

TROOPS OUT

Vol. 4, No. 2, November 1980

Paper of the Troops Out Movement 15p

HUNGER STRIKE

1. THE RIGHT OF PRISONERS TO WEAR THEIR OWN CLOTHES INSTEAD OF PRISON UNIFORM.
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TROOPS OUT NOW!
SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE
IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE!





HUNGER-STRIKE

The Irish Nationalist prisoners in H Blocks, Armagh and prisons in England are prisoners of war. Prisoners of war are not criminals. The prisoners' five demands require the British Government to recognise that.

The men in the H Blocks, who have now begun a hunger strike in support of their demands, will die unless the British Government is forced to restore political status.

We asked London representatives of Provisional Sinn Fein and of the Irish Republican Socialist Party to comment on the situation.

We put the following questions to the Chairperson of Provisional Sinn Fein P.O.W. Department (London).

Who made the decision to go on hunger strike?

The movement supports the men's decision, but it is their decision.

Every effort has been made to dissuade them because of the obvious likelihood of deaths and every effort has been made to avert the need for a hunger strike by persuading the British Government to grant the five demands. But in the end it is their decision and we support it.

It has always been the prisoners themselves who have decided on their actions. The whole blanket protest began when Kieran Nugent refused to put on the prison uniform and that was taken up by others. So it has been right through: the men in H Blocks and the women in Armagh have had to respond to what was being done to them. At each stage, the prisoners have found a way of responding, and continuing their resistance to the attempt to define them and treat them as criminals. They have done that themselves. The five demands came from inside H Blocks, the decision that they must go on dirt protest, and now, finally the hunger strike.

Are you asking the British Government to do something they cannot do?

The prisoners' own statement points out that the British Government has taken an intransigent and not a realistic stand.

What the prisoners are demanding is merely what they had before 1976, and what prisoners in Portlaoise in the South have now. The Southern Government has not found it impossible to live with, nor did the British Government before 1976. This shows that the British Government's position is provocative.

The totally unprovoked attack on the women in Armagh, and the denial of all access to toilets was the cause of the Armagh protest. The Government created that; the women prisoners had no thought of a no-wash protest themselves – it was forced upon them.

The prisoners' five demands are quite practical and possible to carry out. The name political status does not have to be used. On the outside, PSF have shown a spirit of wanting to come to a solution: IRA declared a truce on prison warders.

We have made it as easy as possible for the Government.

Why has the British Government taken this intransigent position?

The British Government has refused to see a political situation requiring a political solution.

We have tried, and the whole military campaign has been to force the British Government to realise that the nationalist community is oppressed, that the nationalist community will never accept partition, and that the British Army is an army of occupation.

For their part, the British Government has always hit at the symptom i.e. the military campaign, and refused to see a political situation.

But they can learn the political lesson, and in the end will have to.

It's the same with the H Blocks and Armagh.

The British Government knows very well it is not dealing with criminals. It chooses to present things in that way; it wants to force prisoners to accept being treated as criminals. But they won't, and the movement won't. Republicans will not compromise on that, and in the end, the British Government must, and can learn that lesson.

What gives the prisoners the strength to go on?

The men in H Blocks and the women in Armagh have serious political aims. They have a clear view of the society they are fighting for. Without that, their resistance could not have been sustained.

They share with the Republican movement the first aim of the reunification of Ireland as a first step towards a democratic, socialist republic – a democratic socialist state which would be politically and economically independent of Britain and every other capitalist power.

Within that context, the prisoners have refused to be treated as criminals. And will not give in on that. But every stage of their protest has been forced upon them. And when you have nothing left but your body, there is very little else you can do. Next to a hunger strike, the dirt protest has been the ultimate protest against their treatment.

Now, these men who are completely helpless and have only their bodies, can

I.R.S.P.

The following statement was made by the IRSP, London, on October 22.

For over four years, the prisoners of war in the H Blocks, Long Kesh, have resisted the continual attempts, by successive British Governments, to classify those who oppose British rule in Ireland as criminals.

Imprisoned as a result of the war against British imperialism in Ireland, these prisoners have now announced that they are going on an indefinite hunger strike from October 27. Their fight is for political status and not merely for humane conditions.

We urge people to show their solidarity with the H Block prisoners and to actively engage in protests in support of their demands for political status. In 1972, a hunger strike combined with widespread street protests, forced the British Government to give in to the prisoners' demands.

The course of action to be taken by all those who support the prisoners should be clear.

use only their bodies to say to those outside: take more positive action to resolve this.

What can people here do to help?

The British Government and the media try to handle the whole situation by silence. That is their deliberate policy. That policy is made to fail by anything which breaks the silence, which has to be given publicity.

To that end all activity is useful – from campaigns on humanitarian demands to campaigns for political status. These things are not in conflict and people should be prepared to co-operate at all levels.

The prisoners regard campaigns over here as important. It is important that campaigns are built up. And also important that nothing detracts from the hunger strike itself. We don't want any adventurist actions or any individual protests which would focus attention on the particular protest instead of on the prisoners and the hunger strike.

**THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IS A SMUGGLED
COMMUNICATION FROM THE P.R.O. OF THE BLANKETMEN
IN THE H-BLOCKS OF LONG KESH:**

We, the Republican Prisoners of War in H-Block, Long Kesh demand as of right political recognition and that we be accorded the status of political prisoners. We claim this right as captured combatants in the continuing struggle for National liberation and self determination. We refute most strongly the tag of criminal with which the British have attempted to label us and our struggle, and we point to the divisive partitionist institutions of the Six Counties as the sole criminal aspect of the present struggle.

We declare that political status is ours of right and we declare that from Monday, 27th October, 1980 a Hunger Strike by a number of men representing H-Blocks 3, 4, and 5 will commence.

Our widely recognised resistance has carried us through four years of immense suffering and it shall carry us through to the bitter climax of death if necessary.

Signed: P.R.O.
H-Block Blanketmen
Long Kesh Camp.
October 10, 1980.

WHAT HAS LED UP TO IT



After four years of punishment, degradation and deprivation, Republican prisoners in the H Blocks are now using the final weapon that they have: their bodies.

Below, we show how the situation in the prisons came to this.

In 1972 the political prisoners in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, went on hunger strike for political status, with massive support from the people, and won it. 'An enormous outburst of lawlessness', as the Northern Ireland Office recently described it on TV, 'concentrated like a dam bursting into a particular moment in history which made it impossible to build in our prisons, to introduce a normal prison regime'.

What this particular 'special category status' meant was treatment familiar to Prisoner of War camps: the prisoners had their own command structure by which to deal with the prison authorities, they organised their own daily lives and kept up their identity as resistance fighters against foreign rule of their country. 'In an ordinary penal institution their dealings with the prisoners is done on a one to one basis, they (the Administration) laying down the rules to the prisoners, playing off one against the other and dividing and controlling them. We, through our staff officers, in dealing with the Administration prevent these divisive tactics from being effective against us.' (Irish PoW)

In March 1976 this political — or PoW — status was taken away, by decree of the British Labour Government. It was part of the Government's propaganda

campaign to deny that there was actually a war going on. They tried to kid us, and the world in general, that all these prisoners were criminals, motivated by personal gain or psychopathic instincts, not by desire to free their country. The propaganda campaign did not stop the British Government from using brutal interrogation techniques against them (admitted in the Bennett Report, March 1979), nor from trying them in courts without juries and without the normal rules of evidence applying.

STRENGTH OF WILL

No matter — that was the Government's great master plan in 1976. What defeats it is the incredible strength and will of the prisoners of war, itself proof enough that they are not criminals.

