NUMBER ONE MAY 1973

FREE IRELAND

NEWSPAPER OF THE ANTI-INTERNMENT LEAGUE 5p

THE WHITE PAPER

ILLUSIONS ON OFFER

by Eammon McCann

Whitelaw's White Paper is totally unacceptable to Socialists and Republicans. It is totally unacceptable because it represents an attempt, not to move away from British exploitive rule of Ireland, but to re-structure that rule, to bring it up to date and thereby to perpetuate it. The vagueness of sections of the Paper, which all commentators have recognised and commented on, means merely that the Tories are not certain in their own minds how best to go about this, nor are they confident that they can carry it off. With good reason.

SINGLE OBJECTIVE

The White Paper makes no basic change in British policy. Through O'Neill's "reform-package" of November '68, the Chichester-Clark/Wilson "Downing Street declaration" of August 1969 etc., British imperialism has been pursuing a single objective - it has been trying, *insofar as it is possible*, to disentangle itself from the semi-redundant Orange apparatus and to give the Catholic middle class a chance of executive power - and to do this without weakening its own grip on Ireland.

O'Neill failed, and the Downing Street Declaration failed for two reasons. First, the British found it damnably difficult to wriggle out of the mesh of the Orange-Unionist complex which it had created and supported for generations. The second, linked, reason was that a large section of the Catholic working class reacted to events by demanding the *end* of British rule in Ireland and by giving support to organisations militarily trying to achieve that.

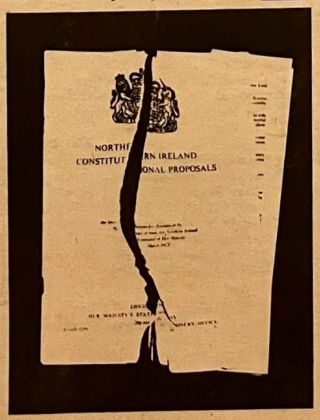
TORY BLUEPRINT

The basic British strategy for the past two years has been get rid of the second difficulty first. That is, to defeat the IRA. In March 1972, when the Bill to prorogue Stormont for one year was passed, the Tories believed firmly, on the basis of advice from the Army, that this would be achieved within the year and that by March '73 they would be in a position to formulate clearly their blueprint for the Irish future. A glance at the statements of Cabinet Ministers and high-ranking Army officers a year ago, will confirm just how confident they were at that point.

But the IRA has not been defeated, despite the cacophonic chorus of condemnation from Toriés Orange, Green and pastel-Pink, Church "dignitaries" and gaggles of "peace-women". And because the IRA has not been defeated, Whitelaw now finds it impossible to produce an unambiguous plan.

AFTER THE ELECTIONS

For example; it is not at all clear what powers the "Assembly" will have. The Tories say they will decide after the election, when they see who, in the light of a continued IRA campaign, has been elected. If the Assembly comprises people unwilling, for whatever reason, to go along with Tory intentions, it will simply be abolished in March '74 and "old-style' direct rule resumed.



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HOLDING THE FORT

The "Irish Dimension" has neither length, breadth nor height and there is no firm commitment even to a "Council of Ireland" which could chat about the Tourist trade (R.I.P.).

In fact, the more one stares at the White Paper, the more it dissolves into nothingness. It is a holding operation to keep the situation in check until the IRA is finally dealt with. Until then internment will continue under the Diplock proposals, and so will harrassment of Catholic areas. In the South, the Cosgrave regime will use all means available, including its whole naval might, to smash Republican intransigence.

In this situation, the role of the AIL is clear. It is to continue to mobilise in solidarity with those fighting Imperialism and to combat at every level any illusions sown by the White Paper.

It is vital that all those who claim to oppose British Imperialism in Ireland, re-double, or resume, their activity within the AIL, and ensure that there is no consensus in Britain for the Tories' proposals.

Coventry Police Raid

Over 200 people demonstrated outside Coventry Magistrates Court, in a picket organised by Coventry AIL, cheered six Irish defendants as they entered the Court, under heavy police guard, to answer conspiracy charges.

The six were arrested after police swooped on the homes of Irishmen and British socialists in the early hours of the morning. The raids were carried out by Special Branch men, including members of the RUC Special Branch operating in Coventry, and groups of police commandos.

PART OF A PATTERN

Altogether about eighty homes were raided, thirty seven in the Coventry district alone. The only link between the people raided was their connection with relief organisations working around the Irish question. The raids are similar to the ones which took place last year after the Aldershot bomb explosions, when Republicans and members of the International Socialists and the IMG were among those singled out for this particular kind of police attention.

Address books, personal belongings and documents were seized. These latest raids are part of a pattern of police repression which has steadily mounted over the last year. Organisations on the British Left and Irish exile organisations are increasingly coming under police harrassment.

UNITED ACTION AGAINST THE RAIDS

Over 800 people filled Conway Hall in London recently in a meeting organised by British revolutionary Socialist organisations - the IS, IMG and SLL - to protest against the last wave of political repression.

This is, we hope, only the first such response of the Irish in British Labour Movement to the latest waves of raids and arrests. It shows what can be done if we build principled united action against the attacks on democratic rights and basic human freedoms, which are being whittled away under the Tory Government.

Support the Belfast 10

A picket of more than fifty people took place outside Brixton prison on the first of what is planned to be a regular Saturday afternoon picket, to draw attention to the plight of the ten people arrested at gunpoint from a Belfast bound plane at Heathrow Airport.

Bernadette Devlin, Vanessa Redgrave and Edna O'Brien have so far stood up and offered to go bail for the Belfast Ten - who are still incarcerated in prison. Future action to highlight the deprivation of basic legal rights for the Ten is planned and a defence committee has been set up. (See back page).

"Annihilate, exterminate, till peace has come"

In the last year over 165 people have been deliberately murdered in cold blood in Northern Ireland. The British Government, Press and TV, have attempted to cover up the real nature of this campaign of assassinations by pretending that some sort of ' psychopathic maniacs ', as opposed to organised killer squads, have been responsible. They have further confused the public into thinking that the victims have been equally divided between Catholics and Protestants. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH.

ORGANISED POGROMS

Of those 165, about 123 were Catholics and the rest Protestants, and that is in an area where Protestants outnumber Catholics by three to one.

Half of the Protestants to die in this way were killed by other loyalists, either because they were too friendly with Catholics or as a result of internal feuds. The number of Catholics to have been killed by the IRA or other non-loyalist groups is only seven.

There is a well organised anti - Catholic pogrom in operation in Belfast. The facts about these assassinations are backed up by frightening stories of families being driven from their homes in UDA controlled areas. *IN ONE ESTATE ALONE, RATHCOOLE, 1,000 FAMILIES, ALL CATHOLICS, HAVE BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS.* 800 families have fled from East Belfast, an area where many of the assassinations took place. In the last few months scores of Catholic pubs, shops and churches have been bombed and burned.

The bomb attacks come without any warnings, and are designed to kill as many people as possible. The British Government and press have attempted to ignore the extent of this loyalist pogrom, so as to avoid having to do something about it.

