

COMMENT, VIEWS, BOOK REVIEWS AND ANALYSIS

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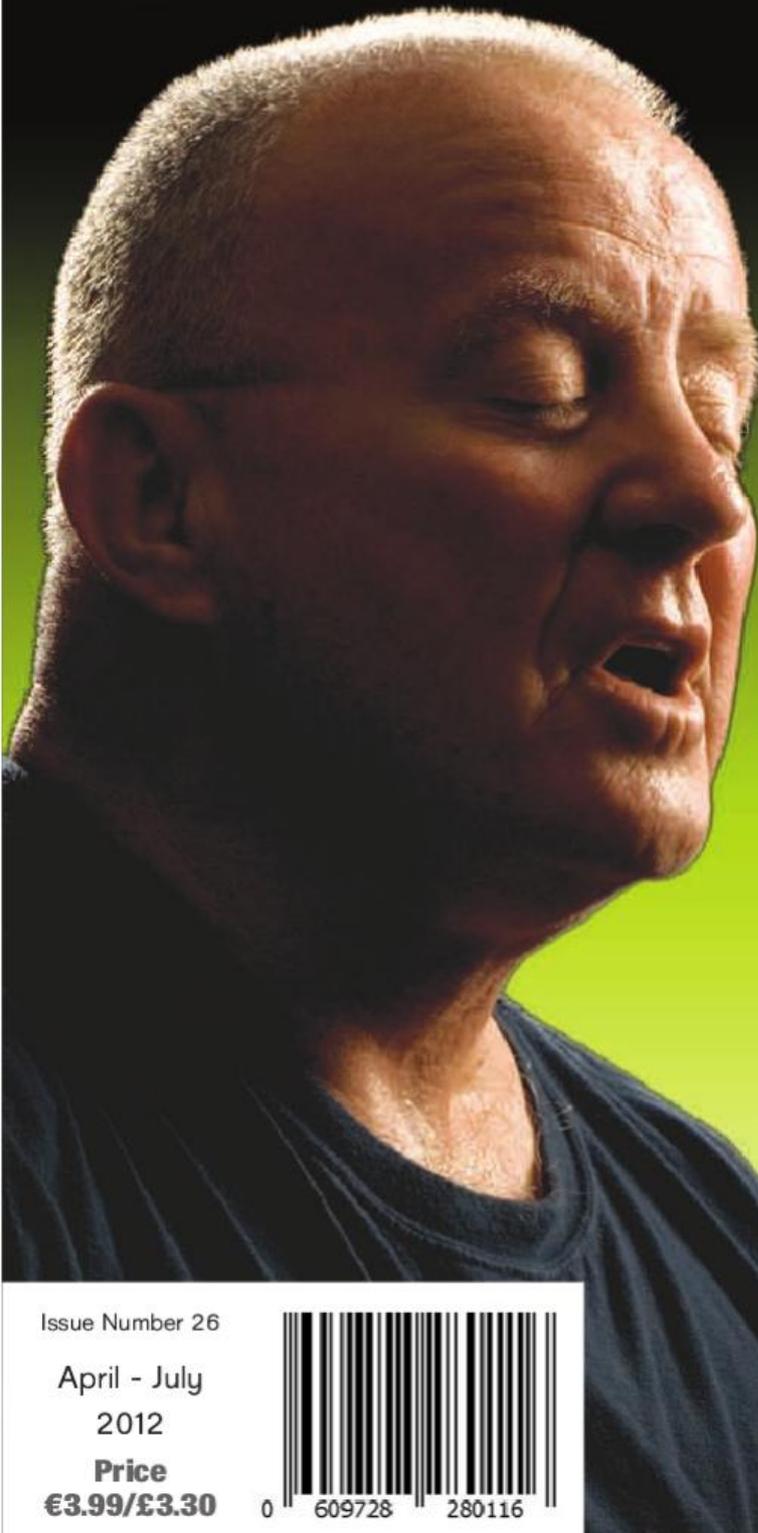
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ex-prisoners
in their own words



» PALESTINE
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CHRISTY MOORE INTERVIEW



CHRISTY TALKS
ABOUT HIS
**PAST,
PASSION**
AND WHAT GIVES HIM
HOPE

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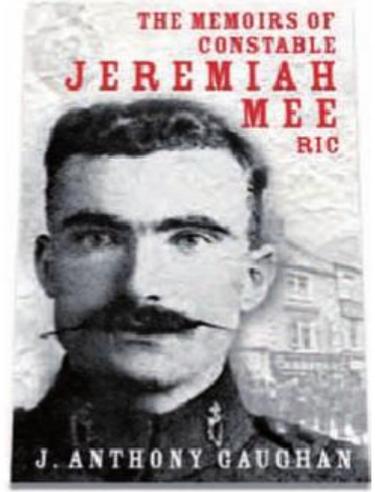
'During the 1980s, the National Liberation Front of Corsica was the only European guerrilla group to carry out more bomb attacks in one year than the IRA'

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EDITORIAL



Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, described the International Monetary Fund/European Central Bank deal as “a noose around the neck” of Ireland

EUROPE Subjugation or internationalism

EUROPE IS AT A CROSSROADS. No longer is it simply the free trade and co-operative area as envisaged by its founders. The EU has developed into a cohesive political unit where larger members such as Germany and France, backed by unelected eurocrats, dictate to others the course and direction which their states should take.

The extent of this bullying and coercion can be seen in the resignations of the Prime Ministers of Italy and Greece. Both were replaced by unelected technocrats, people who have never put themselves before the people or the ballot box and whose only experience necessary to secure their role was close links to the European Central Bank. In Italy, the entire Cabinet running the country is made up of unelected officials. Usually in such situations (as in North Korea) these ruling juntas are condemned as ‘dictatorships’. These Brussels-backed regimes have one purpose – to push through austerity policies which no elected government would ever get away with.

Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, described the International Monetary Fund/European Central Bank deal as “a noose around the neck” of Ireland. He also said that part of the cause of the crash was the Irish Government following deregulation and liberalisation policies – the very policies advocated by the ECB and IMF.

Fianna Fáil and their unbelievably disastrous handling of the economy rightly resulted in their worst election result of all time and their replacement by Fine Gael and the Labour Party. But Fine Gael and Labour were elected on the backs of defiant rhetoric opposing IMF/ECB meddling in our affairs with phrases such as “Not another red cent into Anglo” and “It’s Frankfurt’s way or Labour’s way.” However, once Fine Gael and Labour took their seats in Leinster House, all that changed. The Taoiseach even had the audacity to tell



the Irish people on national television that it was not our fault the crash happened – but we were still going to have to pay for the mistakes of bankers, gamblers and reckless speculators.

People have already seen through this government. Fine Gael’s and Labour’s key concern is not about defending the people from EU-imposed austerity or in bailing out the people. The introduction of a flat-rate Household Charge for struggling families while breaking their own pay caps to give their advisers almost €2,700 a week show just where their priorities lie.

The EU is in dire need of reform: it needs to become an economically and socially just union of equals, not another superpower.

James Connolly was a firm believer in co-operation at an international level and his thoughts on the issue are as relevant now as they were back in 1898 when he wrote:

“The internationalism of the future will be based upon the free federation of free peoples and cannot be realised through the subjugation of the smaller by the larger political unit.”

C | O | M | M | E | N | T

MY GENERATION – THE NEXT GENERATION



BY LAURENCE MCKEOWN

Laurence McKeown is an author, playwright and film screenwriter.

He was a Volunteer in the Irish Republican Army and a republican prisoner. He took part in the 1981 H-Blocks Hunger Strike, during which he went 70 days without food.

I OFTEN HEAR IT SAID BY, let's put it politely, republicans of 'my generation', about how we need to involve youth. What they usually mean is 'how to get youth involved', which is an entirely different thing. The former is to take on board the needs, views, opinions and aspirations of a younger generation and in so doing develop and deepen our collective consciousness and awareness of the world we live in; the latter usually is taken to mean 'get young people to do what we have been doing', which undoubtedly brings new energy but does not result in any change in consciousness or awareness.

It is totally legitimate, understandable, and rational for those who came through the conflict to want a new generation to become involved. They want the struggle to continue. They want the sacrifices and suffering to have been worth it. They want the successes and achievements to be built upon. That, by definition, implies a struggle that already exists, is already defined in the minds of those who have been pursuing it up to now, and is at a certain stage. And that's what 'youth should get involved with'.

There is also the view that young people should be aware of 'what we came

through'. As someone who has written about my own experience of the conflict and that of comrades and communities, I totally agree that a new generation should be made aware of our recent (and not so recent) history. But my generation must remember that it is history for the youth of today. They cannot relive it emotionally in the way that we who came through it can but which we often expect of them. And never should the telling of that history be used as a subtle form of moral coercion as in 'this is what

we did for youse and youse should be grateful and now play your part in it'. That's not the proper basis upon which to join a struggle, arising as it does from external pressure rather than from internal motivation and commitment. More importantly, and thankfully, it just doesn't work anyhow.

The biggest gift my generation gave to the youth of today is the lack of certain knowledge – the knowledge (and experience) of harassment, imprisonment, death on the streets, house raids, families broken up with people on the run, and the multitude of degrading, disempowering humiliations that were daily inflicted upon our communities over a period of decades. That's not their experience today. But what is their experience?

Because they live lives and therefore do experience and have thoughts and opinions and anxieties and hopes and desires and troubles just as we did when growing up though growing up in a much different world. And if we (that older generation) accept that it is different for them today how do we know how different it is unless we listen to them? And this is where a problem can arise because we often prefer to tell (the history; how it was) rather than to listen and even when



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we do the latter we can often have a tendency to reinterpret and reconstruct in our own heads, in line with our own lived experience, what we want to hear (from the young people) rather than what we do actually hear.

So what is the experience of young people when they engage with an older generation of republicans? Do they feel listened to or do they feel spoken to and spoken at and that their role is that of the listener? Do they only engage in real conversation and discuss the issues most relevant to them when they are with their peers? Are they encouraged by us – by way of practical example and demonstration – to be open and honest about what concerns them without fear of being crit-

icised, frowned upon, or reproved? Are we conscious of the power differential that exists when we interact with them and what do we do to negate that differential as much as possible?

We have the option to unconsciously (or maybe sometimes consciously) adhere to the principle of 'children/youth should be seen and not heard' or be open to an egalitarian exchange of views where we (that older generation again) voluntarily give up the power and knowledge of the world we have and through a process of mutual exchange of opinions and dialogue gain the knowledge that a younger generation has and who wish to bestow it upon us. It is their gift to us.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER

to mark the launch of An Phoblacht's new website



The screenshot shows the An Phoblacht website interface. At the top, the logo 'anphoblacht' is displayed in a stylized font. Below it are navigation links for 'News', 'Latest Edition', 'Archive', 'About us', 'Contact us', 'Sales', and 'Publications'. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a large article titled 'Sinn Féin Poll Surge' with a photo of Gerry Adams. To the right, there is a video player with the title 'What would you do with €3.1 billion?' and a thumbnail showing a group of people holding a sign that says 'MORE TEACHERS DOCTORS & NURSES'. Below the video is another article titled 'Neck-and-neck between Johnson and Livingstone' with a photo of Boris Johnson and Ken Livingstone. The website also includes social media icons for RSS, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

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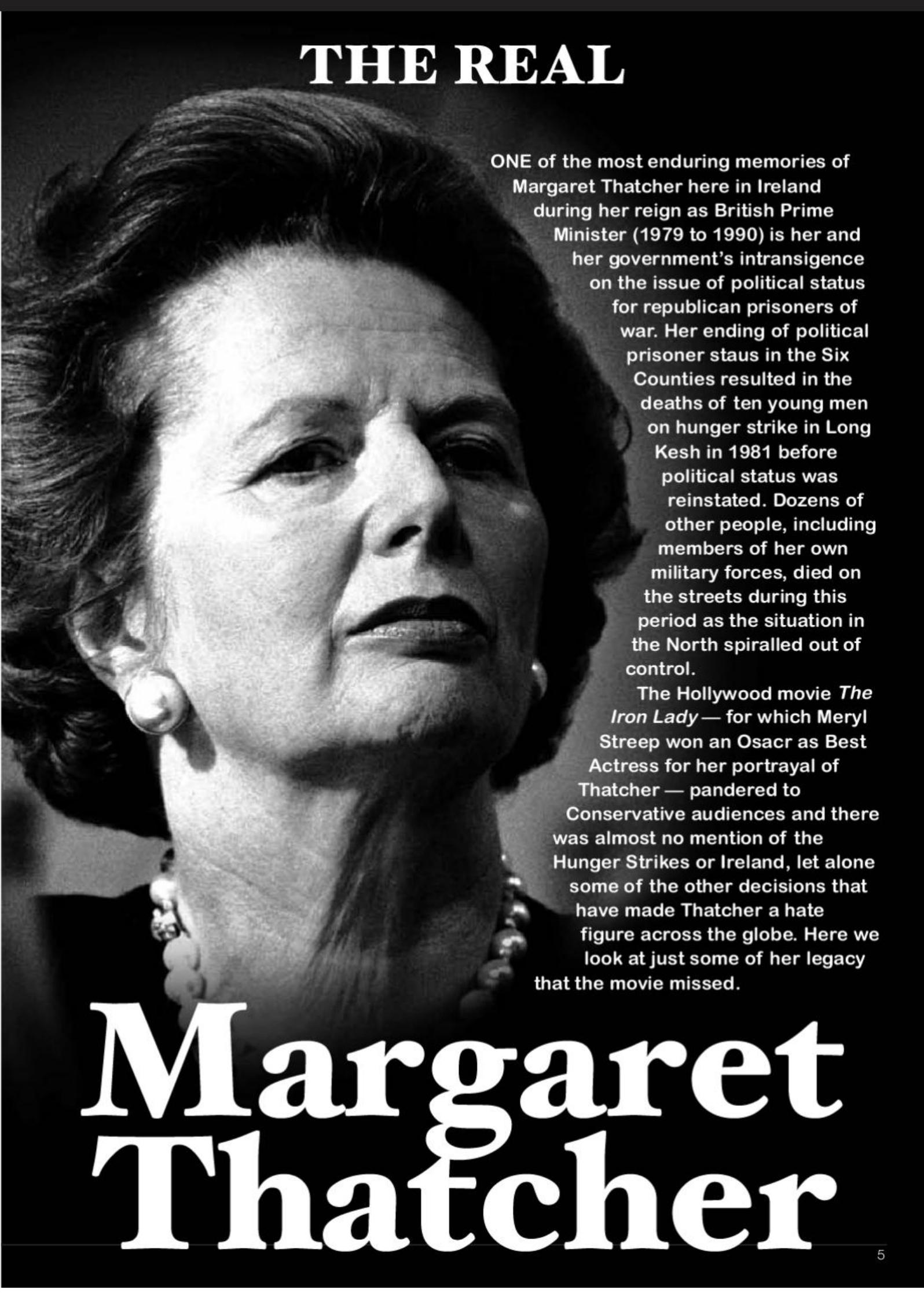
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THE REAL

A black and white portrait of Margaret Thatcher, looking slightly upwards and to the right. She has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a pearl earring and a necklace. The background is dark and out of focus.

ONE of the most enduring memories of Margaret Thatcher here in Ireland during her reign as British Prime Minister (1979 to 1990) is her and her government's intransigence on the issue of political status for republican prisoners of war. Her ending of political prisoner status in the Six Counties resulted in the deaths of ten young men on hunger strike in Long Kesh in 1981 before political status was reinstated. Dozens of other people, including members of her own military forces, died on the streets during this period as the situation in the North spiralled out of control.

The Hollywood movie *The Iron Lady* — for which Meryl Streep won an Oscar as Best Actress for her portrayal of Thatcher — pandered to Conservative audiences and there was almost no mention of the Hunger Strikes or Ireland, let alone some of the other decisions that have made Thatcher a hate figure across the globe. Here we look at just some of her legacy that the movie missed.

Margaret Thatcher

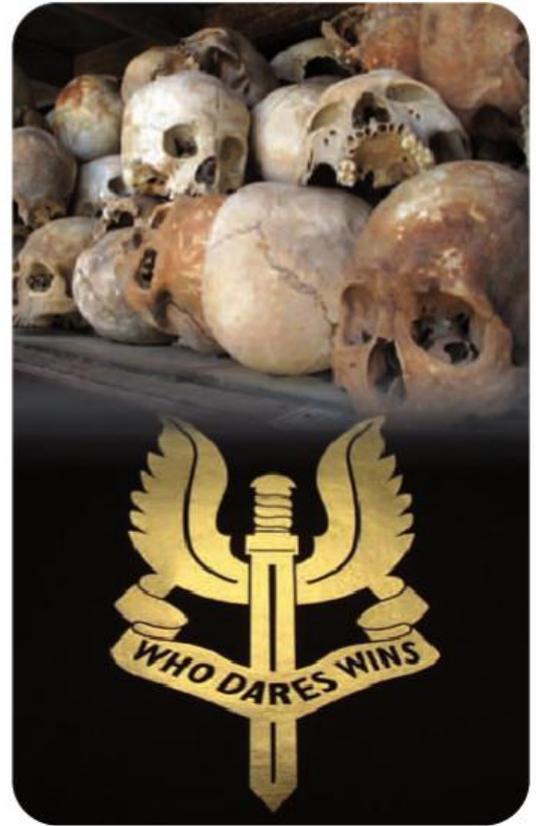
The Real Margaret Thatcher

'Maggie Thatcher – Milk Snatcher!'



Even before she became Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher had made a name for herself as cruel and uncaring when, as Education Minister, she cancelled the free milk programme in primary schools for all those over the age of seven. The Labour Party's Edward Shortt described the decision as "the meanest and most unworthy thing I have seen in my 20 years in the House of Commons".

SAS training and weapons for Pol Pot



An often-overlooked part of Thatcher's time as Prime Minister is her support for psychopathic dictator Pol Pot in Cambodia. During his short but murderous reign between 1975 and 1979, Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge followers massacred almost two million people, about a quarter of Cambodia's population.

After the Khmer Rouge were ousted from power following a conflict with Vietnam, Pol Pot and his supporters retreated into the jungles where they continued to carry out attacks. During this time, Thatcher sent the SAS in to train the insurgents and continued to back recognition of the group at the United Nations as the legitimate government of Cambodia until the late 1980s, with Thatcher adding that "the more reasonable ones in the Khmer Rouge will have to play some part in a future government". She made this comment despite a legitimate and popular government having existed for almost a decade.

It wasn't until June 1991, after eight years of training the Khmer Rouge, that the British Government was forced into admitting its involvement following a report by Nobel Peace Prize winner Rae McGrath. His report proved that the SAS had been training the group in "the use of improvised explosive devices, booby traps and the manufacture and use of time-delay devices". McGrath described the SAS training as a "criminally irresponsible and cynical policy".

Shoot-to-kill and collusion in Ireland



Following the 1981 H-Blocks Hunger Strike, the Thatcher Government brought in a policy of shoot-to-kill by police and military death squads against suspected republican activists in the Six Counties. This policy of shooting unarmed republican activists and making no attempt to arrest them ran contrary to the official British position which claimed they were 'not at war' in the North of Ireland. The policy also resulted in

the shooting dead of numerous civilians.

At the same time, official collusion between British state forces and loyalist murder gangs was stepped up. This included the rearming of Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Volunteer Force death squads through the importation of weapons from South Africa in 1988 organised by British Army Intelligence Corps agent Brian Nelson.