Their protest started first by a simple refusal to wear prison uniforms: 'If they want me to wear prison garb, they will have to nail it on me', said the first blanketman, Kieran Nugent. What followed from this was a whole series of horrors which now has resulted in the hunger strike. Far from being 'self-imposed' and 'IRA propaganda' it was all punishments imposed by the prison authorities and part of the Government's propaganda campaign.

The men prisoners in the H-Blocks of

Long Kesh were punished for refusing to wear prison clothes by loss of all remission, loss of parcels, letters, newspapers, radio and TV. In fact, they had no contact with the outside world apart from a monthly half-hour visit. They were confined to their cells 24 hours a day because the warders forced them to walk naked if they wanted to leave the cell. The women prisoners in Armagh suffered similar punishments for refusing to do prison work (all women prisoners are allowed to wear their own clothes).

CALCULATED BRUTALITY

Over the next two years the warders increased the suffering in Long Kesh with severe beatings being a daily occurrence and obscene body searches (the men are forced to squat over a mirror or have their back passages probed by a warder's finger. The warders started to kick over the pots in the cells and took to not bringing round the slop-out buckets so the pots overflowed).

The prisoners responded in March 1978 with a declaration of total non-cooperation. They refused to leave their cells at all except for Mass and visits, and refused to clean out their cells. To punish them for this all the furniture was taken from the cells and the warders insisted that they had to ask permission to go to the toilet, and get beaten up on the way more often than not. Thus began the 'no wash' protest because the men had to use their cells as toilets. It is almost impossible to imagine how the prisoners survived the conditions, the stink, the maggots, soaking mattresses on the floor, the cold and nakedness.

FINAL STRAW

In February of this year the women in Armagh were brutally attacked and beaten up by male warders brought in from Long Kesh. They were then all locked up without toilet or washing facilities and then found out that these were to be considered privileges they had to beg for. They refused to submit and went on a no-wash protest. Beatings have become a regular occurrence and male warders are now permanently on the wing, day and night.

The conditions all these prisoners suffer are beyond normal human endurance. Their health is suffering badly, and one of them, Pauline McLaughlin, is very near death. Over the years support for them has been growing on the outside, mainly in Ireland but also in the USA — pressure that has forced the British Government to make pathetic gestures (piped music in the cells etc.) but time is against the brave men and women in Britain's concentration camps. The final straw that drove them to the desperate step of hunger striking was the failure of talks between Archbishop O'Fiaich and British minister Humphrey Atkins.

Imprisonment, degradation, torture are just words to us maybe — but they are a living reality in Northern Ireland. We in Britain MUST show our total condemnation of the Government which imposes them.

NEW ARMY-LOYALIST TERROR CAMPAIGN

The whole struggle of the prisoners, and the present hunger strike is at the centre of the whole fight against British Imperialism in Ireland. And campaigns in support of the prisoners are very important.

The British Army and its allies know this, and there is strong evidence that they have launched a campaign not only to eliminate those who lead the prisoners' support campaigns, but to attack and terrorise all those who support it.

This is illustrated by two incidents described below.

Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle were shot dead in Ronnie's house at 4 am October 15. Both men were members of IRSP, but were best known in the last period for the work they were doing in the prisoners' campaigns.

The heavily bolted door was smashed in by 2 or 3 gun men in balaclava helmets. They shot Ronnie dead on the stairs, and critically injured his wife Suzanne. They then went directly to the room Noel was sharing with the baby and shot him dead.

The assassins entered Andersons town, a nationalist area, with impunity and left with the same ease. The army and police presence in that area is constant, and yet they saw and heard nothing. As with Miriam Daly's murder in the summer, very exceptionally, no security forces were around. Such things do not happen by coincidence: at the least, we are talking about the Army, police or police reservists passing information and giving safe passage to loyalist sectarian assassins.

But there is more. It seems possible that the assassins knew Noel Lyttle would be in that house and they could not have known that without direct help from Army or police, since his presence there arose from the fact that he had been detained a few days before and that he was intending to visit someone in H Block the next day.

And on the very same day of the murders, GOC Lawson made a speech described by the press as one of the most outspoken speeches by an Army GOC in the 6 Counties. He pledged that those responsible for 'mindless violence' would be 'eliminated'.

But it was another incident four days later that persuaded Paddy Devlin to say, 'The raid raises the possibility that the SAS (the British Army's special commando and undercover force) was responsible for last week's killing in West Belfast of Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle'. Paddy Devlin's cautious statement comes from one who is viciously opposed to the armed struggle and who has supported the British Army on many occasions.

The raid he refers to was in Twinbrook, West Belfast. When the prisoners'

hunger strike was announced, a number of Relatives Action Committee and H Block meetings were called in West Belfast. One was arranged at a house in Twinbrook for Sunday October 19 (it was at a house because there are no available public meeting places). Local catholic churches were leafleted naming the house as the meeting place and as an information centre for coordinating support for the prisoners.

Just before the meeting was due to start, the house was 'stormed by British Army SAS soldiers' (*Irish Press*).

The 20 SAS had balaclavas over their faces, and wore anoraks (which happened to display orange bands!) They broke in the front door with sledge hammers. They were so like a loyalist assassination squad in dress and behaviour that they were taken to be so and one man jumped through a closed window to try to save himself.

The SAS tied Mrs Berkery and her 14 year old daughter to chairs; all the people in neighbouring houses were put under house arrest; a priest who hurried round when he heard what was going on, was arrested; shots were fired; one report says that a regular Army officer who complained about the girl being tied up was told to shut up or he'd be shot. Mrs Berkery and two others were taken away in detention, but in the end no charges could be put against them and they were released.

The following appreciation of Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle was contributed by IRSP London.

On Wednesday October 15, 1980, the Irish Republican Socialist Party lost two of its most committed comrades. The carefully planned, cold blooded murders of Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle clearly illustrate the dangers faced by those who oppose the British domination of their country.

This was not the first attempt on Ronnie Bunting's life. Having come from a staunchly loyalist background, and being well known as a republican socialist, he had made enemies of more than just the British State.

Whilst a student at Queen's University, he became involved in the civil rights movement and later joined the republican clubs. When he left the republican clubs to become a founder member of the IRSP, he was looked upon as an enemy by some of his former comrades who were responsible for one of the three assassination attempts on his life.

As a result of his political activities, Ronnie was forced to give up his job and move to a safe area of Belfast. The Buntings' home was raided by the British Army on numerous occasions. Ronnie experienced several seven day detentions in Castlereagh, and also came in for

It is clear that the raid was intended to strike the fear of death into all those who wished to attend a meeting in support of the prisoners. And it certainly did that. The SAS have made clear that anyone who attends what is essentially a meeting about civil rights is a target who may be killed in an SAS raid which pretends to be searching for mythical gunmen.

But more than that, the belief that killings which have been put down to Loyalist squads were in fact carried out by masked SAS men is given even more credence. And what that says to the people of West Belfast is that every single one of them may be killed by an official unit of the British Army which may no longer need to offer even the most spurious excuse for shooting to kill. Although the evidence is not conclusive yet, the fact remains that the nationalist people do have good reasons to believe it to be true.

In the face of this official terrorism, the nationalist people have once again responded with great bravery. The very next day, there were ARAC meetings in the Short Strand and Markets area of Belfast. Both areas are small nationalist enclaves and very vulnerable to attack. At both these meetings there was an attendance of 200 or 300. The people are not deterred and are determined to support their prisoners.

harassment by 'Free State Police'. Being a former internee, he always identified strongly with the plight of the prisoners and was a leading activist in the H Block campaign.

