

# TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

**TROOPS OUT  
NOW**

**SELF  
DETERMINATION  
FOR THE  
IRISH PEOPLE  
AS A WHOLE**

Paper of the Troops Out Movement 30p

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## Anglo-Irish Summit



Photo: Derek Speirs/Report

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# **THE ANGLO-IRISH**

The deal signed at the Anglo-Irish Summit is a pudding whose proof will be very much in the eating.

The 'historic' agreement at Hillsborough Castle on 15th November set up one thing. This is the Intergovernmental Conference, an on-going forum which gives the Government of the Irish Republic a formal voice in the affairs of Northern Ireland.

Beyond that all is vague, a deliberate tactic to maintain a balancing act between the irreconcilable interests of the British State and the Irish people. What follows below is a summary of the terms of the Agreement, and then a broader view of its significance. Its full value, if any, however, will only emerge in the months to come.

## THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE

The Intergovernmental Conference is not entirely an innovation. For the last two years an 'Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council', consisting of ministers and civil servants, has been meeting regularly. The proposed Conference is a formalisation of this structure which — to give it added weight — will have a permanent secretariat of Irish and British civil servants based in the North of Ireland (probably somewhere near Stormont, the former N. Ireland parliament).

The Conference will be jointly chaired by Tom King (N. Ireland Secretary of State) and Peter Barry (Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Republic). Other ministers and officials will attend when necessary — for example, on policing matters the two chiefs of police would come along. As yet they have *never* met each other.

## SOVEREIGNTY

The issue of sovereignty raised by this Conference is dealt with by a classic balancing act:

*'The two Governments*

*(a) affirm that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland; [that is Dublin's concession]*

*(b) recognise that the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland is for no change in the status of Northern Ireland; [statement of fact]*

*(c) declare that, if in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland, they will introduce and support in the respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish.' [that is London's concession]*

The power given to the Irish side is described thus: *'The United Kingdom Government accept that the Irish Government*



Photo: Derek Speirs/Report

*will put forward views and proposals . . . In the interests of promoting peace and stability, determined efforts shall be made through the Conference to resolve any differences' (Article 2(b)).* In addition it is stressed that there is no loss of sovereignty 'on either side'. After the Summit, the Irish side conceded that this leaves the final decision-making power in British hands, but they insist that their role is more than 'consultative'. Dr Fitzgerald described the arrangement as the nearest he could get towards joint authority over the North.

## DEVOLVED RULE

The Agreement then sets out the powers and functions of the Conference. Part of its brief will be to create a devolved rule within the North 'which would secure widespread acceptance throughout the community' — something which the present Northern Ireland Assembly has failed to do in the three years of its existence. The Conference is to act as an interim executive power which will hand over its responsibilities to a devolved

# **The Troops Out Movement**



The Troops Out Movement is a movement in England, Scotland and Wales 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 political. 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 15 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 have a number of branches in England, Scotland and Wales. These branches, working locally in what-

ever 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**

## TROOPS OUT

*Troops Out* is produced by a collective drawn from branches of the Troops Out Movement in London.

Readers' views, articles and letters are always welcome (although we can't guarantee to publish everything that comes in).

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# SUMMIT

## BUT WHAT ABOUT SELF DETERMINATION?

It might be that the Inter-government Conference turns out to be ineffectual as a force for change — that it results only in Dublin's seal of approval on British repression. Or it might be that it does initiate some long overdue reforms.

However, there is no programme of reforms — however radical — which could bring about freedom and justice in the North of Ireland. Reforms are welcome, but they are not the solution. The British division of Ireland, and British rule over part of Ireland, are not compatible with civil rights, the freedom of the individual, the rule of law or democratic government. If a nation does not have self determination then it has nothing.

The question really is: will this Agreement be part of strengthening partition and preventing progress; or will it be a step towards British withdrawal even in spite of its authors' intentions? Much of the actual content of the Agreement points to the former, but there are two aspects behind it which are more hopeful and which need to be watched in the months to come.

Firstly, the involvement of the Irish Republic. It is a remarkable feature of Irish-British relations that in the 26 Cos the dominant attitudes towards the war in the North have been indifference or fear. Only twice, in 1970 (the gun-running episode) and 1973 (Sunningdale), has the Dublin Government made any intervention. Nor has there been any

effective popular expressions of Irish sovereignty, even during the hunger strike of 1981.

This has meant, for example, that the republicans seem only to speak for the nationalist minority, not for the Irish majority. It has stifled the validity of withdrawal movements in Britain like the Troops Out Movement whose demand 'self determination for the Irish people as a whole' does not apparently strike a resonance in the Irish people 'as a whole'.

The signing of the Agreement was met with a great deal of nervousness in the Republic — what have they committed themselves to? Whatever it is, it will be hard to return to the blind eye attitude of the past.

The second positive aspect of the Anglo-Irish Summit is the blow it deals to the Unionists. They have not been part of the negotiating team, they have not even been consulted — they are merely told to go along with whatever London and Dublin decide.

The Unionists, with all their bigotry, are a creation of the British State. They were the local ruling class in the North; they were given Protestant supremacy with the guarantee that N.Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom. The guarantee remains, but the political supremacy has gone.

Britain has been forced to the negotiating table. It is up to us living in Britain, as well as to the nationalist forces in Ireland, to ensure that what Britain concedes is not the little bit necessary to stay in business — but the whole works: withdrawal.

by Sarah Grimes, East London  
Troops Out Movement

government as and when agreement is reached.

The thinking behind this seems to be something like: the present Assembly cannot be given any power because the Unionists refuse to deal with the nationalists and therefore the nationalists boycott the Assembly. But if the North is to continue as a 'separate entity' it must be seen to have some sort of local democratic structures. To achieve this, the British side will start to come down heavy on the Unionist politicians to make some concessions towards sharing power; the Irish side will lend their authority to the Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), giving them at least a semblance of power to enable them to end the boycott, take their seats and be given some ministerial posts; both Irish and British sides will hammer Sinn Fein in some as yet undefined way (probably to begin with by imposing a 'non violence' pledge on candidates or sitting members, of which Sinn Fein has five) in an attempt to halt Sinn Fein's drive to a united Ireland. Thus they hope to arrive at an 'internal settlement' under which 'Northern Ireland' will be able to exist for another generation or so.

### REFORMS

None of this is spelt out in the Agreement, however. In the absence of devolved power, the Conference shall concern itself with the political, economic, judicial, legal and security, cultural and social affairs of the North of Ireland.

The Conference will address itself to discrimination and civil rights. It will enhance cross-border military/police collaboration. It will deal with the role and composition of the Fair Employment Agency, Equal Opportunities Commission, Human Rights Commission, Police Authority and Police Complaints Board. It will consider ways of making the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the Ulster Defence Regiment and the law courts 'more acceptable' to the nationalist people. It might consider a Bill of Rights. It might consider 'mixed courts' whereby a southern judge will sit in the northern court and vice versa — although Thatcher expressed scepticism about this in the House of Commons debate which immediately followed the Summit.

It is clear from the above outline of the Conference's brief that it is a pudding whose ingredients consist of all the problems Britain has failed to solve on its own for over fifteen years. The Agreement itself does not give any answers — it leaves it all for the Conference to work out. The communique which accompanied the Agreement states that the first meetings of the Conference will concentrate on the police and military, particularly the UDR; cooperation of the police/military across the border; and 'public confidence in the administration of justice'.

## Pleasing no-one

Writing from Belfast, Bill Rolston looks at the possible impact of the Summit on the various forces in the North of Ireland.

Of itself, the current agreement is nothing more than a recognition of the present state of affairs between the two governments, and is the lowest common denominator of possible agreements between them. As such it can please no one here.

The Social Democratic and Labour Party, whose hopes of some political relevance were dashed by Thatcher's rejection of the Forum Report, have seen few of their pet complaints answered in the current agreement. The sectarian murders committed by the local

British Army regiment, the Ulster Defence Regiment, have led the SDLP to demand the disbandment of the regiment. Instead, the two governments have agreed merely that the intergovernmental conference will talk about "the minority's lack of confidence in the rule of law" as soon as possible.

