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NO MISTLETOE AT STORMONT

THERE WAS no mistletoe hanging up in Stormont Castle when British and 26-County ministers met at the Hillsborough Inter-Governmental Conference on Wednesday. "Blunt speaking" and "the lowest point in Anglo-Irish relations since the signing of the Agreement" was the word after the meeting, as the row over the Ryan case continued to rebound in both London and Dublin.

The long wait for the decision on whether to serve the British extradition warrants on Fr Paddy Ryan finally ended on Tuesday. The Fianna Fail Attorney-General announced that there would be no extradition of Ryan because he would not get a fair trial in Britain after the massive hype over the case in the media and the House of Commons.

The decision was not the Attorney-General John Murray's. Nor was it arrived at because of any worries that Ryan would suffer in front of a British jury. The Haughey government saw that such was the level of public opposition to Ryan's extradition and anger in their own party that it would be politically disastrous for them to have him handed over.

Already this year they have

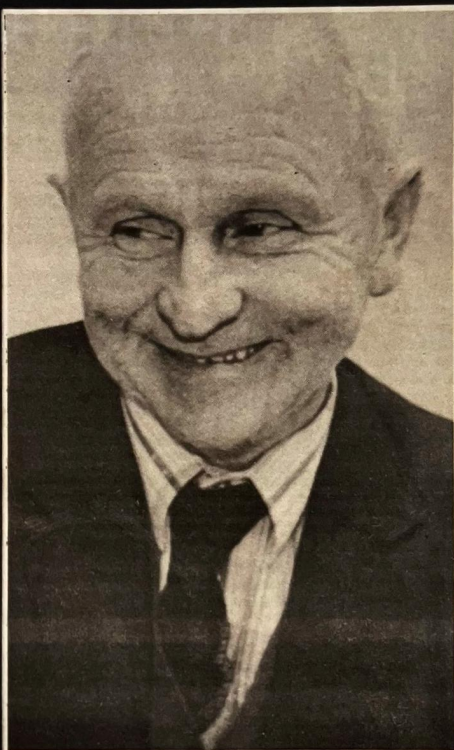
handed Robert Russell and Gerard Harte to the British and, as they pointed out in the Attorney-General's statement, they are more than willing to carry on with political extraditions. Murray repeatedly stressed that this case was an exception and hoped it would not happen again.

There was the admission, if not in so many words, that the government had bowed to the enormous pressure over this

case. The result is another major hitch for the London-Dublin extradition process. The British are infuriated and by refusing extradition on the basis that the requested extraditee will not get a fair trial in Britain, Fianna Fail — in spite of its pleas that this is an 'exception' — has in effect conceded one of the main arguments against extradition.

In his statement reacting to the announcement, Fr Ryan hailed the decision as a victory for the anti-extradition campaign and pledged his support to the four Portlaoise prisoners fighting extradition — Paul Kane, Dermot Finucane, Jim Clarke and Owen Carron. Their fight goes on.

If the usually 'happy families' relationship between the 26-County government and the British is not as cordial as usual this Christmas it is all down to those who have campaigned long and hard against the collaboration of the Fianna Fail government. The pressure must be kept up on this and every front against the British and their allies.

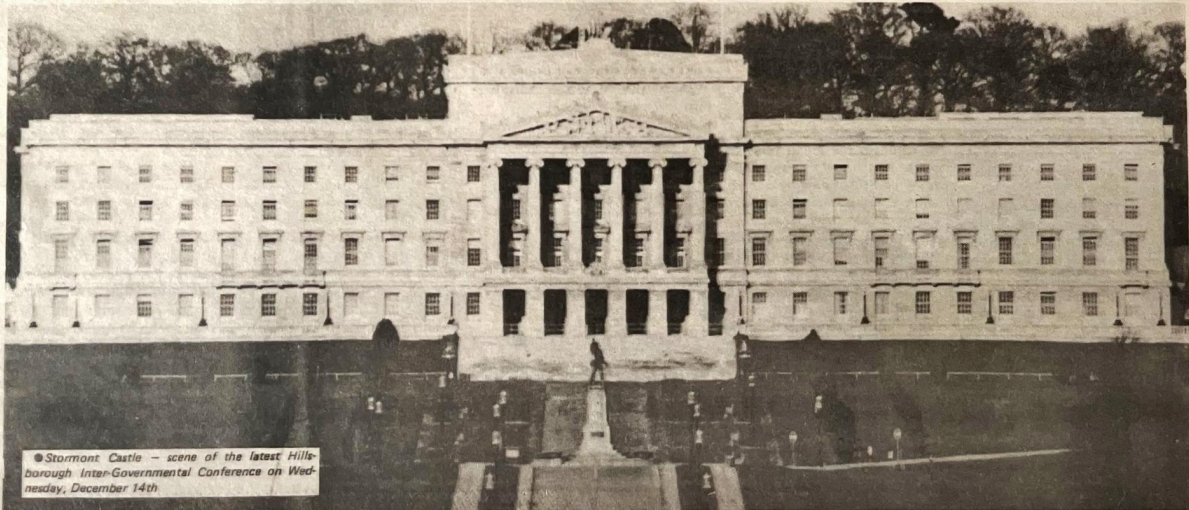


JOHN JOE McGIRL 1921-1988

THE DEATH took place on December 8th of Sinn Féin vice-president John Joe McGirl. For over 50 years he played a leading part in the republican struggle and his life of service to the cause of Irish freedom was unique. The high esteem in which

he was held by the people of his native Leitrim and by republicans everywhere was reflected in an impressive funeral in Ballinamore last Saturday.

Funeral report and oration by Gerry Adams, pages 7, 8 and 9. Profile of John Joe McGirl, pages 10 and 11.



● Stormont Castle — scene of the latest Hillsborough Inter-Governmental Conference on Wednesday, December 14th

PRISON GOVERNOR FLEES IRA

A TOP PRISONS OFFICIAL in the Northern Ireland Office and former Armagh Prison governor, Thomas Murtagh, has fled to a desk job in London following an attempt on his life by the IRA two months ago.

Murtagh earned the undying hatred of republican POWs for his administration's brutal treatment of women prisoners in Armagh which forced them onto a 'no-wash' protest in 1980 and, later that year, three of them — including Mairead Farrell — onto hunger strike.

In a statement following the breaking of the news of Murtagh's "secondment" to the Home Office of former Six-County direct-ruler Douglas Hurd, the IRA "advised" those who have replaced him to take a similar course of action — "leave".

WEEK OF ATTACKS

Seven British soldiers and RUC members were injured, a British military housing complex bombed and a strategic observation post blasted in IRA operations this week.

The first of these attacks was directed against the Pond Park British army housing estate in Lisburn. Shortly before 5pm on Thursday, December 8th, a 200lb car-bomb exploded in Crossbill Place causing extensive damage to houses occupied by British army families and injuring two RUC men.

A 55-minute warning was delivered and the bomb was fitted with a warning alarm which alerted anyone in the immediate vicinity. An anti-handling device was also attached to the bomb so that any attempt to defuse it would have resulted in immediate detonation.

In a statement issued shortly after the attack the IRA's Belfast Brigade said:

"This is not the first time the IRA has warned serving British forces in the Six Counties that they should evacuate their families from the war zone."

The statement went on to point out that the crown forces had in recent weeks "unleashed a massive onslaught against the nationalist community" and had to expect that the IRA "would respond by charging a high price on those intent on terrorising the nationalist community".

In a follow-up statement the IRA responded to RUC and media claims that the bomb had been directed against "women and children". The statement said:

"Following our initial statement on the car-bomb in Crossbill Place we reiterate that a full 55-minute warning accompanied the attack. In addition to the telephone warnings the car used contained a timer-activated alarm which was designed to and did alert British army families to the presence of a car bomb in the area."

"It is ironic that while bleating about the damage to military homes receives saturation media coverage, the massive damage inflicted on nationalist homes over recent weeks by these same people has been carried out under a veil of silence and censorship with no 'media concern'."

"We will not allow the families of occupying forces to enjoy normality in their homes while their husbands daily terrorise people in our community, wreck their homes, assault and abuse our people."

"We would again point out that our ability to successfully transport a large car-bomb into a high security zone despite the massive and ongoing security operation in our areas demonstrates the futility of the current RUC/British army policy of saturation raiding in nationalist areas. We retain the ability, the will and the resources to strike."

DIVIS TOWER BLASTED

Several British soldiers were injured when Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade avoided sophisticated surveillance equipment to place a 7lb limpet mine on the corrugated defences of the British army observation post on top of Divis Tower.

In a statement claiming responsibility for the attack, which occurred on Saturday, December 10th, the IRA refuted RUC claims that the bomb had been planted in an occupied dwelling. The statement said:

"One of our engineering units gained access to an 18th floor flat in Divis Tower. They then made their way onto the 19th floor which is covered by an array of surveillance cameras and proceeded undetected to climb out a window and attach a limpet mine containing 7lbs of semtex to the side of the observation post on top of the tower block."

"Local residents reported that up to four soldiers, from the post's complement of 18, were taken from the scene injured."

On Sunday, December 11th, the IRA in Belfast issued a statement warning that an unexploded bomb was on the Monagh bypass in West Belfast. The RUC was told of the bomb's exact location several hours before.

The statement said:

"One of our engineering units placed a 450lb bomb disguised as a roadside bollard on the bend at the Monagh bypass close to Fort Jericho. On two occasions crown forces targets presented themselves but our Volunteers delayed detonating the device because of a risk to civilians travelling in vehicles on the far lane of the dual-carriageway."

"A third crown forces target was approaching the device and our Volunteers were preparing to detonate the bomb when the patrol turned sharply towards the firing point occupied by our Volunteers. Because of the imminent danger of detection, it was decided to pull off the mine. Our Volunteers first dismantled the firing set and then delivered telephone warnings about the device. It took the crown forces a full 12 hours to respond to the warnings."

DERRY BLAST

Volunteers of the IRA's Derry Brigade successfully penetrated high security around the town's Fort George army base on Monday evening, December 12th, to plant a 200lb van-bomb close to



the perimeter wall of the base.

A 50-minute warning was delivered and the bomb exploded causing significant damage to the base as British army personnel moved in to defuse the device.

BELFAST BOMB

In a statement claiming responsibility for the planting of a 200lb car bomb outside the tax office at Royston House in Upper Queen Street on Tuesday, December 13th, the IRA's Belfast Brigade accused the crown forces of "knowingly endangering civilians".

The statement pointed out that the bomb which had been left outside Royston House was fitted with a timer activated alarm.

The statement went on:

"Five telephone warnings were delivered and crown forces were made aware that in addition to the alarm the bomb was also fitted with an anti-handling device."

The statement said that the RUC made no attempt to clear the area before exploding the car-bomb.

NEWRY RPG ATTACK

South Down Command IRA claimed responsibility for an RPG rocket attack which injured two RUC men and damaged an RUC Land Rover and a nearby security hut.

The rocket attack was mounted as an RUC Land Rover pulled

into Newry Courthouse on Wednesday morning, December 14th. The attack took place only yards from the scene of a bomb explosion three years ago in which an RUC man and a security guard died.

RUC claims after the attack that the rocket missed its intended target and exploded in a nearby security hut were refuted by eyewitnesses to the attack who spoke of seeing smoke belching from the RUC Land Rover.

CONTRACTORS TARGETED

The South Derry Command and the North Armagh Brigade of the IRA attacked two businesses which supply essential services to the British army and the RUC.

The first of the attacks was directed against Henry Brothers of Magherafelt, who have been the target of previous IRA operations in which two senior members of the firm were killed.

On Monday morning, December 12th, at shortly after 7am, a mortar bomb exploded inside the yard of Henry Brothers business premises on the Moneymore Road. No one was injured in the attack but considerable damage was caused to the premises.

