by Paul Hamann, showed a group of ex-British soldiers revisiting Belfast ten years after their first tour of duty. While the programme was primarily a propaganda exercise for the Brits, insofar as it portrayed relatively 'liberal' and informed ex-soldiers who stoutly maintained that their role had been that of peace-keepers between sectarian factions, there did emerge several images favourable to republicans.

The most memorable of these occurs after ex-Colonel David Hancock is seen visiting a community leader, Frank Cahill, in Ballymurphy, whom he had first met while stationed in the areas years earlier. Later, summing up his overall impressions, Hancock refers to his meeting with Cahill: "The thing I shall remember is the dedication of the republican we saw this afternoon. No wavering after fifteen years of conflict on the streets – the same aims, same intentions, same dedication." He goes on: "It is foolish to plan (a solution) without taking a factor like that into consideration."

Liz Curtis, a member of the 'Information on Ireland' group, sees it as essential that people like herself are not only engaged in writing academic books, but work on all fronts of the cultural struggle to challenge the British propaganda machine. 'Information on Ireland' has been involved in producing booklets on the British media, plastic bullets, and arguing for a British withdrawal.

Recently the group took part in an event organised by the GLC's media working group as part of the London 'anti-racist year'. The conference – 'British media and British imperialism' – was addressed by two members of Belfast Sinn Fein as well as by speakers from Black, Third World and anti-imperialist organisations, and the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. At present, 'Information on Ireland' is producing a short book on anti-Irish racism in Britain.

As Liz Curtis concludes in her book: "British people must, in the end, carry the responsibility for the policy their government pursues: they pay the piper and they could, if they wished, call an end to the tune. Whatever the shortcomings of the coverage and the secretiveness of the authorities, it is possible for people to take the initiative and seek out the information for themselves. Ireland is, after all, only next door." ■

BOOK BRIEFS

BY GEAROID MacARDLE

THE ABOVE TITLE has nothing to do with Y-Fronts but is derived directly from a vagueness about deadlines with which this issue of *IRIS* is blessed. Thus when I was finally persuaded that we were actually going to the printer, I cast around in my bookshelf and dis-

covered that the number of books demanding reviews was too many for the usual high quality and detailed inspection to which you have grown accustomed. Brief reviews were required in order to do justice to the publishers and, wary of space restrictions, to keep in with the eagathoir. Maybe by

the next issue the deadlines will be a wee bit more orderly. Chifidh muid.

First prize for presentation and layout of those tomes I received goes to *The Song of the Children of Lir*, followed a close second by *Images of Belfast*.

The 'Children of Lir', told here by Michael Scott, is of course the story of how four Irish children, betrayed by their stepmother and changed by her into swans, were forced to spend nine hundred years under a terrible spell. It is a story of myth and legend, of sorcery and magic from the age of the Tuatha De Danaan. In the end it is a story of how the children, Fionnuala, Aed, Con and Fiac, by devotion to one another were able to withstand many of the great perils created by the wicked stepmother. One of the ancient sorrows of Irish storytelling, it is unfortunate that many Irish children, fed on a diet of Robin Hood, King Arthur, Baa Baa Black Sheep etc., are unaware of the rich lore of Irish folk tales and legends. Parents take note!

Michael Scott has done a lot to redress this imbalance and Robert Vogel's graphics are absolutely brilliant. The book is worth having just for his illustrations. Published by De Vogel Ltd., price unknown though I think it is expensive, the 'Children of Lir' will be appreciated by adult readers as well as children.

Images of Belfast, photographs by Bill Kirk, text by Robert Johnstone, an illustrated celebration of the city, is another collector's piece from Blackstaff Press (price £12.50) and one of the large and growing volumes of literature about that city. Bill Kirk's photographs, excellently reproduced in both duotone and full colour, capture the unique character of Belfast. From Rab Maguire's barbershop to skinheads in Smithfield, bible thumpers in Cornmarket, Stormont Hill, Des Wilson in Springhill, the Twelfth, the Docks, Celtic Park, winedrinkers in Castle Street, punks, the Linenhall Library, McArt's Fort, bookies' shops, Catholic priests, altar boys, Ian Paisley, and a black British soldier outside the Duke of York, any Belfast exile will cover this publication.