As for the loyalist parties, their reaction has been to withdraw from all cooperation with the British government in NI. They have plans to test the legality of the agreement in the courts and to obtain a mandate for their actions by resigning their seats, thus causing a series of by-elections. Their opposition is voiced in terms of a 'sell-out' of their British heritage and of a 'loss of sovereignty'. In fact, the South

will have less say in the North's affairs than the EEC presently has. The loyalists' anger is partly due to their having been kept in the dark by the British in the lead-up to the agreement. In addition, they are, as usual, concerned with symbols. Even if FitzGerald had delivered the head of Gerry Adams on a plate at the press conference, they would have protested that he, a foreign Prime Minister, did so on their sovereign territory. If the truth were told, there is nothing in this agreement which threatens in the slightest their veto on progress towards a United Ireland. More, there is much to be gained for them if the cooperation between both governments leads to increased repression of republicanism.

Like so many occasions of Irish-British cooperation in the past, that is precisely what is likely to be the most lasting legacy of this agreement. FitzGerald said as much: "A

primary aim of the agreement is to provide means by which the minority community may be enabled to identify with the structures of government in NI and to feel themselves to be full first class citizens so that whatever emotional basis there may be for either support or tolerance of the IRA would be eroded".

As for the ordinary nationalist people whom FitzGerald hopes to redeem through this agreement: they are two and a half times as likely to be unemployed as ordinary unionists, less likely to be in skilled jobs or in top management, and are subject to sustained repression by the police and army. In that light, FitzGerald's claim that "nationalists can now raise their heads knowing that their position is and is seen to be on an equal footing with that of members of the unionist community" is an insult to their intelligence.





# THE ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT



## SINN FEIN'S VIEW — ADAMS

The central argument of Gerry Adams' presidential speech to Sinn Fein's annual conference was directed against the Anglo-Irish Summit. The Summit took place two weeks later, but enough was known of its contents for Adams to be able to make decisive criticisms which Sinn Fein upheld after the deal was signed and published.

Mr Adams argues that because the issue of Irish sovereignty was not on the Summit's agenda, the agreement would "copper-fasten" partition; and that if the agreement was lodged as a treaty at the United Nations, it would have the effect of "insulating the British Government from international criticism of their involvement in Irish affairs".

His speech started and concluded on an internationalist note — the struggle for freedom in South Africa, a parallel to the struggle for freedom in Ireland. The speech also attacked those who govern Ireland, both the Irish and the British rulers who desperately oppose Sinn Fein's political advance. "They are not so much afraid of Sinn Fein," Mr Adams declared, "as afraid of the inherent soundness of the Irish people. They realise that they have made such a mess of this country and failed miserably to satisfy the aspirations of ordinary people that the people, cynical of the posturing of establishment politicians, represent a threat to establishment interests."

Below we print the section of Gerry Adams' speech which deals with the Anglo-Irish Summit.

"What started off as the 'greatest political initiative since the '20s' is now merely 'part of a process', to quote Mr John Hume twice. What was to be the relieving of the nightmare of Northern nationalists could well end up with a treaty at the United Nations which endorses the British claim to sovereignty in the 6 Counties, thereby copper-fastening partition and insulating the British government from international criticism of their involvement in Irish affairs.

"While it would be foolish to speculate on speculation about what shape any agreement is likely to take, it is nonetheless important to sketch out our attitude to these talks and in general terms the political context in which they are taking place. They are not about Irish independence or Irish reunification, or even federation or confederalism, or power sharing — those other Forum favourites. This much the London government has made clear...

"The talks, and any subsequent agreement, are about creating a political climate in which this party can be isolated through a mixture of repression and appeasement. The extent of the repression will depend on how successful we are in the continuing process of developing our party and expanding our support.

"On that count we can prepare ourselves for a lot of repression and I hereby give notice to Margaret Thatcher and her cronies in Dublin that we have no intention of ceasing to be successful. On the contrary, we intend to be successful again and again and again. It is necessary here to record that proscription, attempted ostracism, new laws, censor-

ship, the banning of our newspapers, imprisonment (with or without trial), even summary executions, have never defeated us in the past.

"The duration of the struggle, the failure of the British to defeat us, and the short-sightedness of the unionist leaderships are all factors which contribute to the British government's need to involve Dublin more and more in the task of stabilising their interests in this country.

"They can afford to offend the unionists. After all, there will be no constitutional changes and, for all their protestations, the unionists have failed to subdue opposition to partition. Their blatant use of discrimination, gerry-mandering and coercion, encouraged by the British for as long as they succeeded in fulfilling the British need to neutralise opposition to their rule in Ireland, the predictable unionist outcry will be utilised to exaggerate the substance of whatever concessions are produced. In this way, John Hume and Garret Fitzgerald are indebted to Ian Paisley and James Molyneux. As in the past, they trust that unionist paranoia will be sufficient to reassure nationalists.

"Times are changing though. Ordinary nationalists will judge the outcome of these talks not by the rhetoric of its supporters

or opponents but by the real substance, its effects on their lives and its relevance to the struggle of the Irish people for self-determination. In this regard the establishment have made the major mistake of believing their own propaganda. They believe that Sinn Fein flourishes in conditions of deprivation, unemployment and one-sided laws. They fail to note Sinn Fein's commitment — while smashing partition — to working alongside ordinary people to win as many gains as possible within the 6 and 26 Counties. They also underestimate the intelligence of the republican electorate. No mention was made in the past of the Flags & Emblems Act, the status of the Irish language, the conditions of political prisoners and their families. Issues like this, neglected by the SDLP and Dublin in previous negotiations with the British, are now elevated to the position of major importance. The people are not so unsophisticated. They realise that it is their soundness on these issues, allied to their support for Sinn Fein, which makes these issues important points now.

"So too on the question of political prisoners. Our domestic opponents advise both administrations that Sinn Fein needs the imprisonment of our comrades in order to maintain our



Loyalists protesting outside the Summit meeting at Hillsborough.

Photo: Derek Speirs/Report



support base, and that we fear the release of these prisoners or the modification of regulations governing the imprisonment of 'SOSPs' or lifers. On the contrary, this assumption reflects how little people understand the conditions in which we and our supporters live. The political prisoners are our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, husbands or wives, mothers or fathers. They should not be imprisoned at all and any real change in their conditions will be due to their own resistance and the steadfastness of their families. It will be welcomed by us as such. Not as a sop to the consciences of their jailers, but as an overdue recognition of their incorruptibility.

'So too on the accusation that we exploit social inequalities. Unemployment, social demoralisation, poverty, bad housing and ill-health may be a breeding ground for apathy, drug-taking, alcoholism, and

the battering of women and children, but they are hardly fertile conditions for political activism. Where Sinn Fein members are involved with the people against the drug menace and other issues of social concern it is not for political point-scoring but because these evils hurt the communities that we live in and represent. And we do not fear any progress on this front. On the contrary, in its proper context we will welcome any meaningful progress and we recognise the centrality of people's own efforts in making these issues pertinent now.

'Indeed, whilst recognising that Britain may make some concessions to Dublin and the SDLP, and that the EEC and US financial aid may be made available as part of a mistaken analysis that we will be undermined, any such concessions

(Continued on page 14)

## Sinn Fein Ard Fheis

British newspapers persist in describing Sinn Fein as 'the political wing of the IRA', as a form of put-down. While Sinn Fein does openly and unequivocally uphold the necessity of the military work, it is also a vigorous and growing political party which refuses to be marginalised to the 'nationalist strongholds of Derry and Belfast'.

Sinn Fein's confidence as a political force was expressed at their annual conference - Ard-Fheis - which was held in Dublin on 2-3rd November. Over 400 attended it.

The agenda was wide-ranging: publicity; prisoners; social and economic; the economy and taxation; agriculture/forestry; education; international and foreign affairs; London/Dublin talks; anti-repression campaigns; health and social welfare; campaigns and housing; justice and the community; culture; political policy; trade unions; youth; electoral strategy/constitution; women.

macy of the Republic and its Government - because Ireland is divided - it has the principle of abstentionism towards that Government as well as towards British institutions.

It is a very contentious issue, one that caused a split in the movement in 1970 between 'Provisionals' and 'Officials'. The former is now simply Sinn Fein; the latter went on to call itself the Workers Party and has reneged completely on the national question.