Noel Lyttle was best known for his work on behalf of the prisoners, through his involvement with the Smash H Block Committee, and as PRO for the Relatives' Action Committee. Having been recently released from a period in Castlereagh, he was staying with Ronnie and Suzanne Bunting.

The fact that Suzanne Bunting was from a protestant background and a member of the Women Against Imperialism group meant that she, too, was on the assassination list.

The murders, coming just three months after the assassination of Miriam Daly, former chair-person of the IRSP, clearly illustrate the carefully orchestrated campaign to silence the IRSP. With a hunger strike in the offing, this can also be seen as a means of intimidating those active on H Block and Armagh jail.

Whilst we mourn the loss of our two comrades, we know that the only fitting memorial to Ronnie and Noel will be the continuation of the struggle for a 32 county socialist republic.

We wish Suzanne a speedy recovery, and extend our sympathy to her and the family, and to the family of Noel Lyttle.



Addled Atkins

Humphrey Atkins is definitely a bumbling idiot — but as Secretary of State for N. Ireland he is also a dangerous buffoon. This was amply demonstrated when he spoke at a public meeting on Friday 3rd October in the Tory stronghold of Staines just outside London. This is his own constituency and the topic for discussion was 'Is there an answer to the question of Ireland?' He certainly didn't seem to know it and later even went as far as to say so!

Except for four T.O.M. members the audience was mostly true blue Tories, who listened attentively as Atkins glossed over the 17th century plantations and the subsequent almost total transference of land from the indigenous people to the British colonists. To this historic crime, after mentioning that land in Catholic hands had fallen from 75% to 15% he simply added 'well, rightly or wrongly so ...'

Later he mentioned that because the Unionists refused to accept the will of the majority of Irish people, Ireland was partitioned in 1922, again 'rightly or wrongly'. Even on the very foundation of Labour and Tory bipartisan policy towards Ireland he was unsure: 'The fact is that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. That may be right, or it may be wrong.'

Later on, 'there are people in the Troops Out Movement who would have me withdraw the troops from Northern Ireland. Well let me tell them that's exactly what we plan to do.' But when a woman said that her cousin in Armagh was 'terrified lest Britain withdraw her troops', Atkins re-assured her not to worry! As a T.O.M. member raised the question of the H-Blocks and Armagh jail the Tory audience gasped in disbelief and shouts of 'lies', 'rubbish' and even laughter could be heard as she unfolded the cruel reality of British rule in the North.

'This just doesn't happen. Have you ever been in Armagh jail?' asked Atkins smugly. When she answered that it was impossible for her to gain admission, a male member of the audience hurled sexist abuse: 'How do you know it's bloody well true then, you silly woman?'

But if we thought that Atkins had proved himself as a congenital idiot, he certainly felt that he hadn't done enough. When asked at the end of the meeting, 'But you still have not told us, what is the answer to the Northern Ireland problem?' he replied confidently, 'People say to me what is the solution? I say, I don't know.'

Possibly his most confident prediction was given with, 'I think I'll be dead before the Irish question is solved.'

Even as he was leaving, 'Mr. Atkins, could you answer one last question? I don't know if I can.'

'What would you do if there was a mass hunger strike in the H-Blocks or Armagh?'

'Sorry, that's the question I can't answer. Goodnight.'

OCCUPIED BELFAST

The writer was a member of the TOM delegation to Belfast in August. After Sinn Féin's demonstration on the Sunday, the Army moved in.

I was arrested during a riot. I was crouching to protect myself from the plastic bullets when I was lifted by a 'snatch' squad: one soldier grabbed me by the hair while two grabbed me by the arms.

Crammed into an army jeep with 4 or 5 squaddies, all armed to the hilt, I was driven off. But instead of being taken straight to Woodburne police station, the soldiers stayed on for some more battle.

With the jeep stopped in Andersonstown Road, one squaddie would poke his head through a hatch in the roof and blast away with his lethal plastic-bullet gun. After a shot was fired, his mate would call up, 'Did you get one?' 'No, I didn't get one of the bastards, but I will next time.' It was as though he was shooting at ducks on a firing range. Aiming for the head or chest, he was out to kill people. He was not concerned as to their age, sex, politics, or whether or not they were throwing stones. Here was a murderer: his potential victims, the population of West Belfast. In between firing his deadly shots he would lower himself and try and argue with me that if the army were pulled out there would be a bloodbath. I felt sick.

The squaddies called me an idiot, murderer, anarchist, communist, animal. They told me they'd put a few bullets in my chest if they got a chance. They said they would show me the bodies of blown

up soldiers; I shouted that I would show them the vegetable existence they had created for a 15 year old friend — having shot her in the head with a plastic bullet only 48 hours before.

For an hour or two, I was generally abused and threatened. But the RUC policemen found it a problem to insult me for my nationality or race (as they would do almost by instinct with local Catholics); to do so was to adopt the wrong political position. One detective (who had told me that 'Paisley is the man' and 'you should come to the July 12 parade') shouted at me, 'The British empire is finished, why don't you people see that' and 'You English are always poking your noses in other countries' affairs'. He was confused and frustrated at being confronted with an 'ally' who was also a 'traitor'. He finally began to hit me around the head.

Later other RUC men threatened me with Castlereagh interrogation centre, saying I would be held for 7 days, tortured, then deported. I didn't know what to believe.

My treatment as an English visitor was a lot better than for most. I met a Scotsman whose arm was broken in two places by a squaddie while arresting him, and he was denied medical treatment for 4 hours. A local man was taken to a nearby cell with blood all over his face. While waiting to go into court next day, I saw a young woman being led out of court and literally being beaten to her cell: we could hear her screams ringing round the building for 15 minutes. I got off lightly; for these people it is a daily process.

WHAT IS REPUBLICANISM?

In the war in Ireland, the British State uses savage and large-scale repression against the resistance of the nationalist people. The people are fighting for their right to be free of foreign domination – the Irish struggle is no different from the struggle of the people of Vietnam against the USA, of Algeria against France, Zimbabwe against Britain, Iran against the USA or Afghanistan against the Soviet Union.

All democrats can and should support the Irish people's struggle because it is for the freedom to determine their own future. But the simple truth is obscured

by the lies thrown at us from TV screens and the pages of newspapers. Lies: that the IRA are murderous terrorists. Lies: that they have no good reason for fighting. Lies: that they attack all and sundry, indiscriminately. Lies: that they have no support. Lies: that they're not even good at fighting and are on the point of defeat.

Such propaganda is not new. In Kenya, for example, the Land and Freedom Army was always referred to as the 'Mau Mau' to make it sound primitive and savage, and the papers were full of nothing but 'Mau Mau atrocities'. When

the statistics were published after the war they told a different story: the white settlers were virtually untouched, the security forces lost 167 men, but the Kenyans suffered 11,503 'terrorists' killed and 1,819 'loyal Africans' (did they wear badges or something?).

It is vital for people in Britain to see through the lies and give their support to the Irish struggle for self-determination. And to get clear that the British state is thoroughly imperialist with nothing good to offer the peoples of *any* country, even its own.