Robert Johnstone, a young Belfast poet has written a highly readable account of his images of Belfast which marries brilliantly, the verbal and visual, with Kirk's photographs. He fails only, and by his own admission, to get 'inside' nationalist West Belfast: "How could I pretend to know what life is like in Andersonstown or on the Falls Road?" At least Johnstone is honest, but for all that the book is flawed by this omission.

Ironically, however, it says a lot about Belfast, that a man as talented and as caring as Johnstone has to rely upon television programmes to tell him about life in a part of his city. This leads to him describing *One Day in My Life* as "apparently" written by Bobby Sands. And yet, perhaps this and other small flaws are images also of Belfast, and are forgivable because Johnstone's is an unashamedly personal account. Hopefully, next time around, he will spend more time among his fellow citizens on the Falls Road. They have been excluded from so much of Belfast's life, a life they are part of, it seems a pity that they should be so little a part of this fine book.

Another illustrated volume: *The centre cannot hold - Britain's failure in Northern Ireland*, from Bookworth's Ireland (£7.95) by Tom Collins, is a strongly nationalist account of, as the subtitle says, the failures of the British government. With an average of



● One of Bill Kirk's 'images of Belfast'

IRIS

one photograph per large format page, and a foreword by Sean McBride, Tom Collins unapologetically pinpoints the British government's responsibility for the Irish war. Well worth reading.

The Boss, by Joe Joyce and Peter Murtagh (price £6.50) from Poolbeg Press, has been top of the bestsellers list and is probably now in its second edition since I received a review copy. With almost four hundred pages of 'revelations' about Charles J. Haughey, **The Boss** is a good book for a long train journey or perhaps seven days in Castlereagh. I gave up reading it halfway through but will return to it in easier days. For all the meticulous research leading to controversial exposés about the tapping of two journalists' phones, a transcript of the bugged conversation between McSharry and O'Donoghue and much, much more! I found the pen picture of Haughey's personal style, and the Tony Gregory negotiations the most interesting and entertaining. 'Tis little wonder he has a love-hate relationship with Irish journalists – but then Machiavelli probably had the same problem.

The Uncivil Wars, by Pdraig O'Malley (price £7.95) from Blackstaff Press, is well worth reading also, if only to get a background into the thinking of Garret Fitzgerald and his partners in the Dublin Forum. This book is widely rumoured to have been compulsory reading for at least the Fine Gael and Labour Party Forum delegations who made up for years of ignorance about the Irish war by cramming O'Malley's account. I found it an immensely interesting analysis, well written and documented. An insight into how our uncivil wars can be settled in the best interests of the British and Irish establishments. The status quo reconstructed à la Dublin Forum.

Another book worth mentioning, from Pathfinder Press, (£4.95 softback; £20, yes £20! hardback) is volume two of Fidel Castro's speeches: **Our power is that of the working class**, which reached me, I think, on account of James Prior's 'Cuba' speech. I'm still awaiting volume one. Maybe James will oblige before he leaves us. Anyway, if you're interested in the phenomenon of Cuba, and 1984 is the 25th anniversary of the revolution there, this book is a must. It is available from the publishers at 47, The Cut, London SE1 8LL.