Many speakers at the Ard-Fheis feared that if Sinn Fein abandoned the principle of abstentionism then they would go the same way. Others, including some of the leadership, argued that abstentionism is not a principle but a tactic - a particular tactic which is useful in some circumstances but not in others. If Sinn Fein is to be relevant in the 26 Cos, they argued, if it is to play a constructive role in the body politic, then it cannot afford to be shackled and isolated by abstentionism. The motion that abstentionism is a tactic and not a principle was narrowly defeated - with only a 20 vote margin, showing, perhaps, that the debate is by no means finished with.

The Ard-Fheis ended on the Sunday evening with a strengthened commitment to women's rights. Delegates reaffirmed Sinn Fein's internal policy of positive discrimination for women, and condemned domestic violence and pornography. Sinn Fein's policy on abortion was extended to protect the mother's life in cases of ectopic pregnancy and cancer, and to recognise the woman's right to choose. Speakers argued that the notion of self-determination applies to the individual as much as to the nation: it is a question of whether women are trusted to make their own decisions, a question of civil liberties and civil rights.

"Sinn Fein isn't a party of violence, Sinn Fein isn't a party of poverty and Sinn Fein isn't a party of exploitation. I have no trouble repudiating terrorism - the only terrorists in this country are British gunmen and gunwomen." (Gerry Adams)

The last few years have seen Sinn Fein develop rapidly through a firm commitment to a united and independent Ireland combined with progressive social policies. Strategically, Sinn Fein advanced a programme of active community politics from 1981, on the basis of which they have achieved considerable electoral successes. They have one Westminster MP (abstentionist, ie not taking the seat), five Assembly representatives (also abstentionist) and 98 Councillors (who do take their seats, using them to promote the interests of their constituents).

The 1985 Ard-Fheis had the role of consolidating this advance and laying the basis of an overall political programme. But also one of the principle debates was on how to take the advance further and, crucially, how to advance the party in the 26 Cos (the Irish Republic). Because Sinn Fein does not recognise the legiti-



'Our Day Will Come' reads the platform banner at the Sinn Fein conference.

Photo: AP/RN

### UNIONISTS ISOLATED

'We beseech tonight that Thou will deal with the Prime Minister of our country. In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, we hand this woman Margaret Thatcher over to the devil that she might learn not to blaspheme...'

Thus spake the Reverend Ian Paisley to His loyal congregation on the Sunday after the Anglo-Irish Summit.

But behind the laughs is something very sinister and dangerous. On 8th November Kevin McPolin was shot down by the Ulster Freedom Fighters. He was a Catholic workman employed on a building site in loyalist Lisburn, Co. Antrim. The UFF is a cover name for the Ulster Defence Association.

And during the weekend after the Summit there was an arson attack on the home of a Catholic family in North Belfast. And two schoolrooms of a Catholic school in Ballymena, Co. Antrim, were destroyed by fire.

It was predictable that both Unionist politicians and armed loyalists would react against the Summit. Their ideology as a beleaguered 'British' minority garrison in Ireland has never been so clearly exposed since their British guarantors decided not to give them unconditional support.

What also has been exposed is that within the context of the United Kingdom - the context in which the Unionists so firmly insist on their right to be - they are also a beleaguered minority. The more that the likes of Ian Paisley, Gregory Campbell and Ivan Foster get TV coverage, the more revulsion there is in Britain to the religious and national bigotry, their violence and their reactionary historicism. Not to mention the fact that every opinion poll in recent years in Britain has shown a clear majority in favour of British withdrawal from the North of Ireland.



# RACISM - part of Britain's

We have chosen this month to devote our feature pages to articles focussing on anti-Irish racism.

Racism is a system of deeply entrenched practices which works differently against different peoples. Mostly, it is an extension of imperialism from the economic and military level to every level of social organisation and institutions, and to personal psychology.

However little white English people may know of British colonialism in Ireland, we/they subtly recreate and extend that colonial rule every day, simply by benefiting without question. Racism works not only (as sectarianism) through the Unionists in Northern Ireland but through much of the British public; for the scapegoat (the black community, the Irish, or the Jewish) diverts attention away from all the explosive conflicts of interest based on class or sex or whatever. But mainly, of course, it directly

undermines the Irish community itself. Whether through the Prevention of Terrorism Act or the personal put-down, Irish people are pressured to 'keep their heads down'.

Irish people in this country, by naming and organising against racism, for example through the Irish in Britain Representation Group or the Irish Campaign Against Racism in the Media, have gained confidence and strength. The fight against racism will be very important in ending the British occupation of Ireland. So many lies must be exposed: the lie of the 'superior nation', the lie about the 'civilising power', the lie of the 'white man's burden'. This last one is behind the familiar 'bloodbath' argument against troop withdrawal. It is based on the idea that "it would be irresponsible of us to leave you alone until you can leave each other alone".

Most especially in time of war, racism

is part of the armoury. The last 15 years of newspaper, radio and TV coverage of the war in Ireland have shown how sensitive journalists are to politicians' fears for 'national security'. Even now that years of protests against the anti-Irish joke have begun to sound almost clichéd, the media continue to produce racist drivel masquerading as humour.

Irish people's refusal to put up with anti-Irish racism challenges every myth laid before people in the 'heart of the beast' about why they should follow their leaders. In fact, fighting anti-Irish racism is an issue of national security. Any challenge to British superiority, to Britain's right to hold onto the plundered wealth on which all its industrial and financial institutions are based, challenges its right to continue to impoverish and underdevelop other countries, as well as to occupy Ireland.

## Maire O'Shea

We print below the second half of an interview with Máire O'Shea. The first part of the interview focused on the history of the movement for withdrawal, and was in last month's *Troops Out*.

**TOM:** How did the Prevention of Terrorism Act affect Irish politics in this country?

**Dr O'Shea:** Irish people have been effectively silenced by the PTA. Demonstrations were a lot smaller after its introduction.

**TOM:** What activity was there around the hunger strike in 1981?

**Dr O'Shea:** Very few of the ordinary Irish people came out. There was a lot of discontent amongst certain sections that the Federation of Irish Societies did nothing about people being allowed to die on hunger strike. That's when the Irish in Britain Representation Group was set up.

**TOM:** What is the political perspective of the Irish in Britain Representation Group?

**Dr O'Shea:** It aims to be a grass roots organisation to represent the Irish community. It researches the special needs of the Irish workers and has some successes in its campaign to combat anti-Irish racism. One of the successes has been to get Irish Studies adopted in some schools and it aims to get it into all schools with a significant Irish population.

I was involved in the formulation of the political policy of the IBRG. It calls unequivocally for a British withdrawal,

protests against the various aspects of British repression both in Ireland and here which are the spin-offs of the occupation of the Six Counties.

**TOM:** As an active trade unionist, how has your work been affected by being Irish?

**Dr O'Shea:** I was the only doctor in my hospital who was a member of the Medical Practitioners' Union, ASTMS. I couldn't therefore be a rep. without the union, only an individual member. My main role in the branch was to put through resolutions on Ireland. I am the only Irish person in the branch and I feel that because they don't want to listen to what I'm saying about the Six Counties, they try to put me down in a subtle way when I'm trying to explore other problems, like anti-trade union legislation and the cuts locally. But of course, this is hard to prove.

**TOM:** Generally, the trade unions have been weak on Ireland. Do you think this is because of chauvinism towards Ireland and the Irish or a more general backwardness in the trade union movement?

**Dr O'Shea:** Both really. Workers and other sections of the population have had hundreds of years of imperialist conditioning. I think, though, that people are

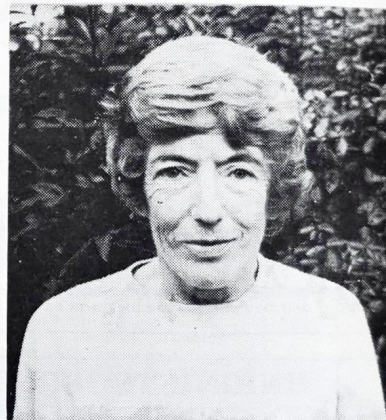


Photo: Birmingham TOM

prepared to take up issues in countries which are not the direct responsibility of the British Government, like South Africa and Chile — but they won't support Ireland. I think this is because Ireland is the direct responsibility of the British Government. They see it, I suppose, as almost treasonable, or perhaps making themselves vulnerable, to support the Irish cause.