THE LOYALIST KILLER SQUADS

A number of the loyalist killer squads are known by name; 'TARA ', ' RED HAND ', ' SILENT DEFENDERS ', as well as these named groups, there are undoubtedly other assassination squads within the UDA, and the illegal UVF. Most of those currently facing murder and attempted murder charges were connected with one or other of these groups.

William Craig once said:

" four or five armed commando type Protestant organisations are now standing by to carry out special duties..... people are beginning to say, if there is going to be a blood bath, well better to get it over with once and for all."

When asked specifically about the assassination of Catholics, he replied: *" if it is impossible to win our democratic rights without this sort of thing happening, then I am prepared to tolerate it."*

Extreme loyalist papers openly call for the killing of Catholics. A poem in one of them contains these lines:

" Fight Provo, IRA and Papish Scum
Annihilate! Exterminate !
Till Peace has come. "

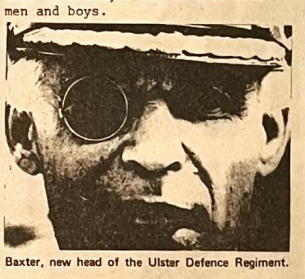
Another poem, refering to John McKeague's ' Red Hand ' group went as follows:

" Now their training it is over,
Their duty has begun,
To rid this little province,
Of the dirty Rebel Scum! "

Of all these groups, only the UVF is illegal. Members of the rest walk the streets freely while hundreds of Republicans remained imprisoned for their political beliefs alone.

But the killings are not the work of the loyalist para-military groups alone. It is widely assumed here in Belfast, that there is a secret assassination squad operating from within the Ulster Defence Regiment, the British trained and financed force that replaced the ' B ' Specials. A number of UDR members have appeared on attempted murder and murder charges, but no attempt has been made to remove extreme loyalists from the UDR. They continue to use it as a training ground and a source for modern weapons.

Many of those to die ' mysteriously ',as the police like to call it, were in fact killed by British Army personnel operating in plain clothes from civilian cars. One of the very first to die in an assassination was Mr. Paddy McVeigh who was gunned down by such a killer gang. Daniel Rooney died likewise,as did several other men and boys.



Baxter, new head of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Within the last few weeks, two soldiers have appeared in court on attempted murder charges. They shot and wounded three unarmed Catholics standing at a bus stop. The soldiers were in plain clothes, and using a Thompson sub-machine gun, the traditional weapon of the IRA. The fact that these men have been arrested should fool noone into believing that the plain clothes killer squads of the British Army are free-lancers.

They are part of British policy in Ireland. One of the leading British Army strategists for the North, Brig. Frank Kitson, has openly advocated the killing off of ' unwanted members of the public '. He has organised similar assassinations in many other British colonies.

BRITISH ARMY TERROR

The British Government, and its army have refused to take action against the loyalist assassins because to do so would mean moving troops from the Catholic ghettoes into the loyalist ones. The British are not here to bring peace or restore law and order as their apologists maintain, but to defeat all opposition to imperialist domination. At the moment,the main threat to British rule comes from the anti - unionist side, so all effort is going in to smash them.

In the meantime, the loyalists are given a free hand to kill and bomb as many Catholics as they like. The British tolerate the assassinations and at times particapate in them, because they have the effect of terrorising the Catholic community into submission. In many areas the killings have scared the people so much, that they are prepared to have the Army back as protectors. Thus the Army is confusing the people into thinking it has a valid role to play here.

WITHDRAW THE TROOPS

But there were no killings like this when the barricades were up and the British Army was totally excluded from the Catholic ghettoes.

The Army cannot and will not defend anyone who stands in the way of the British exploitation of Ireland.

ONLY THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES CAN DEFEND THE AREAS WHERE THEY LIVE. THE SOONER THE ARMY IS WITHDRAWN, THE SOONER THE KILLINGS WILL STOP.

Mike Miller Belfast

Jacqueline Kaye, the secretary of the Prisoners Aid Committee, Clann na hEireann on

IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ENGLAND

"There is no country in Europe where political prisoners are treated like in England" Marx wrote in 1869 and now over one hundred years later we could add "Except in Ireland".

But one of the worst aspects of being a political prisoner in England is that you are not recognised as such. You are according to law an ordinary criminal as regards punishment and can be picked out for special harassment and isolation, while not being able to claim the dignity of special status.

PRISONERS AID COMMITTEE

The Prisoners Aid Committee was set up by Clann na h-Eireann last year to draw attention to Irish political prisoners in England, to campaign for them to be given political prisoner status and to help their dependants morally and financially.

By what criterion do we decide that a man is a political prisoner? It is fashionable to say that all prisoners are political prisoners in a capitalsystem. That all those imprisoned in this late stage of the decline of the bourgeoisie are the victims of this society and its ruthless system of oppression and that they are therefore "political" prisoners.This is not our position.We feel that men whose political activities and beliefs have led directly to them being tried and given harsh and heavy sentences, should be given special recognition of this fact. And they are specially treated within the prison system, where there is an implicit recognition of the fact that they are "politicals". A few examples will show this.

In the Winchester trial last November, judge Sebag-Shaw elicited Noel Jenkinson's political ideas for the benifit of a middle-class jury. I quote from newspaper reports of the trial.

"The judge asked Jenkinson about his comment at the start of the evidence that he deplored the killing of innocent working class people and whether he would deplore it.

My first interest is to my class. I see everything on a class basis and everything that effects my class gets my best endeavours".

Asked if he would describe himself as anti-capitalist, Jenkinson replied that that was a negative thing. "I am pro-working class....I became a Communist because they were the only people who constantly fought against Fascism".

POLITICAL COURTS

At his trial Joe Farrington was closely questioned about his political views and accused of being a Communist sympathiser. Pat O'Sullivan and Conor Lynch at their trial, were both questioned about the IRA, though no attempt was made to prove their membership. Eamonn Smullen recently released from Nottingham, has explained in press conferences and at a public meeting in London, the way in which his militant trade union activities made the Special Branch determined to put him away and how he was given a heavy sentence - 8 years before it was reduced to 5 on appeal- despite the dubious legality of the case. An interesting comparison can be made with the arms cases involving the "Orange Order of England"in Leeds and the UDA case in London last year, where the judge handed down suspended sentences in the first case and the jury acquitted in the second.

Many of these cases bear the marks of a Special Branch frame-up, with the use of conspiracy charges, agents-provocateurs and the planting of evidence. (Remember the Hacney arms Case?). It took the police 3 months to find Noel's fingerprints on the explosives found in his garage.

TREATMENT IN PRISON

In prison these men are singled out for special treatment. They are held as Category A prisoners, with consequent delays to mail and all visitors have to submit photos to the police and be visited in their homes. They are denied political books and newspapers - including letters and cards from the AIL. Most of them are refused "Rosc Catha" and "The United Irishman" on the grounds that it will work against their "rehabilitation", this being an open admission that they are political prisoners.

Like Pat O'Sullivan and Eamonn Smullen were, they are denied parole home leave, hostel and week-end leave and all the other "priveleges" of our wonderful prison system. And this despite the fact that they are well-behaved prisoners and usually earn full remission of sentence.