IRISH REPUBLICANISM ■ ■ ■ ■

For most British people, their only knowledge of Republicanism comes from what adverse reporting they've heard on T.V. and radio or read in the press – rather like Americans and the war in Vietnam. But for tens of thousands of Catholic workers, second class citizens in the North of Ireland living in dilapidated housing estates surrounded by army forts, it's their response to a brutal reality. Facing massive unemployment (40% in Catholic Strabane) and constant harassment from the thousands of loyalist police, Ulster Defence Regiment and British soldiers, they are in no doubt that peace and civil rights will never be possible while the bloody, centuries old British link remains.

Since the initial invasion by England over 800 years ago Ireland has been held by force of arms, and during that time many bloody rebellions took place. Although the first unified, coherent expression for complete independence was led by Wolfe Tone almost 200 years ago, Republican ideals are as strong as ever today and are also part and parcel of the fight for social and economic change throughout the whole of Ireland.

RADICAL NATIONALISM

Whilst extreme nationalism in the oppressor country Britain is akin to fascism (e.g. National Front), in the oppressed nation Ireland it manifests totally different politics. By far the most important aspect of Irish nationalism was and is the realisation that Britain would never voluntarily concede independence.

Examples are the United Irishmen's rising (1798), the Young Ireland rising (1848), the Fenian movement (1860), the Easter Rising (1916) and the present struggle. Many of these revolutionary bodies made their converts entirely amongst working people (e.g. Fenians) and Trade Unionists (e.g. Connolly's Citizen Army 1914).

But there were some in the Irish establishment who were outraged at their radical objectives. 'Hell is not hot enough nor eternity long enough to punish such

miscreants', – Bishop Moriarty of County Kerry on the Fenians. The Land War (1879-1882) where tenant farmers as a class stood up to the landlords, was not merely striving for agrarian reform but was also a movement of national self-assertion. Its attack on British rule through challenging property rights brought many denunciations by Catholic Archbishop McCabe. He was later to be made a cardinal!

CONNOLLY

The link between National Independence and radical social and economic change was made most strongly by Scottish Marxist James Connolly. As trade union leader in Ireland with Jim Larkin's newly formed Irish Transport and General Workers Union he foresaw that the classless nationalism of 'Home Rule' politicians limited social and economic freedom to those with the power to control it – the business, merchant and property owning classes. For him national liberation and socialism were one and the same struggle and he saw that any partition of Ireland would have an irredeemable effect on workers unity. Through his writings, trade union organization and participation in the Easter Rising Connolly did more than anyone else in joining labour with radical nationalism. The legacy of his struggle is felt not just in Ireland but world-wide.

PARTITION

With the British imposed partition of 1921 the Republican Movement split into those who supported partition (Free Staters) and those who didn't (Republicans). The Free Staters, with help from Britain, engaged in a bloody civil war with the Republicans and even executed more than had been killed by the British! But the *raison d'être* of Republicanism – to fight British rule in Ireland – still remained as strong as ever. Although the new 26 county 'Free State' subsequently introduced special legislation and internment to combat Republicanism the continued occupation by Britain of the six N. Eastern counties and the living reality of its repressive Unionist controlled government, police force, and judiciary stood as a constant reminder that the fight was far from over.

After partition the newly formed Nationalist Party sought the Parliamentary road in the N. Irish statelet whilst Sinn Féin (founded in 1907 by Arthur Griffith) took an abstentionist and militantly Republican line. In the North the I.R.A. carried on intermittently with armed struggle and internment without trial was used both North and South. Many Republicans defied the Establishment and Catholic Church when as a gesture of international solidarity they fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War, but their biggest fight came with the beginning of the present war in 1968.

TODAY

When the Civil Rights movement took to the streets and had their marches banned by the Government and attacked by the Loyalist police it was clearer than ever that the irreformability of the N. Ireland state lay in its sectarian and

violent birth of 1921 and the supporting British link. While that link remained nothing would change. With the introduction of British troops in 1969 support for the Republican movement came from all quarters. Particularly in the working-class Catholic ghettos saturated by the British Army the I.R.A. grew in strength. Their rebirth was a direct result of the Nationalist population defending themselves against the police, army and Loyalist paramilitary forces rather than the popular myth of the British press that the 'security forces' are there to protect the people from the 'terrorist'. The continued support for the military and political aspects of Republicanism, especially amongst working-class Catholics who have borne the brunt of 11 years war, is a constant reminder that even the British Army with all its experience of colonial conflict cannot extinguish the age old desire for self-determination.

The idea patronisingly offered by some that Irish Republicanism is nothing more than narrow clerical nationalism or green fascism is an unforgivable slander on a people who have suffered more and fought harder than any other in these islands, and with all the repression that Britain can muster they're still winning. The very least that we can do here is to fight to get the **TROOPS OUT NOW!**

IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

Last month the Irish journal *Magill* interviewed a leading member of the IRA. These excerpts from that interview explain certain aspects of the **armed struggle**. Future issues of *Troops Out* will follow up other aspects of Republicanism.

THE OBJECT OF ARMED STRUGGLE

The object of our armed struggle is twofold: further destabilise the inherently unstable Six Counties, and also to wear down the will of the British Government. Either the British Government itself comes to the conclusion that it must leave, or that conclusion will be forced on them by British public opinion. We can make the occupation of the North extremely expensive. Present costs are running at £1000 million annually and of course we will be hitting at the soldiers constantly and causing their morale to be so low that the Brits will find that they are incapable of maintaining any sort of order in the North.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE WAR

The other aspect of our armed struggle is to affect the morale of the British Army and to create an impact on the British people. We have not managed to match last year's performance this year. That is because circumstances have been

forced upon us and there have been some material problems. The British are sliding into their 1977 mistake of predicting our defeat. They're fighting a statistical war, we're not. We're fighting a political war. The Brits are saying that the Provos are beaten, operations are down, there's less poundage of explosives used, four soldiers less have died this year etc. That's a false confidence and that's OK with us because we will wreck it when we choose.

ATTACKS ON POLICE AND ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT ARE NOT SECTARIAN

In the RUC Constabulary gazette of June 1979 they admitted that the UDR and RUC Reserve were the eyes and ears of the Crown forces in the North. We don't shoot anyone because of his religious beliefs. We have given notice to UDR men that if they contact us and assure us they are no longer members of the UDR we will not touch them. The problem has been because of the difficulties the UDR has in recruiting members because of declining morale the turnover has been so high and occasionally our intelligence has been mistaken and we have shot by mistake former members. In rural areas it is the UDR and RUC not so much the British Army which is repressing people so our attacks on them will continue. But nobody can show there is a sectarian pattern to our attacks on the UDR.

LOYALISM AND THE MAIN ENEMY

The majority of people assassinated by Loyalists have been totally innocent Catholics. This year they have attempted a certain amount of discrimination. They have attacked Republicans and also fellow Protestants close to the Irish nationalist tradition in an attempt to provoke the IRA into blind or frustrated retaliation. We have absolutely no intentions of getting involved in such a war. They distract the IRA from attacks on Crown forces and help the British to foster the idea of being brokers between

two factions. That's not to say we wouldn't take retaliatory action against Loyalists we knew were specifically in the UVF or UDA, and were in an influential position with regard to these attacks.

SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE

The Brits are very, very good at undercover work. This is what they are into now. Nevertheless we are totally satisfied that we know why our active service units are caught. While the British are good we always know where they operate and why they operate. Because the population is hostile to them and sympathetic to us they tell us about them.

POLITICAL AIMS

The position of the IRA on Federalism is that for a long long time we promoted it as the best way of solving the problem by marrying the Unionist tradition to the Irish tradition in a transitional situation. However, within the last number of years the Loyalists started to promote 6 County independence, which they had anyway for 50 years. We began therefore to examine Federalism again and the dangers involved. It wouldn't break the back of Loyalism in Ireland and get rid of the bar to solving the national question and opening the possibilities of establishing a democratic socialist republic. What we now advocate is a single national government but with as much decentralisation as possible.