In a statement the IRA said that the action had come only after several direct warnings to the firm had been ignored. The statement continued:

"Henrys are the main contractors in the north-west for the

crown forces and by their persistent collaboration they have left us with no alternative but to take drastic action against them. We now repeat our warnings on such collaboration and advise all employees of the firm that they are now considered legitimate targets and should resign or face the consequences."

The second attack occurred in a garage at Fountain Street in Portadown at shortly before 5pm on Tuesday, December 13th.

Volunteers of the IRA's South Down Command, armed with handguns, entered the business premises of John Corry, a contractor who was engaged in repair work for the RUC. They fired a number of shots at Corry who died instantly.

In a statement claiming responsibility for the attack the IRA said:

"The target of the attack in Portadown had been carrying out repair work to RUC vehicles. He was targeted as part of our on-going policy against those who actively assist the crown forces in maintaining or carrying out their repression of our community."

"As has been pointed out in previous statements, those who engage in contract or supply work for the crown forces are an essential element in the British war machine and cannot expect to carry on their activities with impunity. They work for large material gain at the expense of our people who suffer at the hands of the crown forces."

FIANNA FAIL BOWS TO PRESSURE

THE REFUSAL of the Fianna Fail government to serve British extradition warrants on Fr Paddy Ryan represents a victory for the campaign against extradition. It was a decision taken by the Haughey administration under severe political pressure against the handover of the priest and provoked another public outcry from the British government.

But let there be no illusions about it. In no way did this decision represent even a temporary reversal of the Dublin government's willingness to co-operate with the British. Rather did it reflect its political opportunism and the real tangle it has found itself in on this major issue of policy in relation to the national question.

The 26-County Attorney-General John Murray announced on Tuesday, December 13th, that he had advised the Garda commissioner not to endorse the British warrants. He gave as the principal reasons the coverage of the Ryan case in the British media and the House of Commons where assertions of Ryan's guilt were repeatedly made. The lengthy statement issued by Murray concluded that in such circumstances the Tipperary priest could not get a fair trial before a British jury.

NO CASE

Significantly, however, Murray's statement said that in respect of two of the four British warrants Fr Ryan did have a case to answer before a court. The Fianna Fail government through the Attorney-General thus left the door open for the British to use the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act to have the cleric tried before the Special Court in Green Street.

On political instructions from the Fianna Fail cabinet Murray clearly went beyond what he was empowered to do under the 1987 Extradition (Amendment) Act. In the document he issued he pointed out that under this act (the so-called safeguards) he is required to see that there is a clear intention to prosecute a requested extraditee, based on a sufficiency of evidence, before he can allow a warrant to be endorsed. But then he explained that in the Ryan case he was going beyond this brief to examine the wider issues in the case under what he claimed were his constitutional powers.

BIG HEADACHE

Opposition parties in Leinster House



● The press conference called by the Father Ryan Committee on Thursday, December 13th

were quick to criticise Murray and the Fianna Fail cabinet for this unprecedented step. They wanted these issues dealt with by the courts. What the Ryan row has made crystal clear of course is that decisions on political extradition cases are for the 26-County government. That is the biggest headache for Fianna Fail. They will now find it much harder to hide behind the courts or indeed the Attorney-General, for few can believe that he took the decision on his own.

Already the exercises in damage limitation have begun. They started in Murray's statement when he said he "expects and hopes that the case will remain a unique one and that the particular circumstances that required him to arrive at this decision will not be repeated. The process of extradition is, and remains part of the law of the State. It has and will continue to be used." He went on to invite the British to use the CLJA and government sources in Dublin on Tuesday night were saying Ryan was likely to be prosecuted under that act in the New Year. The Ryan saga is far from over.

Responding to the extradition refusal the Irish Anti-Extradition Committee said:

"The government should now follow its decision to its logical conclusion and, recognising that no Irish person charged with alleged political offences can get a fair trial in British jurisdiction, should stop political extraditions.

"They should now release the four prisoners held in Portlaoise Prison on British extradition warrants — Paul Kane, Jim Clarke, Dermot Finucane and Owen Carron."

At a press conference called by the Father Ryan Committee on Tuesday, a statement from the County Tipperary priest welcomed the decision not to extradite him to Britain. Father Ryan said that the decision represented a victory for all those fighting extradition, and thanked everyone who is involved in that struggle.

SUPPORT

"The support that I drew from up and down this country," the statement continued, "is to me a clear indication that the vote in Leinster House to continue with the Extradition Act is against the wishes of the majority of Irish people."

He added that the prisoners in Portlaoise

who faced extradition had his full support and that he wanted them released immediately. Being a priest had no doubt helped him to fight extradition, he said, but it was the bedrock of opposition in this country to handing over political prisoners to Britain that won the day.

HUNGER-STRIKE

And he vowed that if Fianna Fail made any attempt to arrest him under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act that he would resume his hunger and thirst strike. He would not tolerate a government led by Charles Haughey acting on behalf of the British by arresting him.

Father Ryan's solicitor Elio Malocco told journalists that there was "not a shred" of evidence against his client. He had been given a total of 168 pages by the British that was supposed to contain evidence. Instead it was "168 pages of paper".

"You might as well say that anyone with a bag of nails or a pound of sugar in their apartment should be charged — that's how bad it is!" he explained.

Joe Ryan, Father Ryan's brother, urged the British journalists to expose Mrs Thatcher's role in Ireland. He said that if the people of Britain knew what was going on here they would have only one message for her: get out of Ireland.

Both he and Elio Malocco called on the Dublin government to "come clean" now about Father Ryan, and guarantee in public that there would be no charges under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act.

CORK MEETING

Over 200 people attended an anti-extradition meeting in Cork's Connolly Hall, the city's ITGWU headquarters on Tuesday night which was chaired by Brendan O'Neill of Cork Trades Council, Senator Brendan Ryan roundly condemned government behaviour on the issue saying that it reminded him of the well-known republican song "Take it down from the mast, Irish traitors".

Brendan O'Neill reminded the audience of British government "terrorism" in depriving people of justice, jobs and decent housing. Fr Des Wilson called on people to "say no to Thatcher" on extradition and noted the Fianna Fail government's rejection of the extradition warrants against Fr Patrick Ryan on the grounds that press prejudice would prevent him getting a fair trial. Instead they suggested he should be tried in a Dublin court. "But we still have the same newspapers in this country," he said.

BRITS RUC PLANS UNCOVERED

DERRY SINN FEIN has acquired a confidential British government document which shows that the RUC intends to extend the barriers around its already heavily-fortified Strand Road Barracks by requisitioning two adjacent properties.

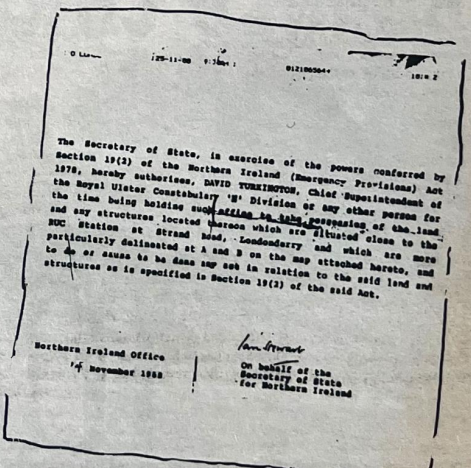
The document, signed by Ian Stewart, deputy to Direct Ruler Tom King, authorises RUC chief

superintendent, David Turkington, through Section 19(2) of the Emergency Powers Act to "take possession of the land and any structures located" on three properties on either side of a security barrier across the Strand Road. These include Hill's, a retail shop, the Clarendon Bar, a well-known Derry landmark, and a derelict site.

A map included with the document clearly shows the three buildings, marked by A, B and C and demonstrates that by seizing these properties, the RUC will greatly increase its stronghold over Derry city centre. Since June of this year when the RUC erected the Strand Road barrier, the area within it has been used as an extension of the barracks. The IRA has declared it a military zone and there has been a large public outcry, backed up by street protests against the new barrier.

This revelation provoked an angry response from Derry Sinn Fein Councillor Hugh Brady:

"This document bears all the hallmarks of a police state. Despite the fact that it was signed three weeks ago, the people of Derry have not been informed of the RUC's latest move to entrench their position at Strand Road. The document is further proof of the efforts by that sectarian and discredited force to control the lives of people and the media."



BELGIUM REBUFFS BRITS AGAIN

BY BRENDAN KERR

World War became, in the words of Thatcherite MP Ivor Stanbrook, "spineless little Belgium (which) doesn't have the guts to do the necessary thing".

Morrison's visit was at the invitation of an Irish solidarity group to promote Sinn Fein's *Scenario for Peace*.

BARRED FROM BRITAIN

The EEC election candidate, who polled 90,000 votes in 1984, is barred from Britain. This and the fact that British arrogance over the Fr Ryan affair has raised the issue of Ireland in the public eye further angered London. Morrison accused the British government of being afraid of the Sinn Fein message challenging its virtual monopoly of the view abroad about what is happening in the Six Counties.

As he left Dublin Airport on Monday afternoon, the Sinn Fein leader said that the call by Home

A BRITISH BID TO BLOCK a four-day speaking tour of Belgium by Sinn Fein's national director of publicity, Danny Morrison, failed this week.

Media interest in the visit of the 35-year-old Belfast republican was heightened by the venom of Tory MPs trying to bully the Belgians into toeing the British line. When it became clear that the

Brussels authorities who had refused to extradite Fr Paddy Ryan were again not going to do as they were told and ban Morrison, the nation dubbed "gallant little Belgium" by the British in the First



● Danny Morrison, pictured at Dublin Airport, on his way to Belgium

Secretary Douglas Hurd for him to meet myself and to be barred from Belgium was Gerry Adams in West Belfast in "hypocrisy". Jogging the memory February 1978 but not for the of the former Tory backbencher, Belgian people to meet me in Morrison suggested: "Perhaps Mr 1988 to debate the way forward Hurd can explain why it was to peace in Ireland."

HUMAN SHIELD FOR UDR

PEOPLE LIVING on a Cookstown housing estate are being set up as a human shield by the UDR to defend the perimeter of its expanding military base in the town.

Tenants in the Rathmore Court area say they'll have to put their homes on the market and sell them below their value if the UDR insists on placing their families at risk by using them as front-line protection against IRA mortar attacks.

The County Tyrone tenants are demanding the removal of the military post which sits on a busy intersection of Cookstown's main street. Any financial losses incurred by the enforced sale of homes will be made good by legal action against the British Minister of Defence.

HIDING

Local people have angrily rejected claims by loyalist politicians that they are merely engaged in a "publicity stunt". One of them told *AP/RN*:

"The UDR is obviously trying to hide for safety behind our homes and children. They're fully aware of what they're doing - putting us in the firing line as hostages against IRA attacks."



● Rathmore Court, Cookstown

BANNED CHRISTMAS SIGN GOES UP



● Mairead O Muilleoir, who helped to put up the banned Christmas greeting on top of Andersonstown Leisure Centre

IRISH language enthusiasts in West Belfast have gone ahead and placed an Irish language sign on top of Andersonstown Leisure Centre despite a decision by the unionist-dominated Leisure Services Committee at Belfast City Hall that permission for it was being refused on the grounds that Irish should not be publicly displayed.

The Christmas crib and accompanying sign wishing Beannachtai na Nollag has become a regular feature in recent years, but when Glenand youth training programme's request to put up the sign came before the Leisure Services Committee on Tuesday evening, December 13th, permission was refused following unionist objections.

The move to prohibit the sign being displayed was headed by DUP councillor, Robin Newton, who said it shouldn't go up unless English alone appeared on the sign. Sinn Fein Councillor Martin

O Muilleoir, one of those who helped put up the sign, on Wednesday afternoon, despite the City Hall dictat said:

"The unionists believe the Penal Laws are still in operation but they can rest assured that their monolingual dictates don't cut much ice with the people of Andersonstown."

O Muilleoir also commented: "One wonders where this decision by the mandarins of Belfast City Council leaves the unionist lord mayor who sports the emblem 'Erin go Brach' on the chain of office."

COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN AGAINST HOUSE RAIDS



● An example of the damage caused by recent crown force raids in West Belfast

ALMOST 100 community and tenants groups in West Belfast have banded together to form the Concerned Community Organisations in response to the massive upsurge in destructive raids being carried out against nationalist homes and properties by the crown forces.

The group have launched their campaign with the publication of a poster with information on the groups involved and including the recent history of raids and the damage caused.

A spokesperson for the group told *AP/RN* that they intend collating information on the raids and the damage to homes for a publicity campaign to heighten awareness of the reality of British occupation for those who suffer its effects. The posters and an additional information pack were circulated to concerned individuals and groups abroad.

Plans are being considered for the organisation of local protests against saturation raiding whenever and wherever it occurred. She continued: "People within our community have been subjected to massive incon-



venience and suffering as a result of these so-called security operations. We believe that it's time particularly in view of the increasing destructiveness of the raids, to make a united stand over this issue and we are hoping for full cooperation from local politicians and activists who are concerned about the repression of our community."

Face smashed by Plastic Bullet

BRITISH soldiers ran amok in Belfast on Saturday night, injuring seven people, one of whom needed a total of 17 stitches to his head after a series of plastic bullet attacks.

A group of teenagers were standing at the top of the White-rock Road shortly before midnight when a British army patrol arrived on the scene. After shouting abuse at the young people, the soldiers ordered them to clear the area.

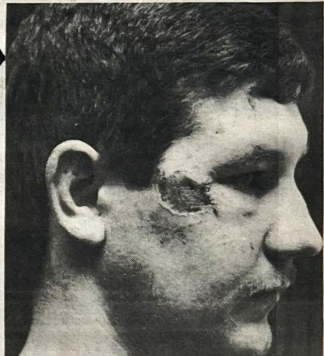
When the teenagers refused to move, the soldiers formed into a line and suddenly unleashed a barrage of plastic bullets. Several people were injured, one youth was hit on the head, and another in the stomach.

Most seriously injured was Philip Moore from Turf Lodge who had just walked round the corner into the line of fire. He was struck on the side of the

● Philip Moore, victim of a plastic bullet attack on Saturday, December 10th

face by a bullet and fell backward against a wall, sustaining a severe head-wound. He was later given seven stitches in the face and suffered severe bruising while his other wound required ten stitches.

Even as the injured were being taken to hospital, more British soldiers charged out from nearby Fort Jericho and again plastic bullets were fired into the group of young people. At least eight people were arrested.



SAVE ANDERSON HOUSE

THE CAMPAIGN to save the only general practitioner's maternity unit in the North West took to the streets of Derry last Saturday when a crowd of 200 marched to the Guildhall Square. Among the marchers against the threatened closure of Anderson House were local GPs, nurses, several women's groups from the city and concerned members of the public. Banners were carried by the local branch of NIPSA, Derry Trades Council, Derry Women's News Sheet, Magee Women's Action Group and the Socialist Workers Movement.

The procession took just 30 minutes to march from Duke Street in the Waterside to Derry City Centre, where it was addressed by Doctor Raymond McClean, Ann Donnelly of NUPE, Goretti Horgan of Derry Trades Council and local Sinn Féin Councillor Dodie McGuinness. Goretti Horgan described the struggle of nurses in England against cuts by the Tory government and how in many cases, the proposed cuts had been reversed.

"Those nurses have shown that it is possible to stop the Tories. The women of Derry do not have to passively accept the closure of

Anderson House. We can fight back and we can win".

CRADLE ATTACK

Ann Donnelly of NUPE said that we had all grown up believing that the welfare state was there to protect us from the cradle to the grave. "Some months ago the Tory government introduced cuts in services to the elderly. They are now attacking the cradle". She called on the WHSS Board members who had proposed the cuts to resign, especially the two city councillors who had been a party to the introduction of the cuts.

As a local GP who has experi-



● A section of the 200-strong crowd march to Guildhall Square, Derry, on Saturday

ence of the benefits of Anderson House, Doctor Raymond McClean blamed the proposal to axe it on the serious understaffing of the maternity ward in Altnagelvin Hospital. He said economy was being placed before human needs.

CONSEQUENCES

Sinn Féin Councillor: Dodie

McGuinness described the likely consequences for the women of Derry if Anderson House is closed. "We will no longer have the choice of having our children and recovering in a relaxed atmosphere. Altnagelvin will not be able to cope with the amount of pregnant women it will have to cater for. The result will be an increase in the number of women

discharged from hospital 48 hours after having their babies".

She thanked all those who had offered their support to the campaign and she appealed for a large turnout at a picket outside the Board meeting at 2.15pm on Thursday, December 14th, when the final decision on the future of Anderson House is to be decided.

BRITAIN'S SECTARIAN FRONTIER

THROUGHOUT its entire length, the border follows a crazy zig-zag path, cutting through communities, through farms and even through houses, but a vast network of border roads have kept these communities just about alive for the 67 years since partition. Now the British army is strangling the border areas with the help of the Fianna Fail government.

With arrogance, and at extraordinary cost, large military operations have been mounted in Fermanagh, Cavan and Monaghan to close off the narrow country roads on which local people depend to sell their produce, to see their relatives or to go to work. These operations have a devastating effect on towns like Swanlinbar, County Cavan or Clones, County Monaghan. Local politicians condemn the road closures, but each operation is conducted with the full knowledge and complete co-operation of the Dublin government.

Farmers with land on both sides of the border often have to travel enormous distances because of these closures.

Five weeks ago the Cornagran Road which connects Swanlinbar with the village of Kinawley in County Fermanagh and the county town of Enniskillen 12 miles away was entirely cut off and closed to traffic. For two days previously, a pair of British helicopters circled over the area collecting data and photographing the local people. Then, early one morning, up to a hundred British soldiers moved in with vast supplies of concrete, digging equipment, girders and cranes.

BARRIERS

The narrow road, little more than a boroen, was blocked at Stumpy Hill in three places with metal barriers filled with concrete. Girders were placed into the concrete before it set and then the concrete-and-metal structures were buried into deep holes in the ground so that the girders stuck out underneath the earth, making it impossible for bulldozers to move them. Each barrier is ten feet long and four feet high. In two places the barriers are two abreast, but at the third, a total of seven barriers have been mounted. Then the proud architects autographed their work. The words "3rd Queen's 88" are engraved in footprints on a pile of concrete at the Northern side of the barriers. One SW Pocock and his colleagues Reno, Pot, Brit and Bones also left their crude signatures on the work.

GARDA COLLABORATION

During the action, the Southern side of the border was saturated by 26-County soldiers and by members of the Garda Spe-



●Aghalane Bridge, blown up by loyalists in 1973 in their attempt to 'secure' the border and cut off all contact with the 26 Counties

cial Branch who provided cover for the British soldiers. The cost of the entire operation was estimated by local people at around £100,000. But the Cornagran Road is only one of six which have been closed in a similar fashion by the British authorities in recent years and dozens of border towns can tell the same story.

Now the townspeople of Swanlinbar and people from surrounding townlands must pass through the British army checkpoint at Mullan on the main Enniskillen road before they can enter the Six Counties, facing delays of up to an hour on short journeys. Cars and lorries are forced to wait in long queues before being called on by a British soldier who examines each vehicle and its driver. On December 7th, the checkpoint was abruptly closed for 90 minutes during the day, causing enormous holdups.

Swanlinbar is part of the same parish as Kinawley on the other side of the border. People from Kinawley attend Mass there and are buried in the local cemetery. Each Sunday there are enormous queues at the Mullan checkpoint and funerals are frequently delayed with mourners suffering abuse from the soldiers.

NATURAL HINTERLAND

Local people angrily dismiss British army claims that their roads are being closed for 'security reasons'. "If people want to cross the border to attack the British forces, they'll do so anyway, whether the roads are open or closed,"

says Sinn Féin spokesperson Dessie Mac Manus of Swanlinbar. "The closures are designed to shore up the border and to crush our community. Eighty per cent of our natural hinterland has been cut off in the last year."

By closing the roads the crown forces are following the demands of loyalist bigots whose object is to cut off all contact with the 26 Counties, at whatever cost to the people who live there. Under the Hillsborough Agreement, this sectarian collaboration has heightened.

In 1973 Aghalane Bridge was blown up by a group of loyalists from Brookeborough in County Fermanagh. The bridge over the Woodford river connected the nearby town of Belturbet, County Cavan with Enniskillen and with most of Donegal. Its destruction was the death-knell for many industries in the town.

BERLIN WALL

In the last ten years the British army had taken over from the loyalists in 'securing' the border in this manner. Under the Hillsborough Deal, this destruction had increased as the British, with their Dublin colleagues, seek to mollify politicians such as Ian Paisley who demand that the border is turned into a sort of Berlin Wall. Now there are only three roads between Counties Cavan and Fermanagh, each complete with checkpoint, delays and harassment.

Local Fianna Fail representatives respond with extraordinary hypocrisy. They roundly condemn these actions which

could not take place without the complicity of the Fianna Fail government in Dublin.

Without assistance from their representatives and facing a virtual news-boycott by the establishment media in Dublin, local people have had to depend on themselves in fighting for their communities. Again and again barriers like the ones at Stumpy Hill have been moved, only to be replaced in ever-more-expensive actions by the British forces.

LOCAL REACTION

The Cornagran Road was first closed in 1972 and was re-opened and closed again on two separate occasions. In 1974 large craters were blown in the road by the British Army but in May 1988 the craters were filled in by local people.

Since then it has once again been closed, re-opened and five weeks ago the largest-ever barrier was erected. The nearby Govies Road, an alternative route into Kinawley for tractor traffic, has also been recently blocked off, leaving an extraordinary collection of barriers around a shallow Fermanagh stream.

An even more vindictive action was taken on Monday morning when the British forces closed the Magheraveely Roads which connects Clones, County Monaghan with Lisnaskea in Fermanagh. This road already had a British army checkpoint! Now Magheraveely can boast of having a dead-end road with a British checkpoint on it — an appropriate symbol for Britain's sectarian frontier.

COOLOCK CHILDREN STILL AT RISK

A DELEGATION from the Worried Parents Committee in Coolock, who have been fighting to get a safe crossing for their children on the Darndale Link Road, were not allowed into a meeting of Dublin's Traffic Committee on Monday December 12th. The committee were deciding on where traffic lights and a crossing would be situated on the dangerous road.

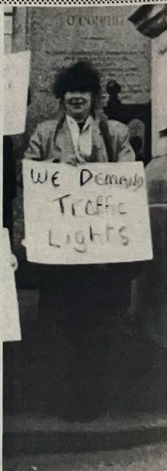
Although the campaign to get a crossing has been successful, June Daly from the committee pointed out that the Traffic Committee's decision to site the crossing near factories and by a new shopping centre means that children are still at risk. The Coolock parents wanted the crossing near the schools in the area, where children cross the road.

A statement that there had been no deaths on the road, allegedly made at the Traffic Committee meeting, was angrily refuted by June Daly and the other parents. Five children have died on this particular stretch of road, they said, including June Daly's eight

year-old son who was knocked down and killed two years ago. Again, a 12 year-old child was knocked down and injured only last Thursday.

June Daly is also fighting for the right to know the outcome of the Garda report on the accident that killed her son. She was not informed about the date of a court case, nor of its outcome, and was only told that the driver had been prosecuted for a driving offence.

The parents committee have been blocking the Darndale Link Road every Friday between 3pm and 4pm to highlight their campaign.



John Joe— tribute to an unbreakable Fenian



● John Joe McGill speaking at an Easter commemoration in Kerry in 1985

WHEN the coffin of John Joe McGill stopped outside his house in the Main Street of Ballinamore the huge cortege fell silent. Many among the crowd of thousands who filled the little town remembered the welcome they had received there from John Joe and Bridie, and for every one that recalled that welcome there was a fond memory of the man they had come to bury.