DUTY OF THE BRITISH LEFT

It is the duty of all the English Left, whose country has been and is guilty of tremendous brutality and savagery in its colonisation of Ireland, to remember the role played by Karl Marx in the campaign to win amnesty for the Fenian prisoners in the 1870s and to join with us in our demands for the release of all Irish Political prisoners from English jails. Let all those who have quite correctly raised their voices for political prisoners in Greece, Spain and Vietnam, now turn their attention to those Republicans imprisoned in their own jails and disassociate themselves from the workings of the class-biased judicial system which now holds within its jaws a group of dedicated Socialists and Revolutionaries who are "guilty" only of having consistently fought against British Imperialism.

Let them remember that a time will come, and will come soon, when they too will be looking for recognition for their political prisoners.

LIST OF PRISONERS AT PRESENT HELD IN BRITISH JAILS.

Noel Jenkinson Leicester
Pat O'Sullivan Hull
Conor Lynch Wakefield
Finbar Kissane Wormwood Scrubs
Alex McLaverty Maidstone
Richard McLaferty Maidstone
Joe Farrington Stafford
Jim Flynn Lincoln
Michael Duigan Isle of Wight
Michael Tobin Chelmsford
Michael Gaughan Albany IOW
James Moore Wormwood Scrubs
Jack McElduff Albany IOW
Mathew Ward Aberdeen
Michael Crowley and
Michael Flaherty- in Borstal, address not yet given

In addition, the Belfast Ten-Roisin McNearney, Marian Price, Dolores Price, William McLarnon, Robert Walsh, Gerard Kelley, Martin Brady, William Armstrong, Hugh Feeney and Paul Holmes are held on remand in Brixton

Tory 'In Defence of Peace'

"Urban terrorism is a serious threat. We must treat it seriously".

Thus concludes a recently-published significant pamphlet from the Conservative Political Centre entitled *" In Defence of Peace "*, which accords the deepest importance to Brigadier Frank Kitson's *" Low Intensity Operations "*.

This pamphlet by seven prominent Conservatives all connected with Defence, floats many ideas on the subject of future military policy and expenditure, which found its way into the British Government's White Paper on Defence.

From both publications it appears that the British ruling machine has learnt much from its Army in the Six Counties and has already developed strategy gained from the Irish experience for application to possible political conflict in Britain.

" Internal security and defence against sabotage within the U.K. is likely to be a major problem in periods of tension. "

Lord Carrington, the Defence Minister gave his personal blessing to *" In Defence of Peace "*, and amongst its proposals is a call for increasing the Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve (TAVR), already 54,000 strong.

" As internal security and defence against sabotage within the U.K. is likely to be a major problem in periods of tension, let alone in war, the uncommitted reserve is too small, especially as the police force is undermanned ", states the pamphlet, *" the strength of the uncommitted reserve should be doubled to enable it to expand still further, should the need arise. "*

On Internal Security, the pamphlet makes three noteworthy recommendations. Firstly, *" When it comes to dealing with a crowd of stone-throwing hooligans on the edge of the Bogside, the equipment that the soldier carries makes him look like a Roman soldier confronting a Sicilian mob in the first century A.D. Britain needs more effective non - lethal weapons."*

Secondly; *" We must remind ourselves constantly that a study of the techniques of terrorism must now be an integral part of every front-line soldier's career. In recent years, some of the best studies of terrorism to be found anywhere have been published in this country by authors like Brigadier Frank Kitson, Brian Crozier and Robert Moss, but we have lagged behind other countries in making counter - terrorism activities an important part of normal training."*



Major-General Frank Kitson

" The lack of formal training has been offset by the commonsense and wide experience of our regular soldiers, but inevitably a study of counter- terrorism is going to involve the armed forces in a closer study of current politics. "

Thirdly, recommends the pamphlet, *" We must pay more attention to our intelligence services. It would not be an exaggeration to say that our Special Branches have been in a depressed state at the beginning of every counter - terrorist campaign that we have fought. Our armed forces have not been able to operate effectively until this weakness was cleared up."*

Such thinking was not specifically shared on a Ministerial level when the White Paper on Defence Estimates for the coming year was published a short time ago. Statistics were given to show just how effective a training ground Northern Ireland was proving for the British Army, which cost Westminister £29 million last year.

Over 46,000 Army personnel had been moved in rotation through the Province last year, but no further indication of Defence policy either in N.I. or in Britain was given in the White Paper.

IN DEFENCE OF BLOODY SUNDAY

The recent publication of *" Protest and the Urban Guerilla "* by Major - General Richard Clutterbuck, a noted propagandist of the Army cause, is a fair indication of current military thinking, and the book contains a large section on Northern Ireland, including a defence of the Bloody Sunday massacre, even more convinced and complete than that of Lord Widgery.

THE ULTIMATE DETERRENT TO CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

The role of the Army as an Armed Police Force to preserve at all cost the established status quo was again stressed by a Wing - Commander H.R. Allen in the Letters Page of a recent *" Sunday Times "*. He wrote; *" No government can rule without an ultimate deterrent to civil disobedience - what would have happened in 1926, during the General Strike, if the Royal Engineers had not been available to handle, for example, the trains and the docks ? ".*

At this point, we would do well to examine again the thoughts of Brig. Frank Kitson, from his *" Low Intensity Operations "* textbook.

" If a genuine and serious grievance arose, such as might result from a significant drop in the standard of living, all those who now dissipate their protest over a wide variety of causes might concentrate their efforts and introduce a situation which was beyond the power of the police to handle.

Should this happen, the Army would be required to restore the position rapidly. Fumbling at this juncture might have grave consequences even to the extent of undermining confidence in the whole system of government."

THE LESSONS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

A common thread running through the ideas of those such as Kitson and Clutterbuck, and indeed the whole galaxy of those who make up the Whitehall -based Institute for the Study of Conflict, is that the Army is overtly an arm of the State which must where and when necessary serve to protect the State.

Social conditions such as massive unemployment, are seen as factors that could provoke insurgency in Britain. But the priority is consistently the preservation of the status quo, no matter how rotten and rotting, and never a consideration of the social factors.

Defence is the sole consideration and, when and if the crunch comes, those who attack, whether by petrol-bombs, disruption or merely by demonstrations, will be the enemy whom the Army must crush.

The British ruling class and its mercenaries in the British Army, has indeed learnt its lessons well in Northern Ireland, and is ready to deal with the situation on the mainland.

Is the British Left similarly prepared ?

Dave Martin

ATTACKS ON WOMEN PRISONERS

Women held in Armagh Prison were beaten up and had fire hoses turned on them by male warders and British troops on March 5th.

The attack followed an unsuccessful escape bid by five Republican women, including Elizabeth McKee, the first women to be interned, and Theresa Holland, a 17year old school student.

A statement smuggled out of gaol said that one prisoner, Collete McCann, was batoned by at least nine of the prison staff, and that another 17-year old, Christine Clarke was hauled down a flight of stairs, and hurled head first into a cell, where she was left unconscious. The warders then hosed the prisoners in their cells.

This savage treatment of Republican women highlights the importance women play in the Irish struggle.