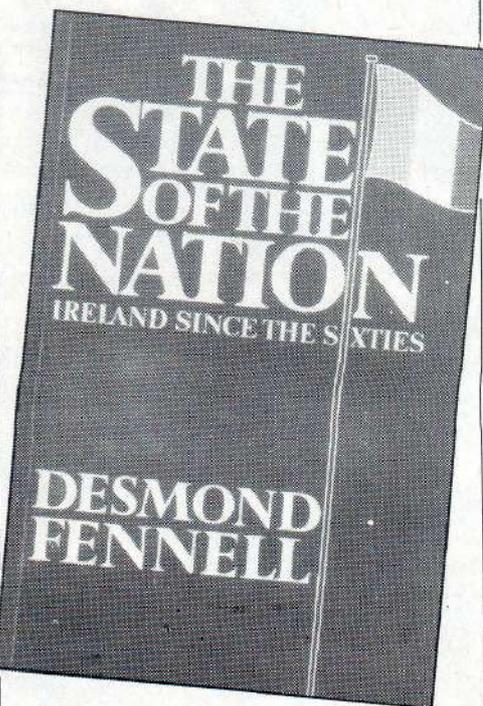
On a lighter note, Brandon Press have produced an Irish Literacy Quiz Book (price £2.50 for a slim volume). I was rather dismissive of it until I tested my knowledge and funk'd miserably. Compiled by Paddy Lysagh, with illustrations by Tom Matthews, you intellectuals and bookworms will enjoy this publication. It has encouraged me to read all those books I've discovered I know nothing about.

Also from Brandon is John B. Keane's **Man of the triple name** (price £4.95), a humorous and delightful study of Dan Paddy Andy O'Sullivan, his life and times, and of the people and culture of the North Kerry community in which he lived. A matchmaker, small farmer, owner of two dance halls, recipient of an IRA pension and a blind pension to boot, Dan Paddy Andy was obviously an important part of rural social life and John B. Keane has captured the joys, strains, pressures and humour of that life for posterity.

It was for his matchmaking and his dance halls, in the atmosphere of the puritanical 1930s in Ireland, that Dan Paddy Andy gained his notoriety. One Archdeacon Browne spoke thus on the occasion of the opening of Dan's dance-hall in Faheduv: "I now have

something to say about a nearby den of iniquity, and it is high time it was said. There is a wild animal after descending from the mountains in Faheduv and it is the man of the triple name, Dan Paddy Andy." So was, and is, the power of the pulpit.

Finally, following on the success of their first three pamphlets, the Derry-based venture, Field Day, have produced a further three (£5 a set): **Heroic Styles: the tradition of an idea** by Seamus Deane, whose earlier **Civilians and Barbarians** was quite brilliant; **Myth and Motherland** by Richard Kearney; and **Anglo-Irish Attitudes** by Richard Kiberd. More of these some other time. Suffice for now to congratulate Field Day for maintaining their high standard and continuing with the series of pamphlets – a form of political expression once highly popular in Ireland.



The state of the nation, by Desmond Fennell (Ward River Press, IR£5.95).

THE UDA's pursuit of an 'independent Ulster' stems apparently from the belief among the leadership of that organisation that they are descended from a little-known tribe of Picts who were the original inhabitants of north-eastern Ireland. 'Facts' like this abound in Desmond Fennell's book.

In a chapter entitled 'Facts for peace in the North', Fennell sets out to demystify the conflict in the six counties – and produces fourteen pages that are almost as complicated and confusing as chapter five of the Forum report.

All in all, Fennell's ponderous style and penchant for dubious historical 'facts' produces a book which falls far short of demanding immediate attention as the blurb on its back cover would have us believe. B.F.

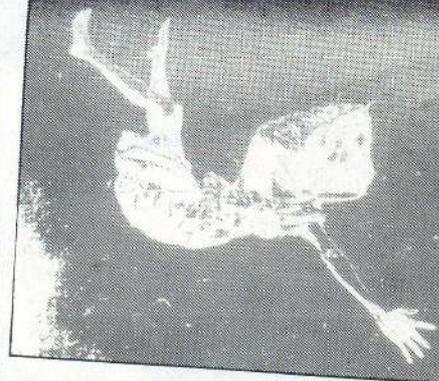
Electoral politics in Ireland, by R.K. Carty (Brandon Press).