Las Malvinas and the General Belgrano

During the 1982 Malvinas (Falklands) War, Thatcher personally gave the order for the British Royal Navy to torpedo the Argentinian light cruiser ARA Belgrano even though it was outside the "exclusion zone", the area declared by the British Government as a 200-mile area surrounding the Malvinas inside which Argentinian vessels would be attacked. The vessel was actually heading back to Argentina when it was torpedoed by a British submarine; 323 people were killed.

Fourteen hours before the sinking, the Peruvian Government had published a peace proposal. The sinking of the Belgrano scuppered any chance of talks and only resulted in more conflict. When questioned on the BBC about the sinking, Thatcher claimed she had not seen the peace proposal before giving the go-ahead for the attack. Her husband, Denis, later condemned the interview, claiming his wife had been "stitched up by poofs and Trots". One commentator noted how Thatcher had "snatched a bloody victory from the jaws of a peaceful settlement".



The miners' strike



In 1984, Thatcher's government decided to close 20 of Britain's 174 state-owned mines with the loss of 20,000 jobs. Miners across Britain went on national strike. Thatcher described those on strike as "the enemy within" and running battles between miners and police continued for months with more than 11,200 people arrested. Ten people were killed and the closure of the mines devastated entire communities across England, Scotland and Wales.

Nelson Mandela and the ANC – 'typical terrorists'



During the years of apartheid in South Africa, Thatcher was one of the few world leaders to oppose sanctions against the racist South African state. She also described Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) as a "typical terrorist" organisation.

Tea and crumpets with fascist dictator Pinochet



In 1998, Margaret Thatcher called for the release of Chilean former dictator General Augusto Pinochet following his arrest in London for human rights violations.

During his reign of terror in Chile, the western-backed dictator had more than 3,200 people executed for political offences while over 30,000 people were arrested and tortured in police barracks. During the Malvinas/ Falklands conflict he was one of the few supporters Britain had in South America.

On 5 October 1998, Pinochet was invited for tea and crumpets with Thatcher in her residence. Twelve days later, he was arrested at a London clinic charged with human rights violations. Thatcher later called for his release and visited him while he was under house arrest.



ABU DIS lies less than 2km from the Old City of Jerusalem. Before the construction of the wall [the West Bank Barrier], Abu Dis was a suburb of Jerusalem until it was cut off by the wall. Most of the residents were born in Jerusalem hospitals. Jerusalem was the primary place of

Almost every student has a story of being held at a checkpoint during school or university exams

employment for people in Abu Dis, and regular trips to Al Aqsa mosque were a normal part of family life. Nowadays, nowhere seems more distant than the striking gold of the Dome of the Rock even though it can be seen from almost everywhere in the town.

For three months I'm living and working in Abu Dis with CADFA, an organisation dedicated to twinning Camden in London with Abu Dis.

They run a cultural centre in the town providing English lessons, art, drama and many other activities for young people as well as housing a small diabetic clinic for those unable to gain access to Jerusalem for the treatment they require. They link schools in



JOHN and SARAH are volunteering with the Camden-Abu Dis Friendship Association (CADFA). They have asked us not to include their surnames to avoid harassment from the Israeli military on their return journeys. A regularly updated blog from the volunteers in Abu Dis can be read at www.palestinianlife.wordpress.com

Camden with those in Abu Dis and run regular exchange visits for students and teachers to encourage cultural links and greater understanding between young people in London and Palestine.

Our work has afforded us the opportunity to gain an insight into the realities of daily life under occupation and an understanding of how it impacts on young people in the Occupied Territories.

The occupation dominates everyday life in Abu Dis and across the West Bank. Education, commerce and social life operate at the whim of the occupying forces. As with other West Bank towns, there are checkpoints on the roads linking it with the rest of the West Bank. These roads are frequently closed, affecting workers and businesses. Almost every student has a story of being held at a checkpoint during school or university

The occupation dominates everyday life in Abu Dis and across the West Bank



Reflections **UNDER** Occupation

Bottles, cans and every kind of household waste, along with liquids and human waste, rain down from the settler houses in the upper floors of the Old City

exams. This attempt to sabotage their education almost defies belief. For the sick, the situation is even worse. Those requiring emergency hospitalisation must first get Israeli permission to access the hospitals in Jerusalem. This process can take hours which has cost many patients their lives.

Abu Dis is designated 'Area B', which means that security is controlled by the Israeli military, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). This leaves the locals between a rock and a hard place when it comes to policing. There is nobody to enforce normal law and order so many problems like drug dealing and illegal cars go unchecked.

On the other hand, the Israeli soldiers in charge of security regularly patrol through the town, demanding the IDs of residents and occasionally clearing the streets with tear gas and sound bombs. These encounters are frequently terrifying displays of violence and intimidation. Two students from Abu Dis, Ahmed and Ali, told me of an incident that occurred while returning from dinner early one evening. The IDF soldiers on patrol demanded to see their ID cards. While Ahmed presented his without hesitation, Ali had left his at home. Ali was given two minutes to retrieve it or the punishment would be visited on his innocent friend. While his companion was away, Ahmed was subjected to a brutal assault. These stories are not unusual. In the boys' school where I work, almost every student has a story of arrest, intimidation or brutalisation at the hands of the IDF forces. Talking to young people affected by the occupation, it is clear that their treatment by military forces and the complete isolation from land behind the wall have only served to make the process of

reconciliation more difficult for every passing generation. This situation is massively exacerbated by the presence and expansion of settlements in the West Bank.

Abu Dis lies in the shadow of Ma'ale Adumim, one of the biggest settlements in the West Bank. The attempt to connect Ma'ale Adumim with the smaller Kidar settlement runs through the small Bedouin school outside Abu Dis. This school provides a vital place for the most under-educated sector in Palestine to receive a pri-

Valuable land for growing olives and other crops are now controlled by Israel and lack of space for expansion of homes has meant that villagers have been forced to use fertile land to build homes.

One villager, Mohammed, recounted the story of how his father wept uncontrollably as he bulldozed olive trees to make room for a home for his young family. "I raised them like I raised you," he recounted his father's heartbreaking choice between a home for his family and their future livelihood.

In the old city of Hebron, although the number of settlers is tiny, their presence along with the IDF in the Israeli controlled 'H2' area have made life extremely difficult for the Arab population. Settlers regularly throw all kinds of debris on the Arab traders at the old market. Bottles, cans and every kind of household waste, along with liquids and human waste, rain down from the settler houses in the upper floors of the Old City. Stall-holders have constructed wire mesh, netting and tin roofs to protect themselves and their merchandise.

The Palestinian people are some of the warmest and most hospitable I have ever encountered. Almost every day we are invited to the home of somebody new and told to consider it our own.

As the occupation continues and the settlements encroach, the Palestinians are left feeling less and less welcome in their own homeland.



Banners in Abu Dis welcome back home 17 year-old Hassam who spent two years of his life in an Israeli prison



Abu Dis lies in the shadow of Ma'ale Adumim, one of the biggest settlements in the West Bank

mary education while maintaining their traditional migrant lifestyle. However, it is under constant threat of demolition in order to further carve up the West Bank for Israeli settlers.

On my visit to the small town of Wadi Fukin just outside Bethlehem, the impact of this land-grab was most evident. Sandwiched between the Israeli border and ever-expanding Israeli settlement, the majority of what was once their land has now been confiscated or otherwise become inaccessible. For a community that relies on agriculture, this has a devastating impact.

Talking to young people affected by the occupation, it is clear that their treatment by military forces and the complete isolation from land behind the wall have only served to make the process of reconciliation more difficult for every passing generation

My fracking fears



BY PHIL FLANAGAN
ASSEMBLY MEMBER FOR
FERMANAGH &
SOUTH TYRONE

SINCE I FIRST DISCOVERED, by accident, that exploration licences were issued by both governments on this island last June, I have become more and more horrified at the inevitable damage that will occur to our country as a result.

As a member of Fermanagh District Council at the time of the licence award, I was disgusted that no public consultation took place on the matter; local people were completely excluded from the process and were treated with contempt. What brought fracking onto my radar at that stage were the earthquakes in Blackpool in England. Being aware of the fact that gas was present in Fermanagh and Leitrim, I decided to look into and found out that Conor Lenihan had awarded licences on his last day in office as the Fianna Fáil Minister of State for Technology, Innovation and Natural Resources.

It was some time later that I found out that during the period when the Executive is supposed to be out of service in the North in the run-up to the Assembly elections, the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment had also awarded licences. This

genuinely shocked me and brought real concerns about what the future was for Fermanagh and Leitrim. Government ministers and their civil servants had taken these decisions without allowing the public a chance to have their say and this has caused great resentment in the local community.

Since that time, much work has been

Conor Lenihan awarded exploration licences on his last day in office as the Fianna Fáil Minister of State for Technology, Innovation and Natural Resources

done by the numerous anti-fracking groups that have been established and many, many people are well aware of the potential dangers that come with fracking as a result of widespread groundwater contamination in North America. There is a very real threat to this island if fracking were to go ahead.

However, it is fair to say that energy regulation is quite relaxed in those parts of the world; thanks in part to close links between former American Presidents, Vice Presidents and multi-billion dollar energy companies who managed to secure numerous exemptions from water protection regulation for fracking.

It must be said that our regulatory system is much better than in some countries but it is far from perfect. In the North, government cannot seem to stop one of its own companies, NI Water, from repeated acts of pollution, so how they think fracking companies can be stopped with regulation baffles me.

But despite all the regulation in the world and all the promises that it will be carried safely and potentially without chemicals, if between 300 and 400 four-acre concrete

pads are to be constructed across north Leitrim and west Fermanagh then this will have a huge and devastating impact on our landscape and our natural environment. They don't call it 'Lovely Leitrim' for nothing! Coupled with that, there will also be inevitable noise and air pollution from diesel generators running 24/7 and from the tens of thousands of lorries on rural roads shipping water, sand and chemicals to these pads. No amount of regulation can make this okay.

The spin-doctors behind Tamboran have published figures on the total amount of gas available, on the number of jobs that can be created and the economic benefits fracking would reportedly bring. But they have failed to take into account the inevitable job losses that will occur as a result

The natural resources of this country belong to its citizens and should be used for their benefit

of damage to our agriculture and tourism sectors. Who in their right mind would eat beef or drink milk from a cow reared in a frack zone? And who in their right mind would come to Ireland for a whistle-stop tour of fracking pads? They have put forward the argument that the shale gas in the Lough Allen basin will deliver 50 years of security of supply, but what they have failed to disclose is that only around 20% of the gas has been successfully extracted in other countries, so these figures need to be assessed impartially. Of course, it would be in Tamboran's commercial interests to talk

There is a widely-held and justifiable belief that many energy companies cannot be trusted

up the potential benefits of such a project.

A myth has also been circulated that the extraction of shale gas in Ireland will lead to cheaper gas for the people of Ireland. However, the very real suspicion is that any private company benefiting from such favourable licence terms as have been offered in Ireland is here for a quick buck. If allowed, they will extract the gas and export it immediately onto the international market at the highest possible price. And even if the people of Ireland were to benefit from cheaper gas prices, what good would that be to besieged communities in Fermanagh or Leitrim who have no access to a natural gas network and never will. Fracking has only become viable due to the soaring price of natural gas across the world; it



A fracking pad in operation in North America. The controversial process has resulted in dozens of incidents of groundwater contamination



will only remain viable as long as this price continues to rise.

Across the island of Ireland there is a widely-held and justifiable belief that many energy companies cannot be trusted. Tamboran has no experience in carrying out fracking in other countries and have travelled the world begging for investment (somewhat unsuccessfully, it appears). They want to use Ireland as an experiment but we must ask ourselves whether we are willing to allow them that chance when so much lies at stake for us?

The Chair of Tamboran is indeed an Irishman but he is not here out of some sort of patriotic duty or love for his country. His former career path was in investment banking, so that paints some sort of a picture as to what his intentions are.

I am not opposed to private companies making money but I am bitterly opposed to the natural resources of this country being used to satisfy personal greed at the expense of its citizens' eco-

nomical and healthy well-being. The natural resources of this country belong to its citizens and should be used for their benefit.

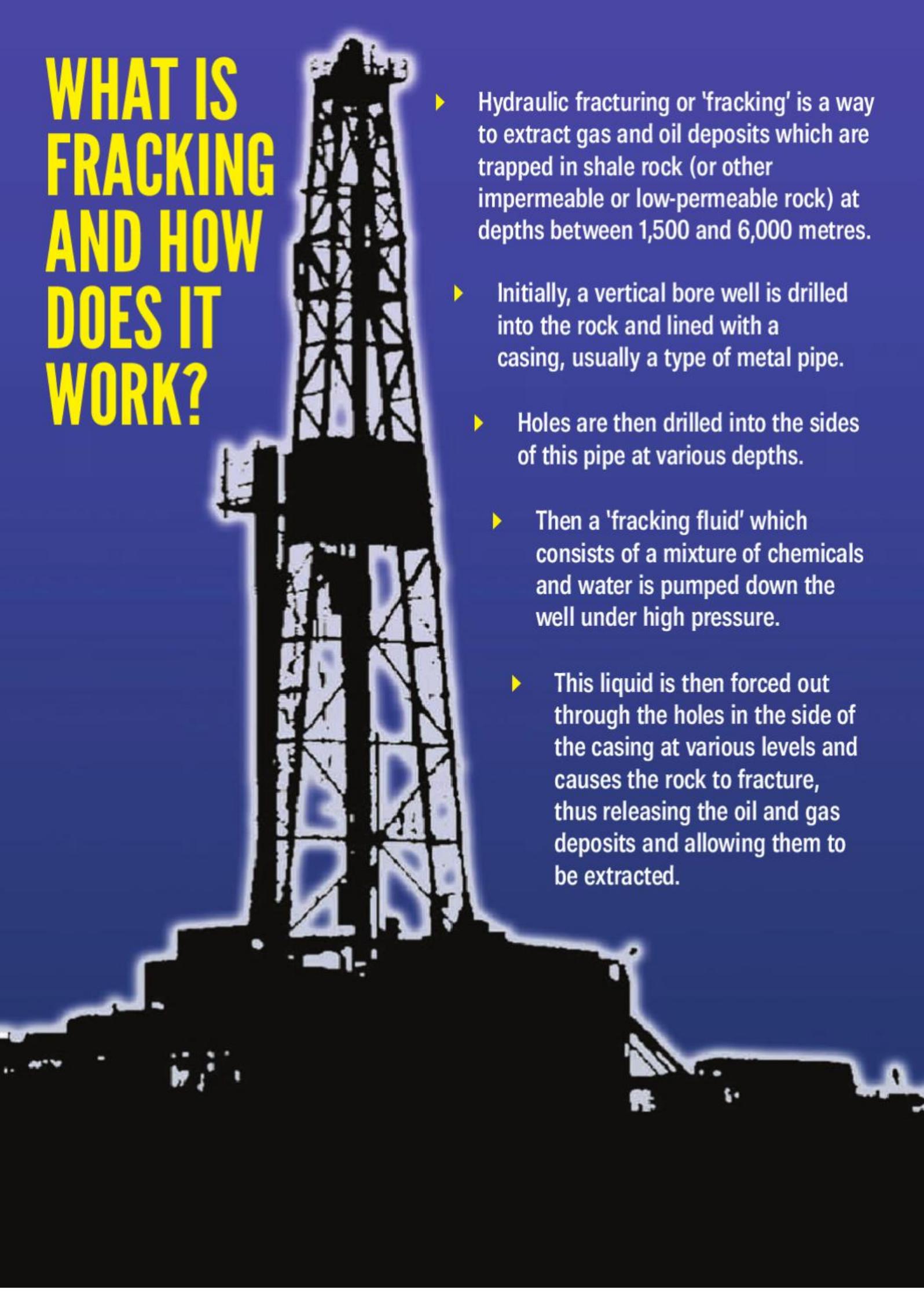
If private companies want to make money in the energy industry in Ireland then the best thing for them to do is to invest in clean, sustainable forms of energy generation that would provide lower energy prices, give us true security of supply and from which community

ownership models could deliver real benefits for local people.

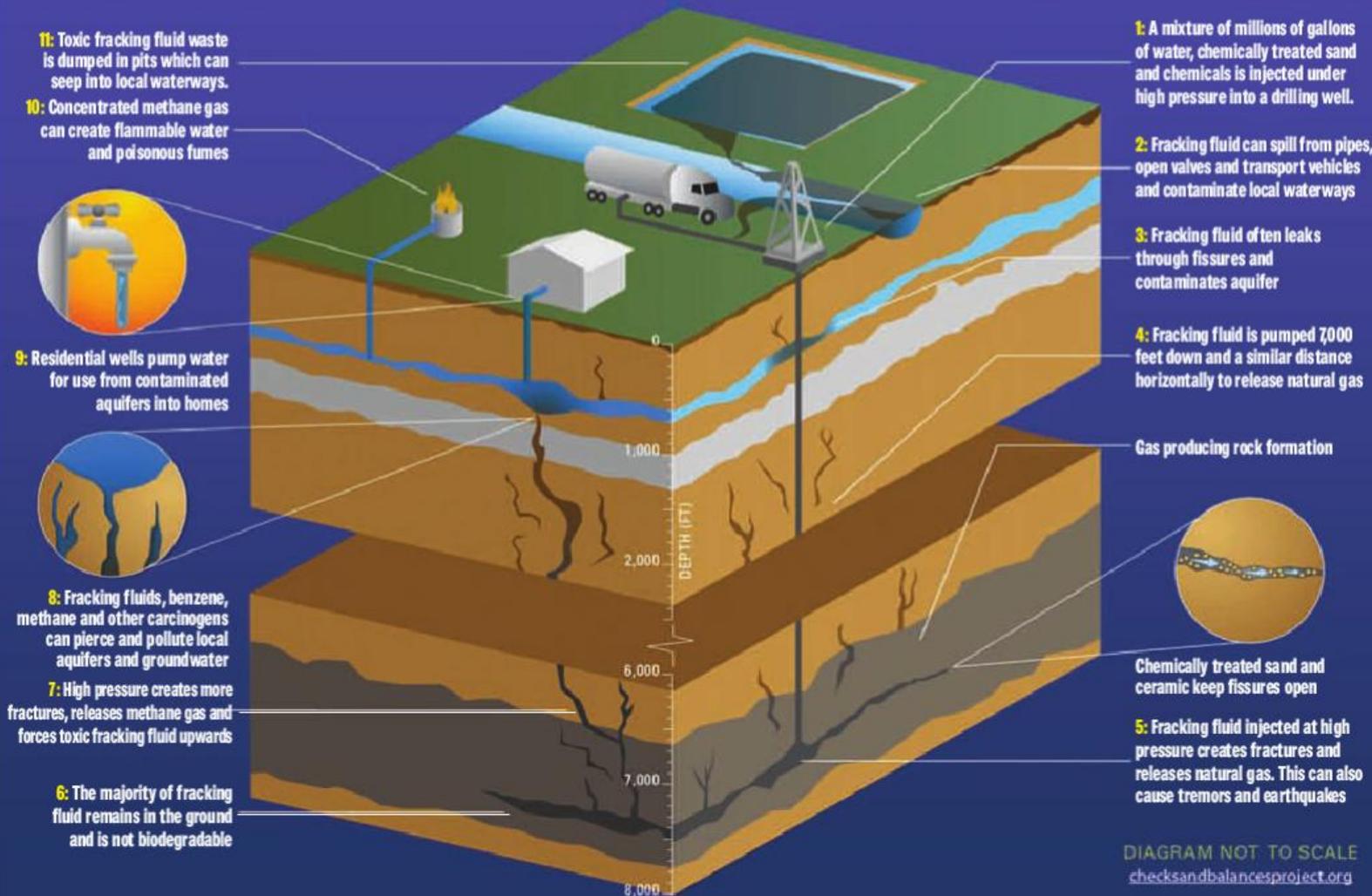
Tamboran has no experience in carrying out fracking in other countries

WHAT IS FRACKING AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

- ▶ Hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' is a way to extract gas and oil deposits which are trapped in shale rock (or other impermeable or low-permeable rock) at depths between 1,500 and 6,000 metres.
- ▶ Initially, a vertical bore well is drilled into the rock and lined with a casing, usually a type of metal pipe.
- ▶ Holes are then drilled into the sides of this pipe at various depths.
- ▶ Then a 'fracking fluid' which consists of a mixture of chemicals and water is pumped down the well under high pressure.
- ▶ This liquid is then forced out through the holes in the side of the casing at various levels and causes the rock to fracture, thus releasing the oil and gas deposits and allowing them to be extracted.