It was one of the biggest funerals Leitrim had ever seen. From every part of that county and from every corner of Ireland they came, young and old, men and women who knew him when as scarcely more than a boy he joined the ranks of Ogligh na hEireann, men who shared jails and prison camps with him, republicans who were with him among the dedicated few who rebuilt the shattered Republican Movement at the end of the '40s, comrades who soldiered with him, activists who campaigned with him in every decade since the 1930s, and the younger generation who knew him in later years and who took strength from his faith in their future.

They walked behind his coffin with the people of Leitrim for whom John Joe's republicanism was expressed in his constant concern and activity on their behalf as their elected representative.

There was a large attendance at the removal to the church in Ballinamore on Friday evening, December 9th. John Joe had died the previous day after a long illness which he fought with courage to the end. News of his death touched people all over Ireland, in Britain, the United States and further afield, friends and republican comrades who knew him everywhere and many more than were able to attend his funeral.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

His outstanding personal qualities were summed up by Fr Dan Gallogly at his funeral mass on Saturday. He described his simplicity and straightforwardness with friend and foe alike and his lack of bitterness towards anyone. Comparing him to Tom Clarke, the 1916 leader, he said he was "an unbroken and unbreakable Fenian". Often misunderstood and misrepresented he was called a fool by some, but, said the priest quoting from Pearse's poem *The Fool*, "What if the dream come true and millions unborn shall

dwell in the house that I shaped in my heart?"

Fr Gallogly told the mourners that John Joe had heard from him once that a man had personal problems, a man who was no friend of McGill's and in whose trouble he could have been expected to take pleasure: "one who held the garments for those who stoned him" was how the priest described him. But John Joe's comment was "I never like to see any poor devil in trouble, no matter who he is or what he is."

WORDS OF TRIBUTE

Fr Gallogly's words of tribute were warmly applauded by the packed congregation.

After the funeral mass John Joe's coffin was carried outside where a huge crowd waited to follow it the short distance out from Ballinamore to the hillside cemetery of Oughteragh. Draped in the Tricolour and carried in relays by his family and comrades the coffin was led by a lone piper as the cortege numbering up to 3,000 people slowly wound its way up to the graveyard. There under a mild December sky overlooking the hilly Leitrim landscape John Joe was taken to his final resting-place.

When the prayers had been said John Joe's fellow Sinn Féin Councillor Mel Farrell chaired the graveside ceremony. He paid his own tribute when he said:



● A piper leads the funeral cortege to Oughteragh cemetery

"He was an unconquered and an unconquerable republican. He gave a life of service to the republican cause which brought suffering, abuse and sometimes failure. His association with the Republican Movement was unique because it bridged the period from the veterans of the Tan and Civil wars to the

present-day struggle. He never wished to become a father figure but merely to play his part well.

DEDICATION

"There are people here who knew him from boyhood, people who shared jail and concentration camp North and South with

him. I only know him a few short years as a fellow county councillor. I can only say he treated me like a son, always willing to advise and assist, never once trying to dictate. As a county councillor, while never once compromising his republican principles, he rose above petty politics and was always prepared to support any measure that would help his native county or his fellow human beings. His sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness and dedication won him deep respect even from those who took opposing political views."

There were scores of wreaths from many groups and individuals and among those formally laid were wreaths from his family, General Headquarters Ogligh na hEireann, the Volunteers of the Northern Command and Ogligh na hEireann, the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle and the county manager and staff of Leitrim County Council.

After Gerry Adams had delivered the oration the ceremony ended with the piper playing a lament, *The West's Awake*, and *Amhrán na bhFiann*. As the strains of the National Anthem faded and the mourners made their way from the graveyard one smiling figure remained very much in people's minds that day, as he did throughout his lifetime for all who knew him. John Joe McGill was not gone.



● (Above and top) Comrades, friends and constituents pay their final respects to John Joe McGill

FUNERAL ORATION OF SINN FÉIN PRESIDENT GERRY ADAMS AT



HE WAS OF THE PEOPLE AND HE WAS WITH THE PEOPLE

TAIMID BRONACH ar an la seo mar fuair John Joe bas cupla la o shin agus ar fud na tire seo, sna Stait Aontaithe agus sa Bhreatain, i bpriosuin na Sasanach beidh daoine cruinnithe mar sinne ag deanamh cuimhneachan ar John Joe.

Friends and comrades, If we lived in a normal country, if we lived in a normal society, the passing of John Joe, of a unique person like John Joe, would be marked with tributes in the media and with mention of his life, of his suffering and of his struggle.

But instead, because of the situation we live in, we gather here as the rain comes down in John Joe's lovely Leitrim and we the ordinary plair people pay homage. I'm sure if John Joe had a choice he would choose you by his graveside, he would choose you to pay him homage.

My words are inadequate to describe John Joe and the effect he had on all who knew him. His death represents a triple loss — to his family, to the wider republican family and to County Leitrim. And to the McGirl family from the rest of us, on behalf of the Arc Chomhairle of Sinn Féin, on behalf of the Republican Movement, on behalf of republican prisoners in this country, in the

United States and throughout Britain and from all of you gathered here I extend our deepest sorrow on John Joe's death to Liam, to Aine, to Cait, to Fearghal and to Nuala and to the rest of the family circle, to his brothers, his sister and his grandchildren.

GREATEST LOSS

Mrs McGirl of course bears the greatest personal loss of all. It is said that in front of every great woman there is a great man and if John Joe was in front of Bridie McGirl that was only because she chose the background. In every other sense she stood side by side with him, taking the hard knocks along with victories through a marriage that was frequently interrupted by long absences, by raids and arrests.

She knew John Joe better than any of the rest of us. She bore his children, she reared them, she kept home, she kept John Joe and she kept every one of us who ever had the good fortune to visit her kitchen. None of us ever came

out of Mrs McGirl's hungry and no republican ever met Bridie McGirl without being glad that they had done so.

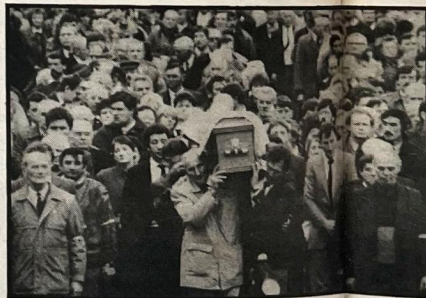
And so it is to her that I extend our most heartfelt sorrow at her loss. Without her calm dignity, without her constant support over all the years John Joe McGirl would not have been able to play the prominent role he played in the republican struggle. Taimid bronach go bhfuil se marbh agus ta ar mbron lena bhean cheile agus lena bpaisti.

John Joe's adult life is a history of the republican struggle for the last 50 years. During that period since he first joined the IRA at the age of 16 John Joe was to be involved with all the great republican efforts to organise, and to mobilise for national and social justice on this island. He was a unique man. He was single-minded but he was reasonable. He was tough but he was gentle. He touched so many of us, so many of my generation, that perhaps of all his own generation he was one of that very select few who was chosen and accepted on a basis of mutual respect by the younger republicans as one of our leaders.

I first met him over 20 years ago when I came to Ballinamore to spend a weekend camping and hiking. It was John Joe that brought me first to Sliabh an Iarainn, to Lough Allen, to Drumshanbo and in the middle of it to a coal-miners' meeting at Arigna. It was the first of scores of visits I was to make to Leitrim and since then through the 20 years of struggle which started so soon afterwards in the North I have always appreciated my relationship with him. Although 30 years older than me I consider him my friend. He treated me and other comrades of my age as equals. He introduced us to Leitrim and to the wonderful, welcoming, hidden Ireland which is found in this country.

UNIQUE LIFE

In speaking at the gravesides of republican comrades in the past I have often stressed that we should not mystify nor give that mystical status which would overcome their humanity because at times their humanity is lost in the myth. It is difficult in John Joe's case because of his uniqueness, because his very humanity and his toler-



● Relatives and comrades carry John Joe's coffin to Oughteragh Cemetery

ance was unique and the centrality and duration of his involvement in active republicanism was also unique.

So it is difficult in describing his republican involvement not to leave oneself open to building myths. But John Joe's life was no myth. He learned his toughness in the Glass House in the Curragh Camp in the 1940s. There, he and a few others were beaten on a daily basis by their captors who tried in vain to subdue their spirit and they failed.

On release after the Second World War John Joe was back again organising, and back in prison again, and back organ-

ising again, always on the road to freedom, always encouraging, cajoling, persuading, occasionally directing with a cross word, always a key figure in the campaigns of his day. In his time he served as Chief of Staff of Oglagh na hEireann and on the Arm's Council of that organisation. He also served as TD for Sligo Leitrim and topped the poll in this constituency in 1957 when some of us were mere children.

When, as little more than children, and with childish innocence we in the North went out in peaceful protest for our civil rights John Joe

MS AT THE GRAVESIDE OF JOHN JOE MCGIRL

was one of those who made a new contribution to the republican struggle. John Joe McGirl in 1969 did not stand idly by. He threw his entire energies, he threw his weight, he threw his considerable reputation, he threw all his body and soul into helping the people of the Six Counties.

He has always been with the activists. He was with the activists at the time of his death. So it was hardly surprising that 1969 saw him in the thick of the reorganisation of the Republican Movement at that time.

FUTURE MATTERED MOST

He was never content merely to preserve the past or to commemorate past deeds. The past was important to him but the future was what mattered most. He had foresight and he had moral courage as well as physical courage. He said his piece without malice, he considered the options, he listened to others and he took his own decision.

In Belfast too he arrived in 1974. He was arrested. He always blamed Seamus Twomey for his arrest. He was initially mistaken for Seamus and for Seamus's, as he called it, 'oul' grey head. He forgot his own grey head. But when it was discovered by the British that it was John Joe McGirl and not Seamus Twomey that they had, John Joe went to Long Kesh.

And the rest of us, poor fools, we felt sorry for him — 'Poor ould John Joe'. Later on I learned that it was he who felt sorry for us because he had been down that road before, there were no surprises for him.

And he was there on the night we burned the camp and on that night he was injured with a rubber bullet. And amidst all the commotion, amidst the circumstances of that night, with flames arising as Long Kesh burned to the ground, as gas and rubber bullets blasted, as flames licked around the watch-towers I made my way to John Joe McGirl and asked him was he alright. And I've always remembered this. He said:

'I'm alright as long as you people are alright.'

Then again at John McDonnell's funeral when the British army and RUC attacked the cortege John Joe was there also. He was of the people and he was with the people.

He loved County Leitrim but he loved all the Irish people — Protestant and Catholic, North and South, East and West. He loved Ballinamore. He served as a councillor in this county for the last 20 years. Last night Canon McManus paid fitting tribute to John Joe's pioneering work in education in this county, in helping the needy, in fighting for the old age pensioners, in the development of Ballinamore, in cultural activities, in the county's library service and



in all facets and all aspects of community life.

John Joe believed that the struggle was where he was. John Joe believed that the struggle was where the republican was. He believed that it should be fought on a 32-County basis and that the end of British rule in our country was part of a greater struggle for an end to poverty and indignity and materialism and for the beginning of peace and justice and equality and freedom.

John Joe's life parallels the life of this state and the partition of this country. Many people have come to me and others who are involved in the leadership of republican struggle, they came to us last night, political opponents of John Joe's, elected representatives from other parties. They said that he was a good man and a decent man and he was a great loss. And John Joe of course was all of these things.

'TERRORIST'

He was all of the things that his opponents and friends respected him for. He was a decent man and he was a good man and he was an honest man and because of that he was also a subversive, he was what our opponents would call a terrorist.

Yes, John Joe was vilified, John Joe was censored because

John Joe worked and he conspired and he planned to end partition in this country.

John Joe's reasonableness was based on the reasoned argument that it is wrong that the neighbouring island should



● GERRY ADAMS

claim jurisdiction over a part of this country. That was reasonable for John Joe, a simple logical fact of life.