MOUNTBATTEN - BRITISH FIGUREHEADS AND ESTABLISHMENT LEADERS

They are part of the British military machine. It would be stupid and morally wrong for us to attack an ordinary British person but for us to attack a pillar of the British establishment like Mountbatten or Quintin Hogg or for us to attack the likes of Roy Mason, who we will never forget for what he did to the Irish people, gains us more attention and political effect.

The IRA is a national liberation organisation.



PORT TALBOT: ARMY VULTURES GET RUDE WELCOME

In a concerted attempt to cash in on local unemployment — including recent steel redundancies — the British Army recently undertook the largest recruiting display to hit south Wales since the second world war.

In a determined day of action against the display the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement supported by South Wales Troops Out and Right to Work branches made sure that the Army were given a welcome they would never forget.

Following a three hundred strong demonstration through the town of Port Talbot, at least half of the protestors proceeded on to Margam Park to picket the army display.

Though the official programme described a planned jamboree of Army displays — from white helmet display teams to parachutists — the best display of the day was of large scale civil disobedience from the protestors — giving the army a real fright.

The day's events started with the pomp and ceremony of a military band march past. However as they disappeared amongst the haze of a hastily thrown smoke flare they were joined in their march past by a crowd of protestors. The whole affair looked more like a surrealist picture than a stiff upper lipped army display.

One pitch invasion was followed by another. On one occasion two protestors, including an ex army officer, took to the field and stood defiantly amidst the whitehelmets motorcycle and horseback display. Becoming increasingly embarrassed at the protestors action the whitehelmets attempted to encircle the protestors and shut them up. However a strategic grab for one of the horses balls was met with loud cheers from onlooking protestors and more red faces from the Army.

The afternoon progressed and the protests continued. Several union jack flags and flagpoles were pulled to the ground, officers outside one tent were pelted with mud, battery guns were overturned. It was a rare sight to see half a dozen surprised paras dropping to the ground being met by jeers and chants of 'remember Bloody Sunday' and 'Go home ya bums'. More red faces.

It was also an ideal opportunity to argue with the soldiers present and put them on the spot about the army's role in Northern Ireland. It became clear that many soldiers were unsettled by our presence. Many listened attentively to our arguments looking very nervous, while others seemed content to rehash the weary old lines about being in Northern Ireland to 'keep the peace'.

The protest action was not only effective in exposing what was a very expensive cover up operation — it also showed that such demonstrations can be enjoyable as well as effective.

Anger is continuing to mount at army recruiting in South Wales. Labour councillors in Cardiff have hit the headlines in the Welsh press by calling for a ban on next year's Cardiff Tattoo. There is little doubt that mass unemployment is being used as a form of economic conscription — aimed at enticing unemployed youth into the army and onto the streets of Northern Ireland. It becomes all the more essential that anti-recruitment activity be stepped up.

Cardiff TOM

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

In an editorial on October 3rd, *The Guardian* called the conflict in the Six Counties 'the most serious and sustained armed rebellion which any Western nation has had to face since the war.' But if you were to use the Labour Party Conference as your guide to the major issues facing the labour movement, then Ireland would seem very much a side issue.

The debate on a motion calling for 'political and military withdrawal, political status for Republican prisoners and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act' lasted half an hour on the Wednesday morning where it had been scheduled at a time when there was no TV coverage. This, and the motion's rejection by a large majority, shows the extent to which apathy, chauvinism and unconcern is rife in the labour movement.

GLIMMER OF HOPE?

The fact that the motion was discussed at all is an encouraging sign. It was brought about by the increased grassroots pressure which was largely coordinated by the Labour Committee on Ireland. And another encouraging sign is the support it received from nearly 200 constituency Labour Parties. This, the most successful campaign in the Labour Party in recent times, raises a tactical question. First, whether by allowing the motion to go for a vote its rejection will affect discussion on the National Executive Council — which is preparing what 'could be' a progressive and comprehensive document on Ireland. The large vote against the motion could well do this, but on reflection the support of 200 or so constituencies could be enough to offset any such negative effects, particularly since the NEC power base tends to be in the constituencies rather than in the unions.

TOO LATE

But at the present rate of progress the breaking of the bipartisan policy (Tory/Labour agreement on Ireland) will come too late for the hunger strikers in the H-

PERSECUTION OF SCOTTISH REPUBLICANS

Summer 1980 will be well-remembered in Scotland for a clamp-down on the Scottish Republican movement. Chief victims were the Scottish Republican Socialist League and the militant bourgeois nationalist organisation, Siol Nan Gaidheal. While in the past both these organisations have been subjected to intense Special Branch scrutiny, the summer began with scores of arrests and interrogations under the vicious Prevention of Terrorism Act, which, in the case of the SRS� led to a spectacular show-trial held under conditions of unprecedented security in the High Court in Glasgow. The security measures were the most stringent ever applied outside the North of Ireland. Because of this stringency, Court staff at one stage threatened to strike, and regular Court journalists threatened to boycott the trial. Nine men and one woman faced 26 charges relating to conspiracy to further by criminal means the purposes of the SRS� and instigate acts of terrorism in the UK. Since the trial began, after imprisonment for over 3 months, 3 of the accused were unconditionally released due to lack of evidence and the other 7 received sentences ranging from 6 to 16 years; a total of 72 years.



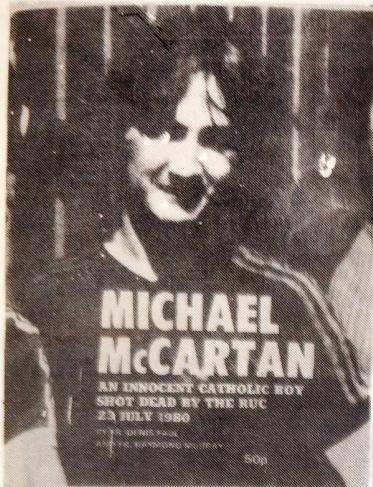
Denis Healey (future Labour leader?) with friends in Belfast.

Blocks. The forces propagandising in or at the Labour Party need to make Ireland the main issue. Everything must be concentrated to swing public opinion around and help avert tragedy.

REVIEWS

REVIEWS

REVIEWS



Michael McCartan by Fr. Denis Faul and Fr. Raymond Murray
50p Press Centre, Falls Road, Belfast 12

As the introduction states: 'The facts of the killing of Michael McCartan — done to death by the RUC must go out to the world to have this illegal "sham legal" killing of Catholics by British-controlled Protestant sectarian forces in N. Ireland stopped.'

The pamphlet (22 pages with photos), is an impassioned, clear account of the facts leading up to 16 year old Michael's murder, for the 'crime' of painting 'Provos' on a hoarding. The introduction gives you a concrete insight into what the 'Protestant Ascendancy' and its British prop in the Six Counties means to Catholics living there. The authors know from bitter experience that nothing will be done about the boy's killing. That is not the point. It is against the tyranny of that ascendancy that 'we Catholics will speak and proclaim our right to equality and freedom'.

The moving stories by Michael's parents, neighbours, and his mates refute the RUC cover-up of the killing — that Michael's paintbrush was taken for a gun, and that they warned him to 'halt' before shooting him. 'We met someone who told us Michael was shot. We met our mates we'd been playing with earlier and they told us what had happened. The reason I'm relating this is had there been a warning we'd have heard it.' (A friend) The stories also tell you about Michael himself, the life of the small community, the support for each other.