HOW NATURAL GAS DRILLING CONTAMINATES DRINKING WATER SOURCES



What do we know about Tamboran Resources?

The company behind the plans for fracking in the north-west of Ireland and who have already applied for testing licenses in Leitrim, Fermanagh and Cavan is Australian-based oil and gas company Tamboran Resources.

The company has claimed that fracking will not damage the environment and has been used successfully and safely across the globe. Yet it has since been revealed that Tamboran have never actually used the fracking process before. The company has also claimed that the project would bring a huge amount of jobs to the north-west; it does not actually have the funds to carry out the project and would instead be reliant on bringing in a multinational backer like Shell.

One of those put forward to argue in favour of fracking is Tamboran Chief Executive Richard Moorman. Moorman fails to mention is that he previously worked for Southwestern Energy, which is currently embroiled in multi-million lawsuit in Pennsylvania, USA. The

company is being sued by local residents who claim it poisoned their water supplies with cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals.

In a separate case, residents in Arkansas are claiming nearly €6million in damages from Southwestern for pollution of their water wells by the process.

What are the possible effects hydraulic fracturing could have on the Irish environment?

WATER POLLUTION

One of the most common problems associated with hydraulic fracturing is the contamination of groundwater and water aquifers.

Earlier this year, the US Environmental Protection Agency said it believed that carcinogenic chemicals found in the Wind River aquifer (the wet underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock or unconsolidated materials) which supplies the town of Pavillion in



Waste fluid and chemicals released by the process are pumped into huge storage ponds at a fracking facility

Wyoming entered into the water supply through the process of hydraulic fracturing. There have been dozens of examples from across the world where water supplies and local wells have been poisoned by the process. In other areas, fracking companies such as Encana Resources have been forced to provide residents with bottled water following complaints by local groups over the decline in the quality of drinking water.

LIVESTOCK AND FISH KILLS

A major peer-reviewed report entitled 'Impact of Gas Drilling on Human and Animal Health', published by researchers at Cornell University, documented human and animal health problems associated with natural gas drilling in six US states.

Cows are particularly affected by the process with exposure to contaminated drinking water being associated with a dramatic increase in the number of still-born calves and calves born with congenital abnormalities. In the most serious incident, 17 cows died within one hour of direct exposure to hydraulic fracturing liquid.

EARTHQUAKES

There is growing evidence which points to fracking

being a major factor in causing minor earthquakes and earth tremors.

A 4.0 earthquake in Ohio on New Year's Eve forced officials to shut down five wells in the area while in Arkansas a moratorium was declared due to the surge in earthquakes since shale gas drilling had begun. Closer to home, Caudrilla Resources, which carries out fracturing near Blackpool in England, admitted that its drilling probably caused two earthquakes in April and May of last year, resulting in Britain suspending the process.

AIR POLLUTION

Hydraulic fracturing has been blamed for releasing dozens of toxic chemicals into the air around drilling sites.

In March 2011, air pollution from hydraulic fracturing in the Upper Green River area of Wyoming in the USA triggered unprecedented levels of ground-level ozone, the main ingredient in smog. This left the small rural community with poorer air quality than most large cities. In Dish, a rural town in Texas, environmental regulators detected levels of cancer-causing benzene in the air at levels hazardous to human health.

Sinn Féin's vision of a new Ireland – a New Republic for the 21st century – is both pluralist and inclusive and based on equality and citizens' rights. The New Republic must be built by Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter. I believe there are many people who share our goals. There are many people across this island who want rid of outsiders ruling us, whether from London or the IMF or the EU. Many people want a real republic, a new republic. This will require the active participation of citizens.

TOWARDS A NEW REPUBLIC I dTreo Poblacht Nua

I call on you to join Sinn Féin
Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams

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Shannon Airpo

HIGH COST OF

The financial cost of supporting US military

OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, almost two-and-a-quarter-million armed US soldiers have passed through Shannon Airport on their way to and from wars of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Every day, hundreds of troops in uniform flood lounges intended for tourists, business people and other civilian travellers. These and the sight of Hercules C-130s and other US military planes at the airport, often with Garda or Defence Forces protection, is a stark reminder of how successive Irish governments have abandoned the state's neutrality.

Regularly, claims are made by politicians and others that the US military business at Shannon is good for the economy. The most troubling aspect of this is the willingness to profit from war crimes, human rights abuses and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. But the lack of openness and honesty about the financial implications is also worrying. Research conducted by the peace and human rights group Shannonwatch shows that the ongoing US military use of Shannon and of Irish airspace costs the Irish state in excess of €4million euro a year. This is as a result of the Garda

policing arrangements at the airport, the use of the Defence Forces to provide additional security, and air traffic subsidies to the US military. When once-off equipment costs such as special security fencing are taken into account, the figure is likely to be much higher.

Since 2006, the average annual cost of services provided by an Garda Síochána at Shannon Airport has been €2.3million.

This includes salaries and allowances, overtime, travel and subsistence expenses, and other non-pay expenditure. The Defence Forces are also deployed regularly to provide assistance in securing the airport. For this, the Irish people have been paying an average of €285,000 a year.

Between 2003 and 2010, it has cost the Irish state a total of €25million to cover the costs of foreign military aircraft using Irish-administered airspace. A large percentage of these flights are US planes en route to war destinations in the Middle East and south-west Asia, as well as other parts of Europe.

The €25million cost is due to Ireland's participation in a multi-

IT IS MORALLY WRONG TO PROFIT FROM THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES LOST AS A RESULT OF THE INVASIONS AND OCCUPATIONS OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN



rt, Ireland.

BY JOHN LANNON
Shannonwatch
www.shannonwatch.org

COLLABORATION

use of Shannon Airport and Irish airspace

lateral Eurocontrol agreement under which it has voluntarily decided to exempt US military flights from charges. This is a reciprocal agreement but there is very little benefit accruing to Ireland from covering the air traffic costs of foreign military flights. The only military aircraft Ireland is likely to have in foreign airspace are the Government jet and the occasional Air Corps plane. Therefore it gets very little in return for covering the very many transatlantic flights of the US military.

The Eurocontrol agreement makes little financial sense from an Irish Exchequer point of view and the situation regarding US military planes is particularly irrational because the US is not a member of Eurocontrol — Ireland does not have to cover their air traffic control costs. Other neutral European countries such as Austria, Finland and Switzerland do not give free passage to them.

It should be noted that the Eurocontrol agreement does not cover the contracted US troop carriers that use Shannon on a daily basis. Even though they carry soldiers and weapons, these are classified as civilian flights for air traffic purposes.

**AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS,
THE SPENDING OF €4MILLION A
YEAR BY A SUPPOSEDLY
NEUTRAL STATE IN SUPPORT OF
ILLEGAL WARS IS AN OUTRAGE**

In the few cases where the state could benefit financially from the US war traffic, it is reluctant to give details. The Dublin Airport Authority has said that landing and parking fees are applied in the case of the main US troop carrier, Omni Air International. However, "for confidentiality and commercial sensitivity reasons", they will not say how much it pays for its daily foreign troop flights through Shannon. The Irish Aviation Authority, which imposes air traffic control fees, also refuses to indicate what en-route and terminal air navigation charges Omni Air International pays.

The lack of transparency around the payment of charges by the US military and its carriers undermines statements made about the use of Shannon being good for the economy. It is morally wrong to profit from the hundreds of thousands of lives lost as a result of the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan but it is even more alarming to realise the extent that we are supporting it financially. At a time of economic crisis, the spending of €4million a year by a supposedly neutral state in support of illegal wars is an outrage.



Le Eoin
Ó Murchú

Ón tús bhí dhá leagan difriúil ann den fhiontar Eorpach . . . comhoibriú eacnamaíoch is sóisialta nó ollstát a bhunú

An féidir stop a chur le gealt-rás na hEorpa



Margaret Thatcher agus Ronald Reagan: Tuistí an rachmais gan srian

TÁ TAIBHSE AG TAITHIÚ AR EORAIP - taibhse na teipe. Cinnte, tá an-aimhreas ann an féidir teacht slán as an ngéarchéim eacnamaíochta is bancaerachta; nó an feidir droch-thionchar na Déine a mhaolú ar aon slí; agus tá's againn go bhfuil an coras - coras rachmasach an mhargaidh - trína chéile mar gheall ar an rialú éadrom is polasaithe eile a d'eascair as teoricí Milton Freedman agus ionsaí idé-eolaíoch Ronald Reagan is Margaret Thatcher.

Ach tá ceisteannaí níos bunúsaigh i gceist nach bpléitear go minic ar chor ar bith - ceisteannaí a bhaineann le cén fáth cómhphobal nó aontas a bhunú ar an gcéad dul síos, agus a bhaineann thar aon rud eile le uaimhian nó glóirmhian na Gearmáine a spreag méadú as cuimse ar an gcómhphobal atá anois ag cur strus do-fhulaingthe ar an Aontas ar fad.

Ón tús, bhí dhá leagan difriúil den fhiontar Eorpach mar a thugtar air. Ar thaobh amháin bhí comhoibriú eacnamaíoch is sóisialta is gceist, agus ní raibh fiú an dream a bhótail in aghaidh dul isteach sa gcómhphobal i 1972 ina aghaidh sin.

Ach ar an taobh eile, bhí an spric seo go mbunófaí ollstát a bhéadh in ann seasamh céim ar chéim leis an stáit aonaithe, sa gcaoi go mbeadh sean-impireachtaí na hEorpa in ann toradh an dúshaothraithe domhanda a roinnt go síochánta eatarthu féin gan cogadh gan coimhlint.

Thuig an dream Níl go raibh gach athrú ar na conarthaí Eorpacha ann le dul i dtreo na sprice seo. I gcás an Aon-Mhargaidh, i gcás

Bhí muinín cailte le fada an lá ag meán aicme na tíre go bhfeadfaí stát neamhspleách compordach a chruthú nó a choinneáil

Ach mar a dúirt Éamon de Valéra, ceannaire bhunaidh Fhianna Fáil, agus é ag caint faoin gcómhphobal ag deire na gcaogaidí: 'Níor throideamar in aghaidh impireacht amháin ar mhaithe le géilleadh do impireacht eile'



Toradh na hEorpa: Daoine ag imeacht arís ón tír

Maastricht, i gcás an Euro, cé gur shéan na fanaicí é threisigh na conarthaí seo cumhacht an lair is laghaigh siad cumas neamhspleách is féinfhlaitheas na dtíortha faoi seach, Éirinn ar ndóigh ina measc.

Ó thaobh na hÉireann de, bhí muinín cailte le fada an lá ag meán aicme na tíre go bhfeadfaí stát neamhspleách compordach a chruthú nó a choinneáil. Cé go raibh ról lárnach ag an stát i gcéad tionscalú na tíre, bhí faitíos ar an meán aicme nach raibh tuilleadh forbartha le déanamh ach ar a gcostas féin ar mhaithe le lucht oibre is íos-aicme na tíre. B'shin carthannacht thar fóir, dar léo.

Insna caogaidí ar ndóigh bhí eisimirce throm thubaisteach ann, agus tá fianaise ann anois go raibh leithéidí TK Whitaker - a bhí taobh thiar den Dara Clár le Meadú Eacnamaíoch - den tuairim go mbeadh sé níos fearr don tír impí ar na Sasanaigh muid a ghlacadh ar ais sa Ríocht Aontaithe mura n-athródh muid ár nósanna ó bhun bairr.

D'athraigh. Osclaíodh an geata don infheistíocht ó thar lear, agus tháinig biseach ar an eacnamaíocht. Síníodh conradh trádála nua



TK Whitaker: A chruthaigh an Dara Clár le Meadú Eacnamaíoch



Ghlacamar le gach aon aistriú cumhachta ón imeall go dtí an lár, agus is beag cumhacht atá fágtha againn anois. Ghlacamar leis an Euro mar airgeadra, cé nár oir sé dúinn: bhí rátaí úis íseal nuair a bhí cinn arda ag teastáil le cuid den dlús a bhaint ón sobal tóigeála, agus ní féidir dí-luacháil a dhéanamh anois mar rogha ar dhéine toisc go bhfuil muid ceangailte leis



Jean Monnet agus Robert Schuman: Ailtirí na hEorpa feidearálaithe

leis an mBreatain, agus nuair a chuir an tír sin isteach ar bhallraíocht sa gcómhphobal Eorpach lean muid iad.

Ach bhí dhá chúis leis seo. Ar dtús ní raibh aon mhuinín sa neamhspleáchas ar aon chuma, ach sa dara áit bhí dóchas ann go mbeadh muid in ann éaló ó fháisc mhúchtha na Breataine. Ach mar a dúirt Eamon de Valera, ceannaire bhunaidh Fhianna Fáil, agus é ag caint faoin gcómhphobal ag deire na gcaogaidí: “Níor throideamar in aghaidh impireacht amháin ar mhaithe le géilleadh do impireacht eile.”

Is cosúil go bhfuil dearmad glan déanta inniu ag Fianna Fáil oifigiúil de chaint seo a gceannaire laoi!

Ach tá rian den argóint seo le clos i gcónaí. Nuair a bhí Liosabóin a Dó faoi chaibidil i bPárlaimint na hEorpa sheas Avril Doyle, feisire den eite is frith-náisiúnaí de chuid Fhine Gael, le cáineadh géar a dhéanamh ar Shasanaigh nár thuig gur “pobal neamhspleách” muid! Is deacair a shamhailt cén bhrí atá ag Avril dána ar ‘neamhspleách’.

Agus nuair a oireann sé dá ndíospóireacht tá fanaicí na hEorpa sa tír seo sásta labhairt go maslach faoin mBreatain, cé go bhfeacann siad an ghlúin don Bhreatain i ngach aon chás eile - athaontú na tíre ach go háirithe.

Tháinig airgead isteach sa tír mar gheall ar ár mballraíocht, gan dabht; ach d’imigh airgead leis agus d’imigh daoine.

Meastar gur mó an luach a bhí ar ár gcuid iascaireachtaí - ar leis an Eoraip anois iad - ná an t-airgead ar fad a thainig isteach óna cistí structúrtha is eile.



Éamon de Valéra: Aímheasach faoi impireacht nua san Eoraip

Bhí an Drang nach Osten ar an gclár oibre arís. Agus b'shin a bhí taobh thiar den mhéadú soir san Aontas Eorpach, in ainneóin na ndifriochtaí cultúrtha is staire idir oirthear is iarthar na hEorpa

Agus insna hochtóidí bhí rátaí eisimirce ar ais ag leibhéal na gcaogaidí, mar atá anois go deimhin.

Céard é mar sin a spreag saibhreas na naochaidí - fiontar na hEorpa le ollstát a chruthú, nó ard-leibhéal oiliúna ár bhforsa oibre agus ár gcead rochtana ar mhargadh na hEorpa?

Chuireamar slacht ar chuid mhor den infrastructúir - bóithre, cumarsáid is eile; ach d'foc muid praghas ard as freisin le eisimirce agus scriosadh sean-tionscail.

Don rannóg talmhaíochta, b'é an toradh ba shuntasai gh na ardaíthe móra i bpraghasanna earraí bhia. Le blianta dhíol muid ar gcuid ar phraghas íseal isteach i margadh na Breataine, ach thug an comhphobal deis duinn margaidh eile a aimsiú agus praghasanna níos fearr a fháil.

Is é sin, agus ár rochtain ar an margadh Eorpach, na buntáistí fiúntacha a thug ballraocht sa gcomhphobal dúinn. Ach dá ndéarfadh muid 'níl' leis na conarthaí a tháinig ina dhiaidh ní bheadh na buntáistí sin i mbaol. Cén fáth mar sin ar thug aicme rialaithe na tíre cead don Eoraip dul sa treó seo, mar bhí a gcead riachtanach ar ndóigh le athrú a dhéanamh an uair sin ar na conarthaí?

Tír bheag is ea Éirinn, agus ba mhór an méad airgid dúinne ce bur geag don Eoraip fein e.

Ach bhí an Eoraip in ann a mhaíomh do thíortha beaga eile gur léirigh sampla na hÉireann go mbeadh an Eoraip cineálta dóibhsean freisin. Agus bhí uas-aicme na tíre seo in ann céimniú go péacógach ar stáitse an domhain.

Ach de réir mar a d'fhás cumhacht an láir, shúigh an chuilithe isteach síos ina lár muid. Agus féach anois muid.

Ghlacamar le gach aon aistriú cumhachta ón imeall go dtí an lár, agus is beag cumhacht atá fagtha againn anois. Ghlacamar leis an Euro mar airgeadra, cé nár oir sé dúinn: bhí rátaí úis íseal nuair a bhí cinn arda ag teastáil le cuid den dlús a bhaint ón sobal tóigeála, agus ní féidir dí-luacháil a dhéanamh anois mar rogha ar dhéine toisc go bhfuil muid ceangailte leis.

Agus céard faoin Eoraip? Níor bhain an ghéarchéim linn amháin riamh. D'oir sé dona meáin an milleán ar fad a chur ar Fhianna Fáil agus labhairt faoi rachmas na gcarad. Ach ní raibh aon mhalairt polasáí ag Fine Gael nó ag Pairtí an Lucht Oibre, agus ar fad na hEorpa bhí an idé-eólaíocht chéanna i gceannas.

Ach bhí ról lárnach sa géarchéim agus in easpa chumas na hEorpa tabhairt faoi ag glóirmhian na Gearmáine.

Sí an Ghearmáin an tír is láidre agus is saibhre san Aontas. Agus tá's acu go maith é. Ag deire an chogaidh bhí an Ghearmáin scriosta, agus chabhraigh na Stáit Aontaithe len é a chur ar a cosa arís mar urdhún in aghaidh na Sóivéide is in aghaidh an chumannachais.

Ach de réir mar a tháinig biseach ar na nGearmáin scriosta chinn sí ar na spricanna bunúsacha a chuir sí roimpi roimh an gcogadh.

Bhí an drang nach Osten ar an gclár oibre arís. Agus b'shin a bhí taobh thiar den mhéadú soir san Aontas Eorpach, in ainneóin na ndifriochtaí cultúrtha is staire idir oirthear is iarthar na hEorpa.