John Joe's reasonableness was that when you asked that government to leave, when you said 'Please go, leave us here for self-government' John Joe believed that it was reasonable that we should be free. He believed that it was reasonable that the North and South should come together in self-government. And when that government refused to leave, and when that government, in trying to protect its own interest, put an army of occupa-

tion in Six Counties of this country John Joe also believed that it was reasonable to meet force with force.

John Joe McGirl wanted peace. We all want peace. We have spent our adult lives, many of us. We have stood at many gravesides like this of men and women who gave their entire lives, some much younger than John Joe, in the cause of peace.

So let us not go from here unmindful of the fact that John Joe's life, above and beyond everything else, was based on the tenet and based upon the foundation that Ireland had the right to be free and that Ireland unfree would never be at peace.

He was never engaged in the politics of opportunism. He was never interested in place-seeking, he was never involved in career-building. He never believed in the rhetoric of republicanism. He believed in the reality of republicanism. And so it was that those who had imprisoned him in the past, those who had vilified him when alive, have discovered that they can't defeat him and in time they have learned to respect him.

The week before he died he phoned me in Belfast. He mentioned Paddy Ryan. He said 'Isn't Fr Paddy Ryan doing a great job. Isn't the Fianna Fail government in a bit

of a pickle. Isn't it a pity the rest of the extradiates weren't priests.'

Even through his long sickness he was in solidarity with struggle, struggle in County Leitrim and struggle throughout Ireland.

I have a special word to say to County Leitrim republicans. This is the end of an era. This is the end of something unique but it must also be the beginning of a new era. And that's how John Joe would want it.

He wouldn't want you to go away and say 'Things will never be the same again. How can we do without John Joe?' You know, you people who worked with him and knew him all his life, you know what he would say to you all. He would say 'get on with the work.' He would say 'Bring Leitrim on.' He would say 'Let's continue the struggle in this county as I have continued it right through my entire life.'

John Joe also made a unique contribution to the development of Sinn Féin and my only regret is that he did not live to see our country free and united. It was my honour to know him.

I have found this oration a trying experience, not only because John Joe asked that I give it — and I hope I have done him justice — but because I was overwhelmed at the prospect of summing his life up and of giving tribute to him and his contributions in a few words. Fr Dan this morning said a lot of what I want to say and I have also to say that it was an edifying and a strange experience to hear praise and not denunciation of a republican.

GREAT INVINCIBLE

John Joe McGirl was an unrepentant Fenian. He was one of the great invincibles. In republican jargon one hears about a '30s man or a '40s man or a '50s man. John Joe was a man of the '30s and '40s and '50s and '60s and '70s and into this invincible generation of today, John Joe was all of that.

It is our job to finish the struggle which he epitomised.

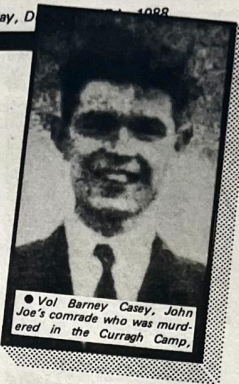
We have done here as in prisons throughout Ireland and in Britain and in the States wherever republican can gather they are gathering today to pay homage to John Joe McGirl. We have come and we should leave here rededicated to what John Joe stood for. Rededicated to ridding our country of all the causes of violence, of all the causes of conflict, of all the unreasonableness and we should pursue with John Joe's single-mindedness and his reasonableness the objective of a free and united people and country.

In conclusion I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank the McGirl family and John Joe for the privilege of speaking here today and I want to pass on again our condolences to the McGirl family and especially to Mrs McGirl.

It was our tribute to know John Joe in life. Let us now continue to know him and to stand by him in death.



● John Joe pictured in 1940 before his internment in the Curragh



● Vol Barney Casey, John Joe's comrade who was murdered in the Curragh Camp,

Seán Seosamh Mac Fhearghail 1921-1988

WHEN JOHN JOE MCGIRL died in his native Ballinamore, County Leitrim on December 8th, 1988, there ended a life of service to the cause of freedom which spanned five decades. He was vice-president of Sinn Féin when he died and, up until the last months when illness took its toll on him, he had played a full and active part in the development of the republican struggle in its final part of the long journey to national liberation and social equality to which he had given his lifelong commitment.

John Joe McGirl was born at Dromany, Aughnasheelin, County Leitrim, on March 25th 1921. It was the same year that Ireland was partitioned and County Leitrim was cut off from the neighbouring county of Fermanagh with which it had so many natural ties. Thereafter throughout John Joe's life and through the history of the Free State it went into decline and had the lowest population and biggest outflow of its young people of all the Irish counties.

Speaking in Fermanagh in 1963 John Joe referred to the effects of partition:

"They fought because they believed that only a free Ireland of 32 Counties could provide a living for all her sons and daughters and could be happy and prosperous. Partition rule has failed as much in Leitrim as in Fermanagh. The youth of Swanlinbar and the youth of Kinawley or Derrylin have met the same fate — two out of every five, at least, have had to emigrate to find work."

ARMY CONVENTION

It was to end all that that John Joe became a Volunteer in the Irish Republican Army in 1937 at the age of 16. In April 1938 he was a delegate at the IRA's General Army Convention which sanctioned a new armed campaign against British rule with bomb attacks on English cities. That same year he was emanded to Sligo Jail and sent to Mountjoy Prison in Dublin to complete his sentence.

With the IRA bombing campaign in England continuing and with the outbreak of the Second World War, de Valera's Fianna Fail government embarked on a policy of ruthless repression of republicans. Internment without trial was introduced and in June 1940 John Joe joined hundreds of his comrades in the Curragh Internment Camp in County Kildare. Conditions in the camp were appalling with the internees being forced to live in cold, wet huts with inadequate bedding and no furniture, in compounds that became muddy swamps in winter. Food was meagre and many prisoners suffered from dysentery.

It was to protest at these conditions that the internees set fire to several of the huts on the morning of December 14th 1940. John Joe was among the internees who took part in the protest and later received a sentence of 12 months from the Military Court. After the burning the men were herded at gunpoint by Free State soldiers onto open muddy ground in the compound and several shots were fired at them. They spent the next two nights crowded into the remaining huts.

On the morning of December 16th, the prisoners were waiting for the call to go to the cookhouse when a party of military police entered the camp. John Joe was among those who witnessed several of the Free State officers raise their revolvers and fire shots into the nearest group of internees to them. Two men



● With his eldest son Liam in 1955

were wounded in this completely unprovoked attack and one of them, Barney Casey, a young Volunteer from Longford, died shortly after from his wounds.

BEATINGS & TORTURE

John Joe served 12 months in Mountjoy and during his transfer from the Curragh was examined by a military doctor who advised him to get examined by an outside doctor, such were his injuries from beatings he had received. While in the Curragh, John Joe was singled out for particularly brutal treatment.

He was held in the notorious Glass House where prisoners were regularly beaten up. They were forced to run the gauntlet by their military guards, one of whose favourite tortures was to make the prisoners lie on the ground and then they would march on their backs in hobnailed boots.

When John Joe was released from the Curragh in 1945 the Republican Movement was in complete disarray. The IRA had virtually ceased to exist as a functioning organisation after the harsh repression of the

war years, including internment, trials by military courts and executions by de Valera's Special Branch. Nevertheless a nucleus of released prisoners including John Joe got together to begin the uphill task of reorganisation.

A meeting was called for the Ardee Bar in Dublin on March 9th 1946. Cathal Goulding, who was later Chief of Staff of the so-called Official IRA (now the undercover wing of the Workers' Party) was tailed by the Special Branch as he made his way to the meeting. The 12 men present were all arrested and jailed, John Joe receiving a nine-month sentence for possession of incriminating documents.

REORGANISING IRA

Undaunted, John Joe finished his Mountjoy sentence and returned to throw himself into the task of rebuilding the Army. He played a central part in the reorganisation of the late '40s and early '50s and was a member of the Army Council of Oglaiha na hEireann which planned, prepared for and carried out the armed campaign in the Six Counties from 1956 to 1962. In 1958 he served as IRA Chief of Staff.

The intervention of Sinn Féin in the 1957 26-County general election proved successful, with four TDs being returned. John Joe McGirl topped the poll in Sligo-Leitrim with 7,007 votes. He was a prisoner in Mountjoy at the time, but in March he returned to Leitrim to a hero's welcome.

While the border campaign won initial public sympathy and electoral support for Sinn Féin, without a sustained political base North and South it wound down and the IRA eventually ordered a cease-fire in 1962. John Joe had been behind bars again when he was tried and convicted by the 26-County Military Court in 1961. That court had been set up by the then Fianna Fail Minister for Justice, one Charles J. Haughey. John Joe was jailed by the court for possession of a small amount of ammunition.

On release at Easter 1962 he again faced the task of re-assessing the campaign and taking the first steps in the long road ahead. The most immediate work was for the release of the remaining prisoners and it was characteristic of him that when he addressed the County Leitrim Easter commemoration two days after his release, he issued a call to action:

"We realise that the tasks before us are not small, but if they are tackled by enough people with sufficient will-power we will succeed. In God's name and in the name of our dead generations let us get on with the work."

ELECTIONS

John Joe himself was already hard at work as a public representative. He was elected to Leitrim County Council for the first time in July 1960. He lost his seat in the 1967 election, but in '74 was back again and served on Leitrim County Council until his death. He was chairperson of the council in 1980/'81. John Joe was involved in all



● The funeral cortege of John Joe McGirl

aspects of work for the community and was a member of the Leitrim VEC, the County Committee of Agriculture, the County Development Committee, the Library Committee, the Health Advisory Committee and the Ballinamore Old Age Pensioners Committee.

The end of the '60s saw the rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the North and another moment of decision for the Republican Movement. The backlash from the Orange state and the deployment of British troops on the streets created a national crisis but the then leadership of the IRA did not recognise it for what it was. They were committed to abandoning armed struggle and to reformist politics.

SINN FÉIN

In the heat of the crisis the inevitable split came in republican ranks. John Joe was at the IRA Convention which brought the division to a head and from which delegates walked out to form the Provisional Army Council and once again reorganise the Republican Movement. He was a member of the Caretaker Executive of Sinn Féin, formed after a section of the Sinn Féin leadership (now the leaders of the Workers' Party) attempted to railroad the Ard-Fheis into support for the reformist 'Official IRA'.

For the third time in his republican career John Joe was at the centre of the reorganisation of the Movement. He worked to defend the nationalist people who were under attack from loyalists and the British state and saw the Movement go on the offensive once again in an armed attempt to drive Britain out.

The repressive response from the British government was nothing new to John Joe, nor was the collaboration of the 26-County government and he was himself charged under the Offences Against The State Act and held in Mountjoy in early 1972.

LONG KESH

Two years later he travelled to Belfast to give the oration at the Easter commemoration and, after initially being mistaken for another leading republican, Seamus Twomey, was arrested and interned in Long Kesh. On October 15th the republican prisoners in the Cages set fire



strike and John Joe was at the centre still. He was one of the seven Sinn Féin candidates to contest the February 1982 general election on an abstentionist basis and with disappointing results as the H-Block vote was not maintained. As before, the lessons were not lost on John Joe. He continued his arduous work as a public representative and played a vital part in the political development of Sinn Féin in the 26 Counties.

At the 1986 Ard Fheis John Joe seconded the motion calling for the end of the abstentionist policy towards Leinster house. For him as for many older republicans it was a painful decision but he saw that it was necessary, as he told delegates, "to make changes if we are not going to hand down this struggle to another generation". He discounted any comparison with the 1969 departure of the Sticky leadership, pointing out that they "had abandoned Irish

freedom" whereas today "we have an Army which has been fighting for 16 years and will continue to fight until British rule is ended".

