

# TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

**TROOPS OUT  
NOW**

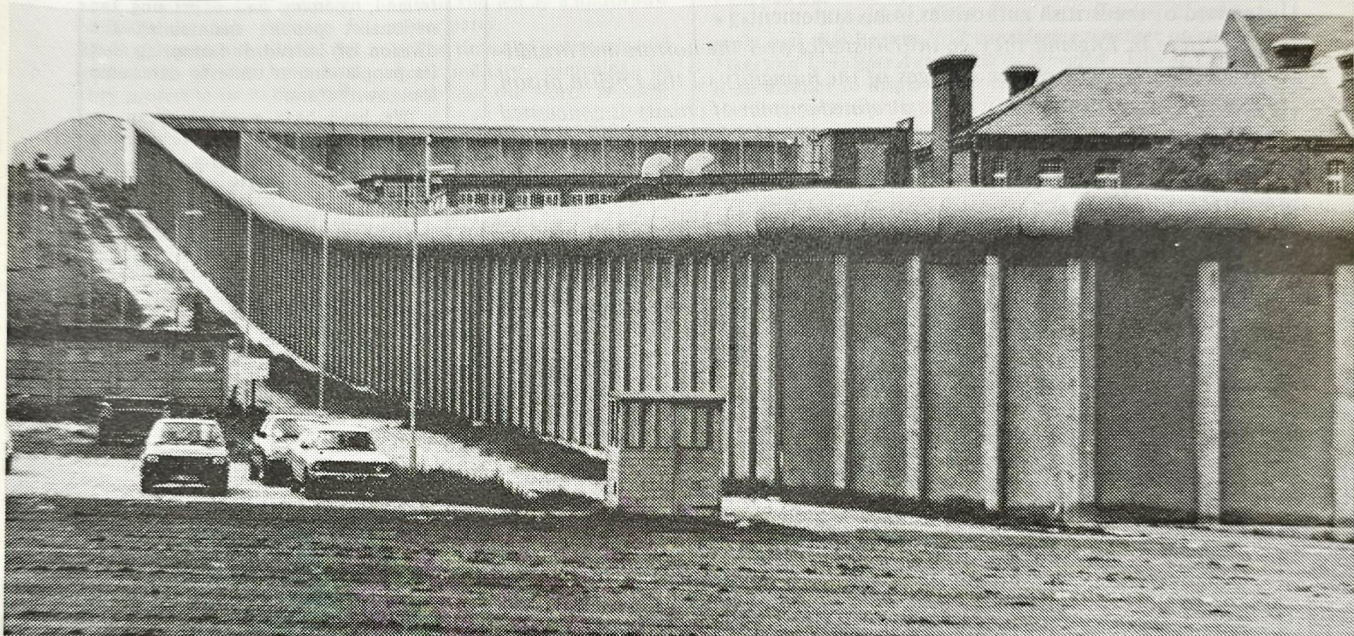
**SELF  
DETERMINATION  
FOR THE  
IRISH PEOPLE  
AS A WHOLE**



Paper of the Troops Out Movement 30p

Vol. 10, No. 3, Dec./Jan. 1986/87

## BRITAIN'S HOSTAGES



## Irish political prisoners

**REMEMBER BLOODY  
SUNDAY**

**March  
January 31st**

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- NEWS, REVIEWS AND LETTERS





# EDITORIAL

As long as Britain continues in political control of part of Ireland, propped up by its military, Irish people will struggle to rid their country of foreign domination. There will be armed retaliation against the suffering that nationalist people bear as a result of the British presence.

Political prisoners are the inevitable result of the Irish nationalist people fighting for self-determination. Britain has a long history of ill-treatment of Irish political prisoners – a deliberate strategy to demoralise and criminalise the Irish people's aspirations for a united Ireland. Tom Clarke, a signatory to the proclamation signed by the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, spent 15½ years in English jails. He showed the double standard of the British authorities in his statement:

*"Here in England they go into hysterics over the horrors and brutalities of Siberia and ring the changes of the humanity of the English prison system. The truth is that as far as a refined system of cruelty is concerned there is nothing on God's Earth to compare with the treatment we Irish Political Prisoners have been receiving at the hands of the English Government."*