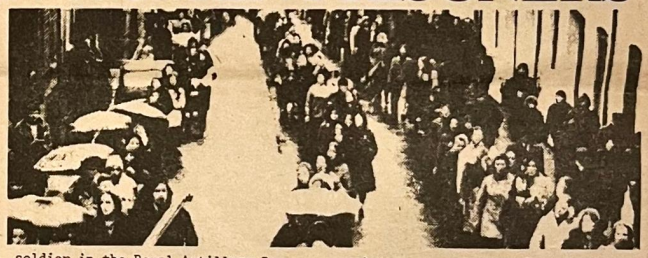
Until this year, women have been dealt with by the spurious legality of the Orange courts and many have received severe sentences. But this has been found too cumbersome to deal with the increasing numbers of women in active opposition to British Imperialism.

In the new year , Liz McKee became the first woman to be interned without trial in the North. She was followed by Theresa " Tish " Holland

WOMEN FIGHT ON

Throughout this phase of the struggle women have played a leading role in fighting British Imperialism. They took a leading role in the rent and rates strike which is still effective in most Catholic areas. They have led militant demonstrations against Army posts and other B.A. installations - it was a Women's Action Group which organised a march to the home of the Bishop of Belfast after he had condemned the IRA.

The women " whistlers " who warn the community of an impending British Army raid, by the ' traditional ' method of banging dustbin lids, have prevented the arrests of many Republicans. Liz McKee was once threatened with shooting by a soldier in the Royal Artillery Regiment for this activity. It was the women of Andersonstown, led by Maire Drumm, now President of Sinn Fein, who broke up the British-inspired *Women Together Movement*, showing them that the women of Andersonstown are not interested in peace on *British terms*.



Recently, a protest demonstration of 250 women resulted in the release of 35 men from the Ardoyne area after a swoop by the Third Parachute Regiment.

After the shambles of the Whitelaw tactic of trying to separate the IRA from its base, the Catholic community in the North, repression has steadily mounted, against those sections of the population who want to break from British Imperialism. Its aim is to crush the will of the people to resist.

That this has failed, that people are still prepared to confront the Army on the streets, to refuse to pay rents, and to support the IRA in its military campaign, continues to prevent British Imperialism from imposing its solution on Ireland. *This is why brutality against women has been escalating.*

Liz McKee's arrest was condemned by by the whole anti- Unionist population in the North, and has brought forth a stream of protests from local people and organisations, including organisations in Britain.

That campaign must be continued against these latest attacks, as part of the on-going solidarity movement with the Irish struggle.

Rosemary Sullivan



Derry Women's Action Committee demonstrate after Bloody Sunday.

Why the An
Internment Lea

The Anti - Internment League was created in response to a unique historical situation - the struggle in the North of Ireland. After Internment was imposed in the summer of 1971, this struggle escalated to the most formidable challenge to British rule in Ireland since 1922.

The minority in the North having risen from their knees in 1968, refused to accept Internment and fought back both militarily and politically. This resistance became the focus of world - wide attention - just as Cuba, Algeria and Viet - Nam had become in their struggles to achieve national liberation. These struggles had not only engaged the invading forces in a fierce guerilla war, but they had also raised the question of international solidarity not least in the country of the oppressor itself.

Bringing the war home

Irish exiles have a long history of particapation in the struggle to free their native land. The Irish in Britain are no exception. But for the first time in Britain a movement was created which embraced not only Irish exile organisations, but also small, though significant sections of British society. Student Unions, Revolutionary Socialist groups and Trade Union organisations were all represented. The Anti - Internment League was a new factor in the British political scene.

There had been co-operation among Irish and British revolutionary groups before in the Irish Civil Rights Campaign, the Irish Solidarity Campaign and numerous local committees. But none had been as large , as broad or as effective as the AIL.

The AIL mobilised much greater numbers of British people than any previous solidarity organisation.

This was a new dimension. It posed the possibility of building a movement in Britain similar to the anti-war movement in the U.S.A. A movement which would have the effect of ' brinaing the war home ' i.e. would contribute to the defeat of the imperialist war by forces within the oppressor country itself.

Such a movement could not fail to involve large sections of the Irish community in Britain. THough it must have as its primary task, the aiding of the Irish struggle, it could not but help to strengthen the arm of those who wished to revolutionize British society.

Bloody Sunday

The situation in the North has proven to be one of extreme volatility. This meant that the AIL could not always respond on the same level - its broad support waxed and waned according to the situation at the time. A large part of those who turned out on AIL demonstrations were reacting to a temporary phase in the strategy of British interest in Ireland. They were horrified at the injustices of internment, and the brutality of the British Army. In other words, they were mobilised by the ' politics of the last atrocity '. This meant that the AIL declined in size after the introduction of Direct Rule. Illusions in the Whitelaw administration abounded and the British propaganda machine, through the Press and TV media, made sure that these illusions were exploited to the full.

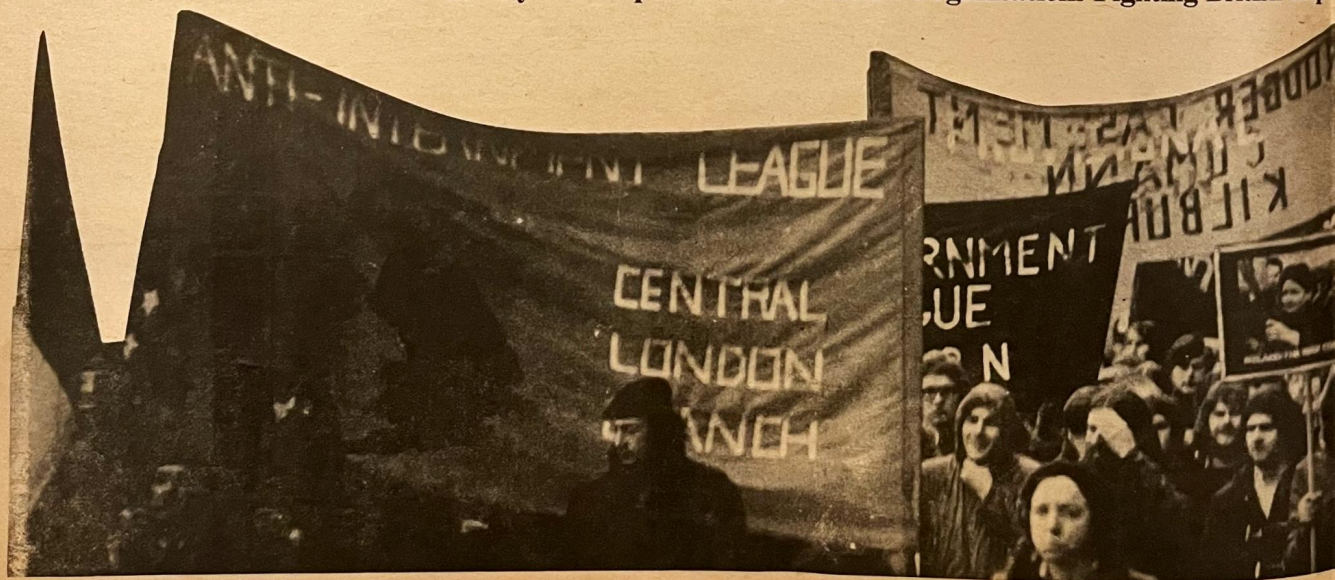
Nevertheless, the AIL carried on with new conviction of the utmost importance of its task, and consolidated itself through the adoption of new aims which made it clear that the AIL was in solidarity with those Republican and Socialist forces fighting British Imperialism in Ireland.