**TOM:** Do you feel that British people are unaware of how their own trade unions have been carried and developed by Irish members?

**Dr O'Shea:** I think that the Irish trade union leaders we have at the moment aren't any great credit to us, but there have always been militant Irish people taking an active part in trade unions as shop stewards and around industrial action. But this isn't visible to the public. There is not much publicity about it.



# war effort

IBA

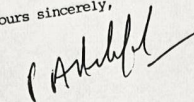
INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY  
70 Brompton Road London SW19 1TL Tel: 01-584 7011 Telex: 24345

Dear Ms. [redacted]  
Thank you for your telephone call of 14th November about an Irish joke on 'Mike Yarwood in Persons'. I am sorry you were offended by it.

Laughter is often a way people respond to things they find menacing. The 'Irish joke' has ebbed and flowed for over five hundred years now: some say it goes back even further, to the twelfth century. There was a time, in the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties, when the Irish joke had all but disappeared. Now it has returned as the situation in Northern Ireland gets no better. To stop it would be an unprecedented act of political censorship, which in our view would be counter-productive. Laughter can be an emollient.

It is helpful that, in our experience quite the best Irish jokes are told by Irish comedians. I am sorry, though, that on this occasion you were offended.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Ashforth  
Television Programme Officer

## IRISH IS A FIVE LETTER WORD

Anti-Irish racism is not restricted to pub 'jokes' or 'Paddy-bashing' in the *Sun* and *Daily Star*.

What, for example, is the implication of putting news about the Republic on the Home Affairs page, as does *The Times*, *Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph*? Is it not that the Irish are adolescent children who might have left home but still need parental guidance? When will our intelligentsia learn that in fact the Irish were never part of the British family though they have been forced into the role of our colonial servants.

Or take this TV review in the left-wing London magazine *City Limits*: 'Play-boy of the West Indies... J.M. Synge's aggressively Oirish classic of paddy daddy bashing becomes, after a sifting through Mustapha Matura's pen, a tale of pathos, attempted patricide and the patois idiom. Transported from the peat bogs to an island of Trinidad and reworked from barked brogue to Caribbean cadences, it's a successful experiment, mainly because the cultures have much in common: superstition, coarse humour and the oppression of women...'

**TOM: What about the Irish as workers and users of the NHS?**

**Dr O'Shea:** When I first came the hospitals were mostly staffed by Irish nurses, but not the English snob hospitals where among snob English people it's more acceptable to train in a teaching hospital. The Irish nurses of the '40s and '50s now have either been promoted or have died. You don't see them so much on the wards now. The mass of Irish girls coming to England stopped in the '60s when you no longer had to pay a fee to train in hospital in Ireland, so they stayed at home to do it, where nurses' pay was a bit better. There has been a trickle since, but now particularly in psychiatric hospitals,

the wards are being run by Malay, Chinese people, Afro-Caribbean people and a few Asians, Italians, Spaniards.

**TOM: Do you think there is any significance in the fact that the NHS has a high proportion of non-English workers?**

**Dr O'Shea:** It's part of the tradition of employing people who would do the jobs that English people didn't want to do — too heavy, too badly paid or with unsocial hours. I think there was a lot of discrimination and racial stereotyping of the Irish in hospitals in the '50s. I have met some very militant Irish in the hospitals — but the majority have felt they must conform and keep their heads down because of

the attitude to them.

I think also the use of different non-English groups has been used to relieve pressure on the authorities to improve conditions and wages. This was done by bringing in people from colonies who would tolerate the conditions because they didn't have anything as good at home.

**TOM: What about racism against Irish people as users of the NHS?**

**Dr O'Shea:** At one time Irish people were sent home, certainly in psychiatric hospitals. Any excuse was good enough to get them home, to relieve pressure for beds. Of course this had to be with the permission of the patient — they were afraid to say no. I have known them to be transferred with an escort (of nurses). I think there was an element of racism — 'these people shouldn't be using the services we're paying for'.

There was a lot of covert racism against the Irish in the NHS. If there was a clash between nurses and senior staff, they would use the excuse of different culture to try and win arguments as a way of putting people down — the Irish had not the 'right attitudes'.

**TOM: Are there any implications for the Irish from your case, and has your case highlighted the issue of Ireland at all?**

**Dr O'Shea:** I do. Large numbers of people have been shocked by my arrest and realise how ridiculous the charge is, or have been interested in the civil liberties aspect. They have begun to look at why the Government would do this. They realise it must be to silence me, and they then ask what am I saying that the Government find embarrassing? And that leads some people to look at the question of Ireland more closely.

"An Irish doctor once attacked me for reminding British colleagues that he was Irish. As he said, we were third class citizens in this country and the only hope for us was to make people forget that we were Irish. The Health Service, though giving us Irish something that we did not have at home, a comprehensive service open to all, was often conditional on submissiveness and gratitude."

"I was struck soon after I came to Britain by the rigid class barriers which made it impossible for professionals in the hospitals to communicate with patients, let alone understand their problems... I learned more from [Irish nurses] and from psychiatric social workers than from any doctor..."

"The Irish in Britain Representation Group, of which I am now President, is seen, I think, as the greatest threat to the British state of all the organisations working around Ireland because of its... potential for organising the grass-roots of the Irish community; for the first time to use its tremendous potential and electoral strength to combat anti-Irish racism, which like other forms of racism, is an excuse for colonialism; to gain recognition of the Irish community as an ethnic minority, to gain facilities for preserving our cultural and political heritage by means of the study of the Irish language and history in schools and colleges in Britain, and for meeting the special social needs of the Irish and to force the British state machine to withdraw from Ireland; putting pressure on the Irish Embassy and government to take responsibility for the emigrants whom they had written off and to defend them against the Prevention of Terrorism Act — the IBRG is also seen as a threat by the Irish government, which is now colluding with the British to destroy its credibility as a legitimate organisation."

Máire O'Shea,

extracts from a speech given to the London Irish Women's Conference 1985



Anti Irish racism is no joke for us Irish. It has a long history and affects us in all areas of our lives, both in Britain and in the 6 Counties. It is not just a case of racist jokes and cartoons. Institutionalised racism affects the Irish community in Britain and the Catholic community in the 6 Counties in areas such as housing, employment and is used to justify many atrocities carried out on us.

Anti Irish racism has been around for 800 years, since Britain began its colonisation of Ireland. Racism is a direct product of imperialism and colonisation. In order to justify the colonisation of a country an ideology of racism which portrayed that country's people and culture as inferior was developed.

In the 12th century Ireland had a highly developed Celtic civilization and was an Irish speaking country famous and respected throughout Europe for its universities, its independent monasteries and its literature. England invaded Ireland in this century but the invasion of such a civilised country needed a lot of justification; England had to convince the English people that invasion was beneficial to the Irish and was not just territorial greed. Henry II therefore found a writer, Giraldus Cambrensis, who produced works saying the Irish were inferior to the English and condemning our customs in order to undermine the widespread view of Ireland as a centre of Christianity and civilization.

Cambrensis' writings have been the basis upon which subsequent myths about the Irish have been based. Of course the Irish fought back against English colonisation but – according to the English – this was not to protect our land, culture or religion but was because of our barbarous and evil nature. Meanwhile, the English invaders gained wealth, property, power and fame from their exploitation of Ireland.

## PLANTATION AND STARVATION

In the 16th century, the Tudor monarchs wanted to control Ireland for strategic reasons as it had become a base in which European powers hostile to England could organise. Therefore the English began their plantation policy which meant driving the Irish off their land and replacing them with English settlers.

After the Reformation in the 17th century, 95% of the land of the Irish people was taken and given to Protestant colonists from England and lowland Scotland. After 1607, Ulster was planted – a plantation which has seriously affected present day Irish politics. Throughout this colonisation, Elizabethan writers portrayed the Irish as backward barbarians and justified England's actions in Ireland by saying that the English were a civilising influence. So when Oliver Cromwell murdered 504,000 Irish people and transported another 100,000 to the Caribbean and America as slaves, English people could see this as ridding Ireland of uncivilised savages.