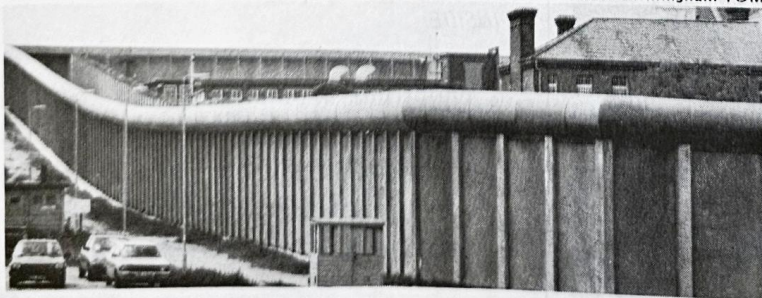
The British Government is nothing if not consistent in its hypocrisy over treatment of political prisoners. We have all heard the criticisms of prisons in Poland and the Soviet Union whilst claiming that British prisons are the epitome of humanity! This month's *Troops Out* examines the conditions these prisoners have to endure, in particular the situation in Durham Jail's 'H' Wing.

One of the worst forms of cruelty to Irish political prisoners is the enforced separation from family and loved ones. Christmas and New Year are times when we all look to spending time with those closest to us and this perhaps helps us to understand more acutely what this separation means.

The families of most of the 38 Republican prisoners in England are based in Ireland. Republicans are housed mainly in the eight top security prisons – Albany, Parkhurst (both on the Isle of Wight), Wormwood Scrubs, Long Lartin (Worcestershire), Gartree (Leicestershire), Hull, Wakefield and Frankland (Co. Durham) or top security wings in Leicester and Durham (for women prisoners). All of these are miles away from ports with direct services to Ireland.

THE MAIN DEMAND OF THE REPUBLICAN PRISONERS IS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO SERVE THEIR SENTENCE IN A JAIL IN IRELAND – i.e. FOR REPATRIATION.

Photo Birmingham TOM



## 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. Ever since 1969 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 whatever ways circumstances allow, are the backbone of the TOM. Membership or affiliation is open to any individual or group supporting our demands:

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

## Troops Out Paper

*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).

**COPY SHOULD REACH US BY 21st JANUARY FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE.**

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Britain & Ireland: £5 yearly (10 issues).  
Europe: £7 yearly.  
USA, Australia & New Zealand: £12.  
Libraries/institutions: £12.  
Make cheques payable to Troops Out (Literature Committee).

All correspondence for *Troops Out* journal, send to:  
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The Anglo-Irish Agreement was one year old in November. It was celebrated by riots and violence by the unionist communities, some directed at their nationalist neighbours and some at their erstwhile allies in the RUC (police).

Meanwhile the British side has hardly pushed the Agreement, partly for tactical reasons, partly from political affinity with unionism. While they continue in this vein their broken promises and continuing injustices unite the nationalist people across all Ireland in a rejection of British involvement in their country — the very thing that the Agreement aimed to defuse.

## Unionist destruction

Confusion about direction in the unionist camp leads them on the one hand into a political wilderness, and on the other hand to a frightening campaign of violence. The violence is directed against the Irish, not against the British by whom they profess to be so betrayed.

Their rate strike and boycott of Council and Westminster business both fizzled out when it came to the crunch. For example, the Lord Mayor of Belfast was recently taken to court for non-payment of rates — and promptly paid up.

On another level, the annual conference of the Official Unionist Party on 8th November drew back from making a clear-cut choice for the Union with Britain to be strengthened at the expense of all else: a motion from the integrationist wing of the party was put back 'until the Anglo-Irish Agreement is smashed'. The other unionist party, Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, makes much noise along the traditional lines of 'the Protestant people will never surrender to Rome rule' but it has yet to tell its people where it is leading them. This in turn has so far prevented the unionists from using their most powerful weapon, an industrial general strike.

On the military front, November saw the formation of Ulster Resistance, an all-male DUP initiative. It is 'pledged to mobilise the men of Ulster into an organised and disciplined force... willing and prepared to take direct action as and when required'. The threat cannot be discounted: the unionist population is well armed and a report from south Derry of a convoy of 40 to 50 vehicles — which was waved through a UDR checkpoint! — is a sinister sign of the times.

Later, on the night of 19th November, several thousand unionists marched through Portadown in military formation and led by a uniformed colour party.