Bhí lámh chinniúnach ag an nGearmáin freisin i scriosadh na hIúgslaive, agus iad ag baint díoltais amach ar an tSeirb a mhill a



Angela Merkel: Ag iarraidh an ceathrú reich a bhaint amach leis an 'drang nach Osten' (an ghluaiseacht soir)

gcuid airm sa gcogadh. Agus in ionad a bheith ag cábhru le daonlathú na hIúgslaive tá na tíortha sin le tabhairt isteach san impire nua - iad dallta ag bréagshampla na hÉireann agus deistin dá gcomharsana.

Ní fios fós, ach is cosúil go ndeachaigh an Ghearmáin thar fóir, agus go scriosfaidh an ghéarchéim an plean seo. Cheana féin táthar ag caint faoi croí-stát a dhéanamh den dáréag nó mar sin a d'fhéadfadh seasamh leis an Euro.

Tá fadbanna leis sin ámh. Teastaíonn óna Gearmáinigh an Spáinn agus an Phortaingéil a bheith páirteach, cé gur chuma dóibh muid a bheith ann nó as is cosúil, ach ní leir gur feidir é sin a dhéanamh cé go bhfuil an Coimisiún cheana níos cineálta leis an Spáinn nó mar atá siad linne.

Mar sin fhéin sin é an fáth go bhfuil déine le fulaingt againn. Mura n-íocann muide - nó na Spáinnigh nó na Portaingéiligh nó na Greighigh - ár gcuid fiacha (mar dhea) leis an bainc Ghearmáineacha beidh an Ghearmáin féin thíos freisin.

Sea, tá an Eoraip amhlaidh mar is chuige sin a ceapadh é ón tús. Ach sí an cheist atá romhainn ná an féidir Eoraip eile a chruthú - Eoraip den fhíor-chómhoibriú, Eoraip a shéanann dúshaothrú, Eoraip nó dhá Eoraip bunaithe ar stair choitinn, ar leas coiteann agus ar mheas ag gach stát is gach náisiún ar na cinn eile.

Ma tá a leithéid de Eoraip uainn sí an chéad chéim ná diúltú don chonradh fíoscach agus gníomhú in éineacht leis an aicme oibre ar fud na hEorpa le Eoraip den chineál nua a chruthú.

CHRISTY MOORE is a musical legend, not just in Ireland but across the globe. A founder member of the groups Planxty and Moving Hearts in the 1970s and 1980s, and a solo artist whose live concerts are unrivalled, the balladeer from Newbridge, County Kildare, is one of the most popular singers ever to perform before the Irish public.

His songs make people laugh, make them cry, and make them think. His long list of songs embodies the Irish spirit of fun and mischief, passion and commitment, and a belief in a better world.

Everyone will have their own Christy Moore favourites: *Lisdoonvarna*, *Nancy Spain*, *Don't Forget Your Shovel (If You Want To Go To Work)*, *Ride On*, *The Craic Was Ninety in the Isle of Man*, *No Time for Love*, *Joxer Goes to Stuttgart*, *(I Wish I Was) Back Home in Derry*.

He is still performing live, appearing on TV and continuing to support progressive causes (he visited the Occupy Dame Street protest and recently played a benefit gig in Cork for the Vita Cortex workers occupying their factory in the fight for a fair redundancy deal). Christy kindly took time out to answer questions from MÍCHEÁL Mac DONNCHA for *IRIS – The Republican Magazine*.

CHRISTY MOORE: RIDE ON



The Dubliners recently celebrated 50 years on the road. You must be approaching that now. What is it, 48?

I have been playing full-time since 1966 but prior to that I did gigs from an early age. As a young lad growing up in Newbridge, County Kildare, I used to sing in variety concerts, in school choirs and in musicals. While working in the National Bank from 1963 to 66 I began to sing in ballad lounges. I sang in venues like Pat Dowling's of Prosperous in County Kildare and Melody's of Ballmacarberry, near Clonmel. In 1964, I was booked to play in The Embankment in Tallaght by the legendary Peggy Jordan, who gave gigs to many young folk singers back in the '60s



What decided you to become a full-time singer?

I saw The Clancy Brothers in 1962 at the Olympia Theatre in Dublin.

It was without doubt the most exciting concert I have ever attended. Later on, I saw Liam Clancy sing



Singing at a rally in Dublin in November 2010 in opposition to the Budget and austerity measures

porter at the John Lewis Store in Manchester Picadilly (they still have my insurance cards). In 1967, I got my first 'professional' gig in a folk club run by Mike Harding in Crumpsall, Manchester.



The '60s was a time of revival of Irish music and song. Were people very conscious of it as such at the time?

Many were aware of this new phenomenon known at the time as 'the ballad scene'. We were called ballad singers and, all over Ireland, ballad lounges were springing up. The fleadh ceoils were the festivals of the day. For many of us the fleadhs were our first experience of a new way of life. We travelled all over the country, usually with very little in our pockets. We dosed in hay barns and cowsheds. We sang and played, learnt

new tunes and songs and established friendships that still exist 50 years on. Back then, not everyone welcomed the 'ballad boom'. Many saw this newfound freedom and revelry as a threat to the state,

on the street at a Fleadh Cheoil in Bunclody. From that time onwards I could think of nothing else but becoming a wandering minstrel. My last full-time job was in 1966 -- I lasted two hours as a cold meats

My last full-time job was in 1966 - I lasted two hours as a cold meats porter at the John Lewis Store in Manchester Picadilly (they still have my insurance cards)



At the Occupy Dame Street camp on the steps of the Central Bank in Dublin in November 2011



Christy takes a stand in the 1980s with the late Joe Cahill against the Broadcasting Act's Section 31 state censorship barring republicans from TV and radio in the 26 Counties (1971 - 1993)

to the Catholic Hierarchy, to the GAA, the FCA and the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association. How right they were!



Right from the start of your career you have given priority to the integrity of the songs

themselves. You've chosen them carefully. What makes you decide on a song?

My singing life began long before my singing career. The very first song I learned was Kevin Barry, which my mother taught to me. My grandfather, Jack Power, used to sing *The Foggy Dew* and my granny, Ellie Power, sang *Down by The Glenside*. The Clancy Brothers averted my ear from early rock and roll. They focused my attention on the wealth and depth of our Irish tradition. Later I became interested in new songs. I began to contemplate the possibility of writing. I am drawn towards songs that stir my emotions.



In your book 'One Voice - My Life in Song' you have chronicled countless gigs, concerts, parties and people you've met in connection with the songs. You must have a prodigious memory or did you keep a diary or notes?

I have a good memory for anything concerning the work. I carefully remember all

Igged for many years before being allowed to record. Nowadays, some people buy the guitar on Monday and have the album out by Friday. This is not always a good idea



(Above) Christy with Gerry Conlon and Paul Hill of the Guildford Four on their release in 1989 after serving 15 years in English prisons
(Below) Donal Lunny and Christy perform at the opening of TnaG (now TG4) television station in Connemara, Galway, in 1996





A Garda Special Branch officer searches Christy in Dublin under the Offences Against the State Act, c. 1980s

those who encouraged me along the way, those who taught me, those who gave me a chance.

My primary musical influences were my mother, Donal Lunny, Hamish Imlach, Ewan McColl, Ralph McTell, Woody Guthrie, John 'Jacko' Reilly, Jessie Owens, Frank Harte, Luke Kelly, Annie Briggs, Andy Irvine, and, for the last ten years, Declan Sinnott.

I have a good recall of songs and where I heard them but I sometimes get it wrong. In the book 'One Voice' I mistakenly claimed authorship of 'The Two Devines and Breslin'. The writer of the song, Donal O'Kelly, contacted me and pointed out my error. I am still grateful for the understanding and compassion he showed.



Has the music scene as you've known it in Ireland changed for the better or worse during your career?

It has changed utterly and in many different ways. There were small pockets of trad music back in the '50s. The various things that have happened since then have had a mushroom effect and now the music thrives. There are so many different genres of music thriving in Ireland now. There are songwriters in every town, recording studios everywhere, bands rehearsing. There is a whole world of music here on our small Island.

Irish music, of many different kinds, now travels the world over. But there are some downsides. Back then you had to earn your stripes to get near the recording process. This meant that you served your apprenticeship. I gigged for many years before being allowed to record. Nowadays,

some people buy the guitar on Monday and have the album out by Friday. This is not always a good idea. Many people make albums now long before they are really ready to do so.

One of the better things is that musicians have a better chance these days of having their copyright protected, of receiving payment for what they have created. Both IMRO and MCPS protect our material.

The recording industry is in chaos but the music itself still thrives. We made music long before the iPod and we will still be singing long after all technology has ceased to function.



Over the years you received the unwelcome

I was invited to visit the H-Blocks during the Blanket protest in 1977. I was asked to help carry the story of the Blanket Protest. As long as live I will not forget what happened in the H-Blocks. It is possible to forgive but we must not forget

attention of censors, political police and others who have disapproved of your choice of songs and campaigns. Did that make life as a singer difficult?

Any of the 'unwelcome attention' you mention was minuscule compared to what thousands have suffered in recent decades. Through various songs and campaigns I have established long-lasting friendships that far outweigh any of the negativity I may have encountered. There were times when harassment and intimidation did make life difficult but these intrusions made me even more determined to 'sing out'.



You first visited the H-Blocks of Long Kesh in 1977. What impact did that experience and the Hunger Strikes of 1980 and 1981 have on you?

I was invited to visit the H-Blocks during the Blanket protest in 1977. I was asked to help carry the story of the Blanket Protest. I met up with Kieran Nugent, Fra McCann and Ned Browne. They shared their experiences with me and I wrote and recorded 90 Miles to Dublin. In subsequent years I revisited the H-Blocks and began to write and to sing songs that dealt with other issues: songs like On The Blanket (with Mick Hanly), Section 31 (Barry Moore), On The Bridge (about women being strip-searched in Armagh and Durham jails), The Time has Come, after the Hunger Strikers died. There were songs like No Time for Love, Scapegoats, Giuseppe, Irish Ways and earlier Only Our Rivers Run Free with Planxty.

I produced an album called H-Blocks in 1977 and in 1982 an album called The Spirit of Freedom. The latter raised funds for the Prisoners Dependents' Fund. Both these albums featured a host of Irish musicians. All this came about as the result of my initial visit. As long as live I will not forget what happened in the H-Blocks. It is possible to forgive but we must not forget.



Song has always been part of the resistance to oppression and the struggle for change in Ireland and worldwide. Do you think that's still the case and is it relevant in today's crisis?

Of course. Songs have always played their part in the



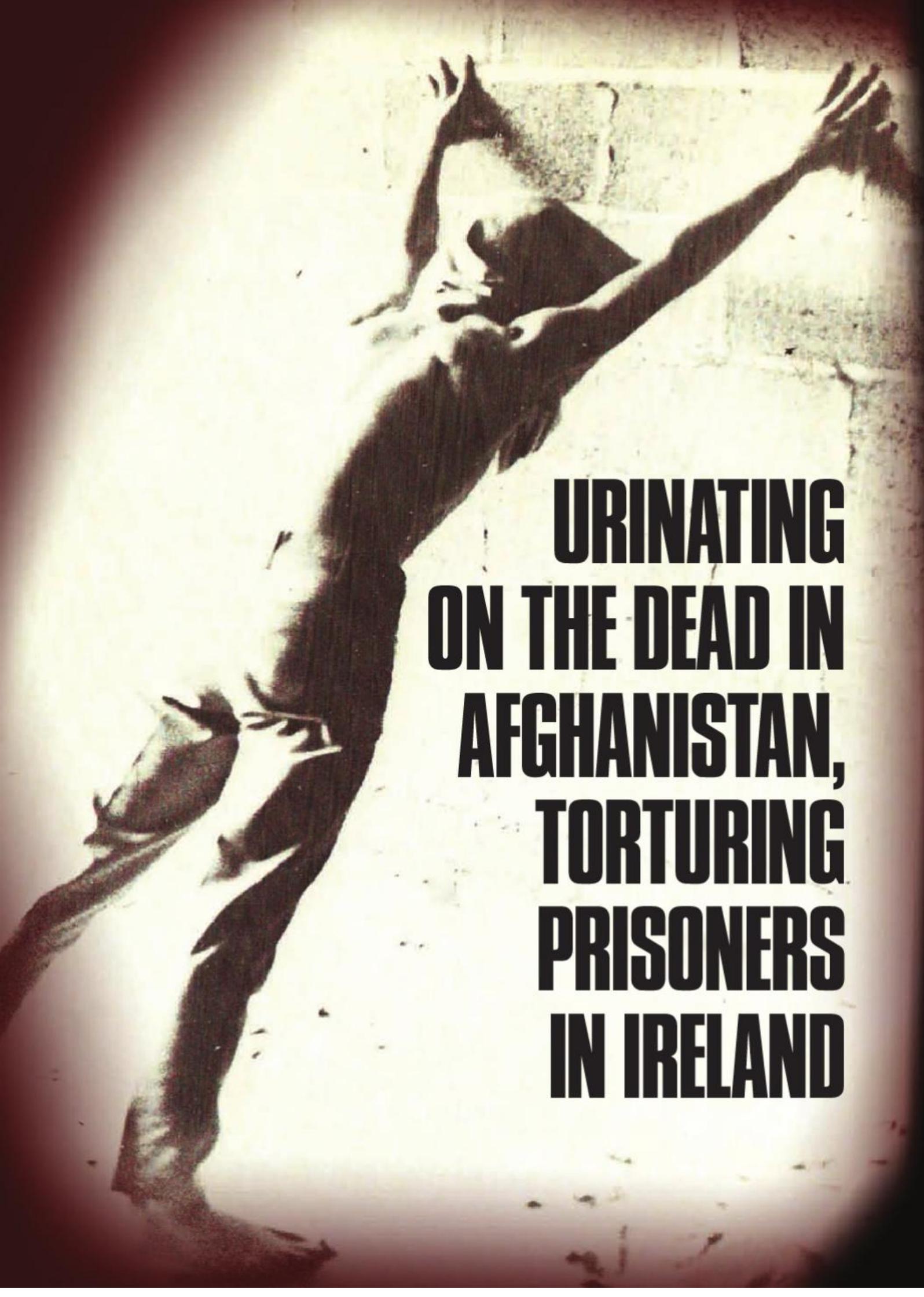
history of struggle. Around the world, songs have helped to spread the word, to raise the spirits, to activate interest and support, to bring comfort and healing, to challenge the powers of oppression. Songs and music have brought love, hope and laughter into the darkest corners.



What gives you hope?

The power of nature and the universe, the goodness in people, the vitality of the young, the innocence of the new-born. These things, and more, give me hope that we can challenge and one day overcome the darkness that lurks in many corners.

Performing at an Amnesty International 'Artists Against Racism' concert at the Point Theatre, Dublin, in December 2001



**URINATING
ON THE DEAD IN
AFGHANISTAN,
TORTURING
PRISONERS
IN IRELAND**



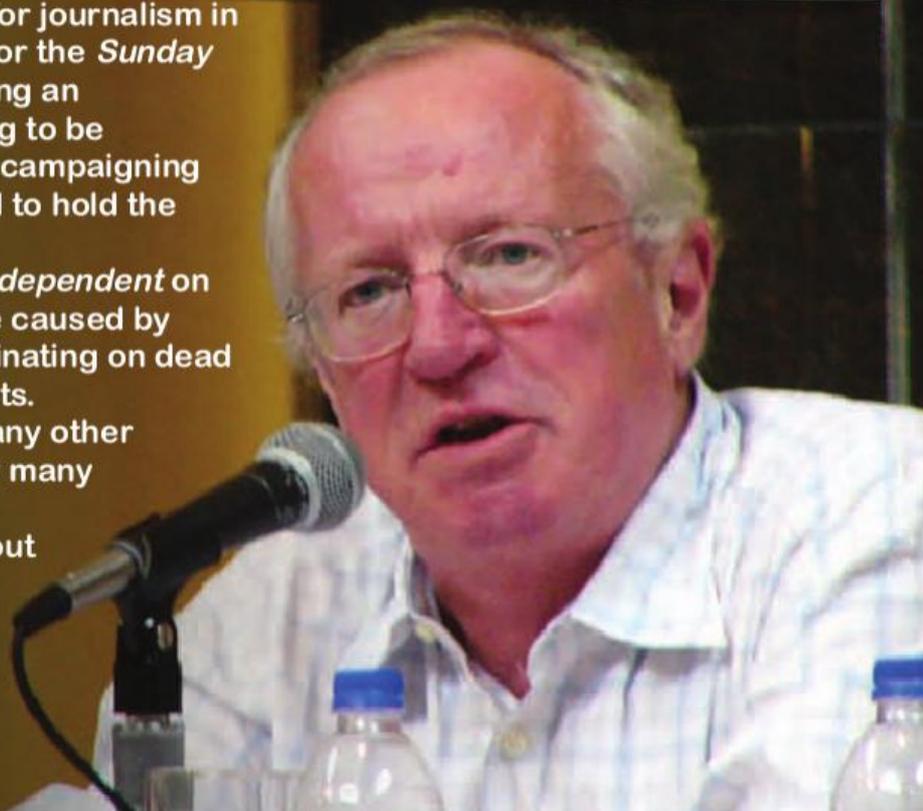
SOLDIERS' WAR CRIMES CAUGHT ON CAMERA

WHEN you despair of what passed for journalism in the now-defunct *News of the World* or the *Sunday Independent* and other titles parroting an Establishment line while still claiming to be 'impartial', remember there are still campaigning journalists like Robert Fisk prepared to hold the powerful to account.

Fisk wrote in the London-based *Independent* on Friday 13 January about the outrage caused by photos of US Marines apparently urinating on dead Afghans, possibly Taliban combatants.

The piece was headlined "How many other abuses took place off camera? How many Hadithas? How many My Lais?" and carried the strapline "This is not about 'bad apples'. This is the horror of war."

Since Fisk wrote this, a US soldier shot dead 16 Afghans, mainly women and children.



SO NOW IT'S snapshots of US Marines pissing on the Afghan dead. Better, I suppose, than the US soldiers pictured beside the innocent Afghan teenager they fragged back in March of last year. Or the female guard posing with the dead Iraqi prisoner at Abu Ghraib. Not to mention Haditha or the murder videos taken by US troops in the field - the grenading of an old shepherd by an Iraqi highway comes to mind - or My Lai, or the massacre of refugees by US forces in Korea, or the murder of Malayan villagers by British troops. Or the Bloody Sunday massacre of 14 Catholics by British troops in Derry in 1972. And, please note, I have not even mentioned the name of Baha Mousa.

The US Marines' response to the pissing pictures was oh so typical. These men were not abiding by the "core values" of the Marines, we were informed. Same old story. A "rogue" unit, a few "bad apples", rotten eggs. Maybe.

The grenading of an old shepherd by an Iraqi highway comes to mind – or My Lai, or the massacre of refugees by US forces in Korea, or the murder of Malayan villagers by British troops. Or the Bloody Sunday massacre of 14 Catholics by British troops in Derry in 1972

But if there is one game of pissing on the dead, how many others happened without pictures? How many other shepherds got fragged in Iraq? How many other Hadithas have there been? There were plenty of other My Lais.

As laptop filmography gets better, so it all comes slopping out: the rapes and slaughter - and yes, by the Taliban the stoning of young women for supposed sexual misconduct in Afghanistan; by al-Qa'ida, executions and throat-cuttings in Iraq.