Since that period the AIL has had some notable successes. In November of last year, in a period of down turn in the crisis, the AIL mounted a demonstration of 2,500. Then in January a 5,000-strong march commemorated the anniversary of the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry, end -ing in an impressive rally in Camden Town Hall, and an overflow meeting which packed the street outside.

The AIL Trade Union Conference

But we know that demonstrations, although useful and necessary, are insufficient, and we need to develop a strategy to react to the changes within Britsh society, if we are to render the kind of aid the Irish struggle needs. We have witnessed the growing dissillusion in Britain with the Irish war, the creeping demoralisation in the British Army, and the concern expressed by increasing number of trade unionists about the repression in Ireland.

The AIL Demands: Self Determination for the Irish People Withdraw British Troops
Solidarity with Republican and Socialist Organisations Fighting British Impe



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ague?

For this reason we are organising a conference in May, which will aim to get across to British trade unionists,as well as students and other interested bodies, the reality of the repression in Ireland today. This conference will not only attempt to communicate the facts to these organisations and individuals, but also place them in their political context. We will argue that the British Army, far from playing a 'peace-keeping role' in the North, is contributing to the violence, deaths, and sectarian strife, and that this is a fundamental tactic of British Imperialism's policy.

Fighting the Illusions

We will maintain that British Imperialism, and its army cannot solve the ' Irish Problem (in reality Irelands British Problem) and that only the immediate and unconditional withdrawl of British troops, and the ending of British rule in Ireland can lead to a lasting peace in Ireland.

Since the White Paper, more illusions have emerged. Against all the evidence of Irelands 800-year old history of oppression, many who had previously particapted in solidarity action are sitting back, and waiting to see if the White Paper will change things. *To these people we say, all the White Papers in the world cannot camouflage the fact that British Imperialism is in Ireland, not to keep the peace as she maintains but to protect the interest of British Big Business, North and South of the Border, and to increase the exploitation of the Irish people. In pursuit of more profits, it puts the lives of Irish people on a British army firing line.*

THE AIL IS THE ONLY ORGANISATION WHICH IS CAPABLE OF MOUNTING THE LARGEST AND BROADEST SOLIDARITY ACTION HERE IN BRITAIN. IT REMAINS THE ONLY ARENA OF SUBSTANTIAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN BRITISH AND IRISH ORGANISATIONS IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES.

FOR THESE REASONS THE AIL WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH THE IRISH QUESTION INTO THE CENTRE OF THE BRITISH POLITICAL STAGE AND INTO THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO BUILD IT.

BOB PURDIE

(A.I.L. NATIONAL ORGANISER)

s Now **Release all Political Prisoners**

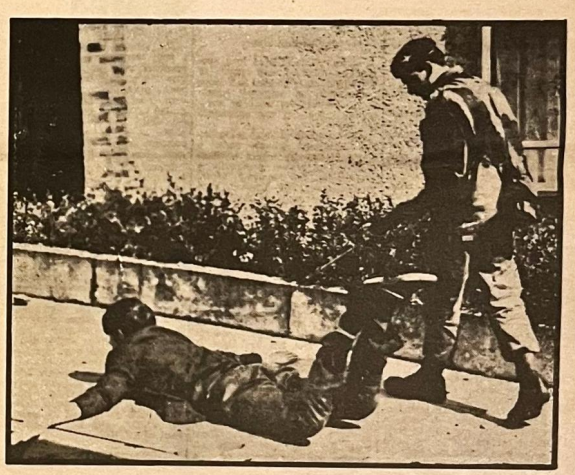
erialism in Ireland



AIL CONFERENCE SATURDAY MAY 19

THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE BRITISH ARMY IN IRELAND

CONWAY HALL RED LION SQUARE HOLBORN LONDON WC1



DRAFT AGENDA

SESSION 1 THE POLITICS OF REPRESSION

Why the British Army cannot solve the Irish crisis; the repression against the minority; The British Government and Army props up sectarianism; Whitelawism and the perspectives of the British Government.

SESSION 2 THE THEORY & PRACTICE OF REPRESSION

The theories of Brigadier Kitson; case histories of Army repression; the implications for the Labour Movement in Britain. Speakers invited from the Association for Legal Justice (Belfast), and AIL.

SESSION 3 WILL TAKE THE FORM OF THREE SIMULTANEOUS WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 1 The Technology of Repression, Rubber Bullets, CS Gas and Torture. Speaker invited from British Society for Social responsibility in Science.
WORKSHOP 2 The Implications of the Irish struggle for the British Labour Movement. The background, the British state and British imperialism, the British working class and the Irish struggle, repression in Ireland and Britain. Speakers from AIL.
WORKSHOP 3 Film Show and Discussion. Film: "Bringing it All Back Home", discussion on the AIL and future actions, etc. Speakers from AIL.

Venue of Workshops to be announced, Workshops subject to alteration.

Central London AIL will be organising a social which will take place after the end of Session 3, venue to be announced.

Further information from: Anti-Internment League, 88 Roslyn Road, London N15.

DIVIDE AND RULE

by Paul Doherty

The Border Poll is only one of the more recent examples of the strategy of British Imperialism to divide and rule. In the case of Ireland, the particular form this strategy has taken is in fostering division of the Irish working class along religious lines, so that Ireland, North and South, can be exploited in the interests of British Imperialism.

The partition of Ireland which created the Northern Ireland statelet was brought about by



Sir James Craig–first Premier of the Six Counties.

fraud. The recent border poll follows from the imposed division. Lord Carson said in retrospect of Partition "What a fool I was! I was only a puppet, and so was Ulster, and so was Ireland, in the political game that was to get the Conservative Party into power". Of course it was a case of the biter bit, as when Lloyd George told Redmond that he "placed his life upon the table, and would stand or fall by the agreement come to" viz. that the six counties would be excluded from the Home Rule Bill only for the provisional emergency period due to the First World War. However, on May 29th 1916, Lloyd Goerge had already secretly written to Carson as follows: "I enclose Green's draft propositions. We must make it clear that at the end of the provisional emergency period, Ulster does not, whether she wills it or not, merge with the rest of Ireland. P.S. Will you show it to Craig?".

THE SELFISHNESS OF GREAT BUSINESS INTERESTS

On the 28th September 1924 the Earl of Shelbourne revealed to the Press Association a memo of the late Walter Long, the British cabinet's adviser on Ireland, that Carson and Craig, when the Partition Act was passing through Parliament, got the cabinet *unanimously* to pledge to hold the six county boundary thereafter inviolable in return for the Unionists' promise to work the Bill. *The Times* detected in the subsequent decision of the Ulster Unionist Council to ratify the agreement "the selfishness of great business interests". So much for the principled behaviour of the British which led to the creation of the six counties.