The threat of a strategic and mass military campaign to destabilise the North is there, but it must be said that it has not yet materialised. What has materialised is violent, and sometimes deadly, attacks on nationalist homes and property, and rioting against the RUC.



Shades of fascism as Paisley and the boys form Ulster Resistance

Photo Pacemaker

These have gone virtually unreported by the British press and TV.

### 'FENIANS' AND 'TRAITORS' BEAR THE BRUNT

Early in November a Catholic Church in Antrim was petrol bombed. In Coleraine a nationalist home and drapery shop were set on fire by petrol bombs. On 8th November four small bombs were planted in Dublin city centres, two of which exploded.

The worst violence occurred over the weekend of 15th November, the anniversary of

## Broken promises

Article 5 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement promised a commitment to 'measures to recognise and accommodate the rights and identities of the two traditions in Northern Ireland... measures to foster the cultural heritage of both traditions, changes in electoral arrangements, the use of flags and emblems...'

• The Northern Ireland Assembly Election (Amendment) Act 1986 was brought in on 23rd November to allow Irish-born residents in the North of Ireland to vote in elections to an Assembly. Before, they were allowed to vote in Westminster elections but not any others. The farce of this version of the promised 'changes in electoral arrangements' is that the Assembly has been disbanded and no new one is likely to happen in the foreseeable future. Meanwhile Irish-born citizens in the North (known as I-voters) are still disenfranchised in local government elections.

• On 'cultural heritage' Sinn Féin's newspaper *An Phoblacht/Republican News* reported that the RUC in Lurgan were busy in November removing Irish language street signs. Sinn Féin had put them up after consultation with local residents.

• Early in November, Tom King in a written Commons reply said that he was 'still considering whether or not the *Flags and Emblems Act* should be repealed'. This Act makes it an offence to display flags etc considered provocative in the circumstances. Its repeal was generally recognised to be the bottom line of a British commitment to dismantling some of the apparatus of sectarian discrimination. One year into the Agreement and the N Ireland Secretary is 'still considering it'.

the signing of the Agreement.

In Carrickfergus, County Antrim, a 66-year old nationalist woman died of a heart attack when a brick was thrown through her window. This happened during a unionist rampage against nationalist property following a late-night rally. In north Belfast shots were fired into the nationalist New Lodge area. In Lisburn two homes were damaged by petrol bombs.

One man was killed when a unionist crowd attacked an RUC landrover — he was reported to have been crushed by the vehicle as it drove away.

The RUC were also attacked in Lurgan and Carrickfergus.

Major rioting broke out during the main unionist rally in Belfast's City Hall. 73 shops were damaged and at least 14 were looted during street fighting, with the RUC responding with batons and plastic bullets. Ever since the partition of Ireland the RUC were a part of the Protestant ascendancy, guaranteed to come out on the right side and protect their own. On 15th November they were called Traitors and Fenian-lovers as they turned their guns on the unionist crowds.



# Injustice gets the OK

Early in November Margaret Thatcher wrote to the prime minister (Taoiseach) of the Irish Republic, Garret FitzGerald, to let him know that there would be no radical changes in the 'Diplock' Court system in the North of Ireland.

The Diplock Courts — whose main feature is that they have no juries — were set up by the British state as a military solution to the failure of their administration. Internment was used to the same end up to 1975 but it didn't look very 'democratic', so the Diplock Courts were invented to process people into prison with the appearance of 'justice having been done'. The use of supergrasses in mass trials in the 80's washed away the last traces of credibility in this appearance.

Article 8 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement recognises this shortcoming — it refers to 'the importance of public confidence in the administration of justice'. The Article goes on to promise 'measures which would give substantial expression to this aim, considering inter alia the possibility of mixed courts in both jurisdictions for the trial of certain offences.'

By mixed courts was meant southern judges sitting with their northern counterparts in

Belfast, and vice versa in Dublin. This plan was overruled by the Lord Chief Justice in the North, Lord Lowry, and his unionist-orientated soul-mate at Westminster — the 79 year old Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham.

In its place the notion of having three judges sitting in the Diplock Courts was mooted, with the recruitment of more judges from a nationalist background. It is this which Thatcher's letter to FitzGerald has dismissed.

