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Ireland

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• TOM KING



• PETER BROOKE



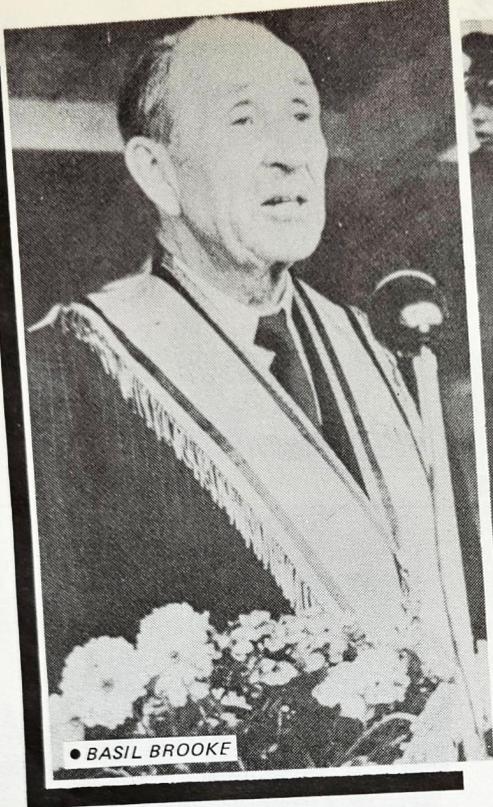
IRELAND 1969 — 1989

**20 years of British failure:
20 years of British repression**

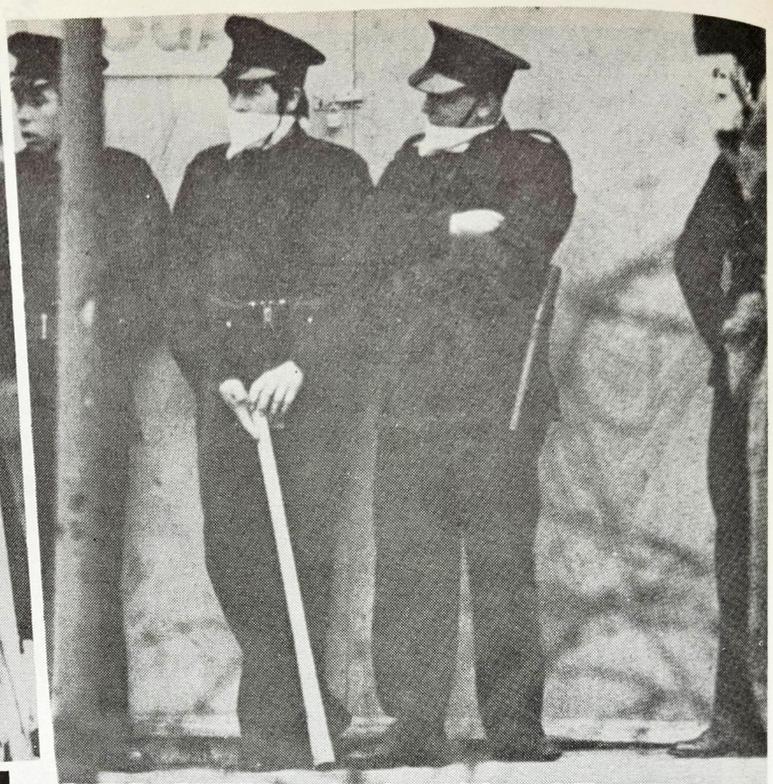
TOM KING, the British government's colonial ruler in the Six-County statelet of north-east Ireland ended his tenure of that position and returned to Britain on Wednesday, July 26th 1989. Like his seven predecessors he left having presided over the divisions, bitterness and injustice which successive British governments have guaranteed for the Irish people through the maintenance of the partition of Ireland.

King was replaced by Peter Brooke — a relative of Sir Basil Brooke, Lord Brookeborough — a notorious sectarian bigot who misruled the Six-County state for the British government for 20 years as the Prime Minister.

Peter Brooke's appointment fell a few weeks short of another 20-year span of British rule in Ireland. August 1989 marks 20 years of the continuous deployment of the British on the streets of the Six-Countries. Twenty years of political failure and state repression.