'Bob Harvey did the reading at Mass (funeral Mass) . . . Michael was sort of quiet. Liked dogs, went out hunting, fishing sometimes, sometimes discos, going around together, playing cards. No work to do here.' (Another friend)

At the end of the pamphlet is a 'letter to America'. It says 'Please ensure that the RUC do not obtain guns from the USA to shoot down Catholics'. The priests who put it together are against violence and for life — they also clearly understand the real perpetrators of violence in the occupied Six Counties.



The Story of the Irish Citizen Army by Sean O'Casey. Journeyman Press, 72pp, £1.50

The Irish Citizen Army, formed around trade unionists and working people, and which played such an important role in the Easter Rising of 1916, has rightly been described as Europe's first 'Red Army'. Here is an account of its formation during the 1913-14 Dublin strike, its relationship with the more nationalistic Irish Volunteers and character portraits of its most important members, Jim Larkin, Countess Markiewicz and James Connolly.

The author Sean O'Casey, also a leading member and later to become one of Ireland's greatest playwrights, while lending his own literary style to the account does not neglect the important history and role of the Citizen Army. Whilst everything looked promising in the beginning for an army of the working class, according to O'Casey *the people of Ireland were not ripe enough to be shaken from the green tree of Nationalism into the wide basket of an Irish Labour Army*. The subsequent arrests of Labour leaders, the end of the strike and the formation of the Irish Volunteers (1914) badly damaged the Citizen Army's progress. Thousands moved over to the more attractive and better organised Volunteers preferring 'Caithlin Ni Houlihan (mythical woman representing Ireland) in a respectable dress rather than a Caithlin in the garb of a working woman' and the first handbill issued by the Citizen Army was titled 'Why Irish Workers should not join the Volunteers'.

But although many bitter disputes took place it was clear that common ground to the British 800 year presence was strong enough and 'it became quite obvious now to all that the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army . . . would eventually be one in action.' Joint drilling exercises became more pointed and practical. The Marxist revolutionary James Connolly was now leader of the Citizen Army and according to the author 'stepped from the narrow byway of Irish Socialism onto the broad and crowded highway of Irish Nationalism'. But although the rising in Dublin on Easter Monday (1916) by the Citizen Army and the Volunteers was brutally crushed and the leaders executed, it heralded the most vociferous challenge to British rule in Ireland.

It is fitting to remember the support that came from British workers during that period. George Lansbury, speaking at a meeting in a packed Albert Hall to commemorate the Russian Revolution, said, 'We English people have to clear our

BRITS & PIECES

... 'We now leave Blackpool and go over to a programme for younger viewers.' This announcement came when many had switched on the telly with baited breath in order to see the Labour Party debate on Ireland. There is an unconfirmed report that Callaghan commented on this: 'So what if our viewers missed it? Play-school is a much more serious question. That's why we scheduled it for ... Ooops!'

... And still on the subject of the BBC, some youths were interviewed recently in Zurich about clashes with police. 'What will be the next step the police will take?' asked the interviewer. 'More repression, and bigger rubber bullets — big ones, like in Northern Ireland.' The BBC's interviewers obviously needed a refresher course, as they didn't seem to understand the second half of the answer. All we heard was: 'More repression and bigger rubber bullets ...' ... And talking of bullets, Willie Whitelaw was singing the praises of the S.A.S. at an International Police Federation Conference in Brighton the other day. He said, 'The aim of the government's counter-terrorist strategy must be to maintain and if necessary restore public confidence in democratic institutions.' If I had been translating for Swiss television, I would have substituted 'murdering thugs' for 'democratic institutions'.

... Meanwhile, David Frost was trying to break the ice at ITV's 25th anniversary dinner party. 'We fought the Germans in 1914 and won. We fought the Germans in 1939 and won. So why the hell are we now in Northern Ireland instead of fighting the Germans?' (We are asking Frost to write 'Brits and Pieces' next month.)

... Last but not least, the Northern Ireland Office's most recent statement on the blanket men and women: 'Murderers are murderers wherever they are.' We can only presume that this was a phrase from the yearly report on the Northern Ireland Office personnel, which slipped out by mistake.

EVERYWHERE THEY GO...

During the recent NATO war games, 30,000 British troops passed through Belgium and were confronted by a fine array of wall slogans painted by the WERKGROEP IERLAND (Vlaanderen) all around Antwerp. 'This must have been embarrassing for the British', they tell us, 'for on their return they phoned the gendarmes to arrest us when we unfolded our banner saying 'BRITS OUT OF IRELAND'. The Brits had to read this message while passing by by the hundreds in their jeeps and trucks.'

own doorstep . . . He (Connolly) and his dead colleagues of a year ago were just too soon, that is all; and, friends, we British people have got to clear that Irish question up, because until we do it, it is not for us to celebrate other people's triumphs over reaction.'

This is both an informative and eloquent account of the Irish Citizen Army's history and provides a very useful insight from one of its members.

Downing Street . . . Birmingham . . . South London

On Saturday 19th October a mass picket was held of Downing Street. It was called to highlight the plight of the prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh who are to begin their hunger strike to the death on October 27th. Many placards and banners were present with the slogans 'Don't let the prisoners die! Restore political status!' There were many new faces present, who had not been on previous demonstrations (excepting the three special branch photographers) and it was also encouraging to see their enthusiasm and the prospect of even greater pickets in the future.

A number of men and women dressed in blankets and led by pacifist Pat Arrow-smith were allowed into Downing Street to present a letter to Margaret Thatcher

And on Saturday & Sunday October 25/26 there was a 25 hour fast and vigil outside Downing St by Belfast women who have relatives in the H Blocks.

They were supported by Sinn Fein and the Troops Out Movement, and at one point on Saturday evening by several hundred women who arrived from the Socialist Feminist conference. Two of the Belfast women were stopped at Heathrow and held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

TROOPS OUT TROOPS OUT

Copy for the next issue must be sent in to arrive not later than November 19.

Subs: £3 for 10 issues yearly. Make cheques and POs payable to Troops Out (Literature Committee). Send subs to Box 10, 2a St Pauls Rd, London N1.

If you want to join one of the TOM branches listed below, or if you don't live near a branch and want to join as an individual, fill in the coupon below. Individual membership is £3, which includes a subscription to Troops Out. Membership of a branch is £2, payable through the branch.

ENGLAND

Barnsley
Basingstoke
Birmingham
Brighton
Bristol
Colchester
Coventry
Crawley
Derby
Gravesend
Harlow
Hemel Hempstead
Huddersfield
Lancaster
Leamington
Leeds
Manchester
Merseyside
Norwich
Nottingham
Oxford
Portsmouth
Preston
St Albans

Sheffield

Swindon
Watford
Walsall
York

LONDON AREA

Camden & Islington
Central London
East London
Haringey
Kilburn
South London
SE London
West London

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen
Dundee
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Glasgow Univ
Stirling
Central Scotland

WALES

Cardiff

To Box 10, 2a St Pauls Rd., Lond N1
I would like to join / be sent information about the Troops Out Movement

Name

Address

In the Midlands the week before the hunger strike, eight Councillors (two from the West Midlands County Council and six from Birmingham City Council) signed a letter calling on the Government to grant the prisoners's five demands. The letter went round trade union branches etc. and a press conference was also held.