BRIMMING with figures and graphs, Carty's book is abundantly researched in its tracing of the roots of the 26-county establishment political parties. Exposing the rampant clientelism that is so much a part of Free State politics, this book will nevertheless mainly be of interest to the academic. B.F.

NORTHERN IRELAND

THE BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

Edited by
John Darby



Northern Ireland: the background to the conflict, ed. John Darby (Appletree Press 1983, £4.95)

Review by Patrick Dempsey

THIS BOOK may claim to be many things, but it is anything but a background to the conflict.

Darby, a lecturer at the New University of Ulster, establishes a highly selective historical background at the outset of this academic collection of essays. The Northern nationalist minority, oppressed and unemployed, are directly equated with the Protestant minority in the twenty-six counties, still influential and controllers of capital. Partition, claims Darby, simply confirmed their 'minority conditions' within separate states. Ignoring the issue of colonialism altogether, he reiterates the establishment view that Britain imposed partition as "the only possible way of reconciling the rival aspirations of the two Irish parties," and appears to believe that had unionists moderated their hostility to nationalists O'Neil-style – and had nationalists been less 'impatient', that conflict could have been avoided. In the light of Darby's earlier work on discrimination one might expect better from him.

Most of the essays continue in similar vein. In an appalling exercise in shifting the blame, in an essay on *The demography of violence*, Michael Poole rationalises the fact that over 75% of civilian deaths outside Belfast have been of Catholics, asserting: "Thus to a very large extent indeed, it is the Catholic community, rather than the Protestant, which has given rise to these deaths outside Belfast, either directly by committing them or indirectly by indulging in activities which may be said to have provoked killings by the official security forces." (!)

Somehow or other, the sound contributions of Paddy Hillyard on *Law and Order*, and Bill Rolston on *Reformism and Sectarianism* (in which he argues that the two "happily co-exist: they are not mutually antagonistic") find their way into this mish-mash of pseudo-intellectual sociology jargon, but they are not enough to redress the balance.

Northern Ireland: The background to the conflict fails even to acknowledge the existence of a different framework of perspectives from those on which the bulk of its contributions are argued, and as such reveals more about the bankrupt background of many Northern academics than about the North itself.

As such, it deserves to stay well in the background – out of sight, out of mind. ■

From Christy Moore's album 'Ride on'
El Salvador by Johnny Duhan
Viva la Quinte Brigada by Christy Moore

Viva la Quinte Brigada

*Ten years before I saw the light of mornin',
 A comradeship of heroes was laid,
 From every corner of the world came sailing
 The Fifth International Brigade.
 They came to stand beside the Spanish people,
 To try and stem the rising fascist tide,
 Franco's allies were the powerful and wealthy,
 Frank Ryan's men came from the other side.
 Even the olives were bleeding
 As the battle for Madrid it thundered on,
 Truth and love against the force of evil,
 Brotherhood against the fascist clan.*

CHORUS:

*Viva la Quinte Brigada!
 "No pasaran!" the pledge that made them fight,
 "Adelante" is the cry around the hillside,
 Let us all remember them tonight.*

*Bob Hilliard was a Church of Ireland pastor,
 From Killarney across the Pyrenees he came,
 From Derry came a brave young Christian Brother,
 Side by side they fought and died in Spain.
 Tommy Woods, aged seventeen, died in Cordoba,
 With Na Fianna he learned to hold his gun,
 From Dublin to the Villa del Rio
 Where he fought and died beneath the blazing sun.*

CHORUS:

*Many Irishmen heard the call of Franco,
 Joined Hitler and Mussolini too,
 Propaganda from the pulpit and newspapers
 Helped O'Duffy to enlist his crew.
 The word came from Maynooth 'support the Nazis',
 The men of cloth failed again,
 When the bishops blessed the blueshirts in Dun Laoghaire,
 As they sailed beneath the swastika to Spain.*

CHORUS:

*This song is a tribute to Frank Ryan,
 Kit Conway and Dinny Coady too,
 Peter Daly, Charlie Regan, and Hugh Bonar,
 Though many died I can but name a few.
 Danny Boyle, Blaser-Brown, and Charlie Donnelly,
 Liam Tumilson and Jim Straney from the Falls,
 Jack Nalty, Tommy Patton, and Frank Conroy,
 Jim Foley, Tony Fox and Dick O'Neill.*

CHORUS:

*Viva la Quinte Brigada!
 Viva la Quinte Brigada!*

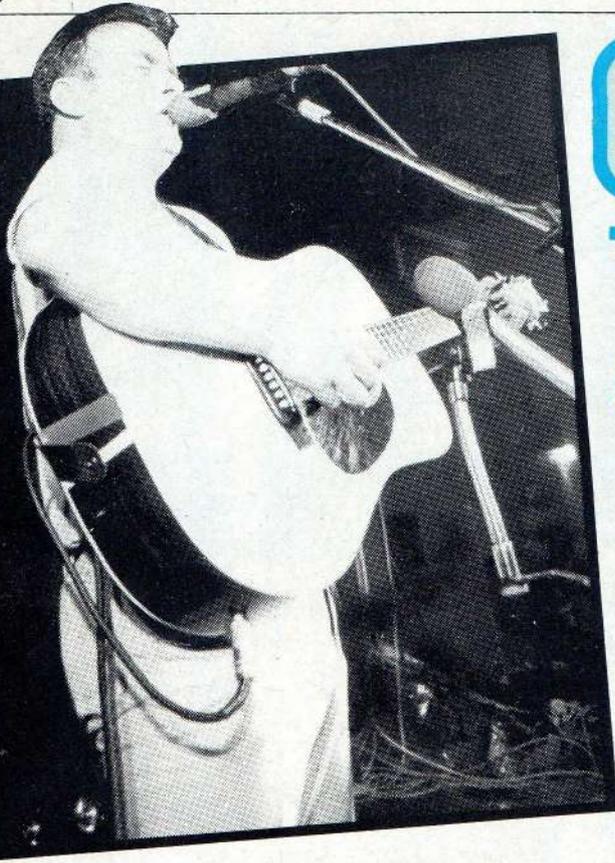
El Salvador

*A girl cries in the early mornin',
 Woken by the sound of a gun,
 She knows somewhere somebody's dyin'
 Beneath the rising sun.
 Outside the window of her cabana
 The shadows are full of her fears,
 She knows her lover is out there somewhere,
 He's been on the run for a year.
 Oh! The Soul of El Salvador.*

*The bell rings out on the chapel steeple,
 The priest prepares to say mass,
 The sad congregation come, tired and hungry,
 To pray their troubles will pass.
 Outside the sun rises over
 The dusty street as the crowd gathers round,
 Flies and mosquitoes are drinking
 From pools of blood where his body is found.
 Oh! The Soul of El Salvador.*

*Out on the ranch the rich man's preparing
 To go for his mornin' ride,
 They saddle his horse out in the corral,
 He walks out full of pride.
 He looks like a cowboy in one of those pictures
 The President made in the past,
 The peasants in rags they stand back,
 For they know that Enrico gallops fast.
 Over the Soul of El Salvador.*

*Oh! The Soul of El Salvador.
 Oh! The Soul of El Salvador.*





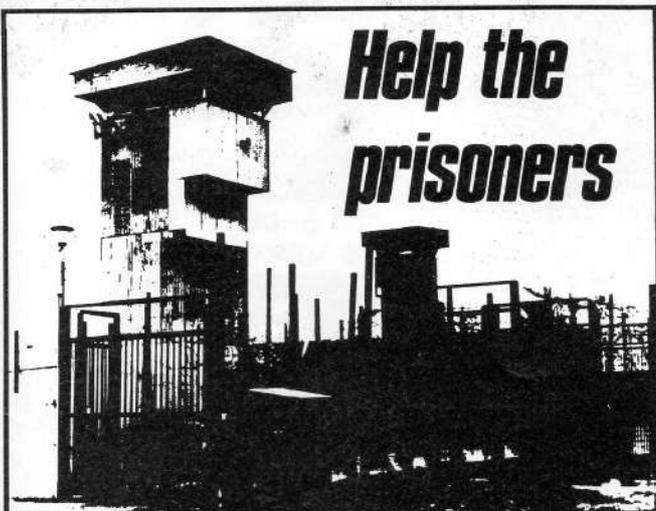
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**Help the
prisoners**