● BASIL BROOKE



● 'B' Specials, the original paramilitary arm of the Unionist Party

Background

PARTITION was imposed on the Irish people by an Act of Parliament* passed in the British legislature. The Act provided for the creation of two states in Ireland — the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. The consent of the people of Ireland was never sought. It was never freely given. Northern Ireland (the Six Counties) represented the greatest land area in which Irish unionists could maintain a majority. The Act ignored the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people for national independence.

Unionist society rapidly adopted a monolithic structure with an almost seamless fusion of political, social, religious and industrial organisations. Unionist political and economic influence and control permeated all aspects of society. Peter Brooke's relative, Sir Basil Brooke, synthesised the situation thus *"I have always said that I am an Orangeman first and a politician and a member of parliament afterwards... All I boast is that we have a Protestant parliament and a Protestant state."*

A short term before making that statement Brooke shed some light on what was entailed by the *"Protestant state"*. Speaking to the Derry Unionist Association he said, *"I recommend those people who are loyalists not to employ Roman Catholics, 99% of whom are disloyal... You are disfranchising yourself in that way... You people who are the employers have the ball at your foot. If you don't act properly now, before we know where we are we shall find ourselves in the minority..."* Not given to mere rhetoric Brooke could boast that *"he had not a Roman Catholic about my own place"*.

Founded on the denial of democracy and generally informed by such rationale as Brooke's, the Six-County state could only be maintained by undemocratic methods.

*The Government of Ireland Act (1920).

The inbuilt manufactured unionist majority meant continuous government by the Unionist Party and its control of the autonomous legislature at Stormont. For the Unionist Party, its simple most important piece of legislation, where maintenance of power was concerned, was the Special Powers Act (SPA). The SPA was a comprehensive piece of repressive legislation with wide ranging powers of search, arrest, detention and imprisonment and included the power to prohibit inquests. So appealing was the SPA to despots that it prompted the South African Minister for Justice, Mr Vorster, to say that he *"would be willing to exchange all the (South African) legislation of that sort for one clause of the Northern Ireland Special Power's Act."*

The SPA was actively and enthusiastically enforced by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) — nominally the police force but in fact the paramilitary adjunct of the Unionist Party — and its reserve force the 'B' Specials. Both forces were overwhelmingly Protestant in composition, the latter exclusively so.

For nationalists the upshot of Brooke's *"Protestant state"* was a system of political and economic apartheid with which the envious Mr Vorster could easily find an affinity.

- The manufactured unionist majority determined that political power would reside in the hands of the Unionist Party for as long as Stormont existed.

- Local government boundaries were gerrymandered to ensure Unionist Party control of local government; even in areas with clear nationalist majorities.

- Nationalist political dissent was harshly suppressed by the RUC and the unionist judiciary.

- Discrimination was rampant: in employment practices; in housing allocation; in the electoral franchise.

The Westminster Parliament had given the unionists political power through a system of devolved government, while at the same time ensuring that it distanced itself from the repressive and undemocratic methods used by the Stormont regime. It turned a blind eye to the institutionalised discrimination, electoral gerrymandering and human rights abuses and the inevitable sectarian pogroms instanced by a sectarian state.

Unionist rule was conditional only on its ability to maintain British interests through political stability.

The Civil Rights Movement: A challenge to state apartheid

ORGANISED DISCONTENT with this apartheid system began to emerge in the late '60s and led to the formation of the Civil Rights Association. Its moderate demands were aimed at trying to reform and democratise the state. The issue of partition was not part of its agenda. Unionists, however, interpreted any form of political dissent, however moderate, as a threat to their privileged position and the union with Britain.

Peaceful civil rights supporters were consequently viciously attacked by the RUC and B Specials. The violent reaction of the state shocked the world as television cameras relayed scenes of unprovoked attacks on Civil Rights marches and demonstrations. The British government was not prepared to allow its interests to be compromised by widespread political unrest. At 5pm on August 14th 1969, substantial numbers of British soldiers moved into Belfast and Derry. The British army was injected into the situation under the propaganda cover of being a peace-keeping force deployed to keep the warring factions apart. The 'religious war' myth was regenerated as justification for the occupation. In reality it had been introduced as a life support unit to sustain a state which was under threat of collapse.

The bad dream of partition was about to become the 'nationalist nightmare'. Within a relatively short period the British army's real role became apparent. With the unionist government nominally still in control the actual power behind the throne was

the British government's proxy, the British army.