The Birmingham Evening Mail responded with a hysterical hate campaign - 'Councillors support IRA' etc even though the letter clearly called on support for the hunger strike on humanitarian grounds - and pretended that it was reflecting 'popular outrage'. The H-Block Hunger Strike Action Group had collected 500 signatures in support of the prisoners in only three days, but this was ignored.

As the campaign in Britain gets moving it is to be expected that business and Government interests will react with more and more hostility - they have much to lose.

The H-Block Hunger Strike Action Group meets every Monday, 7.30, at the Labour Club, Bristol Street, Birmingham.

TROOPS OUT T-SHIRTS

As seen on UTV and RTE!!!

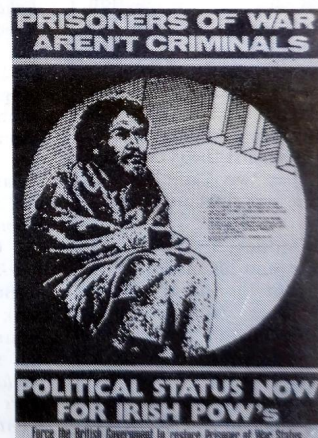
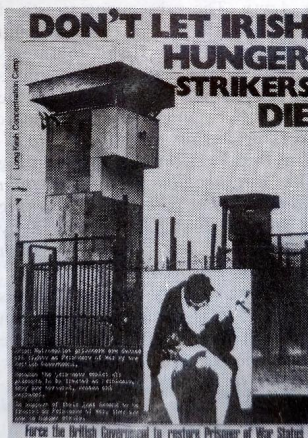
Green Troops Out motif with black lettering 'Troops Out Now, Self-Determination for the Irish People' on white. Small, medium or large.

Better than a badge, as good as a placard. £2.50 + 20p p&p. Orders of 10 or more £2 each +

From: Bristol TOM, Box 3,
110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 8.

A meeting was called by S. London T.O.M. on Tuesday 21st October in Brixton to set up an ad hoc committee which would organise and co-ordinate action in the area around the H-Block hunger strike.

A street meeting was held in Brixton on Saturday 25th October and a public meeting planned for the near future in which it is hoped that Labour MPs, Trade Unionists and representatives from the North will be speaking. Similar committees are being set up in other areas, and it is hoped that all sectarianism will be set aside in furtherance of getting maximum action around the rapidly worsening situation in the H-Blocks.



POSTERS

Posters as shown: A2 size, £1 for 20 cash with order, from Box 10, 136 Kingsland High St E8



The Troops Out Movement is a national movement made up of people who believe that the cause of the 'troubles' in the north of Ireland is the continuing British presence there, both military and economic. We believe that British troops are in Ireland not as a peacekeeping force, but in order to maintain British rule, and that their presence is the most serious obstacle to any progress towards peace. For over ten years the troops have been occupying a part of Ireland, coercing and oppressing the nationalist people, maintaining the division of Ireland and ensuring that its people cannot unite to determine their own future.

We have been working as an organisation for immediate British withdrawal since the early 1970s. We now have over 40 branches around the country. These branches, working locally in whatever ways circumstances allow, are the backbone of the TOM. Membership, or affiliation, is open to any individual or group supporting the demands:

**TROOPS OUT NOW
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE**

HERE IS THE NEWS

SEPTEMBER

31st
Over 20 Loyalist paramilitaries of the Ulster Volunteer Force are arrested and charged with various offences: three with the murder of the Nationalist politician John Turnley and of Rodney McCormick, a Catholic victim of sectarianism in Larne. The round-up includes two members of the Ulster Defence Regiment (local wing of the British Army) accused of arms possession, armed robbery and membership of UVF. And on 29th Sept, an ex-UDR man is charged with the Miami Showband massacre in July 1975, for which two other UDR members have already been convicted.

Foreign Minister of 26 Cos. (Irish Republic) Brian Lenihan, makes a speech at the UN urging Irish unity, British withdrawal and the ending of the British guarantee to the Unionists in the North. But the method of achieving this is to be by negotiations between the two governments — which supposedly have a 'unique relationship' — and in the context of EEC membership.

In the oil tanker drivers strike in the 26 cos, it is announced that the Irish army will be used to break the effectiveness of the flying pickets. The drivers earn on average £68.35p a week and their strike is unofficial.

IRA shoot dead an ambulance driver in Belfast who had been in the RUC reserve force and continued to work with the RUC.

On the outskirts of Crossmaglen, C. Armagh, the IRA ambush an army saracen. Soldiers are treated for shock.

OCTOBER

1st
Labour Party Conference votes to continue to support repression in Northern Ireland and torture of Irish prisoners. See p. 8

3rd
Fra McCann, an ex-blanketman, and Republican supporter Desmond Mackin are arrested in New York for illegally entering the country. They had done a speaking tour and McCann was honoured by the Governor of Massachusetts and the City Council of Boston for his three years on the blanket in Long Kesh. Mackin is also rearrested under a British extradition order as a fugitive from justice.

15 bomb hoaxes and two real bombs bring Belfast centre to a halt: nationalist ghettos are often disrupted by British army obstructions, so the IRA wanted to show what it is like.

SDLP (parliamentary party that relies on the Catholic vote) reject Atkins' proposed Assembly that has advisory powers only. A few days later they qualify their rejection.

5th
An RUC police reservist is charged with membership of Loyalist paramilitary Red Hand Commando. To make it less embarrassing for the authorities he resigns from the police the day he is arrested.

Northern Ireland Office deny they are going to install toilets and sinks in the H-Block cells. But they admit a feasibility study of doing it for all prison cells.

Ronald Reagan gives his view on Ireland: non-interference but with a strong anti-IRA flavour. He is against fund-raising organisations and in favour of extradition even for political charges; 'Peace cannot come from the barrel of a terrorist gun' (which forgets that peace has come precisely by that means for a good percentage of countries, including the USA). John Anderson says he favours a united Ireland.

In an opinion poll on Irish TV (RTE), 77% of those questioned in Northern Ireland are in favour of power-sharing between Protestants and Catholics.

6th
EEC announce a £100 mill grant for Belfast over next 4-5 years for housing, transport etc. 'Belfast and Naples are the EEC's most disadvantaged cities.' But on the 16th Atkins says in a letter to Belfast mayor that this is just a draft plan and the British government has no such intentions. The money was to be part of the refund of British contribution to the EEC purse agreed at the EEC summit this year. The dispute still rages: whose money is it anyway, and is Britain interested in its colony only if it is profitable?

UDR man convicted of attempted rape and assault in Belfast.

7th
UDR man in IRA ambush in Fermanagh. Conservative Party Conference announce no change in its policy of repression for Northern Ireland.

Pauline McLaughlin, political prisoner in Armagh Jail, is rushed to hospital for the second time in two months. Her weight is down to 5 stones and her illness still has not been diagnosed.

8th
Announcement that more troops are to be withdrawn, to bring the numbers down to 11,500.

A Protestant family on a mixed estate in Craigavon is petrol bombed and the mother very seriously burnt: it fits a pattern for which loyalist para-militaries have been charged with.

9th
The progressive Irish Independence Party rejects Atkins' invitation to discuss devolution proposals as being 'impossibly restrictive for any self-respecting anti-unionist.'

In the 26 Cos the first trial under the 1976 Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act ends with the acquittal of the three defendants. The law makes it possible to try people in the South on charges committed in the North, in this case the murder of a UDR man. The judge rejected prosecution evidence as being purely circumstantial, while Sinn Féin picket the court outside, in particular criticising the ruling Fianna Fail party for using the law when they opposed the passing of the Bill in 1976.