The actual fixing of the border of the new state presents an even more fraudulent picture. In January 1920 Long visited Northern Ireland to sample Protestant opinion, the question of the border, and reported back to the cabinet on 3rd February that most of the people were of opinion that the whole province should be excluded; but on the other hand, the people in the *inner circles* hold the view that the new province should consist of the six counties, the idea being that the inclusion of Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan would provide such access of strength to the Roman Catholic party, that the supremacy of the Unionists would be seriously threatened". As Captain Craig stated in the Commons a few months later - "We quite frankly admit that we cannot hold the nine counties". In other words the border was so placed that bearing in mind the division of the working class along religious lines, the Unionists might govern as large an area as was consistent with assured Unionist supremacy and still be economically viable.

THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION

However, before the final seal of approval was bestowed by the British on the new Northern Ireland state, a few more 'tricks' were placed on those who signed the treaty on 6th December, 1921. Article 12 provided for the establishment of a Boundary Commission to determine "in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants as far as may be compatible with economic and geographical conditions, the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland". Michael Collins in a memo made immediately after the relevant interview and shortly before the treaty was signed wrote "Mr. Lloyd George remarked that I myself pointed out on a previous occasion that the North would be forced economically to come in". Lord Birkenhead stated in the Lords on 9th December, 1925 that the Treaty "never could have been signed, it never would have been signed, without Artcle 12". But even before it met the findings of the Boundary Commission were already settled. Lord Birkenhead in a secret letter to Craig dated 3rd March 1922 wrote: "I understand you wish to be assured as to the meaning of clause (12) in the Articles... the Article contemplates the maintenance of Northern Ireland as an entity already existing not a new state to be brought into being... It is regarded as a creature already constituted having its own Parliament and its own defined boundaries".

THE BIRTH OF THE ORANGE STATE

The letter concluded "I have no doubt that the tribunal, not being presided over by a lunatic, will take a rational view of the limits of its own Jurisdiction and will reach a rational conclusion". The Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Justice Feetham, proved not to be a lunatic and the Commission never reported. The state was a fait-accompli as the British had already armed the exclusively Protestant B Specials. It did not prove necessary for Craig, as he offered at Stormont on 7th October 1924, to place himself at the disposal of the Loyalists "as their



Michael Collins

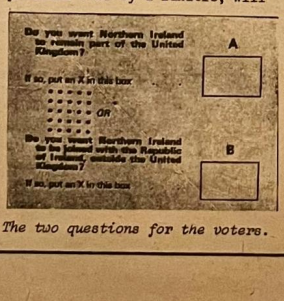
chosen leader to defend any territory which we may consider has been unfairly transferred". Thus the Orange Statelet was born.

THE BRITISH TERMS

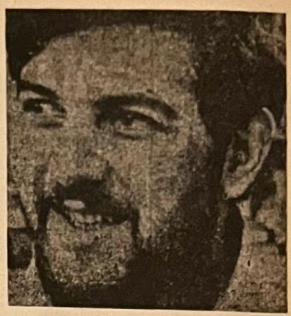
The present Border Poll, the results of which were announced on 9th March 1973 must be seen in this context. Words such as majority and minority are stood on their heads. The questions asked by the Poll were so framed as to give no meaningful choice. Paisley and others insisted that, as Carson had demanded on 22nd July 1914, "all vote as a unit - one unit". The Loyalists, no doubt with the help of some personation, voted to remain part of the United Kingdom 57.2% of the total electorate voting this way. This poll gave the British carte-blanche to subsequently reveal *their terms*, on which Northern Ireland is to remain a part of the United Kingdom.



Bowler-hatted William Cosgrave raises the first flag of the Irish Free State.



The two questions for the voters.



The Tale of Gunner Williams

A British soldier has told of his desertion to the South of Ireland after being ordered to shoot down children in Belfast.

In a recent interview with the *Limerick Leader*, Gunner George Williams of the Third Royal Horse Artillery of the British Army described his arrest and subsequent escape to Ireland.

While the British Press has been so occupied with deploring the "attack on civilised standards" - the bombs which went off in London on March 8th, it is understandable that no space could be found for the story of Gunner Williams who had violated another set of cherished British standards ... he refused to become a child-killer on the orders of an Army Officer.

Gunner Williams was stationed in Belfast last December. *"About a fortnight before Christmas"* he recalled, *"I was on guard duty at Hawkins Street; there was a few children playing about 25 yards away from my guard-post, a sand-bag sanger enclosed by corrugated iron. There were, oh, roughly four of those children in a group, all of them boys and certainly not more than about 12 or 13 years of age".*

SHOOT THEM!

Gunner Williams was alone in the post when an officer came in and spotted the children.

He took a look round to see if all was quiet - you can see in four different directions from the hut - and then he just turned and said to me - "Shoot them.'", looking at the children.

Horrified at the order, Gunner Williams refused, and continued to refuse as the officer repeated louder... "I told you to shoot those kids", and called him an "insolent bastard".

He was put under arrest and charged with "disobeying a direct order" and "insubordination" and after a night in the cells, was taken back to Colchester in Essex, where he waited under close arrest for the return of his regiment.

"The regiment came home at Christmas and everybody got leave including myself, on the understanding that I would return. I was put under open arrest, with no pay."

REFUGE IN IRELAND

He spent Christmas at his parents home in London, which was constantly under surveillance by the police. It was from there that he and his brother Alf successfully escaped to Ireland and took refuge.

The British Army state that they would welcome Gunner Williams back but he seems unsure of his "welcome", saying that neither he, nor his brother can return to Britain.

Gunner Williams has thus become another of the increasing number of British soldiers who have rejected the brutal role which British Imperialism assigns to them in Ireland, and who have been forced to flee from their homes to escape from it.

UDA Puts On A Respectable Front

The UDA has expelled 'hundreds' of its members in a major shake-up aimed at giving the Protestant para-military organisation a respectable front in advance of the local government and the new Northern Ireland Assembly elections in May and June.

UDA members who are being expelled have been accused of 'directing operations involving hold-ups of shops, house-breaking and vehicle hi-jacking and using the name of the organisation in free-lance criminal activities'.

The UVF has played a major role in this 'clean up'. The accused UDA members have been beaten up and exiled from their own areas. One leading UDA member in the Inner Council has been beaten up and accused of 'criminal activities' and barred from his home in the Shankill Road.

GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT WITH UDA

More than 1,000 vehicles have been hi-jacked in the Shankill Road area of West Belfast within a year.

There have been numerous robberies in Protestant areas - many of them unreported due to threats. Faced with growing disillusionment with the UDA, Charles Harding-Smith the Chairman who took over from Tommy Herron after his release from prison has ordered a 'clean-up' from top to bottom.

This attempt to put on a 'respectable' face is a sign of the growing splits within the Protestant extremist camp. The White Paper has thrown them into confusion and they are no longer sure of their support, they must get rid of 'unsavoury' elements within the UDA.

However, this clean-up is also an indication of the power struggle within the UDA and this is probably the real reason why certain previous prominent members have been forced to flee to England. An example of one such case was Dave Fogel.

If recent reports are any guide, a lot more will follow his example.

Macaskill, where are you?

Who exactly is this man Iain Macaskill? Under that byeline, articles have consistently appeared in the 'Evening News', the feeble organ that supplies mindless fodder for the suburbs, which even by the standards of the general British press, are particularly vicious on Irish matters.

For instance, the April 10th edition prominently displayed the revelation that "London pub collections pay for Provos' war". This story centered around the delicate sensibilities of four English people who chose apparently to drink in a Hammersmith pub, the Prince of Wales.