One of the reasons Thatcher gave was that it would have been an 'implicit criticism' of the way things have operated so far. In other words, it would admit to the injustice of past 'trials' — which in turn would raise questions about all the people now in prison as a result of these trials.

## INTO THE BREECH

A few days after this letter was leaked to Irish newspapers, N Ireland Secretary Tom King tried to paper over the cracks in a speech outlining some reforms: there would be fewer defendants in supergrass trials; in bail applications, the onus would rest with the prosecution to prove grounds for refusal of bail, rather than as

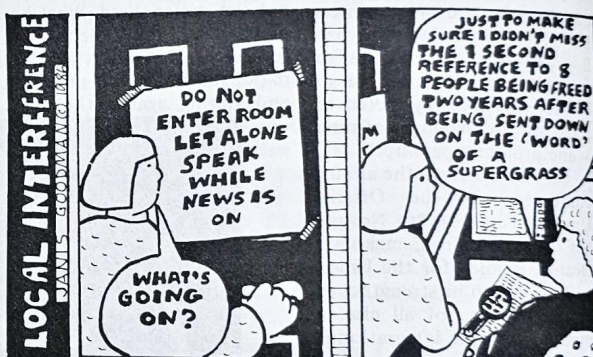
now the onus resting with the defendant to give reasons for granting bail; the length of remand before trial would be shortened by recruiting more judges and senior barristers; and powers of arrest would be restricted by the need to show 'reasonable' suspicion (at present, suspicion alone is sufficient however meaningless or prejudiced).

These reforms were all put to the British Government in the Baker Report, back in April 1984. Over two and a half years ago. But maybe crumbs are still crumbs, however stale.

The propaganda value of King's promises — as a measure of goodwill towards redressing

the balance, or as a consideration of Irish feelings — was undercut by his naive defence of the Diplock system in the same speech. One thing that is not to change is the use of uncorroborated evidence in supergrass trials: no problem here, King said, because the judges are so scrupulous and aware of the dangers. 'Such manifest fairness and care can only give sure ground for public confidence in the administration of justice.'

In his sure instinct for adding insult to injury, King is a worthy successor to all the other British rulers of Ireland. For if there is one thing that the staunch republican and the most virulent IRA-hater agree on, it is that the judges and the entire judicial system are neither fair nor careful, that there is no 'justice' in which to have confidence.



# Dirty tricks department

Just as Harold Wilson's claim in the mid-1970s that he was being watched by MI5 was greeted at the time with some incredulity, Charles Haughey's claims in the early 1980s that his administration was being undermined by British Intelligence was seen as an attempt to draw attention away from his government's failures.

In May 1982 the Justice Minister and the Deputy Commissioner of the Gardaí set up an investigation to find 'Badger', a senior garda officer believed to be working for British Intelligence (see last issue). As part of this investigation, two British diplomats and a multinational company believed to be being used as cover were put under surveillance. The telephones of three journalists were also tapped. One of the

revelations from the phone tap was the existence of a slush fund available for buying off supporters of Charles Haughey. Government minister Ray McSharry was offered £100,000 to stand against Haughey in a Fianna Fail leadership battle.

When the present Fine Gael Irish government was formed in December 1982 it became aware of the phone taps on the journalists. This was made public and the Deputy Garda Commissioner involved was forced to resign. Sean Doherty, the former justice minister, already badly damaged by the Dowra affair (see last issue), was disgraced and had the Fianna Fail whip withdrawn. The two British diplomats left Dublin soon afterwards.

British Intelligence attempts to split the Fianna Fail party

go back to the early seventies. In 1970 they supplied the evidence to the opposition party which led to the 'arms crisis' and the resignation of three ministers from the Government. They were involved with loyalist elements in planting bombs in Dublin city centre in 1972 and in the mid-seventies published a book, *Fianna Fail and the IRA*. This book purported to show that prominent members of Fianna Fail including Charles Haughey were involved in setting up the IRA. Printed to look as if it came from the 'Official IRA' (later to become the Workers Party) the book was very widely distributed and sold in many British left-wing bookshops.

It seems that these moves to undermine Fianna Fail were

made by the Intelligence Services without the knowledge of the Labour government in power in Britain in the early '70s, though whether the operations in the early '80s were made without the knowledge of the present government is doubtful.