10th
Announcement of hunger strike by Irish political prisoners. See p. 2.

UDR man killed by booby trap bomb in Co. Armagh.

A High Court judgement in the 26 Cos upholds the constitutionalality of the paw against homosexuality.

11th
Rose Dugdale is released from Limerick prison after serving 6 years of a 9 year sentence for art robbery and helicopter hijacking. A true supporter of the Irish right to self-determination, she takes part in a demonstration for the Armagh prisoners three days later.

At the weekend conference of the Peace Movement, Mairead Corrigan announces that they are almost broke. The past history of the movement has been to prop up British repression, but now they pass a motion for 'emergency status' for the H-Block prisoners and a return to 'normal law' in the courts.

IRA bomb police station in Warrenpoint. A policeman, a girl and two women are injured.

National H-Block Committee hold a picket outside Armagh Jail. Only a few supporters manage to reach the jail itself, the rest being blocked into a nationalist ghetto by the police, who also attempt to break up the impromptu street meeting.

ICI announce decision to close their plant at Carrickfergus, Co Antrim, with a job loss of 1,000. This brings the total job loss this year

for the area to 3,000; it was a big growth town of the 60's and 70's and a glaring example of continued Protestant privilege; now that privilege is getting dented.

Irish Foreign Minister Lenihan has meeting with Atkins and deputy Gilmour in London in which he pleads for a humanitarian settlement of the H-Blocks but on the wider issue he moves away from the demand for British withdrawal and towards Irish/British cooperation: an 'inter-Government conference' and an on-going working relationship that includes the Northern Irish parties.

5 Nationalist trade unionists are held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act as they return to Northern Ireland after picketing the Tory Conference. They are interrogated and released only after protests from TU leaders.

14th
IRA bomb RUC landrover near the Border on Dublin-Belfast road, resulting in minor injuries and shock.

15th
Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little of the Irish Republican Socialist Party are assassinated. See p. 4.

A 300 lb. IRA car bomb explodes in the centre of Banbridge, Co. Down. A warning is given and there are no injuries; it is one of their economic targets.

Oil tanker drivers in 26 Cos return to work after six week strike having won a considerable advance in their demands.

16th
Cork psychiatrist Robert Daly attacks doctors for their indifference to police ill-treatment and torture of suspects. In spite of the Human Rights Court case and the Bennett Report, British Army and RUC heavy interrogation — beatings, denial of sleep etc — still continue, as his own medical practice with the victims proves. 'Medical bodies have generally shown disinterest also in seeking sanctions against torture. They have criticised torture everywhere except at home.'

Niall Leonnach, the National Organiser of the IRSP, and Pat O'Brien, the IRSP Prisoners Welfare Officer are arrested outside Long Kesh. They are held in Castlereagh Interrogation Centre for 7 days but not charged; Leonnach is served with an exclusion order which bans him from entering Northern Ireland.

19th
SAS soldiers in plain clothes raid advice centre of the Relatives Action Committee in Twinbrook. See p. 4.

26 Cos Government announce increased spending of £100 mill on 'border security' which includes militarising the police and stepping up undercover work.

Relatives of political prisoners meet Irish premier Haughey to ask him to press British Government to grant prisoners' demands and avert the hunger strike.

The conference of the Official Unionist Party — which includes Enoch Powell — are divided whether they want more integration with Britain, or more devolved power for Northern Ireland. Which is REAL Unionism?

20th
Government of 26 Cos states that it is appealing to the British Government about the H-Blocks on humanitarian grounds. Lenihan met the British Ambassador in Dublin to express their concern. And Roscommon County Council calls on the President of European Parliament to mediate between the prisoners and the British Government, and for the International Red Cross to monitor conditions in the H-Blocks and Armagh.

21st
Unemployment figures for the UK show average of 8.5%, for Northern Ireland 15.6% — the highest of all the regions.

DON'T LET THE PRISONERS DIE

Brendan Hughes, P.McFeley, L.Green, R.McCartney, S.McKenna, S.McKiarney, John Nixon

These are the names of the men who have been on hunger strike since Monday, October 27. Already very weak from the appalling conditions in which the British Government has forced them to exist, their decision to go on hunger strike is a brave and determined action in a just cause. The following statement was made by the hunger strikers and smuggled out of H Blocks

We, Republican prisoners of war, presently incarcerated in H Blocks, Long Kesh, firmly declare that from today, October 27, 1980, we shall embark upon a hunger strike, in demand that we not only be recognised and treated as political prisoners, but also as human beings.

Our grave decision to hunger strike is entirely our own, and owes influence only to the perpetuation of 4 long years of British institutionalised torture and unprecedented barbarity here within the H Blocks and Armagh jail.

Having exhausted every other means and alternative available to us, we see no other way of ending this inhumanity.

While the Irish nation remains unfree, partitioned and at war with an alien force, torture in the prisons and oppression in the streets will always exist.

And no different is today from the same Black and Tans of 60 years ago, when the same alien government murdered Terence McSwiney and the young Kevin Barry.

So, in the spirit of McSwiney, and with the determination of 8 centuries of uncompromising resistance, we, the undersigned, of yet another risen Irish generation, declare our firm resolve to uphold these fundamental principles of right and justice. There is no right in torture, and no justice in British justice.

We call upon the Irish nation to bear witness not only to our trials of inhumanity, but to the perennial wrongs inflicted upon our nation by an alien government.

We face death in the mind of those who are right.

We leave our lives in the hands of the Irish nation, and our souls to the most high God.

The British Government will let the hunger strikers die if they think they can get away with it. The Government must be forced to grant the 5 demands.

The main struggle is taking place in the 6 Counties, but we in this country can play an important part by uniting with all democrats and socialists to demand that the Government restores political status.

Everyone, whatever their situation, can help by working with local TOM branches, or with local ad hoc prisoners' committees; by using the H Block petitions; by leafletting, fly-posting, or spray painting; by raising it in trade union branches and on the shop floor, in tenants associations, in every political group.

The prisoners have asked for support; the prisoners' friends and relatives in the Relatives Action Committees and in the H Block Committees have asked for support. Provisional Sinn Féin and IRSP have asked for united protests in solidarity with the prisoners.

Force the British Government to restore Prisoner of War Status.

Tuesday, November 4
Battersea & Wandsworth Trades Council meeting on Ireland: 267-2004 for details

Saturday, November 8
East London TOM demonstration, Tower Hamlets. Details from TOM office
Tuesday November 11

'Prisoners Die!': public meeting, 8pm, Tavistock Hall, Tavistock Rd NW10; speakers: Brent East Labour Party, & Relatives Action Committee
Charter 80 public meeting, Ealing Town Hall, 7.30, film on H Blocks, speakers: ex-soldier, and Labour MP, Clive Soley
Saturday November 15

National Withdrawal Demo: CWI agree that the hunger strike must be a major theme of the demonstration

Monday November 24
South London Hunger Strike Action Committee: public meeting on the prisoners. Speakers from labour and trade union movement and from 6 Counties. 7.30 Lower Town Hall Brixton

Wednesday, November 26
Charter 80 public meeting, Battersea Town Hall, Lavender Hill, Battersea, 7.30

Saturday, November 29
SPTAC picket of Labour Party HQ, Walworth Rd SE17 on 6th anniversary of the Prevention of Terrorism Act

Sunday December 7
National demo in support of hunger strikers: organised by broad based ad hoc committee, will be very important.

Saturday, December 6
TOM Day School on Ireland, Highfields Community Centre, Leicester
speaker from Women Against Imperialism