And no, the Americans are not the Nazis, the Brits are not the French Paras of 1960 Algeria (but surely we're not comparing the French Paras to the Nazis). The Canadians handed prisoners over to Afghan thugs for brutal questioning but the Canadians are not like Saddam's secret police -



A British soldier poses with the severed heads of Malayan villagers



US soldiers shot dead up to 400 civilians at No Gun Ri in Korea



Twenty-five Iraqi civilians were wiped out by US troops in Haditha



The My Lai massacre of March 1968 saw US troops gun down 504 Vietnamese civilians, mostly women, children and elderly people

and, I suppose, the Taliban are not Stalin's NKVD or Putin's KGB (before he became a statesman). And you can't compare – surely – the Soviet invaders of Afghanistan in 1979 with Genghis Khan.

So let's take a little guessing game. A British Sunday paper reveals shocking revelations of torture and cigarette burning, of physical brutality where prisoners must be hospitalised for a week, of possible electric torture. The French in Algeria? Saddam's Mukhabarat [secret police]? Nope. It's The *Sunday Times* Insight Team's report of 7 May 1972; the victims, of course, IRA suspects in Belfast. A 'rogue' unit? A 'few bad apples'? I doubt it.

When the Gloucestershire Regiment went on a rampage near Divis Flats, smashing every window

in the street the day before they were due to leave Belfast, the line was changed. They had been under "enormous strain" – but weren't these 'The Glorious Glosters' of Imjin River fame? And the killer Paras of Derry – weren't these the same Paras of Arnhem Bridge?

And so we go on. Yes, British troops murdered SS prisoners after Normandy – just as the Red Army did in the Second World War and the Americans. And all this gets a bit dull, doesn't it?

Dresden was worse than the Blitz – but who started it? Hiroshima was worse than Pearl Harbour (ditto). The Canadians bayoneted German prisoners in the First World War – but the Germans really did commit atrocities in Belgium in 1914. And what about Waterloo? What did we do with the heaps of French dead? Why, we hon-

oured them by shipping their corpses off to Lincolnshire and using them as manure on the fields of East Anglia.

If war were not about the total failure of the human spirit, there would be something

grotesquely funny about the American reaction to the pissing pictures.

For, note, it was not the killing of these men that worried the Marine Corps in the US – it was the pissing. Nothing wrong in killing amid the “core values” of the Marine Corps; you just shouldn’t urinate on the corpses. And even more to the point: YOU MUSTN’T DO IT ON CAMERA! Too late. It comes to this. Armies are horrible creatures and soldiers do wicked things but when we accept all these lies about “bad apples” and the exceptionalism of crime in war – “there may have been some excesses” is the usual dictator-speak – we are accepting war and going along with the dishonesty of it and we are making it more possible and easier and the killings and rapes more excusable and more frequent.

And how should armies react? With one word: guilty.

The Gloucestershire Regiment went on a rampage near Divis Flats the day before they were due to leave Belfast – but weren’t these ‘The Glorious Glosters’ of Imjin River fame? And the killer Paras of Derry – weren’t these the same Paras of Arnhem Bridge?





LE CATHAL Ó MURCHÚ



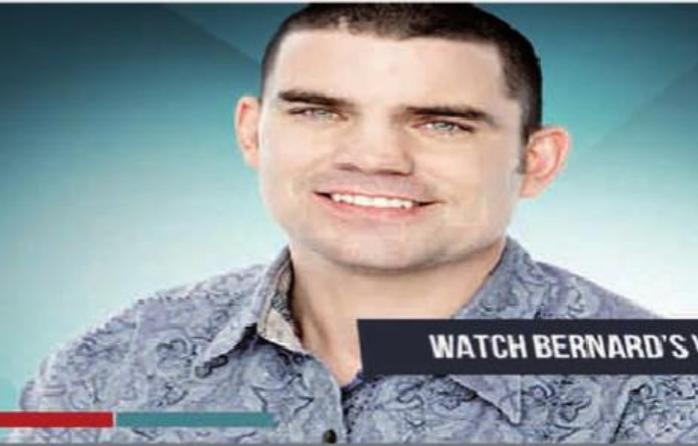
WATCH THE SHOW, SIGN UP AND WEAR THE T-SHIRT.

THE GOOD PEOPLE IN HAIRY BABY IN CORK ARE SUPPORTING THE BRÓD CLUB BY OFFERING THESE EXCLUSIVE BRÓD CLUB T-SHIRTS AT COST PRICE. GET BACK ON THE CAPALL AND START USING YOUR IRISH AGAIN.

PURCHASE YOUR BRÓD CLUB T-SHIRT

WHERE'S YOUR BRÓD?

BERNARD DUNNE ASKS YOU TO SHOW YOUR COMMITMENT TO 'USE WHAT YOU HAVE'



WATCH BERNARD'S V



IT MADE ME FEEL INADEQUATE

PAUL MCGRATH AND A NUMBER OF OTHER CELEBRITIES TALK ABOUT THEIR PAST RELATIONSHIPS AND FUTURE HOPES FOR THE IRISH LANGUAGE

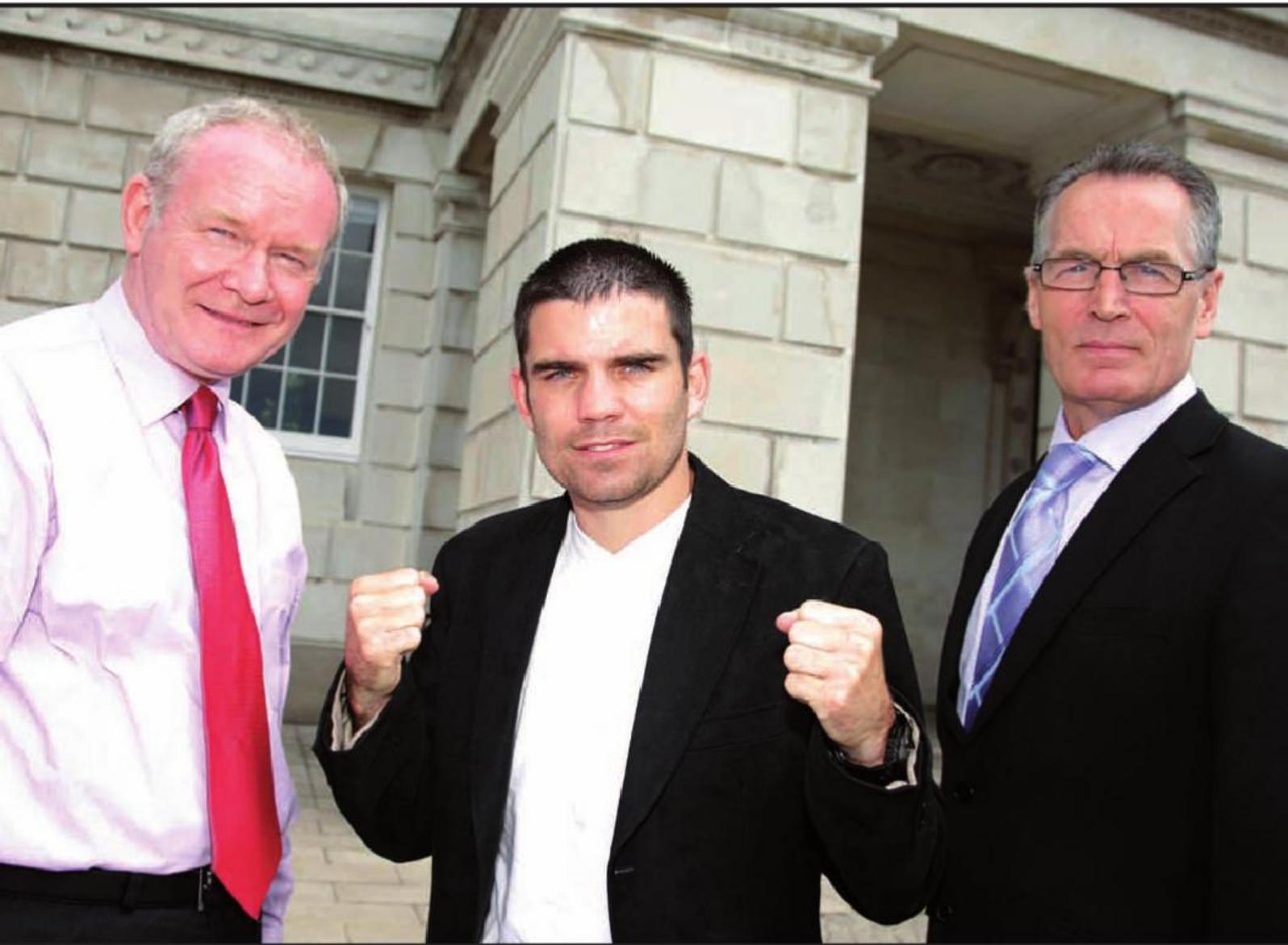
Bród Club: Ag cothú bróid sa Ghaeilge

ANOIS go bhfuil Seachtain na Gaeilge linn go ceann Lá le Phádraig, bíonn ceist na Gaeilge agus ceist chultúr na nGael i mbéal an phobail. Agus bíonn sraith mhór imeachtaí ar siúl le linn Seachtain na Gaeilge (a mhaireann breis is coicís i ndairíre) le meon agus deá-thoil an phobail a spreagadh don athbheochan. I mbliana, tá Rith 2012 ar ais linn tar éis dhá bhliain. Beidh ceolchoirmeacha agus roinnt imeachtaí ealaíonta ar siúl san áireamh.

Ach tá tionscnamh nua ag moladh foghlaim na Gaeilge dírithe dóibh siúd nach bhfuil Gaeilge acu agus a theastaíonn foghlaim nua a chothú ina measc. Is

é Bernard Dunne as Cluain Dolcáin, iar-churraí na Cuinne sa dornálaíocht, atá i bhfeighil ar an tionscnamh fíor-tábhachtach seo. An rud is spéisiúla faoin tionscnamh seo ná, ní amháin go bhfuil sé dírithe ar dhaoine nach bhfuil Gaeilge ar a dtoil acu, ach bhfuil sé á mholadh ag na daoine céanna ach go bhfuil siad sásta tabhairt faoi fhoghlaim na teanga.

Feachtas ardú céime na Gaeilge is ea an tionscnamh úd agus tá roinnt daoine iomráiteacha ag tacú leis - daoine ar nós Paul McGrath, iar-pheileadóir na hÉireann; Katie Tylor, bandornalaí agus curraí na Cruinne; Charlie Bird, iriseoir RTÉ; lucht na Meán ar nós



Bernard Dunne le fonn troda air le hAif Shinn Féin Martin McGuinness agus Gerry Kelly i Stormont

Brendan Courtney, Fiona Looney, Ray Foley, Lucy Kennedy, Tom Dunne, Baz Ashmawy, Jennifer Maguire agus Pamela Flood; Brian Kennedy, amhranaí; PJ Gallagher, fear grinn; Roz Purcell, mainicín; Ben Dunne, fear gnó; agus Kamal Ibrahim, gnóthaí ghradam Mr World, nach mór. Tá roinnt comhluchtaí poiblí is príobháideacha ag tacú leis an bhfeachtas seo freisin, ar nós an CLG (GAA); Bus Éireann; Bus Átha Cliath; Iarnród Éireann; Banc na hÉireann; Irish Pride, gan iad go léir a lua.

Chuige seo, tá imeachtaí á eagrú sna pobail, i mbailte ar nós an Muileann gCearr; Córa Droma Rúisc; Béal an Átha; Port Láirge; Dún Dealgan; agus Portland, Oregon

fiú; agus roinnt eile ag tacú le Bród Club. Tá eolas a scaipeadh freisin ar cá féidir tabhairt faoi chúrsa Gaeilge sa phobal.

Baineann Bród Club agus Seachtain na Gaeilge le hathbheochan na Gaeilge agus le seilbh a ghlacadh ar ár gcultúr arís tar éis na cianta a chaitheamh faoi chos leatromach na gcóilíneach. Is gné an-tábhachtach de thógáil na poblachta úr an fhuascailt chultúrtha seo agus ba iadhm lárnach do fhíor-phoblachtánaigh i gcónaí go mbeadh an Ghaeilge mar ghnáth-theanga labhartha ag muintir na hÉireann i gcoitinne.

Ní saoirse mar is ceart go saoirse ár gcultúir dhúchais.

Le Chéile

AN EVENT TO HONOUR
IRISH REPUBLICANS COMMITMENT TO
THE STRUGGLE FOR IRISH INDEPENDENCE

26th May 2012 @ 7.30pm

Gleneagles Hotel

Killarney, Co. Kerry

Honourees:

Paddy Fitzmaurice Cúige Mumhan

Des Ferguson Cúige Laighean

Mary Nelis Cúige Uladh

Teresa Bradley Cúige Chonnacht

Terry O'Sullivan USA

Táille: €40

Email: briandowling@sinnfein.ie • Write to: Sinn Féin Finance Dept, 58 Parnell Square, Dublin 1
Telephone: 00 353 1 873 3611 • Mobile: 00 353 87 230 1882

'SCÉAL' is the Irish word for story. It is a word featured prominently in prison writings by republican prisoners in the recent past. Combined with 'Gaoil' it encapsulates the vision set out by Éirí na Gréine's achieving project which has been ongoing for the past eighteen months.

Abhaile Arís An Ómaigh, later to be reconstituted as Éirí na Gréine was set up in 2007 when a number of ex-prisoners came together with other interested people to lobby for the rights of the republican ex-prisoners community in the Mid Tyrone area. It is designed to assist with the particular needs of politically-motivated ex-prisoners and their families and to empower all those who have experienced incarceration as a result of the political conflict in Ireland.

From then until now, it functions as a support centre for ex-prisoners in the Mid Tyrone area and also is being utilised by political ex-prisoners in other areas of Tyrone.

One of the emerging needs identified at those early meetings was the need to document the stories of republican ex-prisoners in the local area told by the political ex-prisoners themselves.

With financial assistance provided by the Heritage and Lottery Fund and through the PEACE III programme the group set about this project.



The overarching aim of the 'Looking Back To Move Forward' project is to tell the untold stories of republican ex-prisoners and to give an insight into the hardship and suffering that they and their families had to endure.

Prisoners who were involved in the project ranged from men imprisoned in the 1950s right through until those released in 2000

as a result of the Good Friday Agreement and numbered just under 20. Many of the prisoners spent time imprisoned variously throughout Ireland as well as prisoners who were incarcerated in England.

In an effort to document the experiences of local republican ex-prisoners in jail, we have compiled a DVD of interviews carried out with local political ex-prisoners about their time in prison. Additionally this book has been compiled. The project will also be complemented by a website (www.gaolsceal.com) as well as an interpretive exhibition, telling some of the stories of ex-prisoners involved with this project.

It is clear there is a lasting legacy for republican political ex-prisoners who were imprisoned as a result of the conflict. It is our aim to tell their stories and document their experiences and build an understanding as to their motivations, rationale and determination of republican prisoners of war and how they came out of the jails as committed republicans, unbowed and unbroken.

Barry McNally

Project Co-ordinator
Looking Back To Move Forward

Gaol



Scéal

LOOKING
BACK TO
MOVE
FORWARD



SUPPORT
THE
DE
OS
National H-Block, Arr
50, Mountjoy St

AS
977

H-BLOCKS
Long Kesh and Armanh

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

TYRONE WOMEN Bronwyn McGahan and Geraldine Ward (nee Ferrity) were republican prisoners in Maghaberry Prison, Lisburn.

Bronwyn spent the years from 1990 to 1995 in Maghaberry. She was elected a Sinn Féin member of Dungannon Town Council in 2011.

Geraldine was serving a life sentence from 1990. She was released under the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. She was the very last POW to be released.

BRONWYN

When I was arrested in Ardboe I was 18 years old. I had been in a car and the RUC and British Army (maybe the UDR) stopped me and carried out a search of the car I was driving. They found an under-car booby-trap bomb, a gun and ammunition. I was arrested and taken to Gough Barracks.

I was arrested a week after Martin McCaughey was killed so you could imagine the circumstances at that time. When I was in the barracks, Frank Hughes was brutally murdered by the loyalists. The detectives made some comment about Frank Hughes and then obviously when it was time out with my solicitor he had confirmed what had happened to him. I think the day that we were brought into Maghaberry jail that was the day that Tommy Casey was shot dead or getting buried. So that two week period was pretty bad although at that time I suppose we didn't really see it because that's the way it was at the time. Those were the circumstances, the conditions you were living in.

GERALDINE

The first day I went into the jail was a Wednesday and you went into reception, got your name and details taken and then you were taken across the doctor's, which was just a wee walk across. I remember



Maghaberry POWs in 1994: (Back row) Geraldine Ferrity (Tyrone), Ailish Carrol (Armagh), Bronwyn McGahan (Tyrone), Rosie McCorley (Belfast), Patricia Deane (Belfast), Roseanna Browne (Belfast), Martina Anderson (Derry), Open University tutor, and Maryellen Campbell (Belfast). (Front row) Shauneen Baker (Belfast), Marie Wright (Belfast), Mary McArdle (Belfast), Paula Burns (Belfast) and Ella O'Dwyer (Tipperary)



Martin McCaughey (23) and Dessie Grew (37) were two unarmed IRA Volunteers shot dead in an SAS ambush close to farm buildings near Loughgall, County Armagh, on 9 October 1990. Their deaths were part of a series of shootings that provoked allegations of a shoot-to-kill policy of ambush and summary execution carried out by British forces.



Bronwyn



Poilin Quinn shouting out the window at me: 'You know that we'll see you soon!' It was nice to hear Poilin shouting, a friendly voice. I remember going on the wing shortly after and Bronwyn was upstairs. She made me tea and toast and that was a shock because jail wasn't really what I was expecting it to be like.

My family were very strong — strong in front of me anyhow. They never really talked much about the impact. They just kept coming up and visiting and telling you the news, what was going on. They were always very, very positive around me and I think that makes you positive as well.

BRONWYN

Our house had been raided in the early hours of that morning but nobody had copped on that I was away. Then something clicked with my mother: where was I? They started to get really worried and then the cops announced I'd been arrested and told my family that I was very lucky I didn't end up like Martin McCaughey. Without the support of my mother and my father, my brother and my sisters, I don't know how I'd have got through it. They were brilliant, leaving you money down every week, parcels, buying you clothes. The support there was just incredible, not just from my family but also as well from my neighbours and my friends.

GERALDINE

They didn't complain. They went down on visits and you would see the end of the visits and the screws [prison officers] would be telling the children to leave and the adults with them would be threw



Tyrone taxi driver Frank Hughes was shot dead by loyalists in 1990. He was last seen picking up a fare outside a hotel in Dungannon on 23 October 1990. His body was later discovered in his burnt-out cab around five miles away near a derelict farmhouse. The killing was claimed by the Protestant Action Force, a cover name for the Ulster Volunteer Force. Billy Wright and Mark Fulton, later leaders in the breakaway Loyalist Volunteer Force and believed to have been Royal Ulster Constabulary Special Branch agents, were both implicated in the killing.

out and the children would be crying their eyes out of the visit room. But the mothers all were very strong. They'd pack their bags up with the tea and whatever and they'd walk back to the wing and they'd stay strong. It is amazing now to realise how strong they actually were. It was like: 'You'll not break us.' I have a really lot of respect for the mothers that were in there.