PASSIONATE & HEARTFELT

His contribution to that Ard Fheis was passionate and heartfelt and brought the delegates to their feet. Backing his words with action he was himself the Sinn Féin candidate in Sligo-Leitrim in the February '87 general election. Fifty years had passed since John Joe McGirl, the young man of 16, had joined the Republican Movement.

Bhí grá ar leith ag John Joe do chultúr agus teanga na hÉireann agus dhéan sé iad a chur chun cinn i rith a shaoil. Bhí stair agus cultúr ag lár-chroí a chreidiúnt agus spreag siad é chun a shaoil a chaitheamh ag troid ar son saoirse iomlán mhuintir ar dtíre. Beidh an bua mar thoradh ar a obair.



● John Joe and Bridie McGirl about 1961

NEW PHASE

A new phase of the struggle was opened up by the hunger-

BROADWATER FARM JAIL PICKET

THE Broadwater Farm Defence Committee organized a 200 strong picket outside Wormwood Scrubs Prison in West London on Sunday, December 11th.

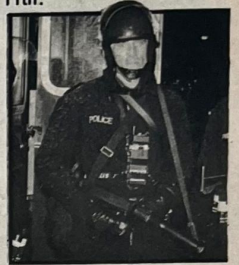
Several Irish campaigning organisations joined the picket, including the Irish in Britain Representation Group, the Troops Out Movement, Irish Prisoners Appeal and the London Women and Ireland Group. The picket was held on the eve of the appeal hearing of Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite, who were framed for the killing of a policeman during the revolt in Tottenham in North London in 1985.

Readers of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* will be more than familiar with the tactics used by the British state to terrorise and to impose a collective punishment on the republican community for its militant resistance to British rule. Since the first rebellions by inner city communities in Britain itself in 1981, the state has begun to turn the same terror tactics which it has developed over 20 years of occupation in the Six Counties against its own population.

ESTATE DEFENDED

In Tottenham, North London, in 1985, fierce fighting followed a police attempt to break-up a peaceful demonstration which was leaving the Broadwater Farm Estate to protest at the death of a black mother of the hands of Tottenham racist police. During the disturbance a policeman was killed. Despite an attack by hundreds of armed police with riot equipment the estate was successfully defended.

In the weeks after the revolt thousands of police were deployed in a military-style occupation of the Farm and surrounding areas. More than a quarter of all the homes on the estate were raided by squads of up to 50 armed police and there were hundreds of



arrests including whole families and children snatched from their classrooms. Those arrested were isolated for days on end, denied access to legal advice and threatened and abused by interrogating officers. Some were eventually forced to sign bogus confessions.

FORCED CONFESSIONS

Forty nine young men were eventually convicted on the basis of such "confessions" including Mark Braithwaite, Engin Raghip and Winston Silcott, who were sentenced to life in prison. Their last chance to get some semblance of justice from the British legal establishment came this month when a hearing will decide whether to grant them leave to appeal.

The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign called a mass picket of Wormwood Scrubs to mark the eve of the appeal hearing, and to demand the unconditional release of the three youths, who are all currently in the Scrubs, and all the Broadwater Farm youth. The pickets were addressed by many speakers including MPs Bernie Grant, Jeremy Corbyn and representatives of the Troops Out Movement and the Guildford Four campaign.

An occasional column about Britain from behind the lines

BEHIND THE LINES

BY
GEORGE
KING

"SOLUTIONS"

THREE TORY politicians have just offered their pet "solutions" to the "problem" Britain faces in Ireland. Senior politicians making serious policy statements about a serious matter should be taken seriously.

In fact, these solutions are extremely interesting only in that they illustrate once again the continuing stupidity and historical illiteracy of the average British MP when considering how to deal with what they still choose to call "the Irish crisis". There is a common link between all three: they are old ideas presented as new, they are designed to maintain the British presence, and they blithely conceal the colonial nature of the struggle.

The first was offered by Ivor Stanbrook, vice-chair-

person of the Tory MPs' Northern Ireland Committee, and supposedly therefore, a man who should know about things across the water. He wants to transport republicans in the Six Counties to the 26 Counties and re-draw the border to exclude those areas which are considered to be republican.

TASTY CARROT

The kind and helpful Mr Stanbrook even offered a tasty carrot to encourage republicans and IRA supporters to move by suggesting

there should be "generous resettlement grants".

He declared:

"The Queen has no need of unwilling subjects. Let those who wish to leave the UK do so. Then let the courageous British people of Northern Ireland live in the peace and security which they deserve, fully integrated with the UK, represented in British governments by British political parties."

One Labour MP quickly called this "absolute insanity... horrendous and ugly... with all the smell of the Final Solution." The fact that it is a half-baked idea is at one and the same time laughable and tragic. Can a senior MP in 1988, after all that has happened, with knowledge of Irish history, really think that a bit of new gerrymandering will sort everything out nicely?

BRUSHED ASIDE

As if that wasn't bad

enough, a day later we heard from the veteran backbencher, Julian Amery. His new idea - billed as "the other Ulster solution" - was, wait for it, full integration of the Six Counties into the UK. "No serious attempt has ever been made by ministers even to discuss the call for Integration," he wrote in *The Times*. "They and the press have simply brushed it aside."

Amery concedes that the province has become "a virtual colony governed directly from Whitehall by a secretary of state" and thinks this is undemocratic. All he proposes, however, is a constitutional acceptance by the 26 County government and the Unionists of the existing situation. The condescending Amery asserts that once the Six Counties has become integrated "the representatives of the two communities could then argue their differences in a House of Commons much more tolerant than Stormont ever was."

And then came the third idea from a very senior Tory indeed. The difference is that this idea will be put into action because it came from Tom King, the secretary of state.

He unveiled his latest "political" initiative which, as usual, is part of a security strategy, by announcing measures which will require local election candidates to sign a declaration renouncing violence and extending the period of disqualification from office for those convicted of what he likes to call terrorist offences.

Candidates will be expected to declare that they will not express support for, or even approval of, the IRA.

KING'S MEASURES

King said his measures were "a necessary and appropriate step" to show

that the British government would not tolerate those who "exploit the democratic system to further violent aims."

More Tory condescension again. Republicans do not tolerate the continual colonisation of Ireland. They do not believe in "democratic system" which partitioned their country to prevent the democracy of 32-County nation being asserted. Republicans do not have "violent aims". They are forced by the armed presence of foreign soldiers on their soil to take up arms.

The only exploiters of the democratic system are the British government who are taking this anti-democratic step because they cannot tolerate that fact that Sinn Féin candidates get elected in the Six Counties. But King's measures - like Stanbrook's and Amery's - will not succeed in "solving" Britain's Irish problem. They will, however, cause more suffering by delaying the inevitable course of history which points to the unification of Ireland.

Mála Poist

AP/RN, 58 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

BELOW we publish extracts from an open letter written by the Belfast-based Fair Employment Trust, which supports the MacBride Principles, to the US Ambassador in London, Charles H. Price II, who recently backed the British propaganda campaign against the principles.

Dear Mr Ambassador,

We note the comments about the MacBride Principles and Fair Employment in Northern Ireland, attributed to you in media reports of a Chamber of Commerce lunch in Belfast on 7 December, 1988.

If your remarks were accurately reported, it would appear that you have been gratuitously selective or ill-informed in

arriving at a judgement in this matter, and in actively associating your office with the policies being pursued by English politicians serving rotational appointments as government ministers in this part of Ireland.

You should be aware that a system of structured and pervasive job discrimination has been engineered and sustained by successive provincial administrations since Ireland was partitioned by the English parliament. The declared objective of this policy was to secure the perpetual domination of one section of the community over the other, to thereby resist any effort, however peaceful and non-violent, to alter the status quo thus created.

English politicians managed this racist and sectarian policy vicariously until 1972 when they assumed direct personal control of the administration, in response to world outrage at the massacre of civilian demonstrators in Derry by their airborne combat troops.

Since then, they have proclaimed ad nauseam their unshakable determination to uphold the system of economic apartheid which has deprived the Catholic nationalist working class community of job opportunity and economic developmental potential for generations.

Their first essay in legislation since 1920 (the anti-discrimination provisions of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act of 1973), was substantially repealed three years later by the Fair Employment Act, 1976. From this Act emerged the lethargic political cosmetic which was paraded internationally as the solution to anti-Catholic discrimination, until its politically designed futility and ineffectiveness was challenged by the launching of the MacBride Principles in November, 1984.

As a direct result of the promulgation of the MacBride Principles, English politicians have been protesting their good intentions and promising

to do good things with ever increasing frequency and vigour. Regrettably, after four years, their proclamations have not yet been translated into any form of concrete action.

Nothing has happened since Messrs Boyson and Hurd declared in May/June 1985 that the level of Catholic disadvantage and inequality was unacceptable, and promised to "review" their anti-discrimination laws - again!

It has, however, been reliably reported in local media, that during the same period, English politicians have authorised the expenditure in the USA of £15 million (\$27 million) from the provincial budget, to fund a diplomatic propaganda offensive against US citizens seeking through the MacBride Principles programme to promote peaceful, non-violent solutions to the colonial military conflict in Ireland.

If these reports are accurate, English politicians would appear to have directed into a propaganda campaign in your country the equivalent of 22.5% of the \$120 million provided by the US Government to promote peace, reconciliation, and job creation within the most disadvantaged areas of North East Ireland.

It can therefore be conclu-

ded that US taxpayers have been unwittingly funding a propaganda offensive against the constitutional freedoms which they have sought to exercise within their own state legislatures. Is it not your duty, Mr Ambassador, to enquire why \$27 million has not been devoted to anti-discrimination measures in Northern Ireland?

Specifically, you should demand that the promised anti-discrimination legislation, which has been awaited since May 1985, should include the following:

1. Clearly defined and specific provisions for effective affirmative action programmes written into the primary legislation, in order to redress the appalling legacy of historical Catholic nationalist disadvantage, created by generations of structured and pervasive discrimination.
2. The institution of definitive goals and timetables for the achievement of community-balanced workforces, with exemplary penalties for non-compliance written into the primary legislation.
3. The inclusion of all state and semi-state agencies and public bodies as parties to the legislation, with the same defined responsibilities and penalties as will attach to private sector employers.

4. Powerful and definitive contract compliance sanctions to be applied to all contractors and sub-contractors benefitting from publicly-funded contracts or grant-aid from any sector of the public service or statutory bodies.

5. Effective and powerful independent machinery for the investigation of individual complaints with exemplary penalties to be levied upon defaulting employers, and adequate financial and legal provisions to support individual complainants in securing their legal entitlements.

6. The total abolition of the flaccid political cosmetic agency which has served the interests of English politicians since 1976, and its replacement by a manifestly-independent and effective enforcement and monitoring body, equipped with the financial, professional and legislative services necessary to secure meaningful advancement in equality of economic opportunity and the elimination of economic apartheid.

Your sincerely,
Oliver Kearney
Executive Secretary
Fair Employment Trust
(N. Ireland)

STAIR MICHRUINN

A Chairde,

Chuir sé Ionadh orm go raibh blur leimheas ar *Green* against *Green: the Irish Civil War* le Michael Hopkinson chomh neodradh san, is droch-leabhar é; droch-stair atá ann; níl na foinsí uilig atá ar fáil úsáidte; níl na foinsí a úsáidtear i gceart i gconair; ní luait-ear oiread agus foinsé amháin i nGaeilge srl. srl.

Anuas ar sin cumann sé út "Southern Ireland" mar a raibh Ogligh na hEireann i 1913 agus 1914; na raibh tuairim faoin Chéad Chogadh Dhomanda; agus laistigh da limistéar (26 Counties áit eile) na troideadh Cogadh na Saoirse. Bhfuil níl mó samplaí de dhíth?