In 1690, William of Orange, a Dutch Protestant, defeated James II, both of whom were contending for the British throne, and power in Ireland was consolidated by the Protestant ascendancy. The Irish had been dispossessed of their land and lived in extreme poverty as tenants.

During the Great Hunger (famine) of 1845-49 1½ million died while over a million more emigrated. There was enough food produced to feed the people, but it was being exported so that people could pay their rent (for what had been their own land) to English landlords. To cover this up, the English establishment's propaganda said that there was only one crop in Ireland, the potato, and that it was blighted; it was not England's fault that the Irish were starving.



## EMIGRATION

The famine caused massive Irish emigration and as the dispossessed Irish settled in England, they were subjected to appalling racism. Many of the Irish immigrants were half-starved and disease ridden, they lived in the worst housing conditions and had the worst jobs. Rather than see these people as the product of what British colonialism had done in Ireland, many people, including the young Frederick Engels, saw the Irish as sub-human.

Although the social conditions of the Irish in England had begun to change by the 1880s, the attitudes towards them worsened. The Irish were portrayed as apes and monsters in numerous *Punch* cartoons. They were seen as a threat to civilisation. This was intended to undermine Irish political movements demanding everything from land ownership to home rule and sometimes involving armed Fenian activity in Britain. This racist propaganda was very effective in duping English people about what Britain was doing in Ireland.

The same kind of propaganda is still being used today. Present day anti-Irish racism manifests itself in the Unionists' treatment of Catholics in the 6 counties and in the treatment of the Irish in Britain.

## RACISM AS SECTARIANISM

The Protestant Ascendancy (Unionists) were the ruling class in Ulster and their power depended on the link with Britain. Therefore when the rest of Ireland gained independence from Britain a 6 county state (Northern Ireland) was created in 1921 out of the 9 co province of Ulster. This state was ruled by Britain but had a devolved Unionist Parliament in Belfast. It contained a 2/3 Protestant majority and a 1/3 Catholic minority.

# Patterns of Emigration No joke for



"Coming from an Irish city where there was no-one dared pass a picket line, I found that in

The Catholic minority were opposed to the creation of the state and in order to maintain control the Unionist Establishment turned N. Ireland into a police state with an armed sectarian police force and repressive legislation which were used against the Catholics. Britain used divide and rule tactics in the 6 cos, deliberately fostering the 'religious divide' and backing up the Unionists in their institutionalized discrimination against Catholics who were denied equal access to jobs, votes and housing.

In order to justify this anti-Catholic discrimination the Unionists, backed by Britain, used racist propaganda against Catholics. Many Protestants believed that Catholics were inferior – lazy, drunken and stupid and workshy. It was therefore justifiable to treat them badly and use repressive policing methods against them.



# Emigration & Discrimination for us Irish



Photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format

## Press Council bombarded

Since the formation of organisations like the Irish Campaign Against Racism in the Media and the Irish in Britain Representation Group, British newspapers have regularly been reported to the Press Council for anti-Irish racism. Sometimes the complaints are upheld; more often they are not. But it is still a useful tactic in raising awareness of conscious or unconscious prejudice.

A recent example was a case brought by the IBRG at the beginning of November against the *Sun*. The *Sun* had reported a court case in which a man was convicted of manslaughter and arson; the report specified that the man was Irish. The IBRG argued that this breached the Press Council's rule that a person's race or colour should only be mentioned if it was relevant.

The Press Council admitted that it was not relevant in this case, but nonetheless decided against the IBRG on the grounds that the report was not 'perjorative or prejudicial'.

racist stereotypes of the Irish which are used to undermine Irish resistance to British oppression. The Irish community in Britain are portrayed as violent, mindless murderers who are lazy, drunken and stupid. Anti Irish jokes make the Irish out to be stupid and inferior so therefore it is alright for the so-called 'superior' English to dominate them. The English are always portrayed as a 'civilizing influence' on the uncivilized Irish.

Anti Irish jokes are therefore not 'harmless fun'. They are a deliberate means to trying to justify British oppression in Ireland. They are a racist insult to Irish people. It is easy to make jokes about people who have been exploited, murdered and denigrated by the British for 800 years; if we Irish are seen as stupid sub human savages then it does not matter to people if we are killed or tortured in the 6 cos by British forces or if we are discriminated against in housing and employment in Britain.

Anti Irish racism is a result of British imperialism in Ireland and as well as attacking racism, its cause — imperialism — has to be attacked as well. British people have to see through the myths and realise that far from being a 'civilizing influence' Britain has one of the most violent and uncivilised histories of any country in Europe and that all kinds of atrocities have been justified by claims of religious, cultural and racial superiority. The next time an English person laughs at an anti Irish joke she or he should take a long hard look at their country's history and what it has done and is still doing in Ireland.

by Siúbhán Nic An Aili

There was practically 100% unionisation and that unionisation in Britain was far behind."

Máire O'Shea

Above: The Holyhead boat train where British Rail, Sealink and B&I combine to give Irish emigres hours of contempt, dirt and neglect (photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format).

## RACISM AND THE WAR

Present day Loyalists have called Catholics Fenian scum and swine who should be incinerated. This kind of thinking has led to sectarian loyalist murder campaigns against Catholics just because they are Catholics. It is therefore no surprise to find that Loyalists paramilitaries have links with the National Front in Britain.

Anti Irish racism in Britain is directly linked to the situation in the 6 cos. Britain tries to maintain an image of itself as a 'peace keeper' in Ireland, whereas in fact it has been the cause of the war there. British people are not told the truth about what Britain is doing in Ireland; instead they are presented with

"Do we [as Irish women] identify with the Ireland we left behind or with Ireland as it is today? With the Women's Movement in this country or specifically with Irish women, priding ourselves on superior moral standards; with the British working class movement, which can include adopting the racist attitudes which are common in the British movement and which come from generations of imperialist conditioning; or do we identify with the other large immigrant communities who differ from us by having black skins, but who share our experience of British colonialism and racial discrimination? Can we be flexible enough to contain such varied identities?"

Máire O'Shea



# NEWS AROUND BRITAIN

## Drop the charges against Maire O'Shea

Over 1,000 people marched through Birmingham on 9th November in support of Maire O'Shea, calling for the charges against her to be dropped.

The Demonstration was officially sponsored by NUPE, ASTMS and COHSE and supported by South Wales and Kent miners and many trades councils. Also on the march was the Troops Out Movement, the Irish in Britain Representation Group and the Irish Solidarity Movement.

At the rally following, Councillor Sheena Clarke from Sheffield described her own detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act after attending a housing conference in the Six Counties. She had been asked what connection she had with Sinn Fein, what she thought of the Maze prison escape and of the hunger strikers.

Helen John, from Greenham Common, told the audience to expect "some of the oppression the Irish have experienced - plastic bullets, CS gas etc."

Messages of support were read to the rally from Tony Benn,

Ken Livingstone, many trade unions and Labour Parties, and lesbian and gay groups.

Nearly £600 was collected towards Maire's defence costs, estimated to be £60,000.

Maire O'Shea goes on trial on 14th January. Her support committee is calling on groups throughout the country to organise events for that day as part of a national day of action.

The petition calling for the charges against Maire to be dropped is to be handed in to the attorney general a few days before the trial starts. An urgent effort to get signatures must be made over the next few weeks. And organisations are also asked to continue raising funds for Maire's defence - for example, by donating a day's pay.

Details of events being organised should be sent to the Dr Maire O'Shea Support Committee, c/o 448 Stratford Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham B11, where petition forms can also be obtained. Cheques should be made payable to Dr Maire O'Shea Defence Fund.



Photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format

## Conspiracy Trial

Manchester Crown Court will be surrounded by armed police officers on Tuesday 14th January, when the trial begins of five people arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act a year earlier. As in all cases where Irish people face charges of a political nature, the police will put on a show to convince the jury and the wider public that they are dealing with 'dangerous terrorists'.

There will be a convoy of police vehicles delivering those defendants who are in custody, marksmen on the roof, intense searches of anyone entering the building, sniffer dogs, and a large presence of police and prison warders inside the court room itself.