BRONWYN

Maghaberry was always portrayed as one prison but it wasn't. There was actually two systems in place: one for the men and one for the women.

GERALDINE

Republican women were definitely treated differently. We would have had our own



Geraldine

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

structures in our own wings and we would have taken our direction from the O/C [Officer Commanding]. There would have been an O/C on each wing and then there would have been an O/C over the jail.

Everything was structured. When we went in at the start we were locked from half-eight at night till half-eight in the morning, from half-twelve to two, and from half-four to half-five.

So we cleaned the wing three times a week — Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday — but then we had to cut it down to twice a week because we didn't have time. You were only out a couple of hours and you had to get your dinner, your food, you had to get your shower, go over to education to do classes and you had to try to fit everything in around the couple of hours you were out.

The food, the parcel, everything that came in would have been shared amongst us all. Just because it was your food parcel didn't mean it went to your cell; it went into the kitchen and it was just taken for granted.

It was almost like a family-type situation in the jail. You always had backings you know and if you were wrong you would have ten people ready to tell you that it was wrong! So you were always kept pointed in the right direction. If somebody was having a bad day, there was always somebody there to say, 'Look, you know tomorrow is a new day,' or whatever. We were pretty much like a family.

BRONWYN

One of the really bad times for ourselves in Maghaberry Jail was the murders of John Quinn, Dwayne O'Donnell, Malcolm Nugent and Tommy Armstrong. That was on a Sunday night and we had heard about it on the radio at nine that night and Poilin was in.

Poilin's a sister of John Quinn who was murdered that

Tommy Casey, a Sinn Féin activist and a 57-year-old father of 11 children, was shot dead by the Ulster Volunteer Force in Kildress, Cookstown, on 26 October 1990. Tommy has gone to check the home of a friend who was away on holiday. An AK47 rifle, part of a huge consignment imported from apartheid South Africa by the high-level British Army Intelligence agent, Brian Nelson, for a number of unionist paramilitary groups, was used in the killing.



night. We kept listening to the radio every hour but no names were given. It was a very long night. I think it was at seven o'clock in the morning being woke up by shouting through the vents and I just knew it wasn't good what I was going to hear and I got up because I'd dozed over. I got up and I went over to the vent and I could hear Poilin shouting up the vent about it. 'You know it's our John, and Dwayne and Malcolm.' I couldn't even speak; it was just absolutely and utterly devastating. That was seven o'clock in the morning and we weren't unlocked until eight. I think that was the longest hour of our lives. As soon as we did get unlocked we went straight down the stairs to Poilin. Poilin was a very strong person but she was in complete and utter shock. Fr Kevin Donaghy came in about 15 to 20 minutes later.

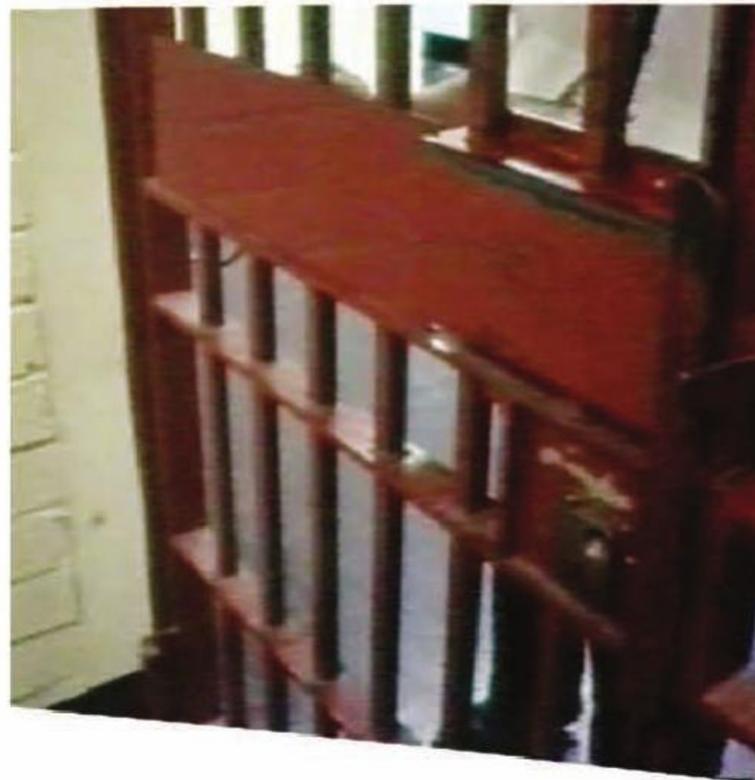
I always remember as well there was another Volunteer who had died and he had been arrested along with myself but he'd got out — Noel Wilkinson. Noel died very tragically as well, When we learned of his death it was just far too



LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD



Saoirse demonstrators from Tyrone call for the release of Irish political prisoners



LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

much for us to take and plus we were isolated from the community. You wanted to be out there, you wanted to be with the community, you wanted to grieve with them but we couldn't.

The visits we had with our families afterwards were quite traumatic too you know because the Screws were standing there watching you, watching every move. I was actually quite close to Dwayne and Dwayne would have been down frequently visiting me. Dwayne would always be there with Tiny McNulty or Eamon McVeigh or Gary O'Donnell. I'll never forget when they came into the room, none of us could talk for two or three minutes because it was the first time I had a visit that Dwayne wasn't there. We eventually sat down, we composed ourselves and got on with it because you had the Screws gawking down your throat and so it was pretty awful.



John Quinn, Dwayne O'Donnell, Malcolm Nugent and Tommy Armstrong were killed in a UVF gun attack on Boyle's bar in Cappagh, County Tyrone, on 3 March 1991. John, Dwayne and Malcolm were members of the Irish Republican Army. The finger of suspicion has pointed towards collusion between loyalist death squads operating locally and the British Army, RUC and intelligence services.

enough to have the two of us, to have the beds and be fit to block the door but they came a couple of times with small riot shields which we would kick then they'd come back with men and bigger riot shields. Then the first time we got them away they came back with big massive riot shields but they still had to go away because they couldn't get the door open.

GERALDINE

Another low for us would have been the strip search in March 1992. It was a Monday morning that the strip search took place.

They went into people's cells and pulled them out and like Marie they stripped more or less in the middle of the wing in front of the board of visitors. When it came to our cells, we were sharing and we had bunk beds and so we decided we would barricade the cell. We put the bunk beds, lockers, a chair and boxes of stuff up against the door. We had the cell completely blocked from the door back because the door opened in at that time. Then we lay on top of the bed so whenever they would open the door we were fit to kick out at their riot shields.

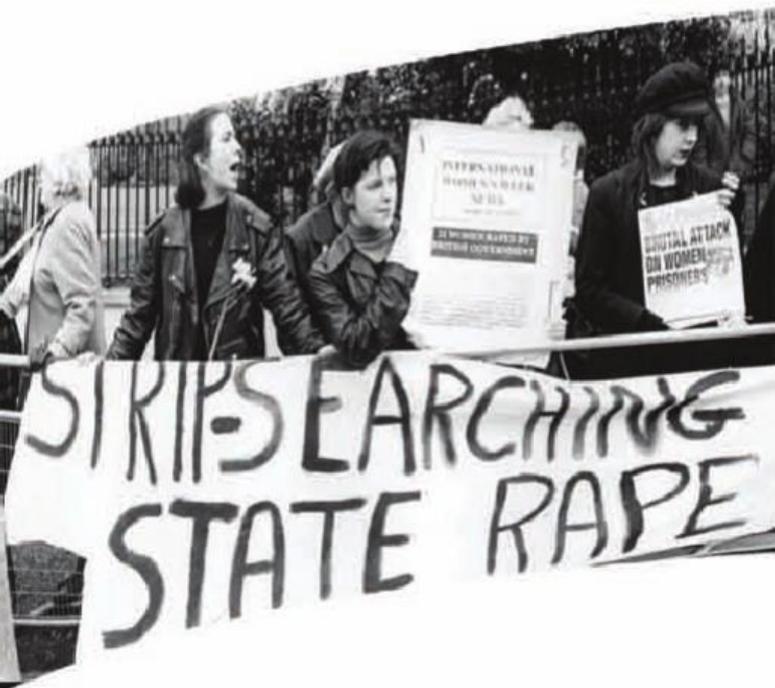
It started off that just the female Screws would come and it took them about four hours probably to get into our cell because we had the door blocked. We were lucky

BRONWYN

They couldn't get into our cell because every time they went to open the door both of us were lying on this wee bunk bed and with our feet just kicking the door so they couldn't get in. We were able to keep them out for about four hours.

GERALDINE

When they got to us, I hit my head on the floor so hard everything was kind of black.



LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD



LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

I felt them taking off my belt and my boots at the door where I was lying and then they carried me then over to C2, to another wing, and then they just dropped me on the floor. Then they stood on my legs and they put my hands up my back. Some of them stood on the side of my face. (I think that was the norm with everybody.) They threw a sheet over me and they shouted at each other, like a command, and they all ran out of the cell. So there was no search, in fact, they weren't looking for anything. There was no pretence they were even looking for something because they just pulled your clothes off, dropped the sheet and ran and closed the door behind them.

At that stage I knew Bronwyn was back in the cell and on her own, and that was an awful feeling too because you knew she was gonna go through the same and there was nothing you could do about it.

BRONWYN

It came to my turn and it was really horrific because there was about four or five male prison officers. They opened the door and they came charging towards me, shouting. One of them put his arms around my waist and threw me to the floor. About five male screws pinned me to the floor, each one of them holding a limb or part of my body. I remember a male Screw at the lower end of my body and he nipped my bum. It was a pretty scary experience. They had me and that was it. I just kept spitting in their faces and they just kept shouting at me. They then started to shout these commands and as they shouted these commands — 'Lock 1-2, Lock 1-3' — then each of my limbs were twisted and it was really, really sore. I was taken then over to C-Wing and put into a separate cell from Geraldine. They threw me on to the floor,





Protest outside Maghaberry calling for an end to strip-searching

the male Screws did, and the female Screws came in. Then they just stripped me and that was it.

GERALDINE

Within the last couple of months in 1998, ones would have got their release date and because they had days of parole to take it meant that they were almost ready to get out when they got their date but I had got another year or so. I had appealed that on the Monday to the Governor and on Monday evening he came down about five o'clock. He said, 'You're going home tomorrow,' at nine o'clock in the morning or whatever. I phoned home to the family to tell the news and they were delighted.

That night I never really got to bed because I spent the

whole night packing and cleaning because, as POWs, you would have been very aware of cleanliness.

The next morning, I had to take my stuff over to reception. The Screws at Reception were absolutely hostile, livid that the POWs were getting out and they would lose their jobs and not one of them spoke one word the whole morning.

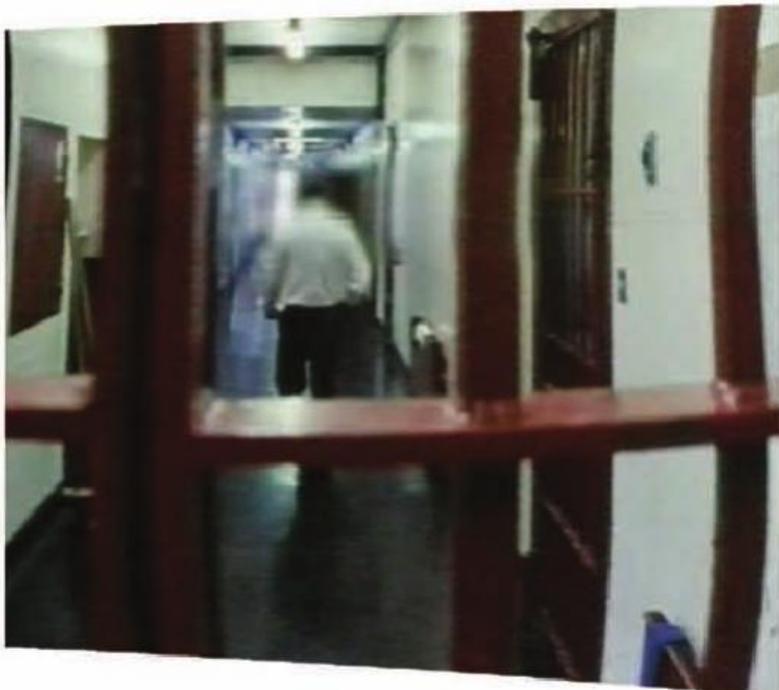
BRONWYN

It was August 1995 and two weeks prior to my release, that's when I was starting to pack my stuff. I found it very, very difficult. I don't know why but I think it was just, I suppose, leaving Geraldine as well. It was all very mixed. My family were obviously delighted and so happy but I can't say that I felt like that. I just had very mixed views about it and so the closer it got to my release the harder too it got for me, being there and packing everything up and going. At that point we weren't sharing cells but we spent a lot of time in the cell watching DVDs and so on.

The morning I got out, it was very very emotional — very, very emotional.

After saying my goodbyes, I was brought over to Reception and of course then it was astounding. The Screws then stripped me even though that was the day I was getting out never to come back. So I was stripped but that was just typical of them, just giving you that last wee reminder.

I got brought out of the jail and my father, my mother and my sisters were there waiting on me. They were so happy that I was out.



THE LAST FEMALE REPUBLICAN PRISONER TO BE RELEASED FROM MAGHABERRY UNDER THE TERMS OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

Developing a spirit of revolution

SHORTLY AFTER HER RELEASE from Maghaberry Prison under the Good Friday Agreement, Geraldine Ferrity (now Ward) spoke to *An Phoblacht* in January 1999 and described how the fight by republican women in Armagh Jail and Maghaberry over the years for better conditions was a positive force that shaped her outlook on life and on struggle.

Geraldine told *An Phoblacht* that she only heard she would be released the day before she got out, just three days before Christmas, on 22 December.

"It came out of the blue so, in many ways, I wasn't fully prepared. Release wasn't something I'd really thought about and I hadn't even started the parole programme yet."

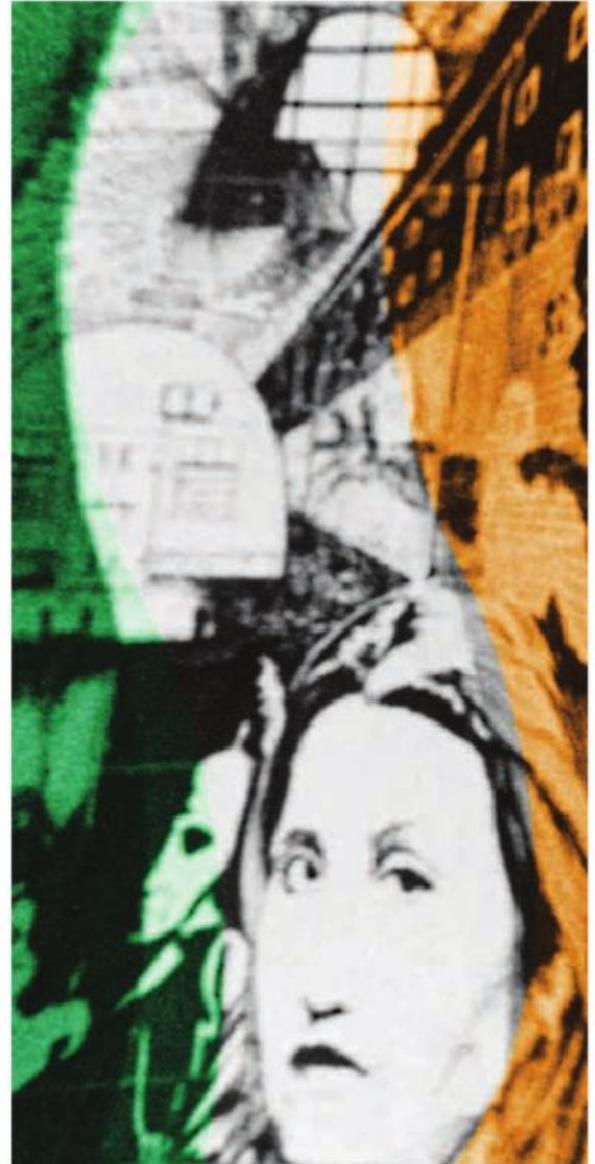
The development of the republican struggle in the nine years she was jailed in November 1990 had seen "massive changes", Geraldine said, noting: "These are interesting times." And Geraldine was among the prisoners who saw these changes as part of the same struggle.

"The whole sea change towards a more focused political strategy was not a shock. The political developments are a continuation of the struggle. It is a natural progression from the political development of republicans both inside the prisons and outside on the ground.

"Everyone has developed where previously the struggle had been less political. Now it is much more political and now everyone has an opinion, which is great."

A key moment for Geraldine was the breakdown of the first IRA cessation in 1994.

"Through the first and then second ceasefires there was loads of debate about what was going to happen,



with lots of different views and strong feelings. And even before the breakdown of the first ceasefire there was a lot of anger at [British Prime Minister] John Major. He did nothing to move the Peace Process forward. Republicans tried so hard to ensure the process kept up its momentum but still Major did not respond in kind."

She told *An Phoblacht* that when she first went into Maghaberry it was hard:

"But in that time I have learnt a lot. You have to learn to live with people who are basically strangers very quickly. The whole process of personal development, the studying, education, ad hoc political debates and deep friendships are related to the political maturing of the Republican Movement as a whole. It wasn't just a political education; you also learnt a lot about other people and about living with other people.

"Although relationships with people outside of the jails were different, they were maintained and in many ways became stronger. It's also knowing that if you

People writing

letters from as far

as America,

Australia, New

Zealand and the

Basque Country

were also important.

'It showed the

system that we

weren't on our own'



Geraldine Ward with Gerry Adams at the 1994 Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in Dublin

needed anything people would be there even if you didn't have direct physical contact."

The commitment of family and friends from her native County Tyrone and Sinn Féin and the POW Department were also vital links to the developing climate.

"They kept you up to date on not only the wider political debates but also the local issues and also helped maintain the links with the local community."

People writing letters from as far afield as America, Australia, New Zealand and the Basque Country were also important. "It showed the system that we weren't on our own," she said.

"The spirit in Maghaberry was phenomenal. As a group of republicans we were very strong. Although there was so few of us we fought for everything like

there was 200 of us. We kept up the battle for better conditions and backed each other no matter what."

During her incarceration in Maghaberry the republican women brought about changes in the lock-up regime, the introduction of telephones and a furniture-making course. But, added Geraldine, "Some of the major changes in conditions were won by the women in Armagh Jail."

Geraldine also spoke of one of the pivotal moments in her youth, the death of hunger striker Bobby Sands.

"Bobby Sands died three weeks before my tenth birthday. No one thought the British would let him die. Before then I didn't really understand the depth of what was going on. I mean you knew it was bad but after that you realised that something very serious was going on."

CORSICA:

BY MARK MOLONEY

Europe's hidden independence struggle

THE FRENCH call the Mediterranean island of Corsica 'The Isle of Beauty'. Located off the north-west coast of Italy, with a population of 300,000 people, it is rugged, mountainous and full of steep cliffs and rocky streams. Many of its peaks reach heights of over 2.5 kilometres and remain snowcapped even during the hot Mediterranean summer.

But the natural beauty disguises the true history and tension of an island that has never accepted its place within the French Republic. Unlike Brittany, Occitania or any other region of France, the majority of people who live in Corsica still speak their own unique language (which closely resembles Italian) despite a concerted attempt by the French Government to wipe out minority and regional languages.