Minding their own business, they were approached, according to Mr. Macaskill, by three men who told them they were collecting for the Provisional IRA. Shock, horror, the gallant four were appalled and refused to donate.

The vicious twist in the story comes when the landlord is named, though he was allowed to deny knowledge of the collections. This is reminiscent of the approach taken early last year by English journalist James MacManus, then for the Daily Express (though now he is a favoured 'liberal' on the Guardian), when he pilloried the landlord of the Albany pub near Great Portland Street.

Clann na hEireann had held a press conference there to explain their stand after the Aldershot explosion, and MacManus' subsequent malicious bile against the pub succeeded in having the landlord sacked within a week by owners Watney Mann.

However, back to Mr Macaskill. To make the point, he wrote: "The four customers were adamant: 'The collections did take place'. And although they wish to remain anonymous at the moment, they are prepared to testify in court what they saw".

The week before, ace news-hound Macaskill decided that the letter bomb explosions in the Post Offices at Kilburn and Paddington were definitely IRA outrages, and wrote that Scotland Yard were acting on this assumption. The fact that Scotland Yard emphatically denied such a connection did not deter Macaskill from his important work.

So again, who are you, Mr Macaskill? There are many of us who would warmly welcome the opportunity to meet you.

David Mulcahy

GERMAN SOLIDARITY

After an initial period of confusion over the nature of the struggle in the North of Ireland the German Left is now beginning to realise its responsibilities in helping Irish revolutionaries to overcome their international isolation and counter the mystifications spread by British propaganda. News and analyses of the current situation in Ireland can frequently be found in the left wing press, and actions like the daubing of the British consulate in Hamburg with solidarity slogans on the first anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" mark a definite step forward. The first step towards systematic Irish solidarity work was taken by groups with direct links with Irish revolutionaries: the German section of the Fourth International, Gruppe Internationale Marxisten, which initiated a "Free Ireland Solidarity Committee", and the West German Agency of the Official Republican movement. The Free Ireland Solidarity committee organised a speaking tour of West German universities with Bob Purdie of the AIL and representatives of PD and the Provisional Republican movement. The Officials were also invited. Hundreds of people turned up at every meeting. Branches of the committee were set up and a journal called *"Freies Irland"* launched which carried photos, news and analytical background material plus interviews with Republican leaders. Parallel to these activities, the West German agency of the Officials started publishing *"IRA Info"* and they also organised a speaking tour with Tony Heffernan of Sinn Fein.

These initiatives have done a lot to introduce the issue of Ireland into German politics, and there is certainly a basis for broad united front activities in support of the Irish struggle.

Copies of the *"Freies Irland"* journal and information about the work of the Solidarity Committee can be obtained from: Freies Irland c/o 6 Frankfurt, Leisnerstr. 14. West Germany.

H. Mintoff

JOHN MACLEAN COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

Dear Comrade Editor, November 30th this year (1973), will mark the 50th Anniversary of the death of John MacLean, the courageous and beloved revolutionary, who was at the centre of the struggles on "Red Clydeside", during and after the First World War. He died in 1923, his health broken by his experiences in prison and his intense political work. However, unless some steps are taken, this Anniversary will go almost unmarked. MacLean's contribution to the working class movement, and the political ideas for which he stood have been almost forgotten, he is at best remembered as an ikon, who epitomised the spirit of the Clyde, but whose role and ideas are neither discussed nor understood.

And yet MacLean has increasing relevance. A discussion of his contribution raises a number of vital questions. What can be learned from MacLean's fight for an anti-imperialist stance by the Labour movement during the World War? What was the influence of MacLean as a theoretician and Marxist teacher compared to that of the shop stewards in the shipyards and factories, and how did he influence them? What can we learn from MacLean about the relationship between revolutionary intellectuals and the working class? Why did MacLean refuse to join the Communist Party of Great Britain? What was the detailed background to this important aspect of the history of the working class movement in Britain? Why did MacLean, almost alone, place the national struggle of Ireland between 1919 and 1921 at the centre of his propaganda and agitation? What lessons can we draw for the attitude of contemporary revolutionaries to the present round of struggle in Ireland? Why did MacLean call for a Worker's Republic of Scotland? Can a nationalist stance in Scotland and Wales be consistent with a socialist programme?

Let this year be "John MacLean Memorial Year". There should be a series of activities to commemorate his work, to promote the publication of his writings, and to promote the broadest possible discussion about the man and his ideas. The John MacLean Society in Scotland has decided to organise activities in MacLean's native country, and now a Commoration Committee has been set up in London. A coloured poster has been provided, and a public meeting has been arranged for November 30th at the Conway Hall where Harry McShane has agreed to speak. We appeal to you to support the Committee, attend it's meetings and help set in motion it's activities.

The next meeting of the 'John MacLean Commemoration Committee' will take place at the 'General Picton' Public House, Caledonian Road, King's Cross, at 7.45 pm. on Monday 7th May.

Yours fraternally, Alistair Renwick.
28 Lammas Park Road London W.5

IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS

Appeal for books and magazines to send to Internees in Ireland. Please send any spare books or papers (particularly political) or donations for same, to MIKE SCOTT, 16 WETHERBY GDNS, LONDON SW5.

I.S. IRISH FORUM
'THE PROTESTANT WORKING CLASS'
SPEAKER JEFF BELL
In the ROEBUCK pub, Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (Warren Street Tube). FRIDAY APRIL 27th, 7.30pm.

PLEASE HELP TO MAKE THE INFORMATION ON LOCAL ACTIVITIES IN *FREE IRELAND* AS COMPLETE AS POSSIBLE. SEND ANY DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS INTO THE EDITOR AT 88 ROSLYN ROAD LONDON N.15.

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For full adresses and further details, write to The Anti-Internment League, 88 Roslyn Road, London N 15

The following notes from some comrades in Oxford may help readers to arrange local mobilisations for the May 19 Conference:
In Oxford they plan to
1.Set up an ad-hoc organising committee to draw in local Irish organisations- union leaders, trades council, Council of Action in an attempt to win delegates. Also local political organisations,student groups in both the University and Poly, tenants committees, womens groups etc.
2.Arrange public meetings,plus leafleting, etc.
3.Arrange model resolution to be put to as many organisations as possible, together with propaganda for the Conference.
4.Arrange transport and accommodation for delegates.
5.Press the need to continue the work *after* the Conference, within the forces mobilised for it.

CENTRAL LONDON AIL

Regular fortnightly Forums and discussions on aspects of Irish history and the current struggle. Held at the General Picton Pub, Caledonian Road,London N1 (King's Cross Tube) on Fridays at 8pm.

APRIL 27th: Sean MatGamna on Connolly's 'Labour in Irish History'.
MAY 11th:Panel of speakers on the role of the British Troops in Ireland.
MAY 25th: Peter Beresford-Ellis on the Irish Radical Tradition.

JOHN MACLEAN
Full Colour Poster at 30p each, including postage, or 10 for £2.25.
Orders to ALASTAIR RENWICK, 28 LAMMAS PARK ROAD,EALING, LONDON W5.