## GARRET'S INHERITANCE

Desmond FitzGerald, father of Garret the present Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland, left his son with a nasty inheritance. Commenting in January 1922 on a United Ireland he said 'The way I look at it, for our generation we have gone far enough. Let us leave it to the next to finish it.'

Alas his son Garret has been unable to get the phrase out of his mind. When asked a similar question on Channel 4 news on 15th November 1985 after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement he said, 'That is a matter for another generation'.



# Political developments in Sinn Fein

Observers from the Troops Out Movement were among the people invited to the 82nd conference (Ard Fheis) of Sinn Fein, held in Dublin on 31st October, 1st November and 2nd November 1986.

In stark contrast to the Official Unionist Party, who held their conference in secret the following weekend to hide internal disagreements from public scrutiny, all but an hour of the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis was open to the media.

TOM observers saw a vibrant political party engaging in real debates, with delegates not being afraid to criticise the leadership when they saw fit, which belies media descriptions of Sinn Fein as an undemocratic monolith.

Despite media attempts to create a split within Sinn Fein's ranks, and to confuse the party's supporters, the vast majority of delegates went home after the Ard Fheis feeling that the weekend had brought victory closer.

Many people were turned away, whilst inside over 2,000 people crammed into every available space. People stood for hours on end, not daring to go to the toilet for fear of losing their place. This was a political gathering with a difference.

Whilst the enormous media interest focussed on the build up to Sunday's big debate on whether the party should drop its abstentionist policy to the Parliament in Dublin, delegates from Sinn Fein cumainn throughout the 32 counties of Ireland discussed policies and activities on an enormous range of issues.

The Ard Fheis was opened (for the first time on a Friday evening) by Sinn Fein chairperson Sean MacManus, who told delegates: *"The determination of the Westminster and Dublin Governments to formulate and implement common political objectives has been equalled only by their common indifference to the economic and social misery which their policies have caused the people of this island."*

*"As both administrations concentrate their attention on bolstering a border which is the primary source of division on this island and while vast resources are diverted to copper-fasten this division, the dole queues lengthen, health services are cut back and our youth are forced, in increasing numbers, to emigrate in search of a better life."*

Sean MacManus went on to ask, what benefits for nationalists have come from 12 months of the Anglo-Irish Accord? *"There were going to be changes in employment with equality of opportunity,"* he recalled. *"The judiciary and the RUC would be reformed, show trials would end, harassment would cease, our cultural identity would be recognised."*

But the reality, he continued, was that 150 nationalist families have been forced to flee their homes in Lisburn, and 13 people have been assassinated by loyalists in reaction to the deal.

In Strabane the British Army and RUC have gone on a 'sectarian spree' of harass-

ment, in Maghaberry women are still being strip-searched, and at the border Irish people are arrested if they give their name in their native language.

## GAY RIGHTS

The Ard Fheis having been opened, delegates set about developing their policies on issues as diverse as housing, prisoners, education, agriculture, foreign affairs, childcare, health, social welfare and justice.

One resolution overwhelmingly carried was proposed by a cumann from Dublin, stating: "Sinn Fein publicly demands the de-criminalisation of homosexual acts between men, and also calls for the full equal rights for lesbian women and gay men with their heterosexual counterparts."

Supporting this resolution, Daisy Mules from Derry referred to the many Irish lesbians and gay men who feel forced to emigrate because of pressure against gay people in Ireland.

In response to one delegate who urged the deletion of the word 'publicly' from the motion, Martha McLelland from Derry responded: *"We are not a populist party, we are a revolutionary party."*

When it came to the vote, the motion was easily carried, with the leadership (Ard Chomhairle) supporting it.



Lily Fitzsimmons

## Abortion issue

Prior to the abstentionist debate, the longest, most contentious, and most open debate was on the issue of Abortion. In addition to the allotted 45 minutes, this discussion continued right through the hour that was supposed to have been the lunch break.

Before 1980, Sinn Fein had a simple policy of opposition to abortion. But from the 1980 Ard Fheis onwards, this policy has gradually been amended so that by the end of last year's Ard Fheis the policy read: 'We are opposed to the attitudes and forces in society which compel women to have an abortion. We are opposed to abortion as a means of birth control but we accept the need for abortion where the women's life is at risk or in grave danger, for example ectopic pregnancy and all forms of cancer. We recognise that women have the right to choose.'