Five people will be in the dock charged with conspiring to cause an explosion. They are:

- Dr Maire O'Shea who was interrogated under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for five days before being charged. She has been out on bail since February of last year;
- Peter Lynch who was interrogated for seven days under the PTA. He has been in custody since New Year's Eve 1984;
- Peter Jordan, Patrick Brazil and Billy Grimes who were interrogated for seven days under the PTA and then remanded back into police custody, making a total of 11

days of interrogation! All have been in custody since Christmas Eve 1984.

The prosecution will be painting a picture of a conspiracy to cause an explosion that never happened. They will no doubt use the fact that the defendants include members of the Troops Out Movement and the Irish in Britain Representation Group to tar those organisations with a 'terrorist' brush.

Some of the disturbing aspects of this case are the length of interrogations the defendants underwent before any charges were made - interrogations which would never have been allowed to go on for so long had they been arrested under any other legislation than the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

At the same time as these five defendants were being interrogated in the Bridewell at Liverpool, other people were

going through the same experience there. One of them, who was released after 7 days having been fined for giving a false name whilst drunk, said afterwards: 'I was woken up every couple of hours to answer questions. They kept telling me I was involved in illegal activities.' He said he was stripped of his clothes and deprived of exercise.

Another man questioned at the same time, who was released without charge after seven days, said he was questioned at all hours of the day and night and he lost all track of time: 'One of them picked up a list of prisoners from Republican News and said 'there is a square down there vacant for you, you bastard. I hope you haven't bought any Christmas presents for your kids because we can see you going down for the next 15 or 20 years.'"

Obviously, any charges which follow days and days of such interrogations must be highly dubious. But when the charge is of Conspiracy, further questions must be raised.

Conspiracy trials allow the prosecution to introduce evidence which would not be permitted in ordinary trials - evidence about the defendants' reading habits, political affiliations and so on. Conspiracy trials also give the police an ideal opportunity to build up 'guilt by association' in the eyes of the jury - and of course to attempt to cause rifts among the defendants.

The trial in Manchester Crown Court is expected to last several weeks. If they are convicted, the defendants face up to 20 years in prison. If they are acquitted, they will have already had their lives shattered by the police and their Prevention of Terrorism Act.



# NEWS AROUND BRITAIN

## Terror Act research grant approved

West Midlands County Council has approved a grant of £7,499 for the recently formed West Midlands Prevention of Terrorism Act Welfare and Research Association.

The Association includes among others on its committee Christine Crawley, the Labour Euro MP for Birmingham East; Geraldine Egan, President of Birmingham Trades Council; local West Midlands and Birmingham Councillors; and representatives of the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Irish in Britain Representation Group, Coventry Trades Council and the National Union of Public Employees.

Originally a grant of £26,000 was approved by the Council's race relations and equal opportunities committee on 20th September. Due to Government restrictions on public spending it was reduced to £7,499 - £1 below the ceiling at which it would have required the approval of the Department of the Environment.

Various attempts were made to block the grant, with the *Birmingham Post and Mail* trying - unsuccessfully - to generate 'public outrage'. Tory MP for Yardley, David Gilroy Bevan, called

on the Government to block the grant. The issue was also raised in Whitehall during a meeting by West Midlands councillors, seeking funds to help restore Handsworth, with Douglas Hurd and the Minister for the Environment. The entire application process was monitored by the Special Branch: people were followed, phones were tapped and mail went astray. An internal letter sent by the West Midlands County Secretary to leading councillors and fellow chief officers which said, "I have been told that there are some leading figures on this Committee who are questionable, to say the least..." has been completely refuted by the Association. They have referred the letter to the local Ombudsman for investigation.

A spokesperson for the Association said that a further grant will now be sought, and that it still planned to open an office and engage in researching and publicising the effects of the PTA on the Irish community in particular, but also on other ethnic minorities.

"There is a greater need than ever to highlight the workings of the PTA. Between 1977-84 half a million people, in the main from

the Irish community, have been stopped, searched and questioned under the Act (source: HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary Annual Reports for England and Wales). A yearly average of 44,000 plus. Last year (1984) showed an increase of 3,000 to previous years - 47,779 (in England and Wales alone). Out

of this ten-year total only 0.02% have been convicted of any charges, mainly for non-'terrorist' offences."

The figures expose the true nature of the Act, which is to intimidate the Irish community in general and political activists in particular.

### Brock's factory picketed

Brock's Factory in Sanquar, Scotland, where plastic bullets are manufactured was picketed by members of the United Campaign against Plastic Bullets on 21 October. The 14 strong group, consisting of relatives of plastic bullet victims, members of Sinn Féin, Peoples Democracy, Irish Republican Socialist Party, IRSP, Connolly Youth Movement, CYM and Students against Repression at Queens University Belfast were joined outside the factory by Glasgow Women and Ireland Group and Labour Committee on Ireland.

Workers leaving the factory refused leaflets but later at the nearby village of Sanquar, away from management intimidation, willingly accepted them and listened to members of the campaign. Every home in Sanquar received a leaflet explaining the full horrors of this weapon.

As a chilling reminder, 6 days later the full destructive and lethal power of the plastic bullet was seen on the streets of Derry. The British army opened fire with plastic bullets on a crowd of young people leaving the Embassy Dancehall. Dominic Fleming was about to get into a taxi when he was hit by a plastic bullet. His leg was broken in several places and is now in plaster.

## Strip Searching - Stop this torture

An appalling level of strip searching by British prison authorities continues in Armagh Jail and in Brixton Prison, London. Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer have both been on remand in Brixton on conspiracy charges since July, and are not likely to be tried before March. Every month they suffer at least 50 strip searches, about 115 body searches (that is, with clothes on), and frequent cell searches and cell changes. Their medical neglect continues.

Recently the conditions of these two women have worsened because both are being denied sleep, a well known form of torture: warders systematically wake them up every 15 minutes by lifting the flap on the cell doors and shining a light directly into their eyes.

Ella and Martina have issued these statements describing the strip searches, through their solicitor:

Martina: "I walk to the wing knowing what lies ahead. There are two empty cells and I am ordered into one of them. Once in the cell two prison officers order me to take my clothes off while a third holds up a blanket shoulder high. The fourth stands watching. Realising that their eyes are constantly looking at me over the blanket and feeling so helpless knowing I cannot do anything I start to remove my blouse and bra. The officers take them to check and I put on a so-called 'dressing gown', which is like a scruffy surgical gown. It is made of rough starchy material. Feeling demoralised I start to remove the bottom half of my clothes. Every last bit of my underwear is scrutinised. When my clothes have been searched I dress and then one of the prison officers starts putting her hands

through my hair. Oh! how that gives me the creeps! I feel I could strike her but knowing that this is what they would like me to do I control my anger."

Ella: "I stand like an embarrassed child watching her dangle my bra and panties about. For increased effect I am ordered to turn around slowly to give them a peep at everything. They order me to lift the gown that I have been given to wear. I have only been allowed to wear this gown since September. Before that I had to stand naked while they checked my clothes. Prison officers rub my hair and ears and like an animal I have to lift my feet so they can inspect them too. The awful dread is that I will be touched so I am stiffened to resist. They have told me that they can lift my breasts forcibly if they decide to and even probe my body folds. They can touch any part of me at all. It is horrible to have four eyes staring at me over the top of a blanket. While

two officers stand behind this blanket another may stand in front. I know that every part of me is being touched accidentally or deliberately since I arrived here. Normal physical contact has become a challenge. The gown I am wearing slips off when I fumble, sweat and rush into my clothes."

The solicitor's statement continues:

"Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer believe that the strip searching of Irish women held in prisons in this country is linked to the treatment which women in Armagh Prison have endured for years. They do not accept that the strip searching is in any way necessary for security but the frequency and manner in which it is done makes it clear that the purpose is to harass and humiliate them."

In the second half of November, 4 members of the Belfast group Relatives of Women In Armagh Jail visited Britain. They included the sister of Martina Anderson, Isobel Anderson. In London the relatives spoke at a series of public meetings organised by London Labour Women's Committee, and met representatives of the TUC women's section, Labour MPs, MEPs and councillors, and Irish organisations. They then toured public meetings in Sheffield, Birmingham, Derby, Nottingham, Wolverhampton and Manchester. A full report will be in February's *Troops Out*.