P. O Snodaigh,
Baile Atha Cliath.

STOP EXTRADITION

A Chairde,

"Stop Extradition!": that was the plea of all patriotic Irish people last year. It is still their plea. But the cowardly deed was done. Robert



Russell has been extradited to the British. How many more times will the Dublin government repeat this shameful act? Charlie Haughey sits in his fine house in Kinsale pretending to be the leader of the Irish nation. Robert Russell sits in his prison cell. He doesn't have to pretend to anything. He is an authentic Irish patriot. Charlie Haughey has committed an act of treason. Judas received thirty

pieces of silver, what did Charlie Haughey receive?

The Irish people have a sovereign right to determine their own affairs. The armed presence of a foreign power in Ireland is a crime against the Irish people. Those who fight that occupation, the heroic Volunteers of the Irish Republican Army, deserve the support and loyalty of all Irish people. To hand over to the British these true soldiers of Ireland is an act of betrayal against all the generations of Irish people who fought for the freedom of Ireland. It spits on the graves of Tone, Mitchel, Pearse and Bobby Sands. Extradition must be stopped! The shameful scene of an Irish republican being frogmarched over the border and into a British helicopter must not be repeated.

Denis Fitzpatrick,
Australia.

PTA

A Chairde,

The IBRG condemns British government plans to make

the PTA permanent, and to increase police powers under the Act. The PTA has been shown to be absolutely useless in its declared intentions, and is nothing but an extremely racist piece of legislation which targets innocent minorities in Britain. It is a gross violation of the human and civil rights of the Irish community in Britain.

The proposed act contains new police powers to raid the homes of arrested persons, which would lead to massive intimidation of innocent Irish families. 98% of these legalised break-ins by the police will be for no good reason other than the ethnic origin of the occupier. We deplore further proposals to monitor bank accounts of groups and individuals, and the reversal of justice with the onus on the individual or group to prove that the money belongs to them. Every Irish business and bank account in Britain is now suspect, and now to be subject to the 98% British victimisation rule. Hurd and Thatcher turn Robin Hood and Maid



Marion on its head, and start legalised stealing from the poor and families.

We accuse the British government of cheap publicity stunts and of using the PTA as a mafia-style Christmas tree, to hang any draconian measures to harass and silence our community and we call on

the British government to renounce its terrorism against our community, and to abandon their vindictive political policing and judicial methods which keep the innocent Bir mingham Six, Guildford Four and Judith Ward in prison, and which daily harasses our community under the PTA.

The IBRG is writing to and lobbying all the political parties in Britain and Ireland seeking their support against these racist laws. We are further seeking the support of the trade union movement, local councils and human and civil rights bodies in opposing the PTA. We call on the Fianna Fáil government to renounce the Coalition government stand of support for the Act, and to declare publicly their opposition to racist legislation designed to harass Irish nationals in Britain. We further call on all Irish groups and individuals to make their views known to their elected representatives.

Pat Reynolds (PRO,
Irish in Britain
Representation Group)

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REVIEWS



A POWERFUL MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

BY MAEVE ARMSTRONG

I WAS just about up to there one day when at long last I retrieved from a pile of intimidating correspondence the tape cassette of Maria Tolly's latest production *Up To Here* and shoved it rather irreverently into the tape deck. (Oops Maria! You know the score, sister).

Tolly's music and lyrics have been a source of inspiration to me for several years now and believe me the new album's got just about everything. The music defies labels.

New Wave Folk with a decidedly international flavour: touches of blues and jazz, Irish, English folk laced with flamenco and Latin American rhythms. After the first side I was completely hooked.

Each track is a fresh musical experience, the lyrics powerful. Maria's last album *Voices* brought her into conflict with the establishment because of its British-withdrawal-from-Ireland message and this time around with *Up To Here* there's bound to be an eyebrow or two raised in the corridors of misused power.

STORIES ATTACKED

In *Christie*, based on hours of interviews with young Irish people at London, she lashes out at anti-Irish racism and British occupation in the North and in *Blood on the*

Coal she attacks British Coal and the Tory government for their hypocritical position on apartheid by importing cheap South African coal. Tolly declares:

"There's coal coming into South Kirby did you know, there's coal coming into South Kirby, but did you know that the coal is wet with the blood of the Black South African miner?"

The album is interspersed with tracks about the environment and our need to take care of planet Earth but most of all I love Tolly's down-to-earthness, her songs about women in struggle; of the daily grind of trying to keep food on the table and clothes on the kids' backs; of struggling against imperialism and a patriarchal society which keeps women down. *Woman and the Rock* is the age-old allegorical story of women's oppression and women's strength but it is Tolly's imaginative lyrics and haunting musical arrangement that makes this a special track which

women everywhere can identify with.

FAMILIAR STORY

Wonderful Woman tells the humorous story of Tolly telephoning around women involved in the Miners' Strike, in CND and other campaigns only to find that they are out campaigning, haven't got time to talk to her because they need to go out to meetings and, quite frankly, her call is holding them up. Sounds familiar?

Another one I and every-one else on the dole can identify with is *Combination Blues* which sums up the state's criminalisation of people on social security. The 'scroungers' being harassed by DHSS snoopers. If the 'Ed' would allow me space I'd enlighten you all further about this super album. By the way, she wants me to loan her the cassette (which I'll refuse cause she should buy her own and support sister Tolly in producing more albums like *Up To Here*).

Last, but not least, *Enough* will have you singing along after the first chorus so I suggest all you women out there should adopt it for those times when you've just about



● MARIA TOLLY

had it 'up to there' with life, whether it's the babies, the husbands, the bosses, the Brits...Never mind a few broken windows, sing along as I did at the top of your voice and I guarantee you'll feel stronger and more inclined to get out there and clean up the glass.

Up To Here, twelve orig-

inal songs, written, arranged, produced and sung by Maria Tolly is co-produced and engineered by John Rocca (founder of Freeze). It's available in all good record shops or direct from RED HOT RECORDS, price £6 (post and package included), c/o Maria Tolly, 77 Old Park Road, London, N13, 4RG.

YOU'D EXPECT BETTER

BY DEIRDRE NIC AN tSAOIR



● Lou Grant, disappointingly, dealt with the war in Ireland in the same simplistic and ignorant manner as most other films and series on the subject such as *Cal and Harry's Game*

ALL LONG-RUNNING TV series have at one stage or other dealt with 'Troubles', 'Ulster' or the war in Ireland directly or indirectly in their own simplistic, ignorant, silly and often racist and anti-Irish manner. When a programme such as *Lou Grant* decides to dabble in Ireland's struggle, you'd expect at least that the facts would be right.

Ed Asner, who plays the news editor of the *LA Tribune*, Lou Grant, is known for his struggles for freedom of Latin American countries. The programme itself has on many occasions delved into and highlighted many contentious issues in US politics and has quite regularly questioned US government's foreign policy. But on Wednesday, December 7th, the programme lowered its standards to the level of pro-British propaganda programmes which are churned out regularly.

In a fit of fantasy the series-makers decided to deal with a former IRA gun-runner, Frankie Fitzgerald, who has "outlived his usefulness". He

is befriended by Lou Grant. Frankie not only robs him of his driving licence and passport, but later robs him of all his money when he drops in for tea.

RIDICULOUS

The story goes jumping from one journalist to another after the *LA Tribune* decides to write a feature on American/Irish who support "the war in Ireland". Thrown in are gun-runners stuffing as many guns as can fit around a corpse in a coffin, or into the back of a sofa. Not being content with the stereotyping of all the Irish characters with Darby O'Gill accents, ridiculous lines were added. "These boys are playing this for real",

"Some of them are violent" and the usual British propaganda lines "nobody resigns from the IRA" and "one thing they're good at is shooting one another".

ADDED SPICE

For added spice the 'Peace' women were thrown in, of course the fact that they are 12 years out of context did not matter. Historical facts didn't exist in the programme; you have one of the freedom fighters telling us that in 1916 negotiations were held which partitioned the country. You also have an "O'Neill wing" of the IRA in the '70s.

With pubs, an American/Irish congressman, Kerry Doherty, a child being killed by a bomb in an attempt to kill Frankie, PLO and Libyan connections thrown in Lou Grant was no longer a good programme about investigative journalists, but a poorly-made British propaganda show.

IMEACHTAÍ

FUNCTION

Featuring the Irish Brigade
Saturday December 17th
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Pick-ups: 10.30 Art Gallery,
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11.30 St. Catherine's
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CHRISTMAS DAY

SWIM

SPONSOR CARDS and details of the annual Christmas day swim, in aid of an Cumann Cabhrach, can be obtained from 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

PEOPLE'S PAPER

Harassment, threats, loyalist attacks, raids, bribery attempts, industrial news, local protests or public meetings on various issues and humorous stories - all are of interest to us.

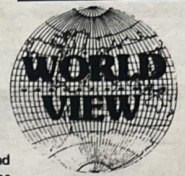
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● Liam McElhinney (centre) at the funeral of John Joe McGirl



CHARLIE KERINS COMMEMORATION

A PARADE IN TRALEE town to the Charlie Kerins monument on Strand Road on Friday, December 2nd commemorated the Kerryman who was hanged in Mountjoy Prison in Dublin in 1944.

At the monument erected in his native town to honour his memory, wreaths were laid by Sinn Féin Councillor Billy Leen for Sinn Féin and by Mary Fusco on behalf of Kerry prisoners of the war.

Gerry Savage, who chaired the ceremony at the monument, recalled how Charlie Kerins was hanged on the orders of a Fianna Fáil government which employed the infamous British hangman, Pierpoint to do its dirty work.

Belfast Sinn Féin councillor Alex Maskey gave the oration, in which he said that this generation of republicans were carrying on the unfinished struggle of Charlie Kerins and the many other Kerry patriots. He went on to say that the current controversy about the British extradition warrants for Fr Paddy Ryan was "presumably just a hiccup in the increasing collusion between the London and Dublin governments". He went on: "To finish the work of Charlie Kerins, much has yet to be done and many sacrifices made. Extradition must be vigorously opposed and British interference in Irish affairs brought to an end."



Cumann Cabhrach Dundalk Christmas Raffle results
Large hamper: John Dixon; Handbags: J. Boyle; Continental quilts: Guinness: Jimmy Fox; Bed set: G. McArdle; Josephine: Brady; Hairdryer/cake: Johnny Caranar; Wall clock/cake: Paul Leech; Tea set/biscuits: Kathleen Morton; Shoes: G. Beer; David Murphy; Towel set: G. Beer; Brian Ruddy; Shirt and tie/cake: Marie O'Callaghan; Whiskey/chocolates: Dermot Hearty; Whiskey/wine: Tommy Quinn; Whiskey/sherry: Sean Donegan; Whiskey/Martini: Louise Ruddy; Whiskey/Champagne: Marie O'Callaghan; Whiskey/3 toys: Owen Rogers; Whiskey/earrings: Tommy Fearon; Vodka/chocs: Peter Kenna; Vodka/chocs: Oliver Quinn; Vodka/chocs: Sadie Collins; Vodka/chocs: John Donnelly; Martini/Paint brushes: Tommy Quinn; Toy/Biscuits: Aidan's Bar; Martini/Sweets: E. Quinn; Sherry/after shave: Benny Kelleigh.
Thanks to all our helpers and supporters.

POST POBLAUGHTANACH

BELFAST SINN FEIN has again this year introduced their own Christmas postal service, Post Poblachtanach.

The theme of this year's stamp is censorship.

Stamps cost 10p each and can be got at any Sinn Féin centre in Belfast.

Deliveries will be made throughout Belfast up until December 23rd.

GORBACHEV'S PEACE MOVES

OVER 40 YEARS of propaganda by the NATO powers fell apart within the space of a single speech on Wednesday December 7th, when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev addressed the United Nations. By announcing the largest troop reductions since the end of World War Two, Gorbachev exposed the real cause of the Cold War which has brought the entire world to the brink of nuclear annihilation on many occasions since 1945. He neatly disproved claims by politicians such as Reagan and Thatcher about the 'Soviet threat to world peace', showing instead that NATO and the vast Western arms industry was the real danger. Gorbachev's breathtaking move will mean half a million less Soviet troops over the next two years and the disbandment of six Warsaw Pact tank divisions based in the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, amounting to a cut of 5,000 tanks and 50,000 soldiers. The total effect of these cuts will be to reduce the number of tanks and artillery pieces by one fifth and aircraft by one tenth.