The Falls Curfew, internment and Bloody Sunday in Derry, clearly identified it as an indispensable and major instrument of government for Westminster in the same way as the RUC had previously served the Stormont regime.

Within weeks of the Bloody Sunday massacre Westminster had prorogued Stormont and resumed direct responsibility for the governance of its colony.

Twenty years ago people in the Six Counties were marching for civil rights, justice, equality and self-respect.

The moderate and just demands of the Civil Rights movement were:

- One man one vote;
- An end to the gerrymandered local government boundaries;
- An end to discrimination in the allocation of housing;
- An end to discrimination in employment;
- The repeal of the Special Powers Act (SPA).

Pursuit of those demands and the Stormont regime's crazed reaction to it brought the state to a point of collapse. Only the life support system provided by the British army staved off that collapse and in the process of attempting to sustain the state has exacerbated the situation.

A brief, and by no means comprehensive survey of the situation over the past 20 years and as it exists demonstrates the denial of civil rights throughout that period and the current state of civil rights today.



● An injured civil rights marcher

Repressive Legislation:

Powers and Effect

THE SPA was indeed repealed. But it was replaced by even more comprehensive repressive legislation, chiefly embodied in the Emergency Provisions Act (EPA) and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). This has had the effect that since its inception, the Six-County state has been continuously governed by repressive legislation.

The provisions and effect of these and other pieces of repressive legislation has meant that:

- Anyone can be stopped by British forces anywhere, at any time. They must give their name, address, where they are coming from, where they are going to.

- Anyone can be arrested anywhere, at any time. A detainee can be held for up to seven days for interrogation. More than 60,000 arrests have thus taken place. No further legal action was taken against the overwhelming majority of those arrested. Powers of arrest are therefore used largely for purposes of gathering information. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that seven day detentions are in contravention of the European Convention. Britain accordingly derogated from the Convention. This represents the eighth occasion that such a derogation from the Convention by the British government has occurred. In almost all cases the offence was related to human rights violations in Ireland.

- Some 7,000 people have been charged with politically motivated offences subsequent to their arrest. A substantial percentage were charged on the basis of statements of admission only extracted through torture and maltreatment. The British government has been found guilty of 'inhuman and degrading' treatment by the European Court of Human Rights. It is regularly criticised over treatment of detainees in interrogation centres by Amnesty International.

- More than 2,000 people were interned without charge or trial between 1971-1975. The power to intern remains on the statute books and can be reactivated at any time.

- Torture and maltreatment of detainees during interrogation replaced internment as the chief means of removing opponents from the streets. In one three year period in the late '70s, 94% of all charges were brought on the basis of statements of admission thus extracted, while 80% of all convictions were similarly based.

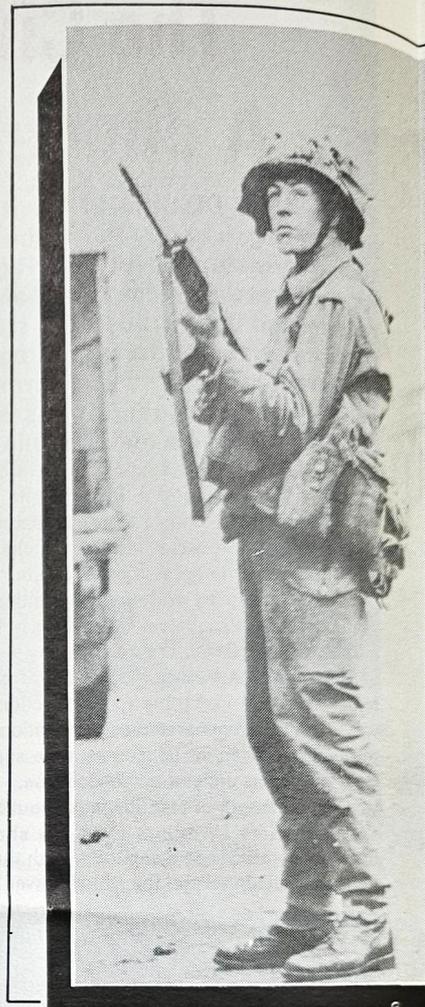
- Widespread torture was replaced as a policy as the result of a national and international outcry with the use of paid-perjurers and mass show-trials involving up to 40 defendants. This in turn had to be abandoned because of public outrage and incredible prosecution witnesses, but can be reactivated at any time.