# NEWS AROUND BRITAIN

## Release the Birmingham Six

On November 23rd eleven years ago, six Irishmen were arrested and later convicted of planting the Birmingham pub bombs. The *World In Action* television programme on October 28th, showing the falseness of the evidence presented against the men, was the most significant step so far in the growing campaign to have the men released.

The programme understandably presented the evidence of the men's wrongful conviction as new, though a close look at the trial showed that the evidence against the Six would not normally have been sufficient to convict anyone. At the time the Government desperately needed to be seen to be doing something about the IRA campaign, and crudely these men were their unlucky victims.

As for the crucial forensic evidence, a scientist of long experience called Dr Black showed clearly at the trial that the conclusions drawn by the government forensic scientist,

Skuse, were false and did not show that the men had been involved with explosives. But Dr Black's testimony was ridiculed and disregarded by the flagrantly biased judge — now Lord Bridge.

The test used by Skuse to show the men were involved with explosives is known as the Griess test. *World In Action* demonstrated how this test was unreliable because the same results could be obtained with explosives or with other substances, including cigarette smoke. The man who himself developed the test, Dr John Yallop, has also been saying this for some years. Despite this, the Home Office has refused to check the validity of the Griess test.

The Six have consistently claimed that they were severely beaten while in police custody to produce 'confessions'. Photographic evidence to support this claim has been known to be available at least since 1976. When the men tried to sue the police for assault in 1980, they

were prevented from doing so by Lord Denning in a notorious judgement: "If the six men win, will it mean that the police were guilty of perjury, violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence: and that the convictions were erroneous? The Home Secretary would have either to recommend they be pardoned or remit the case to the Court of Appeal. This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say: It cannot be right that these actions should go any further. They should be struck out." This was the last legal avenue open to the six men.

The clarity with which the *World In Action* programme presented the evidence that the men were wrongly convicted, helps the campaign for the men's release at the crucial time. It is possible that in the light of the Anglo-Irish agreement the release of falsely convicted Irish prisoners such as the Birmingham Six could be included in concessions given to the Irish government by the British government. However, that is improbable unless there is considerable public pressure put on both the Irish and British governments over the next few months.

Meanwhile Annie Maguire, another Irish frame-up victim, is actively continuing her campaign to have her and her family's convictions over-

turned. On November 19th she addressed TDs and senators in Dublin. She said she was campaigning in Dublin in the hope that Irish people would support her in her effort to correct the injustice done to her and "I hope they will also keep in mind the Birmingham Six, who are currently serving life sentences and who can do nothing for themselves in prison."

TOM has published two extended leaflets detailing the cases of 18 Irish people falsely convicted in English courts, including the cases of the Birmingham Six and the Maguire family. They are very useful to anyone thinking of campaigning on the issue. For a copy of each send a large s.a.e. and 20p to TOM, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

### Terror Act arrests in London



Photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format

Brendan O'Rourke's flat in Brixton after police broke in in the early morning of November 13th and caused extensive damage before taking him and Conor Foley, who was staying there, away for questioning. The two men were arrested and held without charge under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for 48 hours.

The apparent pretext for the raid was the attempted bombing of Chelsea Barracks two days previously, an action claimed by the INLA. However, the detainees were only questioned very briefly about their movements on the Monday night. Their interviewers were far more interested in their involvement in Labour Party politics and in organising demonstrations. Conor Foley is active in the Labour Committee on Ireland, while Brendan O'Rourke is a member of the Irish in Britain Representation Group. Their treatment should be seen as nothing less than a punishment for their political activity.

Four others were arrested at the same time and treated in a similar fashion. All were released and no charges have been brought.



### PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS

Please send cards, letters and reading materials to these prisoners, especially on their birthdays and over Christmas. Many of them spend long periods in solitary confinement or under Rule 43. Please don't forget to use the number.

#### REPUBLICANS IN ENGLISH JAILS

**JAMES BENNETT** 464989  
H. M. Prison Long Lartin,  
South Littleton, Evesham,  
Worcs. December 4  
**LIAM BAKER** 464984  
H. M. Prison, Hedon Road,  
Hull, North Humberside  
HU9 5LS December 6  
**NOEL GIBSON** 879295  
H. M. Prison Albany, Newport,  
Isle of Wight PO30 5RS  
December 11  
**WILLIAM ARMSTRONG** 119085  
H. M. Prison Albany, as above  
December 26

**EDDIE O'NEILL** 135722  
H. M. Prison Frankland,  
Brasside, Co. Durham  
January 15  
**ANTHONY CLARKE** 726381  
H. M. Prison, Love Lane,  
Wakefield, Yorkshire  
WF2 9AG February 11

**ARMAGH PRISONERS**  
**MARY McCONVILLE**  
(4 years) December 9  
**CHRISTINE BEATTIE**  
(12 years) December 25  
Address: Armagh Prison, Armagh,  
Ireland.



# Your Letters

We welcome contributions and feedback from readers. Please send your letters to this address:

*Troops Out*, c/o Box 10, 2a St Paul's Road, London N1.

## SOLITARY

A Chara,

We would like to bring to your attention the solitary confinement conditions endured by Irish Republican Prisoners in English jails.

We call on you to raise the question of this insidious form of punishment with the Home Office, in order that pressure may be put on the prison authorities to cease using it immediately.

Irish Republican prisoners in England have been kept in solitary confinement for periods of twelve months and more: the case of Vincent Donnelly (who is presently in Armley in Leeds) being a prime example. Vincent has been in solitary for over a year, and has been moved from Wakefield F wing to Armley for 28 days when he will probably be moved to another prison.

It is a fact that solitary confinement is applied more for the purpose of 'spirit breaking' than as a form of punishment. We further call on you to highlight the fact that the supposedly illegal control units are still in use, the one in Wakefield being the most infamous. These solitary confinement cells are small, painted white, with no natural light or ventilation and practically no fresh air and the effect of the 23 hours a day spent in them is to disorientate the prisoner mentally and physically, to demoralise and depress him which in turn leads to him becoming agitated and aggressive with warders when they harass and deliberately annoy him. He thus finds himself on charge and will receive additional solitary confinement. This vicious circle cannot be broken by the prisoner except with our help. These practices are used in a racist and discriminatory fashion against Irish Republican prisoners.

We hope that you will identify with our obvious concern and condemnation on this matter and will raise the matter in the appropriate places and with the appropriate people to gain the maximum publicity on the situation.

Is mise,

LIAM O'RIAN

5 Blessington St, Dublin 7

## TERENCE MacSWINEY

A Chara,

On behalf of the National Executive of the Irish National Council I would like to thank the United Ireland Association for giving our members the opportunity of paying our tribute to the memory of Terence MacSwiney at Southwark Cathedral on Sunday 27th October.

The Irish National Council shares the wish of the *Irish Post* that the Annual Remembrance of Terence MacSwiney will once again become an occasion when the national-minded members of the Irish community in London can come together to pay their respects to those who like Terence MacSwiney have made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of Irish Freedom.

Is mise le meas,  
Geraldine Smyth  
Secretary,  
Irish National Council

*(The all-Irish elections of 1918 were a landslide victory for Sinn Féin and a mandate for freedom from British rule. However, Britain responded by incarcerating most nationalist leaders, including the Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney. MacSwiney died in 1920 in Brixton Prison, London, after a hunger strike of 74 days protesting for his release. — Eds.)*

## COMMUNISTS

Dear Friends,

Very many thanks for sending me issues of *Troops Out* magazine as they come out. I always look forward to receiving the next issue, every issue keeps me up-to-date with developments on a broad front and contains articles with useful analysis and information.

As an ex-member of the Communist Party of Great Britain I welcome the news of the formation of Irish Republican Support Group within the CP (August/September issue) and particularly the fact that they have, I think, indicated that they see the *Troops Out* Movement as the organisation within which individuals and groups with a principled stand can work together, whatever differences they may have on other matters.