The Soviet leader made it quite clear that these defence cuts are being undertaken whatever the response of the Western Powers and that they

would be accompanied by similar reductions among troops stationed along the Chinese border.

The speech also covered the question of Third



● MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

World debt, some of which is owed to the Soviet Union: "The Soviet Union is prepared to institute a lengthy moratorium of up to 100 years on debt servicing by the least developed countries and in quite a few cases to write off the debt altogether," he said.

The speech was welcomed by Western leaders with glazed expressions and forced smiles. Its sheer popularity in Western countries meant that NATO's politicians had to

seem to like it. But behind doors, they raged as the speech deprived them of a key propaganda weapon.

During the Second World War the Soviet Union bore the brunt of the Nazi armies and finally broke their power at the battle of Stalingrad. Although allies of the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States refused to mount a land attack on Hitler's Western front until the Soviets defeated the invaders and began to drive them back across Europe. Millions of Russians died as the Soviet Union effectively defeated Hitler on behalf of its allies, but at the end of the war Britain and the United States simply turned their guns on their former friends.

The Cold War which followed was always based on the military superiority of the United States and its NATO partners. The

US nuclear bomb became a threat to the security of the Soviet Union, forcing Moscow to divert more and more of its scanty resources to new military equipment. With each leap in Western military technology, the screw was tightened on the Soviet economy.

Gorbachev's speech marks a courageous break with this escalating spiral of deadly weapons and of troops. It almost certainly has ended the Cold War. It is a matter of really tragic irony that the most important step to world peace since 1945 was followed within 24 hours by the devastation of the Armenian earthquake where up to 50,000 citizens of the USSR were killed.

O'REILLY'S 'CHARITIES' EXPOSED

TONY O'REILLY, boss of the Heinz food empire, has found a good business angle on the Hillsborough Agreement, but he was very embarrassed recently when his business dealings were exposed by Australian Aid for Ireland (AAI).

O'Reilly has set up a group of international funds which raise money among migrant Irish communities for projects in Ireland. The money is directed at organisations which are approved by O'Reilly and his friends in the Dublin and London governments and the whole operation is presented as a means by which migrants can give financial backing to the Hillsborough Agreement. The Australian Ire-

land Fund, the American Ireland Fund, the Canadian Ireland Fund and others follow an identical pattern with Tony O'Reilly as the director and expensive fund-raising dinners as the main activity.

O'Reilly hosted a glittering spectacle at Sydney's new Convention Centre on November 28th for the (300 dollar-a-head) Second Annual Dinner of the Australian Ireland Fund, but the sparkle faded from his

eyes when he discovered a large group of protesters from Australian Aid for Ireland outside the building. "Ah, go away," was the millionaire's considered response as AAI members condemned him for "peddling British propaganda around the world".

ACTIVITIES DETAILED

Those attending the dinner were provided with a pamphlet by AAI members which detailed the activities of the Australian Ireland Fund.

"From the proceeds of last year's activities the Australian Ireland Fund sent \$50,000 to Ireland. This money went to five organisations out of a total of 2,000 that applied. Again, the common factor amongst those who received funding was their promotion of the concept of Irish sectarianism as being the problem rather than the symptom of the problem. In other words, the AIF sifted through 2,000 applications from Irish



● TONY O'REILLY

groups and came up with five whose aims are in tune with their own. Those groups who analyse the conflict from a nationalist perspective and see the cause of the conflict in the British presence need expect no funding from the AIF.

"It would appear that to be non-political in AIF terms requires the denial

of Irish nationhood. In other words, those who accept and collaborate with British rule in Ireland are eligible to be funded whilst those who reject British rule and struggle for their country's freedom are rejected out of hand."

TAX EXEMPTION

O'Reilly has already used the American Ireland Fund for boosting his business reputation. By using the fund he was able to get tax exemption for a donation to Trinity College in Dublin to set up an institute of technology named after his parents and many other pet projects have received money from the various parts of his overseas 'charitable' empire.

His anger at the exposure of these activities by AAI was shown by the actions of his private security personnel who intimidated the protesters. The AAI members were forced to call on the assistance of local people to defend their right to protest.

GLASGOW RALLY

FREE SPEECH ON IRELAND was the theme of a rally in Glasgow on Saturday, December 3rd, where the main speaker was Belfast City Councillor Fra McCann of Sinn Féin.

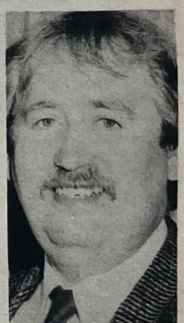
Sharing the platform with him were Harpal Brar, (National Organiser, Indian Workers Association (GB)); Alan Miller, (Chairperson, Scottish Council for Civil Liberties); Dave Anderson, representing the Durham Mechanics Branch of the National Union of Mineworkers; and Peter Gibbs of the Glasgow Committee for a British Withdrawal from

Ireland. The rally had been called in response to a ban imposed by Labour-controlled Strathclyde Regional Council on a march calling for a British withdrawal from Ireland, due to take place in Glasgow on October 8th. A planned march in Glasgow's city centre, for December 3rd, was also banned by the Regional Council. However the Council did give

permission for a march to take place in the Blackhill and Royston areas of the city prior to the rally. The Billy Reid, Kevin Barry, Pollok, Volunteer Jim Lynagh (Loughall Martyr), Wolfe Tone and Andersonstown Martyrs Republican Flute Bands ensured that the Regional Council got the clear message — the demands for British withdrawal and free speech on Ireland will not be silenced in Glasgow.

Harpal Brar and Dave Anderson drew attention

to the similarities between the struggle of the Irish people and those of the national minority communities and working class people of Scotland, Wales and England. Alan Miller pledged that his organisation would continue to campaign against all restrictions imposed on free speech, including the media ban on Sinn Féin representatives and their supporters. Fra McCann put the present-day repressive legislation in its historical context showing that every attempt to crush the Republican Movement had been tried and subsequently defeated through the



● FRA MCCANN

resistance of the nationalist people.



THE FLYING COLUMN

THE *SUNDAY TIMES* magazine last week featured Dublin's Trinity College. It was just the sort of public relations job for the college that you'd expect, with pompous quotes from all the respectable and famous people who went there down through the years and a stylish little gloss over the few patriots who emerged from its portals.

As part of the *Times'* extensive research into Trinity they brought Senator Shane Ross to Jury's Hotel in Ballsbridge and gave him a plateful of biscuits. This is what he told them about his Alma Mater:

"Trinity turned its back on the English people (munch) and to a certain extent on the Northern Irish and on its own ascendancy past. It became (nibble) very apologetic. It opened the floodgates to north Dublin's working-class (munch) and all but excluded foreigners. Only now (munch, munch), are they beginning to realise their mistake."

Yes, that's the great thing about these people who label themselves liberal unionists; their tolerance and sense of history.

ALSO EXPERTS in the field of etiquette are the people of West Germany. Remember how, after the IRA's 1988 European Tour brought some spectacular results, British army cars were 'trashed' by locals? Brits would return to their lovely tax-free cars to find all the windows smashed, the seats slashed and a little 'Provogram' across the bonnet, usually in spray-paint, saying 'The IRA will get you too!'

Well now, according to several British newspaper reports, the Brit military is getting worried about how unwelcome the Germans are making them feel.

"The Germans are starting to think of us and not the Russians as the real enemy," bitched one officer, while another, standing in the hatch of his tank in the middle of a German village, moaned that the Germans "don't give a stuff about their own defence".

The growing influence of the Green Party in politics is being blamed by the British for their unpopularity.

Presumably their unpopularity in Ireland is due to the growth of some similarly 'subversive' grouping.

ONE of my best spies in England, who just happens to have an obsession with runaway bullocks, has come up with another bizarre story involving British policemen and animals.

This time the bullock escaped from its pen in Haywards Heath, Sussex, and made its way towards the railway line. When challenged by a cluster of local law



● SHANE ROSS

enforcement officers it made an example of the nearest one by biting him on the buttocks. He then ensconced himself on the London-Brighton railway line. The brave policeman decided against a further attempt to dislodge him, allowing the trains to be held up for an hour and a half. Then they shot the bullock dead and dragged it away.



THE SAFE in the office of the London Flying Squad at Scotland Yard has been robbed twice this year. Just thought you might like to know!

ONE-TIME Labour Party leader Michael O'Leary is a very interesting type of fellow. You will no doubt recall that he left the party to join Fine Gael, well now, apparently, he has grown disillusioned with Fine Gael and supports Fianna Fail.

Yesterday's *Evening Press* carried a long review by Mr O'Leary of Dr John O'Connell's autobiography and in true reviewer style he uses to opportunity not to examine the ins and outs of the book, but to get into a bit of political revisionism. In the course of the tract he announces:

"I would put the '73/77 Coalition government in the same league of excellence as the present Fianna Fail government led by Charles Haughey."

Now who could disagree with that?

THE 750,000 members of the British Legion, many former members of the armed forces, are becoming very worried about some proposed entrepreneurial thinking by the Royal British Legion. The organisation plans to sell computerised names and addresses of its members to marketing companies for mail shots.

Their fear is that it could lead to another type of shots if 'terrorist organisations' get their hands on such a ready-made hit-list.

But the Legion is determined to go ahead with the plan, which will net them 5p for every name they give. That's the free market economy for you!

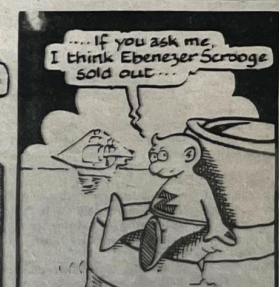
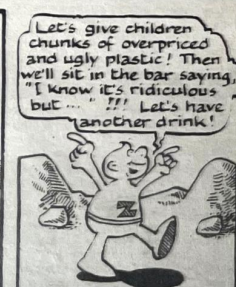
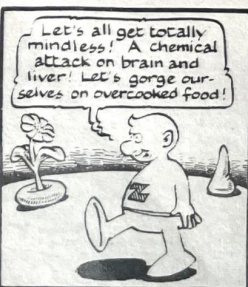
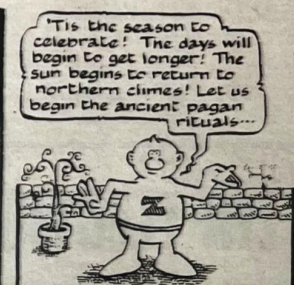
BRITISH MPs first heard the news on Tuesday that the Fianna Fail Attorney General had refused to extradite Father Patrick Ryan as they left a memorial service in Westminster. The newspapers and television stations were very coy in saying for whom was the service, and not surprisingly. It was to commemorate dead British spy and ambassador to Dublin, Christopher Ewart-Biggs.

THE LATEST convoluted joke from the University of Long Kesh to reach my ears deals with the subject of Margaret Thatcher's imminent conversion to Catholicism from her previous religion, Capitalism. Why else, the logic goes, is she always screaming for a priest.

THE PEOPLE who label themselves Belfast Sinn Féin Comhairle Limistéar may or may not have a sense of history, but they definitely have a sense of etiquette. They held their annual Christmas dinner last Friday in the Conway Mill, issuing lovely invitations with little stars and a pretty design.

At the bottom of the card was the message: Bring your own drink please, and knife and fork and plate!

NOTES



DUIRI SIAD

If there were a revolution here the Irish Army would defeat the other fellows within three weeks. Who do you mean by the other fellows, the IRA?

Yeah.
Well I wouldn't be too sure about that!
— A telephone conversation yesterday between a very imaginative listener and a more down-to-earth Gerry Ryan on RTE Radio 2.

Isn't it a pity that all the extraditees aren't priests!

— The late and great John Joe McGirl.