- With the ending of internment the securing of convictions was facilitated by the use of juryless, single judge Diplock Courts, many of the judges having direct links with the Unionist Party.

- Diplock judges can now draw a negative legal inference from a detainee's exercise of their right to silence during interrogation. In effect the right to silence now ceases to exist.

- Changes in the Judges' Rules of Evidence has been meant that in firearms or explosives cases the onus of proof lies with the defendant. The defendant is deemed guilty until they can prove innocence.

- Extensive powers to search have led to the searching of



almost 300,000 premises. In 1988 alone, 8,500 residences were searched with varying degrees of damage being caused. Over £1 million was paid in compensation for such damage in the financial year 1988-89.

- Seizure of property. Any property can be seized for the use of the military. Residences, schools, industrial premises, sport grounds and farmland have been seized for use as military installations.

- The British government has now vested itself with the powers to seize the homes of political opponents.

- Spontaneous anti-government demonstrations are prohibited by the Public Order (NI) Order 1987, which demands seven days notice of any demonstration and contains intimidatory clauses which require that the organisers provide their names and addresses to the authorities.

- Censorship. Recently introduced legislation means that the broadcast media are banned from interviewing republican spokespersons. Effectively the British government can carry out its undemocratic policies in Ireland with impunity.

- The Payment of Debt Act effectively removed from the nationalist population the only limited economic muscle it possessed in its ability to withhold monies due to public bodies.

Other gross violations of human rights have been carried out by both the British army and RUC with the perpetrators being given the full support of the legal and judicial system to act with impunity.

- Rubber and plastic bullets have been used as a means of intimidating and deterring demonstrations. Since 1973, more than 54,000 of these lethal projectiles have been fired at the civilian population. Sixteen people, seven of them young children



● British army, the life support for the sectarian Six County statelet

have been killed, most in circumstances which amount to murder. Hundreds have been seriously injured. Injuries include serious mental and physical disablement.

● Disputed killings by government agencies. Over 300, mainly unarmed nationalists have been killed by members of the various security agencies — the British army and the RUC. Over 160 people have been killed in disputed circumstances.

● British forces have been given virtual immunity from conviction by the Diplock courts for offences committed while on duty. In 20 years only one British soldier has been convicted in the Diplock courts for murder. Despite receiving a life sentence the soldier was released after serving only two years three months and was immediately re-instated in the army.

● Shoot-to-kill. Since the early 1970s the British government has periodically engaged in a policy of eliminating political opponents. Initially this policy was restricted to the attempt to kill opponents in 'credible circumstances' — in possession of or in proximity to weapons or explosives. Since the early '80s, however, it has been the general rule that the killing takes place first and 'credible circumstances' are manufactured afterwards. This was the case in the series of killings carried out in Armagh in 1982 and again in Gibraltar in 1988. Amnesty International has called these 'extra-judicial killings' and has demanded a judicial inquiry into all disputed killings. The British government has refused.

In addition to the oppression meted out by British government forces the nationalist population has suffered the onslaught of attacks from the extremes of unionism.

● Sectarian death squads. Almost 700 people, 90.5% nationalists, have been victims of sectarian assassinations perpetrated by

loyalist paramilitaries. Many of these killings are suspected to have been carried out with the collusion of members of the British army and RUC.

● In August 1969, internment week 1972, and in the wake of the signing of the Hillsborough Treaty, thousands of nationalists were fire-bombed out of their homes by loyalist extremists.

● Sporadic attacks on nationalist homes and individuals has been a constant feature of the past 20 years.

The hunger-strikes: As well as the trauma and suffering on the streets nationalist opponents of British rule in Ireland were selected for very special treatment inside British prisons. The struggle for decent conditions, dignity and recognition as political prisoners has been constant of the past 20 years and continues today. Of all the prison campaigns the most publicised — because of the numbers involved, the deviation, and because of the toll in lives extracted was the 'blanket protest' which culminated in the hunger-strikes of 1980 and 1981.