The history of Corsica mirrors those of many other small nations in Europe who suffered oppression at the hands of much larger neighbours. Its key location at the heart of the Mediterranean meant that it faced attacks, raids and occupations from the Greeks, Romans, Genoese, Vandals, Pisans, Moors and eventually the French.





'We hope not to have to act drastically . . . we will remain attentive and never let pass an opportunity for peace'

2012 statement from the National Liberation Front of Corsica (FLNC)



The ancient mountain capital of Corti, last stronghold of the resistance during the French invasion

In 1767, the French launched an invasion of the island

The island enjoyed a mere 14 years of independence from 1755 to 1769 under the leadership of their national hero, Pascal Paoli, after they drove the Genoese from the island. During this time, Corsica became the first independent country to grant women the right to vote and its constitution, written under Enlightenment principles, was years ahead of its time.

In 1767, the French launched an invasion of the island. Paoli's forces fought desperately to defend their new republic but the overwhelming numbers of the French Army finally consolidated their hold on the island in 1770. Paoli fled to Britain where he remained until the French Revolution allowed him to return to Corsica. Ironically, another native Corsican, Napoleon Bonaparte, who would later become Emperor of the French, was a young supporter of Paoli. His father had served as a personal assistant to the revolutionary leader and writing to him in exile in May 1789, Napoleon said: "As the nation was perishing, I was born. Thirty thousand Frenchmen were vomited on to our shores, drowning the throne of liberty in waves of blood. Such was the odious sight which was the first to strike me."

In January 2012, I travelled along with Sinn Féin Councillor Pádraig Quinn from Dungannon to the island to take part in the annual Scontri Internazionali youth event which is held in the university in the ancient capital of Corti each year. As we drove from the

northern coastal town of Bastia up into the mountains of the interior, the opposition to French rule became more evident. French-language road signs were either painted out or riddled with bullet holes, while graffiti declaring support for the outlawed National Liberation Front of Corsica (FLNC) was plastered all over walls.

Tourists are warmly welcomed in Corsica but those trying to purchase land are not. Passing through one small rural village we noticed the letters 'IFF' painted in six-foot-high letters on a wall — the phrase stands for the Corsican phrase "French Out" and beside it were painted a coffin and a packed suitcase!

In the 1970s, the situation in Corsica exploded. Poor economic conditions, appalling infrastructure and a lack of third-level education and job opportunities brought the situation to boiling point. A major factor was the increasing number of holiday homes owned by French continentals. Despite Corsica having a population of only 200,000 people in the 1960s, by the end of the decade more than 50,000 French mainlanders had purchased homes on the island. These homes resulted in a property bubble, putting house prices outside of the reach of many native Corsicans. In 1973, a wave of bombings targeting holiday homes rocked the island. A group calling itself the Native Corsican Liberation Front (FPCL) called for the expulsion of what it termed "colonists". By 1974, more than 100 bombs had exploded.

The turning point, when Corsica went from a mild irritant to a serious political crisis for the French, came in the summer of 1975 when a wine scandal was uncovered between four newly-arrived French farmers and a

wine company based in Paris. The conspiracy, which involved illegal transactions and alleged cover-up by the French Government, threatened to collapse the very important Corsican wine industry.

In response, members of a local political group occupied the farms of one of the implicated farmers. Some of the men carried hunting rifles (which is not uncommon in Corsica as their national sport is hunting) and informed the police they would leave peacefully after three days. Outside, hundreds of supporters gathered. The French authorities, unfamiliar with or dismissive of Corsican customs about carrying rifles, over-reacted. Twelve hundred police backed by helicopters and armoured cars surrounded the compound. Shots rang out and two police officers fell dead, apparently shot by the protesters who had gathered outside. Who fired first is still disputed but those inside surrendered immediately and were arrested.

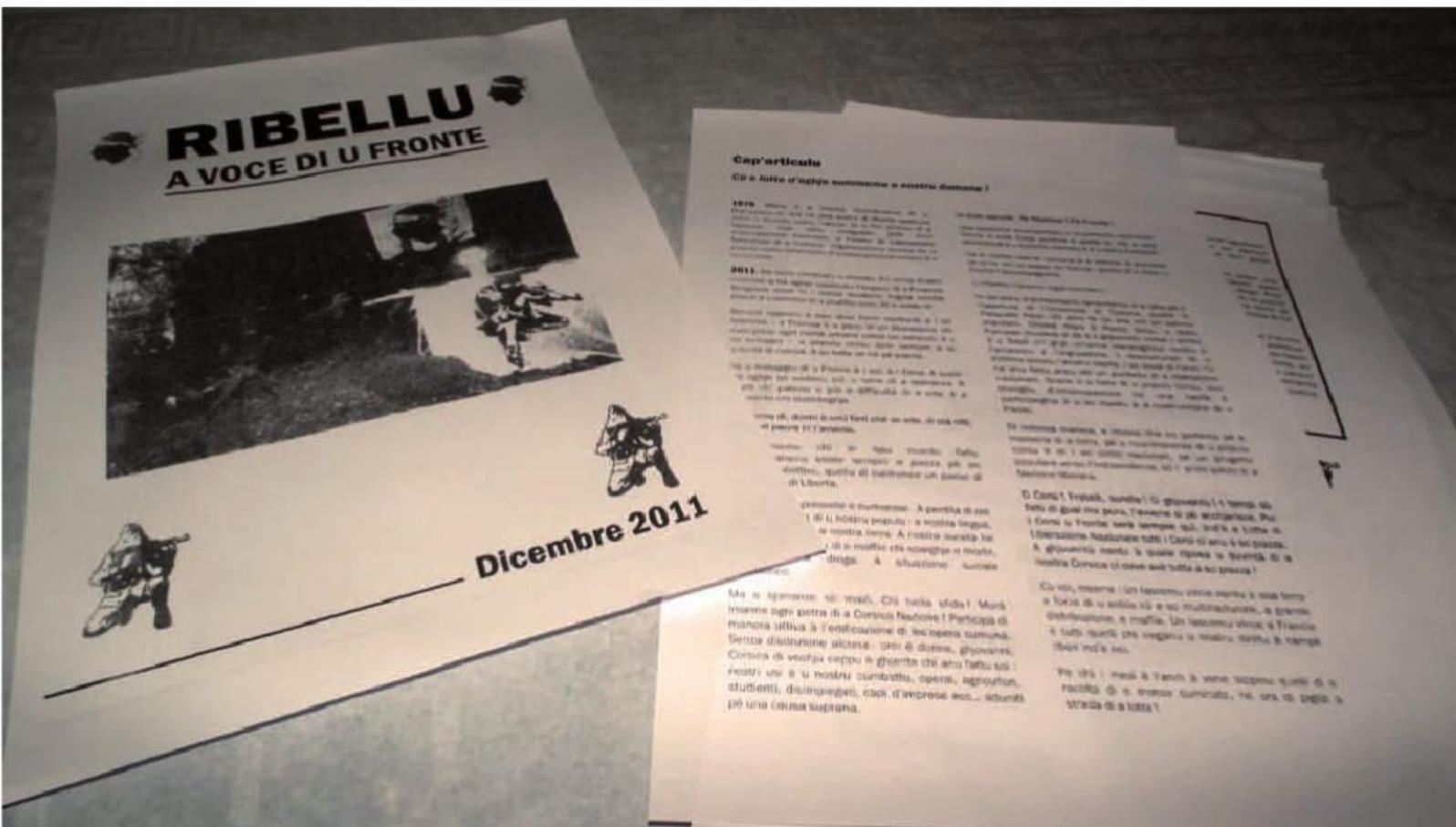
The political party that organised the protest was banned. That night, the island was engulfed in rioting. In the northern town of Bastia, where the men were being held, gun battles raged between nationalists and police, with another officer being killed. Sporadic clashes continued while in the background an armed organisation was being established. That group was the National Liberation Front of Corsica (FLNC), which would launch an armed struggle in 1976. The organisation still exists to this day, although it is nowhere near as powerful as it was in the hot summers of the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, during the 1980s, it was the only European guerrilla group to carry out more bomb

attacks in one year than the IRA (in one night it managed to bomb 78 targets in Corsica and 19 banks in Paris without causing a single fatality).

During this period, pro-French paramilitary groups such as FRANCIA and the Civic Action Service also emerged. The groups targeted known nationalists and carried out bomb attacks on offices and centres run by nationalist groups. In one incident in a village a few miles north of the capital of Ajaccio on 6 January 1980, three members of a pro-French paramilitary group were captured as they attempted to drive through a checkpoint controlled by armed nationalists. One of the men who was captured claimed that the pro-French groups were being controlled by a senior police inspector based in Ajaccio. Two days later, the captured men were freed as a large force of French police, which included armoured combat vehicles, raided the village, arresting 11 people. That summer, at the European Parliament, a group of MEPs (which included Irish MEPs Neil Blaney and John Hume) called on the EU to compile a report on the deteriorating situation on the island.

As the armed struggle continued, various political parties which were either supportive or at least refused to condemn FLNC actions appeared and disappeared. Electoral success was hard to come by as the Right held a powerful grip on the island although some nationalists did have limited success. Despite the ongoing violence, the island only made international headlines when bombs exploded in mainland France and this had become much less frequent from the 1980s onwards. In

The FLNC's end-of-year statement for 2011



CORSICA



Corsica Libera
representative
Lyvia Cosimi

Despite Corsica having a population of only 200,000 people in the 1960s, by the end of the decade more than 50,000 French mainlanders had purchased homes on the island

1982, Corsica was given its own regional assembly. The assembly secured further powers in 1992 and an advisory Economic, Social and Cultural Council was also set up.

The island became front-page news across the globe in February 1998 when Claude Érignac, the Prefect of

Corsica and the most senior representative of the French Government on the island, was shot dead in a gun attack in the capital of Ajaccio. All of the major armed groups denied involvement in the killing and a local shepherd and nationalist was later found guilty of the killing in June 2011.

The 1990s and 2000s saw the splintering of the independence movement with bitter feuds and poor electoral performances. However, during the 2000s two leading nationalist parties emerged. The first, Party of the Corsican Nation, appeared in 2002 and was formed following a merger by a number of 'moderate nationalist' parties. The second, Corsica Libera (Free Corsica), was formed just three years ago when three pro-independence parties, some linked to the FLNC, decided to merge.

I met Lyvia Cosimi, a representative of Corsica Libera and

the leader of Consulta di a Gjhuventú Corse, a pro-independence organisation active in the University of Corsica and other educational institutions. Lyvia is also active with the Solidarity Association, which campaigns on behalf of the 70 or so Corsican political prisoners being held in French prisons.

In its first election, Corsica Libera gained 10% of the vote while the moderate nationalists garnered 26%. It was an astounding result for the parties.

"In the last election we noticed nationalism and pride in our country and language had increased in recent years," she told IRIS.

"We noticed that a lot of people felt very strongly about protecting Corsica. There has definitely been a rise in national consciousness."

Asked what she attributed the rise in support to, Lyvia said that young people are increasingly identifying themselves as Corsican rather than French.

"Young people play a huge part in the struggle. Many see independence as a solution to much of the problems faced here."

The island has a massive problem with outward migration. "Unless you can get a job in tourism or medicine, then there are very few opportunities for young people here," she pointed out. In contrast, the number of people moving in and buying up property in Corsica remains high. The island is seen as an upmarket destination for holidaymakers yet it is one of the poorest regions in France.

Later, after our interview, we attended a Corsican cultural night in a marquee which was set up on the campus. When we arrived, a statement from the FLNC was being distributed. The statement claimed responsibility for 38 bomb attacks in the latter half of 2011. The majority of the bombs destroyed holiday homes and villas belonging to people from the French mainland while five targeted government facilities. None of the attacks caused any injuries. The spike in bombings last year even resulted in the British Government advising its citizens not to travel to the island.

The seven-page FLNC statement also reiterated the aim of the movement to obtain for the Corsican people their "inalienable right to self-determination". It ended with the line: "We hope not to have to act drastically... we will remain attentive and never let pass an opportunity for peace."

One female student at the event told us:

"I have great respect for them [the FLNC]. They are fighting to keep the island Corsican and keep the French out. Parents know that their children cannot afford to buy homes here because of the prices being pushed up by these colonists."

During the evening, various bands and musicians played traditional Corsican music, with lyrics in their native language. A notable Corsican song 'Sister Ireland' written in the 1980s, draws comparisons between the two islands and their struggles for independence. In recent years there have been some con-

CORSICA

During the 1980s, the National Liberation Front of Corsica was the only European guerrilla group to carry out more bomb attacks in one year than the IRA

cessions from the French to help conserve the Corsican language. Lyvia insists that the powers to protect this unique part of their identity should be in the hands of Corsicans themselves. The language, while still spoken by around 60% of people, has been demoted to a secondary position. Almost all media is through French. Even in the University of Corsica — an institution which the Corsicans fought for years to get reopened after it was shut down by the French — it is noticeable just how many students use French to talk amongst themselves outside of lectures.

“The only way to save our language is to co-officialise it in administration. No official papers are produced in Corsican even though the language is used in the Corsican Assembly. A few months ago, the Corsican Assembly voted on a motion which contained such ideas to help in the preservation of the language but we need it to be passed in the French Parliament. Surely we know what is best for our own language.”

Discussing the possibility of Corsican independence, Lyvia says that a lot of groundwork needs to be put in before it becomes a realistic proposal.

“If we all woke up in the morning and Corsica was independent, it would not be economically viable. But a gradual period of easing towards independence

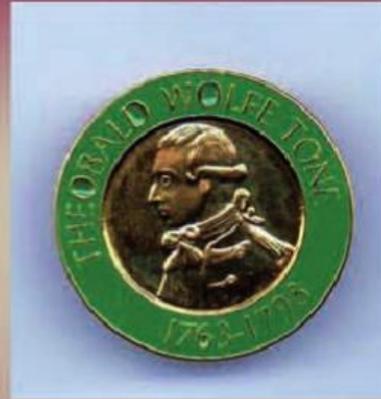
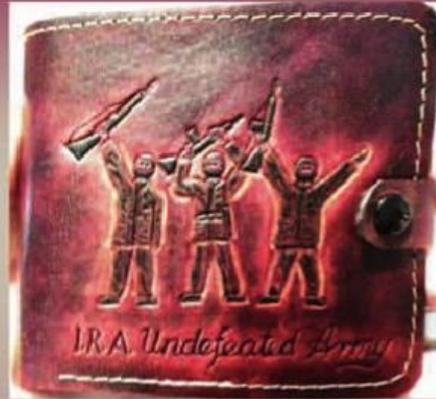
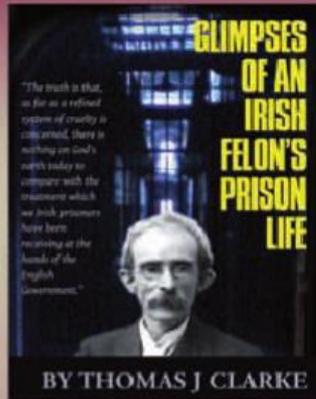
where we obtain more powers over our own economy and manage to build on what we have, I believe that will lead to a very strong state. We of all people know our nation's strengths and weaknesses and we can make the most informed decisions on what path the country should take.”

As an island nation, Corsica was better able to preserve its unique identity than other regions of France and its promotion remains a key objective to nationalists. The building of political support for Corsican nationalism, the growing clamour for independence, and the disillusionment among young people

with the political establishment means that, in the not too distant future, Corsica, along with the Basque Country, Scotland and Catalonia, could be amongst Europe's newest nation states.



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Singing out for young Palestinians

Lost Youth – Songs of Solidarity

Various Artists

Price: €10

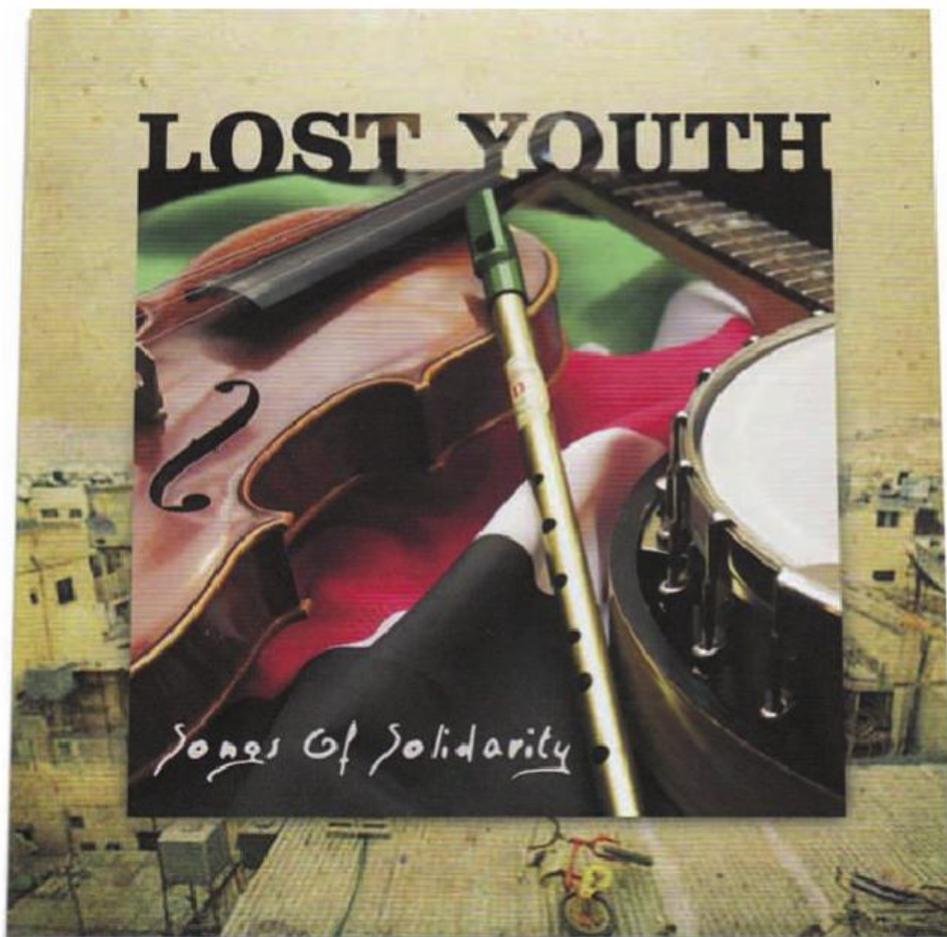
Review by Mark Moloney

'Lost Youth – Songs of Solidarity' is a benefit album for a child prisoner, Mohammed Same Hasash, who has been imprisoned by Israeli forces for seven years.

In 2005, the A'edoon Palestinian youth theatre group toured Ireland, Scotland and England to perform dance and drama at local festivals. As they set out on their journey to cross from the West Bank into Jordan, a 15-year-old performer, Mohammed Sameh Hasash, was kidnapped by Israeli authorities. Mohammed was interrogated for more than two months at Petah Tikva before being sentenced to ten years' imprisonment by an Israeli military court on spurious charges. He is due for release later this year.

The young Mohammed was well-known in the West Bank where he had made documentary videos about his life in Balata refugee camp. He had also worked as a youth reporter and covered the numerous Israeli invasions and incursions and was planning to pursue a career in journalism.