STIRLING AIL
SCHOOL ON THE WHITE PAPER AND THE BRITISH ARMY
To be held in Stirling University on Sunday May 6th
MAIN SPEAKERS INVITED-
Mike Farrell PD Belfast
Eddie McWilliams Leeds IS
Bob Purdie-Nat.Organiser AIL
DETAILS from Stirling University AIL,c/o C.S.A. University of Stirling.

ARMY MORALE STARTS TO DISINTEGRATE



Snipers to the right... and left. Camera catches worried look on troops' faces

In January, the British Government applied to Sweden for an extradition order. It was for a deserting soldier. When he heard his unit was to be sent for another tour of duty in the North of Ireland he preferred instead to walk for three days across snow covered mountains to find asylum in Sweden. He said he wanted no part in the killing.

His case was the tiny tip of a very large iceberg. Everyone living in the minority areas of the North knows of the soldiers that "break" the men who run from the barracks seeking escape, usually only to be dragged back by the snatch squads.

The demoralisation of the British Army is not surprising. They have used every tactic at their disposal in an attempt to bludgeon the anti-unionist people into submission, and they have clearly failed. Morale is disintegrating, the soldiers whose consciences are immune to their anti-working class activities are shaken by the unabated resistance they are facing.

The soldiers have found many outlets for their frustrations, and they are not merely the petty bullying of the foot patrol and the searches. In one recent month alone, 27 "guardians of law and order" were convicted in court on charges ranging from theft to rape. But they have some other, more sinister pastimes - the shooting of innocent civilians, whether openly while in uniform, or hiding behind the guise of sectarian murders, in plain clothes from passing cars.

Only last month there were the open murders of two supposed "gunmen". On 13 March, Mr. Eddie Sharpe was shot dead by an Army sniper as he stood in his own doorway in Ardoyne. Only one shot was fired around that time - it was by a British paratrooper. On 4 March, 12 year old Kevin Heatley was murdered as he stood with some friends in his home estate, Derrybeg in Newry. Only one shot was fired that night - it was by a drunken British soldier.

These have been no isolated incidents but just a part of the pattern that makes up occupation by the British Army. These murders have been regular occurences since the arrival of the troops in 1969.

The British Army has admitted to nearly 170 men killed since 1969, though the true figures are somewhat higher. These are their biggest losses since the Korean War. Now, especially since the introduction of the RPG-7 rockets at the beginning of the year, the IRA is fighting with better equipment than ever before, and British soldiers are more vulnerable than ever. The rockets were a development the British just had no answer for. Soldiers were made vulnerable everywhere, at any time, whether in armoured car or in barracks. A weapon designed specifically for use against armoured cars has been proved effective on several occasions, despite Army denials.

There is another factor which the British Army has never had to cope with in war before. Because advanced English hospitals are comparatively near, the injured and maimed are getting unusually good medical treatment. This has saved the lives of many soldiers but has also had the effect of keeping alive casualties as little more than vegetables. This has obvious consequences on wives and relatives of the patients and their reactions reverberate through the married quarters and home towns. Clearly this not only shatters British Army morale but also builds up a desire in Britain for pulling out of Ireland.

FACTS CLEAR

The facts of collapsing British Army morale are clear.

In October last year Army enlistment figures were 25 per cent down on the previous year.

In November an "over tired" member of the Labour Party front bench revealed in the bars of the House of Commons that the British Army had experienced its first mutiny of the present campaign. Units stationed in Germany, believed to be from the 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, refused to contemplate a return to Ireland.

In the same month it was admitted, and published in most English newspapers, that large numbers of soldiers of Colchester in Essex, where the British Army dries out soldiers returning from Ireland, had been arrested on drugs charges.

On 9 December, a short paragraph in the Daily Mirror reported that British soldiers at Colchester had opened fire on the administrative block of the barracks.

Later in the same month the Daily Mail reported an attempt by just under 30 paras to buy themselves out of the Army. Their regiment was to return to the Six Counties.

Those were incidents given or accidentally leaked, to the Press in only three recent months. Obviously, they are just the affairs the authorities could not hide, and they indicate far deeper crises in the Army which have been kept from general knowledge.

EFFECTS IN BRITAIN

And all these British Army casualties and the continued resistance is having political effects in Britain itself. British war weariness is beginning to be reflected in Parliament. Slight cracks have been appearing in the bipartisan approach to Ireland by the two major parties and several Labour members have been making speeches calling to "bring our boys back home". It would probably take only one major political figure to express similar sentiments to unleash a tidal wave of public opinion demanding withdrawal from Ireland.

And if the White Paper fails to pacify the North, imperialism will be in crisis. The British will be forced back on their usual tactic - sheer military force. But that is a strategy they have been following for three years, and it has not paid off. The Army is war weary, the British people are war weary. The only comparatively new factor on the side of Britain is the willingness of the Southern regime to attack anti-imperialists just as vehemently as imperialists themselves. This is a crucially important aspect of the situation and must be combatted by socialists and Republicans North and South.

But the way forward for the anti-unionist people of the Six Counties is clear-resistance in all its forms must continue against the British Army, against imperialism.

FROM 'THE PLOUGH'

The Belfast Ten Defence Committee

A committee has been set up to help defend the ten people charged in connection with the recent bomb explosions in London. It is in urgent need of support. It calls on all those willing to defend democratic rights, and who are opposed to the continued repression of Irish militants to assist it in launching a national campaign to highlight the way in which the Belfast Ten have been treated since their arrest, and to demand their unconditional release.

The committee has been in touch with the families and associates of the Ten, and with their agreement has assumed responsibility for the welfare of the prisoners-insofar as the prison authorities are willing to have any provision for their welfare made.

The following facts illustrate the general attitude of the police and prison authorities to date. 1. In defiance of regulations and general practice, the ten were denied access to solicitors, and relatives who tried to visit them between March 8th, the day of their arrest, and March 12th. 2. In defiance of regulations and "normal standards of decency" nine of the ten were kept completely unclothed in Ealing Police Station for the same period. 3. In clear breach of the "legal rights of the citizen" the fingerprints of the ten were taken forcibly without any warrant being produced or sought. 4. Against all precedent, the three girls, Dolores and Marion Price and Roisin McInerney, are being held in a male prison, Brixton. 5. The visiting rights accorded all remand prisoners have been denied the Ten. Most visitors are simply not admitted. Their Belfast solicitor, Mr. Patrick McGrory, has not been allowed to see them.

Not one national newspaper has made complaint against this erosion of civil liberty. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the committee's campaign be given all possible support.

The committee needs money - to bring the families of the Ten to London to visit them, to ensure that food, cigarettes, books etc. are made available, and for printing, the hire of halls etc. At present the committee has no funds at all.

The committee hopes that a campaign for normal visiting facilities will soon be successful. We want to arrange a rota-system which will ensure that each of the Ten has the statutory one visit per day. We therefore urge people to send us their names to be put on such a rota-list.

Offers of help of any other kind will be gratefully received. For example, the families will need accommodation when they come to London.

All donations, name for the visiting rota, and other communications should be sent to Maureen Maguire, 88 Roslyn Road, London N15.



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Printed by F.I.Litho(TU)Ltd 182 Pentonville Rd London N1 Published by the Anti-Internment League