

# THE IRISH WORKER



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BULLETIN OF CLANN NA HEIREANN IRISH WORKERS ORGANISATION  
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## TASK FOR TRADE UNIONISTS

This month marks ten years since the British Army was sent in to Northern Ireland. Ten years ago also saw the beginnings of large broad solidarity movements in this country in support of the demands of the Northern people for basic civil rights.

Today, however, potential support within the British labour movement remains somewhat soured as a result of the extension of the disastrous terror campaigns of the paramilitaries to this country. That the potential support still exists was shown clearly by the response by various trades councils around the country to the Better Life For All Campaign.

That support must be harnessed and turned into a broad solidarity campaign. It must be understood, though, that the problems in Northern Ireland are complex and that there are not, consequently, any simple or short cut solutions.

During the past few years, a great deal of 'Irish work' in this country has been of a diversionary nature, with concentration solely on highlights or spectacular issues; ignoring the real needs of the people of the North - peace, democracy, guaranteed civil rights, jobs etc.

What is needed is a sustained campaign around the issues that the people of the Six Counties need our support on, regardless of whether they appear attractive or not.

Already it is the policy of the TUC to support the demand for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. That support must be expanded and turned into action and that will only be done by building a strong solidarity movement around the following program of demands:

A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland along the lines of the N.I.C.R.A. model.

The ending of Direct Rule. Northern Ireland needs more democracy - not less. A democratic Assembly elected by proportional representation and protected by the Bill of Rights is required.

The withdrawal of the British Army to Barracks pending their ultimate and absolute withdrawal from the country.

The reform of the RUC to end its political role and the creation of a community based policing service.

An end to all repressive legislation and a review of all convictions in the no-jury Diplock courts.

The reform of the whole Northern Ireland

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Sir Kenneth Newman, Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, is to become Commandant of the Police Staff College at Bramshill, Hampshire, the top police training college in Britain.

If this reflects official thinking on the RUC, it bodes ill for any changes in interrogation procedures, which were subjected to damning criticism by the Amnesty International report and the official report by Judge Bennett. As claims mounted of torture of suspects at Castlereagh holding centre, where detainees were held for seven days under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Chief Constable Newman maintained throughout that injuries sustained in custody were 'self-inflicted'.

Commenting on Newman's appointment, Humphrey Atkin, Northern Ireland Secretary, said that Sir Kenneth had 'established a reputation for skill and integrity second to none for any police force in the United Kingdom'.

The more sinister aspect of the move to Bramshill is its implications for the future role of the police force on mainland Britain. Newman has obviously been selected because he has presided over a force which has been a training ground for new methods of policing and new police technology: the employment of snatch squads, use of riot shields, CS gas, and so on. Most importantly, the RUC is the only police force in the UK whose members are routinely armed.

# Erosion of civil liberty

All these trends towards a paramilitary police force, strenuously resisting demands for accountability to the public, are evident in Britain. Snatch squad methods were first employed by police during the struggle of Asian women for union recognition and an end to slave labour at Grunwicks. Riot shields were introduced at Lewisham as the police shepherded the National Front through a largely black area, despite local opposition. Recent attempted bank robberies have revealed the growing practice of deployment of arms.

The nadir of police community relations was reached in April with the death of Blair Peach of the Anti-Nazi League in Southall. It was little noticed at the time that April marked the tenth anniversary of the death of Samuel Devenny, at the hands of the RUC, during a police riot following a civil rights march.

## When the cuts go deeper

Two recent measures implemented by the Direct Rule regime in the Six Counties have seriously exacerbated the shortage of available housing at rents that people can afford.

An Order in Council, effective from October 1978, allowed landlords to raise rents by 2½ times for properties with a net annual value of over £60. Half of all tenants in this sector are over sixty, yet they are faced with an extremely complex law, and in some situations they may have to apply to three different officials to avoid being adversely affected by it.

Worse still, the order takes no account of improvements made by the tenant themselves to the property, and there is always a massive backlog of appeals against increases.

Take for instance, Mrs Logue, a pensioner from Portadown. She rents an unfurnished house with no bathroom, no inside toilet, and with no source of hot water except a geyser which she herself installed. The house is scheduled for demolition. She was recently informed by the Department of Environment that her rent would be increased from £1.99 to £4.13 a week. She commented, 'I'm afraid my husband fought in vain for this country as there isn't much justice left'.

Yet as the availability of private sector housing for rent declines, in the public sector the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has decided to offer a quarter of its total stock for sale.

As of February of this year there were 24,458 on the waiting list for council houses,



# More Guinness

Guinness is good for you. So runs the old adage. For most of us, the assertion usually warrants special consideration in the aftermath as opposed to during the consumption of the subject. There are some, though, who are quite adamant that hangovers - however induced - notwithstanding, the statement represents bald truth. Indeed, it would be fair to say that the more hangovers there are, the better it (Guinness, or more accurately the profits accruing from its sale) is to them. 'Them', of course, is the Guinness board.