It was that final sentence (added last year) that has caused some dissension within Sinn Fein's ranks over the past 12 months, and led to a motion this time to delete it. In Gerry Adams' view, that sentence went *"too far and too fast"*, and if it was deleted Sinn Fein would still be left with a *"progressive, compassionate, realistic policy."*

Other delegates disagreed, however, and they wanted to clarify Sinn Fein's position further by supporting a motion from Derry which sought to de-criminalise abortion, called for non-directive pregnancy counselling, and accepted 'the individual's right to make a conscientious decision for or against abortion without coercion from any other individual or group.'

Over 30 people spoke during the debate, including Councillor Lily Fitzsimmons from Belfast who compare the 'criminalisation' of republican prisoners in the six Counties a decade ago to the criminalisation of women today on the issue of abortion.

In the end, delegates agreed to delete the 'right to choose' sentence, while the Derry motion was defeated by 212 votes to 117.

The debate within the movement has not ended, however, and supporters of the Derry motion say they will be back year after year, arguing that some form of right-to-choose policy is the only one consistent with the aspiration towards self-determination for all the Irish people.

They also accept that such an open debate on the question of abortion would simply not be possible with any other political party in Ireland.



# Political developments in Sinn Fein

## Abstentionism



PHOTO AP/RN

THE STAGE FOR SUNDAY'S DEBATE on abstentionism was set the previous day, during the Presidential Address by Gerry Adams MP. The bulk of his 90 minute speech, frequently interrupted by spontaneous standing ovations, was devoted to the issue.

It is perhaps difficult for readers outside Ireland to understand what the abstentionist debate was about, particularly as the media were more concerned with creating 'splits' and comparing the situation to the republican split in 1969/70.

Sinn Fein has always refused to recognise any parliaments other than a 32 county Irish parliament. Therefore, when it has fought elections to Westminster, Stormont (Six Counties), or Leinster House (26 Counties), it has always been on an abstentionist platform. In other words, any Sinn Fein candidates elected have refused to take their seats.

Nobody has suggested dropping absentionism in Six County elections, where the nationalist electorate clearly understands and supports the principle involved. The debate was about whether the policy is any longer applicable to the 26 Counties, whose population does not face the daily reality of British troops on their streets.

Three different positions emerged within Sinn Fein during the debate.

Firstly, the majority (and the leadership) position that if Sinn Fein is ever to grow in the 26 Counties and shorten the war in the North, it will have to drop abstentionism.

Secondly, the view of former President Ruari O'Bradaigh and a grouping around him, that to drop abstentionism is to sell-out republican ideals.

Thirdly, those who felt that dropping abstentionism was wrong, at least for the time being, but who didn't see it as an issue for walking-out.

"We must develop a 32 County wide political struggle. This is the most important task facing us at present. While consolidating our base in the Six Counties, we must develop a popular struggle here in the 26 Counties to complement the struggle in the Six County area. Of necessity this means, in order to advance at the level of people's consciousness, the removal of abstentionism in regard to Leinster

House...

"What will make an organisation like ours revolutionary is not whether it is committed to any particular means of achieving revolution - such as street agitation, electoralism, or physical force - but whether all the means, it uses - political work, publicity, mass education, electoralism, and armed struggle (which should play no part in the struggle in this state) or projects of economic, social or cultural resistance - are conducive to achieving the revolutionary reconquest of Ireland." Gerry Adams.

When Sunday came there were almost 700 delegates and over 1,300 visitors present. Over 50 people spoke during the five hour debate, with almost as many others wanting to speak but not having the time.

The Ard Chomhairle resolution to drop abstentionism in the 26 Counties from the Sinn Fein constitution was proposed by Pat Doherty, who said that ordinary people simply don't understand the policy of abstaining from Leinster House.

Seconding the resolution, veteran republican John Joe McGirl said he had been an abstentionist all his life but had now changed his mind because "it is necessary to make this change if we are to hand down this struggle to another generation."

This was a recurring theme from the proposal's supporters: that in order to win the struggle Sinn Fein must break out of political isolation in the 26 Counties, and in order to do that it must make itself relevant to working class people by being prepared to challenge the establishment parties within Leinster House.