Deprived of political status in 1976 republican prisoners refused to don prison garb and clad themselves in the blanket. Within a short period the punitive actions of the regime forced them to live in their cells surrounded by their own excrement. To no avail beatings and degradation were used to break the prisoners will. For four years they persevered in the most awful conditions. On October 27th 1980, a hunger-strike which was to last 53 days began. It extracted sufficient concessions from the British government to make a settlement possible. Having secured the end of the hunger-strike the British reneged. A second hunger-strike was initiated on March 1st 1981. It lasted 217 days ending on October 3rd. International opprobrium of the British, and with it the irrefutable recognition of the political status, which the

British had so vainly and bloody-mindedly attempted to deny, was the formal outcome.

In the interim ten young Irishmen Boddy Sands, Francis Hughes, Ray McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara, Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, Tom McElwee and Mickey Devine had given their lives. Mairead Farrell who participated in the first hunger-strike was later to be killed in Gibraltar by the SAS.

On the streets Paul Whitters (15), Julie Livingstone (14), Carol Ann Kelly (12), Harry Duffy (45), Nora McCabe (29), Peter Doherty (40) and Peter Magennis (40), were killed by plastic bullets.

Social Issues

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION. Structural discrimination in employment has remained a feature of British government rule in the Six Counties. Direct responsibility for that lies with the British government.

Discrimination has, in fact, been synonymous with British rule. Unionist loyalty — the rockbed of the British presence — is, in part, conditional on the maintenance of the economic privilege, often marginal, which employment discrimination has conferred on unionists.

Patterns of discrimination which existed throughout the period of the Stormont regime have remained intact since Westminster assumed direct responsibility for the governance of the Six Counties. In one aspect, unemployment, the situation has actually disimproved for nationalists.

Unemployment in the Six Counties in April 1989, officially stood at 107,623 representing 15.6% of the workforce. Trade union estimates place the figures at at least 40,000 higher. Areas which suffer most unemployment are nationalist areas west of the River Bann — Dungannon, Strabane and Derry — and West Belfast which contains 10% of all the Six Counties' unemployment. In 1970 nationalists (40% of the population) were twice as likely to be unemployed as unionists.

By the 1980s nationalists were 2.5 to 3 times as likely to be unemployed. This despite an annual turnover in the jobs market of 100,000 jobs and the introduction 13 years ago of legislation which had the alleged aim of eradicating discrimination. Newly enacted anti-discrimination legislation has failed to get the full support of either the British Labour Party or the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. It has ignored the recommendations most likely to produce positive effect which were presented to the British government by its own Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR). It appears that the British governments objective in producing the new legislation is to attempt to relieve itself of the political pressure it has been subjected to on the issue as a result of the Mac Bride Principles campaign in the United States.

Housing. While direct discrimination in housing, as experienced by nationalists before the establishment of the Housing Executive no longer occurs a recent report produced by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) for SACHR revealed that indirect discrimination continues to ensure that Catholics remain at a significantly greater disadvantage than Protestants.

The PSI report revealed that because of discrimination against Catholics in housing allocation, Catholics had less access to housing than Protestants. In addition Catholic housing estates in Belfast, in particular, have greater problems of disrepair.

The report found that "in 1987... applicants preferring

Catholic estates had a substantially poorer chance of being rehoused than those preferring Protestant or mixed estates, especially in Belfast."

Further evidence of this indirect discrimination in housing was revealed in the Continuous Household Survey which was published in April by the Policy Planning and Research Unit (PPRU) of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

According to that report:

"Catholic households were more than three times more likely that Protestant households to live in accommodation falling below the bedroom standard. Conversely, a much greater proportion of Protestants than Catholic households lived in accommodation with more bedrooms than their assessed standard."

On the question of persistent problems and the availability of facilities in their homes, Catholics were consistently worse off.

In a reflection of the distribution of wealth and political power within the North, the report found that:

"Protestants were more likely than Catholics to be owner occupiers". Catholics were more likely to be housed in public housing than Protestants.

In addition, *"Catholic households were also less likely than those of Protestants to report having a school, bus stop, public park or children's play area nearby."*

It is clear that the British government which has responsibility for Housing has made no effort to redress the imbalance in housing need between Catholic and Protestant areas. Indeed its policy in recent years has been to reduce the Housing Executive's budget (over £100 million in three years) and place greater emphasis on private house building, which we will see from later figures on the economy and employment, effectively blocks many Catholics from having access to housing.

According to the Regional Trends Report produced by the British government in July 1989, which covers Britain and the Six Counties, it spends proportionately less money on housing in the north than in any other region!