As a child, he had seen numerous friends killed by Israeli troops and was looking forward to touring Ireland to highlight the situation in his country to a wider audience but



he never made it outside of the West Bank.

Irish, British, Basque, Palestinian and American artists are among those who contribute to this brilliant benefit CD.

Some of the stand-out tracks include 'Rachel Corrie' by Pól Mac Adaim, a song about the 23-year-old US peace activist who was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer as she tried to stop it demolishing the home of a poor Palestinian family in the Rafah district of Gaza in March 2003. Another is 'Long

Live Palestine' by Iraqi-English political-hiphop artist Lowkey

Contributing Irish artists include Kíla, Damien Dempsey, Cormac Breathnach and Gráinne Holland.

Every year, more than 700 children, some as young as 12, are detained and prosecuted by Israeli military courts in contravention of the Geneva Convention. Part of the proceeds from this CD go towards highlighting the child prisoner issue.

As a child, Mohammed had seen numerous friends killed by Israeli troops and was looking forward to touring Ireland to highlight the situation in his country to a wider audience but he never made it outside of the West Bank





Royal Irish Constabulary officers in Cork, 1920, and (below) Jeremiah Mee

Inside the RIC

The Memoirs of Constable Jeremiah Mee RIC

By J Anthony Gaughan
Mercier Press, €19.99

Review by Pádraig Finlay

I RECOMMEND *The Memoirs of Constable Jeremiah Mee RIC* as one of the best books I've read in a long time about the turn-of-the-century events that led up the Easter Rising and the Tan War. It's a first-hand account of life in the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) from 1910 to 1920 and what spurred Jeremiah Mee to be the spokesperson for a mutiny against orders for the RIC to shoot any IRA suspect - or 'suspicious-looking' man - on sight.

The mutiny in Listowel, County Kerry, on 17 June 1920 is a fascinating episode and the 'inside story' of Mee's life in the RIC - including meeting Constance Markievicz and preparing a memorandum for Michael Collins about the IRA campaign against RIC members - had me hooked.

The Divisional Police Commissioner for Munster, Lieutenant-Colonel Gerald Ferguson Smyth, gave his men a state licence to kill: "The more you shoot, the better I will like you, and I assure you that no policeman will get into trouble for shooting any man." The RIC men at Listowel rebelled against the order to kill at will and were replaced. (Smyth was himself shot dead by an IRA unit a month later.)

Mee went on to work in the First Dáil's Department of Labour and was involved in the Belfast Boycott of 1921 on foot of a Dáil directive "imposing a boycott of Belfast banks and Belfast goods as an appropriate response to the pogroms and continuing bigotry in Belfast".



With the newly-republished memoirs of Jeremiah Mee we now have a comprehensive record of not only the incident but the changing attitudes within RIC members themselves and the role they were being asked to play. It also explores the changing relationship between the communities from where they

came on the one hand and the British military on the other.

The text is complemented by period photographs of RIC officers and Mee's intimate knowledge of relations between the police and the IRA under Michael Collins offers valuable insights into revolutionary times in Ireland.

Allegiance to Britain's monarch and the Civil War

The Oath is Dead and Gone

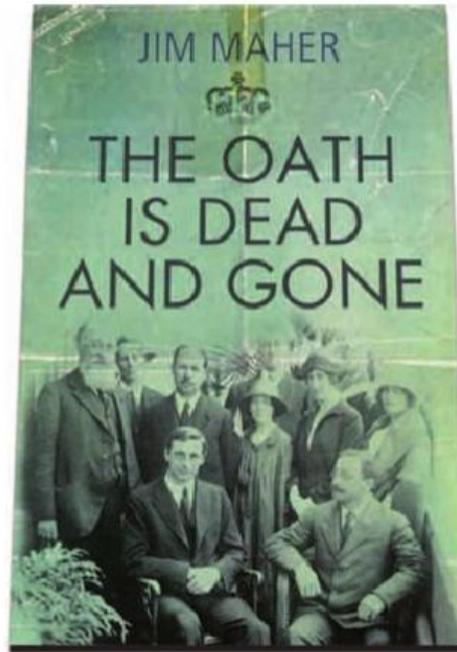
By Jim Maher

Londubh Books, €27.99

Review by Cathal Ó Murchú

JIM MAHER'S study is a narrative account of the issue of the Oath of Allegiance to the British monarch in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 and how it affected and influenced post-Civil War politics in the emerging 26-County state. The Oath would prove to be sufficiently divisive and contentious enough to be a major cause of the Civil War in 1922-23.

Maher charts politics as affected by the Oath issue and how republicans led by Eamon De Valera embarked upon a political path that ultimately led to removal of the Oath.



This is a worthwhile book insofar as it deals with the Oath issue during the 1920s and 1930s. However, Maher over-emphasises the Oath issue as being the major cleavage between republicans and Free Staters. Many would argue that issues of class, economic outlook, basic worldview, and fundamental political differences were in reality more relevant.

The Oath was undoubtedly the *casus belli* of the Civil War but deeper issues were at the heart of this conflict — essentially being what shape a future independent Ireland would take and who would shape it.

Nonetheless, this book remains a decent read, contributes significantly to understanding much of the politics of that era, and indirectly offers lessons to contemporary republicans involved in the political project of expanding the broader appeal of republican politics today.



(Second and third from left) Katherine O'Callaghan, widow of retired Mayor of Limerick Michael O'Callaghan who was murdered by Black and Tans in 1921, and Mary MacSwiney, sister of Terence MacSwiney who died on hunger strike in 1920, on their way to the Treaty debates in December 1921 — both voted against the Treaty



Shirt factory workers in Derry, 1960

A pioneering classic

A Labour History of Ireland, 1824-2000

By Emmet O'Connor

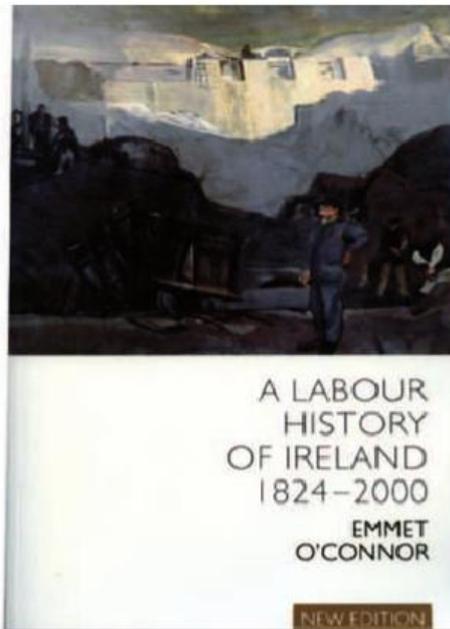
UCD Press, €28

Review by Cathal Ó Murchú

THIS is a new edition of O'Connor's original work of the same name but with three new chapters that cover the years 1960 to 2000. The first edition (1992) covered the period 1824 to 1960.

It's an overview of Irish labour history of broadly the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that focuses specifically on the Irish trade union movement and on Irish political parties and movements that represented or claimed to represent the Irish working class and small rural peasantry. Apart from the various left and labour movements covered, more than 50 key personalities are examined. Aside from this principal focus, O'Connor clearly places Irish labour history in the contemporaneous political contexts of the various historical periods dealt with therein.

To his credit, O'Connor successfully manages this whole period and does so in an all-Ireland context. Even from the divergent paths that labour history took in the two jurisdictions since partition of the early 1920s, the all-Ireland context remains, which is mildly impressive in its own way



considering the two-nationist element that exists in the field of Irish labour history (not least in the current labour movement itself).

The origins of organised Irish labour in various rural, oath-bound secret societies is explored, as is the role they played in the major political events of the day, such as Catholic Emancipation, the Anti-Tithe Campaign, the Repeal Movement and the Young Irelander rebellions. The catastrophic Great Hunger of the late 1840s is shown to have had a majorly regressive impact on the

development of organised Irish labour but not so much that this process was completely halted. The narrative goes on to explore Irish labour during the Fenian Risings, the Land War, the constitutional crisis of Home Rule in the latter nineteenth century, and the revolutionary period between 1913 and 1923.

One of the curious aspects of the broader Irish labour movement is how weak and unsuccessful they have been in comparison to their continental counterparts. This is despite the exceptional militancy that Irish people have exhibited in history in regard to confronting landlordism and colonial authority. It is also a fact that the millions abroad in the Irish Diaspora have traditionally leaned considerably to the Left in their various host societies and indeed have been crucial in building the trade union and labour movements in their respective countries. O'Connor discusses some of these points in the book.

Overall, 'A Labour History of Ireland' is a worthy contribution to the history of Irish labour and is an indispensable companion to students and activists of this period. It doesn't quite have the revolutionary zeal of Desmond Greaves's 'The Life and Times of James Connolly' but it is nonetheless perhaps the most comprehensive work of its kind that covers the subject and period in question and for this reason it can be regarded as a pioneering classic.



Trade union leader Jim Larkin speaking in Belfast in 1907



Dublin Unemployed Protest Committee march in Dublin in 1957

The ANC's 'International Brigades'

London Recruits – The Secret War Against Apartheid

Edited by Ken Keable
Introduction by Ronnie Kasrils
Merlin Press, £15.95

Review by John Hedges

IN THE YEARS shortly before the Irish Republican Army's bombing campaign in England recommenced in the 1970s, dog walkers on Hampstead Heath in the leafy suburbs of well-to-do London would have been startled to learn that their urban idyll was also being used for the test firing of 'leaflet bombs' by a guerrilla army fighting racism in faraway South Africa.

The ANC and its military arm, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), had been reeling from arrests and repression. In the Rivonia Trial of 1963-1964, ten leading opponents of apartheid (including Nelson Mandela) were jailed on charges of sabotage. In the years that followed, it was important to show the oppressed people of South Africa and the apartheid state that the ANC had not been broken.

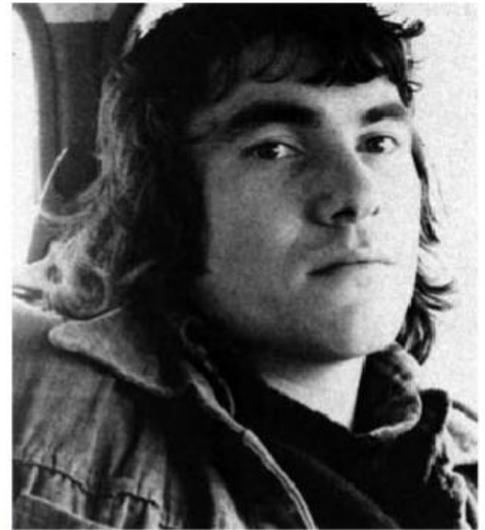
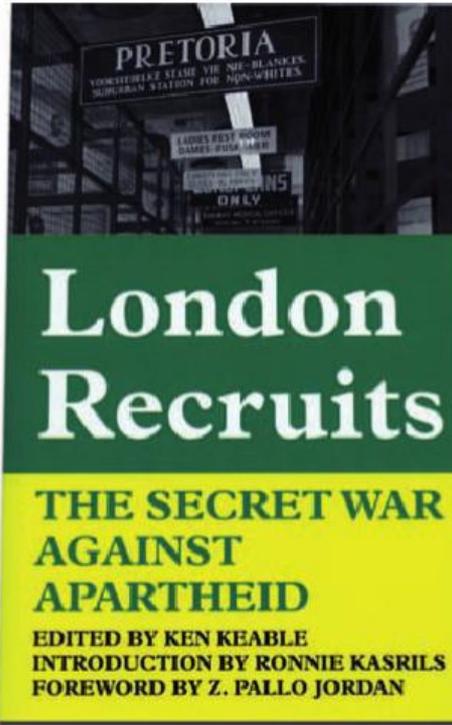
'London Recruits - The Secret War Against Apartheid' is a collection of reminiscences in their own words of 30 of the men and women who were not South Africans but who risked their liberty and their lives in the belly of the beast from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s. (Editor Ken Keable was one of those recruited in London by MK intelligence officer Ronnie Kasrils.)

From a secret 'operations room' in north London's Golders Green, Ronnie and his comrades talent-spotted amongst the communities of cosmopolitan London, aided by a network of scouts across the political spectrum.

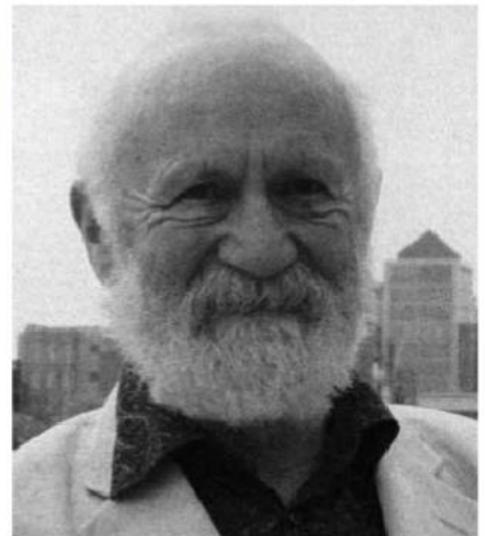
The recruits came from many countries, including Ireland.

Mike Milotte went from studying for his A Levels in the North of Ireland in 1967 to the London School of Economics and then South Africa 'Working for Ronnie'. In August 1970, Milotte was part of a co-ordinated propaganda offensive using leaflet bombs and loud-speaker broadcasts spread across five cities - Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London - to demonstrate that the ANC was still in business all over the country.

Back in Ireland two years earlier, in 1968 in Dublin, Kadar Asmal recruited Seán



Mike Milotte



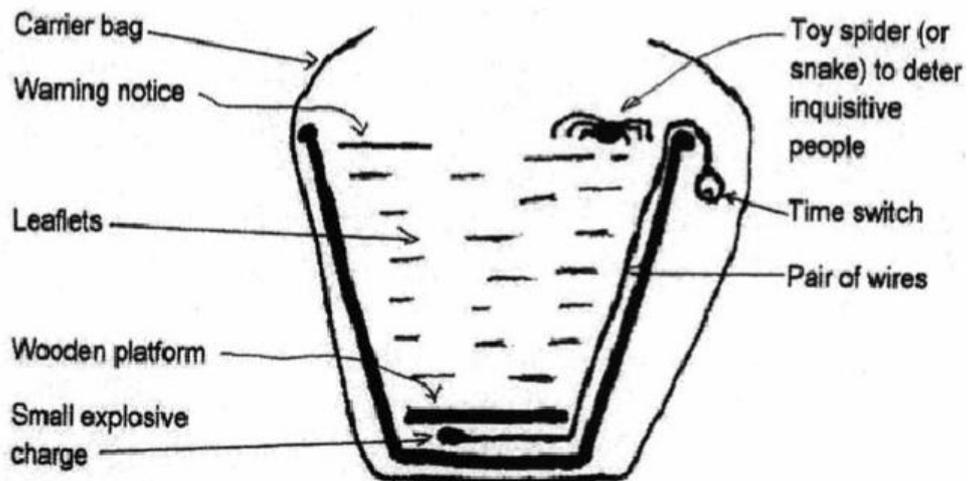
Seán Edwards

Edwards to the London-based network. Seán's father, Frank, was an International Brigader in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War. (Seán's account in 'London Recruits' is even more modestly brief than the rest of his fellow contributors.)

The 'London Recruits' risked arrest, jailing, torture and even death, not just for carrying out morale-boosting propaganda actions but transporting weapons, assisting with safe houses and helping ANC fighters to enter South Africa.

Ronnie Kasrils's autobiography is titled 'Armed and Dangerous' after a police description of him on the run in South Africa as a 'wanted terrorist' leader. He was to become Minister for Intelligence under President Nelson Mandela in post-apartheid South Africa. Today he is unstinting in his admiration for those low-profile operators known as the 'London Recruits'.

"It is a remarkable account of the direct role of international activists in the struggle against apartheid," Ronnie writes. "Without a shadow of a doubt, they played no small part in the ultimate success of the struggle that liberated South Africa from apartheid tyranny."



ANC drawing of a leaflet bomb

Interviews from Catalonia

What Catalans Want: Could Catalonia be Europe's next state?

By Toni Strubell
Catalonia Press
£12.00 (Black & White),
£26.99 (Full Colour)

Review by Mark Moloney

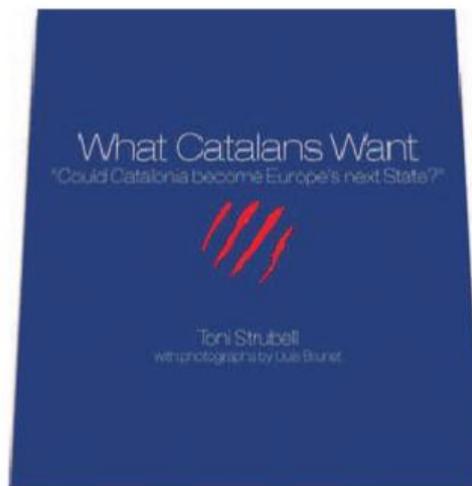
'WHAT CATALANS WANT' is a ground-breaking book by English-born Catalan activist Toni Strubell which takes an insightful look into the political situation in the Spanish province of Catalonia, whose capital is Barcelona. It tries to explain to an international audience why many Catalans want their own independent nation state and why 'independentism' has become a powerful force in modern Catalan politics. It is also beautifully illustrated with portraits of each of the interviewees by Barcelona photographer Lluís Brunet.

Catalonia, which has its own unique language and culture, is ploughing ahead with securing more autonomy for the region. The demands for self-determination have never been louder. Between 2009 and 2011, several pro-independence parties held unofficial and non-binding referendums throughout the territory which showed an overwhelming majority of those who voted were in favour of breaking away from Spain (although official surveys put the number at around 40%). In July 2010, more than one million people marched through the streets of Barcelona calling for an independent Catalan state.

Strubell interviews 30 high-profile Catalans from a wide variety of fields, including politicians, economists, Spanish Civil War veterans, media personalities, religious figures and a number of foreign individuals living in the territory. They outline their hopes and fears for the future of Catalonia: from the joy of possibly seeing a Catalan national soccer team to exploring financial arguments about the economic viability of independence.

The deteriorating relationship between Spaniards and Catalans crops up throughout with many contributors outlining the reasons they feel uncomfortable being part of a Spanish state.

"The main problem is that no one seems to know about us. Nobody knows what our problems are. People think we're just Spaniards with a stupid tendency to complain about things," says 103-year-old Dr



Moisés Broggi, who served as a surgeon for the International Brigades during the Civil War.

Catalonia, and particularly Barcelona, is a European tourist hotspot. Hundreds of thou-

sands of people visit the region each summer. But the overwhelming majority are oblivious to the political and cultural situation in the coastal territory. "Most of those who come here are not aware of the fact that Catalonia has an identity of its own, different from the rest of Spain," says Dutch journalist Alex Reitman, who is based in Barcelona.

This book certainly goes some way in addressing these concerns but one is left feeling that, despite the interviews being well put together, perhaps the inclusion of some Catalans opposed to independence, as well as those who consider themselves Spanish and who live in the province, would have helped to give readers a broader picture of the Catalan political scene.

2014 marks the 300th anniversary of the loss of Catalan independence in the Wars of Spanish Succession and it is in this year that many within Catalonia want to see an official binding referendum on independence.

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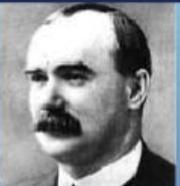
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