If I could mention only one relatively small but important area of work — trade unions. My own home town of Bristol has a trades council which has an approved policy of support for the two main demands of *Troops Out Now* and *Self Determination for the Irish People as a Whole*. This was carried by a majority vote in a full Trades Council meeting some time ago, despite vicious opposition from CPGB members — especially those on the Trades Council committee. But it has been mainly due to the continued opposition of the CP that attempts to draw the

**NEW SONGBOOK**  
from  
**BIRMINGHAM T.O.M.**  
**'SONGS FOR SOCIALS'**  
Old favourites of Ireland's  
fight for freedom in the past  
and the present.  
Plus songs of women and  
songs around the world  
£1 (£1.30 by post)  
from Birmingham TOM  
c/o 448 Stratford Rd,  
B'ham 11

Trades Council and its affiliated union branches and members into positive action, and support for meetings or demonstrations about Ireland, have been frustrated. And their main line of attack has always been a vicious slander of the *Troops Out* Movement by lies and gross misrepresentation. It would be a great step forward if our CP friends in Bristol could now ensure that any CPGB members of the Trades Council, both committee and rank and file, work in future to carry out the approved policy on Ireland, instead of deliberately sabotaging it, in effect imposing the policy of the CPGB onto the Trades Council.

As for myself, I'm pleased to say that I'm keeping fit and well and I'm grateful to the many friends in TOM, IBRG and other organisations who are in contact with me by letter or visit.

With very best wishes to all comrades and friends,

Pete Jordan  
(Remand Centre, Risley)

## A cry from the heart

**THE TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT IS IN URGENT NEED OF FINANCIAL HELP.** The TOM depends on the generosity of its members, fundraising events, standing orders and book sales for its income. But now this income is not enough. **WE NEED DONATIONS AND MORE STANDING ORDERS** to help us continue our work.

We need donations so that we can pay a worker, service the national office and produce campaign material. All donations, however small, will be appreciated. Standing orders can be made out to: The *Troops Out* Movement, a/c no. 50504051, at the Co-operative Bank, Islington, whose no. is 089033. We hope you can help us.



Earlier in 1985, London branches of the *Troops Out* Movement did a sponsored walk which raised over £600.



# COMING EVENTS & RESOURCES

## LONDON

**Monday December 2, 8pm-12**

### BENEFIT BOP

for the Campaign to Stop the Strip Searches in Armagh Jail  
Bands: MIAOW and 3 independent Irish bands — THAT PETROL EMOTION (from Derry), MICRO DISNEY (Cork), and RUEFRAX (Belfast — not confirmed) at the Boston Arms, next to Tufnell Park tube (entrance in Junction Road), London N19 Entrance £3, £2 with UB40

**Wednesday December 4, 7.30pm**

### BENEFIT for the IRISH RADIO USERS GROUP (GLOR GAEIL) which has applied for a community radio licence.

at Kennedy Room, Irish Centre, Camden Town, London

*Live traditional music:*

TOMMY MacCARTHY — uilleann pipes  
MacCARTHY FAMILY — concertinas, fiddles  
TONY HUSBAND — singer

also PYROTECHNICS and COMEDIAN TONY CARROL

Bar. Toilets not wheelchair accessible, but help provided.

For more information ring Olga on 609 8916.

## JOIN THE TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT

Below is a list of towns and districts in England, Scotland and Wales where we have TOM branches or contacts. If you want to join through a branch or as an individual, please fill in the coupon provided, and send it to PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| ENGLAND     | Tyneside    |
| Birmingham  | York        |
| Brighton    | LONDON AREA |
| Bristol     | Camden      |
| Cambridge   | East London |
| Colchester  | Haringey    |
| Coventry    | Islington   |
| Leeds       | Lambeth     |
| Leicester   | West London |
| Manchester  | SCOTLAND    |
| Merseyside  | Aberdeen    |
| Northampton | Edinburgh   |
| Norwich     | Glasgow     |
| Nottingham  | WALES       |
| Oxford      | Cardiff     |
| St. Albans  | Swansea     |
| Sheffield   |             |

I would like to join/be sent information about the Troops Out Movement.

Name .....

Address .....

Membership of a branch costs £6 (£2 unemployed) payable through the branch. Individual membership is £10 (£6 unemployed) which includes a subscription to *Troops Out*.

**Friday December 6,**

doors open 7.30pm

### AN EVENING FOR IRELAND

with PEGGY SEEGER,  
EWAN MacCOLL, RAOUL VALENCIA,  
BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH and GROUP  
at Caxton House, St. John's Way, N19  
(Archway tube)

Tickets £2.50/unwaged £1, available from 203 Seven Sisters Road and on the door.

Food Bar

Proceeds will go towards providing minibuses to transport families visiting republican prisoners in N. Ireland.

**Saturday December 7, 8.30pm**

### BENEFIT SOCIAL for East London TOM with PERSONS UNKNOWN IAN McPHERSON IRISH MUSIC

at Hackney Trades & Labour Club, 96 Dalson Lane, E8

Late bar, food

**Monday December 9, 7.30pm**

### PUBLIC MEETING on the PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

Organised by Hammersmith Labour Party

Speakers include MAIRE O'SHEA and CLIVE SOLEY MP

Shepherds Bush Village Hall, Bulwer St (off Wood Lane), London W12 (tube, Shepherds Bush)

**Saturday December 14, 8-11pm**

### BENEFIT towards legal costs for WELL WOMAN CENTRE and OPEN LINE, Dublin (taken to court by SPUC) with GINGER AND SPICE and SISTAH'S IN SONG

Women only  
at Caxton House, St John's Way, N19 (Archway tube)

Entrance £3 waged/£2 low waged/£1 unwaged  
Bar, food

Wheelchair accessible

Organised by Irish Women's Abortion Support Group

**Saturday December 14, 2-10.30pm**

### IRISH CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

\* Videos: Plastic Bullets, Strip-Searching, The Irishmen

\* Exhibitions: The Invisible Irish, Cormac  
\* Slides: Wall-paintings and posters from Ireland

\* Books: Bobby Devlin talks about  
*An Interlude With Seagulls*

\* Music: Persons Unknown and Plenty Left

Admission free

at Venture Community Centre,  
Worlington Road, London W10  
(Ladbroke Grove tube, buses 7, 15, 52,  
295 to Ladbroke Grove or 28, 31 to  
Westbourne Park station)

Bar, disabled access  
GLC sponsored

**Saturday February 1, 8pm till late**

### BENEFIT towards legal costs for WELL WOMAN CENTRE and OPEN LINE, Dublin

with THE GUEST STARS  
Women only

at Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1 (Highbury tube)

£3/2 concessions. Bar

Organised by Irish Women's Abortion Support Group

## LIVERPOOL

**Thursday December 12, 8 till late**

### BENEFIT SOCIAL for Máire O'Shea Defence Fund

at Merseyside Trade Union &  
Unemployed Resource Centre,  
24 Hardman Street, L'pool

Admission £2 (concessions £1)

## MIDLANDS

### SPEAKING TOUR ON PLASTIC BULLETS

The Troops Out Movement has continually campaigned against the use of plastic bullets and called for them to be banned. In the build-up to the Bloody Sunday demonstration on 2nd February, a Midlands speaking tour has been organised. Present will be EMMA GROVES, blinded by a rubber bullet in 1971, and BRENDA DOWNES, widow of John Downes who was killed by a plastic bullet in 1984 at the annual Internment Commemoration in Belfast.

**Mon 27th Jan. (day):** Reception and welcome, organised by Christine Crawley MEP and Birmingham and West Midlands Councillors.

**Mon 27th Jan to Sat 1st Feb:** Emma Groves and Brenda Downes will open the Open Exhibition on the Use and Effects of Plastic Bullets, being shown at Triangle Art Gallery, Arts Centre, Holt St, Gosta Green, Birmingham.

**Tues 28th Jan. (eve.):** Nottingham Trades Council Public Meeting.

Meetings are also being organised in Birmingham with the Indian Workers Association, the Handsworth Defence Campaign and the Labour Party Black Section.  
Phone 021-773 8683 for further information.

**Wed. 29th Jan, 7.30:** Coventry TOM Public Meeting, at KOCO, Unit 15, Arches Industrial Estate, Spon End, Coventry.

**Thurs 30th Jan, 7.30:** Birmingham TOM Public Meeting, at Digbeth Civic Hall.

**Fri 31st Jan (day):** Birmingham, Standing Conference of Local Government Women's Committees, hosted by West Midlands County Council.