It is obvious that indirect discrimination remains a major problem. The British government has not only refused to provide the necessary financial resources to redress this serious problem but has consistently in recent years inflicted savage cuts on the Housing Executive's budget. An estimated £120 million over three years.

The increase in public housing on which nationalists have a greater dependence, has a greater adverse in nationalist areas, an effect which grows with every cutback.

Exercise of the franchise: While the obvious and untenable abuses in the exercise of the franchise under the Stormont regime which led to the demand for 'one man one vote' had to be removed and could be removed without posing any threat to the state, the British government has in the '80s introduced specifically to hamper the exercise of the franchise by Sinn Féin supporters.

- Identification requirements at the pollings booths are directed at disenfranchising the overwhelmingly working-class Sinn Féin voter.

- Prisoners can no longer stand as candidates.

- Ex-prisoner candidates for local government seats must have completed their sentence five years in advance of their candidacy.

An anti-violence declaration for local government candidates was introduced in an attempt to deter Sinn Féin candidates from standing and in the hope of disqualifying successful Sinn Féin candidates at a future date.



● The Dublin government is engaged in actively defending the British imposed partition of Ireland

The 26 Counties

THE IRISH FREE STATE formally became the Republic of Ireland in 1948. The name change bore no more substance than the substitution in the Six-County in the '70s of the Emergency Provisions Act for the Special Powers Act, or HIMP, The Maze for Long Kesh. The inbuilt flaw of partition and the acquiescence of successive Dublin governments in maintaining that flaw determined the political, social, economic and cultural development of the state.

Since its inception partition took a heavy toll on the 26-County economy. The vast majority of industrial manufacturing jobs in Ireland at the time of partition were in the Six Counties. Financial interests in the 26 Counties itself were dominated by British concerns.

The effects of partition on the economy have left an indelible mark from which it has never recovered.

- Today's domestic debt stands at £20,000 million.
- Unemployment at 228,000, 17% of the workforce, has quadrupled since 1969.
- The annual drain of wealth out of the state stands at £4 billion equalling one fifth of gross national product.
- 59% of households are estimated to be living below the poverty line.
- Half of the people born in the state since its inception have been forced to emigrate.

The name change, like the clause in the state's constitution, which claims territorial ownership of the whole of Ireland was but part of the delicately constructed web of compromises between British demands that the Dublin government defend partition and Irish expectations that it support its removal.

The paying of lip-service to the latter while actively pursuing the former was the course adopted.

Paying lip-service involved not just the constitutional claim and the name change to the 'Republic of Ireland'. In 1966 the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916 was commemorated with multiple mass-activities and extensive reviews of the period in both the printed and broadcast media. A double album of patriotic songs by the then foremost and nationally and internationally famous folk-group the Clancy Brothers and Tommy

Makem was issued to celebrate the event. The double album was accompanied by a commemorative book, *The Irish Uprising 1916-1922*. It reproduced two pieces by leaders of the Rising who were subsequently executed by the British government: Padraig Pearse's *The Coming Revolution* and James Connolly's *What is our Programme*. The foreword was by Eamon de Valera, then head-of-state and leading participant in the events being commemorated. He wrote, "We wish to honour, in particular, the seven brave men who... made the decision to assert, once more in arms, our nation's right to sovereign independence."

In 1969 with the deepening crisis in the North the Dublin Premier, Jack Lynch, went on state television and said "It is clear that the Irish government can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse." He called on Britain to negotiate "recognising that the re-unification of the national territory can provide the only permanent solution to the problem."

Within a few short years all patriotic songs were banned from the state broadcasting media. The revisionists were coming out of the closet. The alter-ego of the 26-County state was taking on an unusually clever definition. The active defence of partition came more and more into relief.

Since partition, the 26-County state had adopted repressive legislation which was a mirror image of that in the Six Counties reflecting a similar legal and judicial system.

South African style censorship restrictions were introduced thirteen years in advance of similar British censorship restrictions. Republican analyses and views like the sentiments expressed in patriotic groups were banned.

Less obvious black-lists banning republicans from public employment had long existed, internment regularly used.

It is estimated today that IR£1 million is being spent per day on defending the British imposed border.

The long established prohibition on the extradition of political offenders has been abandoned and extradition is now a regular practice by the Dublin government.

Of at least as much importance the revisionists have delegitimised the debate about Irish national independence and in as acute a manner as in Britain itself.