In the first half of this year sales soared to £301 millions with profits reaching £23.1 millions. In league table terms, the Republic of Ireland heads the field with a profit of £8.3 millions, with the United Kingdom breathing down their neck on £8 millions. Overseas operations, boosted by the new fully operative brewery in Nigeria, boast a healthy £4.7 millions.

Lord Iveagh modestly describes the results as 'excellent', but points out, as a word of caution, that the results for the rest of the year are not expected to exceed the comparable period for last year.

Could it be that amidst all the jubilation at Pope John Paul's September visit to Ireland, we detect some long faces around St. James' Gate? When the Pontiff visited his native Poland earlier this year, many of the Faithful voluntarily stopped drinking alcohol for three weeks as a mark of respect.

Reported to have been extremely impressed by such abstinence, the Irish Catholic Hierarchy, with the prompting of local parish priests, are said to be working on a Pastoral letter on the very same theme.

an increase of 11% over two years previously. On top of that there were 20,158 people recorded as wishing to transfer.

The Housing Executive claims that sales will be confined to areas where housing 'need' has been met. Yet in Coleraine, for example, where houses are on offer, 17% of houses were described in 1976 as unfit.

The policy has also had sectarian overtones, as the majority of houses on offer are in Protestant areas.

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# Vietnam

A recent statement from the International Affairs Bureau of Sinn Fein The Workers Party dealing with the subject of Vietnam concluded:

'Sinn Fein The Workers Party is in full solidarity with the democratic socialist Government and people of Vietnam in their major struggle to reconstruct their country after the vicious assaults of the American, French and Japanese colonialists wars. Our Party is sending a second donation of £400 to aid that work.'

Readers of the Irish Worker who would like to subscribe to the appeal should send donations to;

'Vietnam', International Affairs Bureau, Sinn Fein The Workers Party, 30 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1.

All donations will be acknowledged.

The effects of this policy will be to cream off the better quality council houses which, when resold, will be well out of the reach of council tenants, who will increasingly be confined to older houses, flats, and substandard dwellings - if they can get a house at all. Not only that, but the loss of rental income on the houses sold will reduce the finance available to pay the debt charges on new housing - and that means higher rents.



# CLANN na hEIREANN

IRISH WORKERS' ORGANISATION

A march has been organised for August 12th in London to demand Britain's withdrawal from Ireland.

Clann na hEireann Irish Workers Organisation, a support group for Sinn Féin The Workers Party, will not be joining that march. Let it be made clear that we are totally and unequivocally opposed to all foreign domination of Ireland. And insofar as Britain represents a section of the overall foreign domination then we support the idea of her withdrawal. However, as an Irish emigrants organisation with a long history of involvement in the Irish struggle, we reject any attempt to reduce the complexity of the situation by ignoring glaring realities and offering 'at a stroke solutions'. Any such 'solutions' that are offered in place of the long, hard, unromantic road of solidarity work that lies ahead, are dangerous and divisive.

Whether the main organisers like it or not, the march will revolve around the question of British troops (not Britain's involvement) in Ireland, and there is a vast area of difference between the two.

The solution to the multifarious problems facing the Irish people, the summit of their ambitions, the panacea for advancement will be presented in one simple, compact slogan: troops out now.

We support the demand for the withdrawal of the British army but, unlike the bloody advocates of civil war, we want that withdrawal to take place in conditions that are in the best interests of the Irish working class and as part of an overall political package that encompasses their immediate needs: peace, jobs, civil rights and democracy.

There will be many genuine people on the march who are concerned with the atrocious record of the British administration in Ireland. Unfortunately, they will be outnumbered by the rag bag of band-wagoneers who dismiss the whole class nature of the struggle in Ireland and reduce the whole situation to

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prison system with humane conditions for all prisoners.

The creation of jobs by a massive program of state investment and the creation of an all Ireland economic development board to fully utilise Ireland's natural resources and technological expertise.

The recognition of the very serious social problems facing the people of the North and an end to all cuts in spending or investment programs

The isolation of all terrorist groups and their supporters

The introduction of measures to combat sectarianism including the progressive introduction of integrated education.

Such a campaign is geared to providing the basis from which a united Irish working class can practice normal, progressive, class politics.

Readers who wish to support such a campaign should contact The Irish Worker.

a simplistic catholics versus protestants plus troops John Wayne-type model.

Such a presentation could not be further from the truth and we feel that to take part in such a march would bestow undeserved credibility on a false empirical analysis.

Clann na hEireann and the Irish Worker have always maintained that the only ultimate solution in Ireland is socialism and a prerequisite for that is the unity of the Irish working class - protestant and catholic - north and south. Support for that struggle in this country offers no short cuts or instant solutions. Building that support will be long and hard and will require positive action by the British Labour movement in support of the demands that the Irish people themselves make.

Anniversary marches certainly offer those who have reneged on Ireland the opportunity to make a penitent appearance on the streets. They offer no substitute for the Bill of Rights, the ending of repressive legislation, the creation of jobs and homes, democracy, that the Irish working class require for unity and progression.