An Cumann Cabhrach & Green Cross

AN Cumann Cabhrach and Green Cross are the two organisations, staffed by voluntary unpaid workers, which exist to alleviate some of the suffering of republican prisoners and their families. Dependent solely on public subscriptions and collections, these bodies provide weekly grants to the dependants of nearly 1,400 republican prisoners in jails in Ireland and Britain, pay expenses and arrange accommodation for relatives visiting republican prisoners in English jails, and provide finance to purchase clothing and other necessities for these prisoners.

We thank everybody for their support in the past, and urge all those concerned with republican prisoners to continue with this vital help. In particular, we would like to mention the assistance of our exiles in America and Australia, whose commitment is an inspiration.

All donations, enquiries and offers of help should be addressed to:

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 The Central Committee,
 c/o 44 Parnell Square, Dublin.
 Tel: 726932

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AN PHOBLACHT Republican News



**IRELAND'S BIGGEST SELLING
POLITICAL WEEKLY**

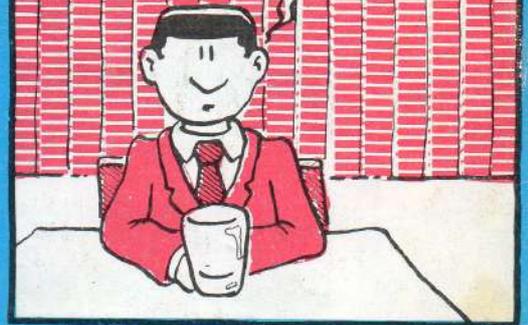
THESE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT PEOPLE... THESE FEMINISTS... THERE'S ONE THING ABOUT THEM THAT WORRIES ME...



ONLY ONE? HOW FORTUNATE FOR YOU! I CAN THINK OF THOUSANDS...



NO, NO, YOU MISUNDERSTAND ME... A STRANGE THOUGHT RECENTLY CROSSED MY MIND...



WHAT IF THEY ARE RIGHT?



WHAT IF THEY ARE RIGHT ???

OH, YOU POOR NAIVE CHILD! WHAT A SILLY QUESTION! YOU DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF WITH THOSE THINGS!



THE PROBLEM IS NOT "WHAT IF THEY ARE RIGHT?"—THE PROBLEM IS FINDING WAYS TO AVOID LISTENING TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY— LIKE THIS —



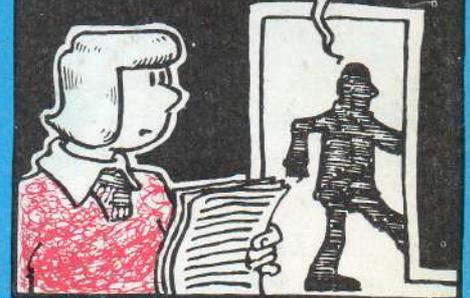
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PAPER ON THE PAY AND CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN THE-

FOR GOD'S SAKE! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY?



YOU SHOULD READ IT... IT'S VERY IMPORTANT...

MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY DINNER?



THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIOUR! HOW COULD A REPUBLICAN REACT IN THIS WAY TO A SERIOUS MATTER?



REPUBLICAN?!? I NEVER SAID I WAS A REPUBLICAN!

ARE YOU SURE?



THAT'S MOST PECULIAR FOR I KNOW ONE OR TWO REPUBLICANS WHO BEHAVE LIKE THAT...

... ONLY ONE OR TWO, OF COURSE!