The formal abandonment of the aspiration of national independence was given effect in the Dublin government's signing of the Hillsborough Treaty in 1985

Charles Haughey, then the leader of the opposition declared that the Treaty "copperfastened" partition. Within a very short time, as the next Dublin premier, he was actively endorsing it.

What of the future?

TWENTY YEARS after the civil rights struggle, the denial of democratic rights and the abuse of human rights is more acute than ever; the occurrence of those abuses is daily; their frequency multiplied by hundreds.

Draconian legislation and armed force have been the major instrument of government for two decades. The political debate throughout that period has concentrated exclusively on security matters and political initiatives aimed at giving partition a human face, at making partition an acceptable settlement. Sunningdale, the power sharing executive, the various Six-County assemblies and the Hillsborough Treaty itself all had that as their objective. All have failed. All were little more than exercises in the crisis management of a system which has permanently been in crisis as is testified to by the need to govern it with repressive legislation since its inception.

In the interim some 3,000 people have died, the only growth industry is the prison system and democratic rights have been trampled on.

While the political debate remains focused on security measures and political initiatives aimed at stabilising partition instead of upon a democratic solution the potential for future turmoil, suffering and injustice remains. The major responsibility in all of that lies with the British government. It has the major influence in limiting the extent of the debate. It legislated for the "carnival of reaction" which James Connolly accurately predicted would be the result of partition. It has the power to de-legislate. Successive Dublin government too must share the responsibility. Their actions for almost seven decades now in paying lip-service to national independence while actively supporting partition has cast them in the role of contributor to the problem instead of contribution to the solution.

It is clear that a partitionist settlement is no solution to this conflict. The simple most worthwhile contribution which Britain can make in Ireland is to state its intention to withdraw.

The ending of partition in this context and the restoration to the Irish people of their right to national self-determination, independence and sovereignty, remains the only solution to the British colonial conflict in Ireland.

On this anniversary it is worth contemplating how much the Irish nation would have progressed if instead of propping up the corrupt Stormont regime and the inherently flawed partition system, in 1969, the British had terminated their claim to jurisdiction and played a constructive role in facilitating an Irish national democracy. Whatever might have arisen at that time as a result of such a sensible approach would now be a matter of history and the subject of an entirely different review.

Instead of the continuing conflict, death and disharmony, a unified and sovereign Irish nation would be applying its energies to the social and economic problems with which it is beset today.

In 20 years time we'll be looking at yet another august anniversary in the year 2009 and looking back at 40 years of British repression, 40 years of bankrupt British policies in Ireland.

As things stand we have not progressed beyond the partition of Ireland in 1921.

THE CONDITIONS FOR PEACE IN IRELAND

THE ROOT CAUSE of the conflict in Ireland is the denial of democracy; the refusal by the British government to allow the Irish people to exercise their right to national self-determination.

The solution to the conflict in Ireland lies in the democratic

exercise to that right in the form of national re-unification, national independence and sovereignty.

In the words of the late Sean MacBride, Irish recipient of both the Nobel and Lenin Peace Prizes:

"Ireland's right to sovereignty, independence and unity inalienable and indefeasible. It is for the Irish people as a whole to determine the future status of Ireland. Neither Britain nor a small minority selected by Britain has any right to partition the ancient island of Ireland, nor to determine its future as a sovereign nation."

A true and lasting peace in Ireland can only be achieved by the creation of the necessary political conditions.

These conditions are:

- The ending of the British government imposed partition;
- British disengagement from the Six Counties;
- The setting of a definite date within the lifetime of a British government for the completion of this disengagement;
- The disarming and disbandment of indigenous British forces;
- The calling of free elections to an all-Ireland Constitutional Conference to agree upon a new constitution and national system of government;
- The unconditional release of all political prisoners.

It is only through the process of decolonisation and dialogue that a peaceful, stable Ireland will emerge. Only when independence is restored can Ireland hope to prosper and take her place among the nations of the world.

The onus is on the British government to ensure a peaceful transition to a united and independent Ireland. The shape of that society is a matter for the Irish people. Only when Britain recognises that right and initiates a strategy of decolonisation along these lines will peace and reconciliation between Irish people and between Britain and Ireland be established.

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Republican Press Centre,
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Ireland's biggest selling political weekly newspaper:
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