Councillor Jim McAllister from South Armagh told delegates: "We all have the Republic in our minds, and this motion is trying to put it on the ground. We don't want the Republic to be just a plaque on the wall; I want to live in the Republic!"

Several speakers referred to the fact that at a recent Army Convention, the IRA had come out in support of dropping abstentionism. Rejecting the change would mean condemning the men and women who are fighting on the ground to a longer than necessary war, delegates were told.

The 1969/70 split was discussed during the debate, with veterans such as Joe Cahill dismissing similarities with 1986 because 16 years ago the IRA was incapable of defending nationalists in the North and the then leadership had run-down the movement's military capability - whereas today the IRA had been fighting for 16 years and both it and Sinn Fein were led "from the front". There would be no sell-out.

But Ruari O'Bradaigh and his supporters disagreed. Entering Leinster House, he argued, would enmesh Sinn Fein in reformism and constitutionalism, would lead to the armed struggle being scaled down, and would eventually result in the recognition of Westminster.

In a reference to taking seats in Leinster House, another speaker said: "When you lie down with the dog you get up with the fleas." Richard Behal of Killarney told Northern delegates that Leinster House is "as loathsome to me as Stormont is to the people living in the Six Counties."

For the leadership, Martin McGuinness assured delegates that "we have absolutely no intention of going into Westminster or Stormont." He said that the republicans were not at war within the 26 Counties. Referring to the threat of a walk-out, McGuinness said: "If you allow yourself to be led out of this hall today, the only place you're going is home." He reiterated that there has been no walk-out from the IRA, even though a number of volunteers disagreed with the recent change of policy.

Summing up the debate, Pat Doherty for the Ard Chomhairle said: "We have heard no alternative from those opposed to the change, only fear, fear, fear. They simply have no concept of winning... We have to use modern methods to achieve the ideals of the past."

When it came to the vote, the leadership's motion was carried by 429 to 161, thereby achieving the necessary two-thirds majority.

About 30 delegates, led by Ruari O'Bradaigh, then left the hall, outnumbered by photographers, TV crews and reporters. Joined by 100 non-delegates, they went on the announce the formation of 'Republican Sinn Fein'.

In a statement the following day, Gerry Adams said that when those who walked out realise they have made a mistake, "they will find the Sinn Fein leadership is not lacking in comradeship or understanding of their plight." The door to the struggle is still open, he went on.

Reflecting the high morale and enthusiasm demonstrated by Sinn Fein's biggest Ard Fheis in years (if not ever), he added: "In the meantime, we and the vast majority of republicans throughout Ireland and abroad will get on with the challenging task of building a radical and relevant alternative to Garret Fitzgerald's misrule on the one hand and partition and the British presence on the other hand."



# Irish prisoners in Britain



Long Lartin Prison, where eight Republican prisoners are currently serving their sentences (photo TOM).

## Families under sentence

It is Home Office policy (1964 Instrument No. 388 – Prison Rule 31) that a prisoner should serve his/her sentence as near as possible to their own home to preserve family relationships and to work towards rehabilitation. How then does imprisoning a woman from Tipperary in Durham, a man from Kerry in Frankland, a man from Belfast in the Isle of Wight etc. etc. uphold this policy?

The enormous distances that families have to travel is a form of cruelty in itself. Consider one case of a woman from Belfast with four children having to journey from Belfast to the Isle of Wight to visit her husband. Arriving exhausted and irritated is hardly conducive to preserving family relationships. And what lasting impression does it have on young children if they have to go through two days of tedious and often upsetting travelling before they can see their daddy? On top of the travelling there is the problem of staying in bed and breakfast accommodation with strangers. Coping with children in such circumstances is bad enough without the stress of visiting your husband in prison hundreds of miles from home who you might not have seen for six months.

Relatives are having to spend hours in social security offices to obtain their entitlement to a travel warrant (second class sea and rail of course – the DHSS haven't heard of the invention of the aeroplane!). There are numerous instances of people not being informed of the warrant being granted until the day they have to travel. They have to suffer humiliation and worry to get what is theirs by right. And of course no travel warrant takes into account all the extra expense to keep children occupied on such a long journey so there are always additional financial worries when embarking on these visits. Needless to say visits which are so traumatic often only happen once or twice a year.

Many people are too ill to travel. Currently, the father of one prisoner who

is serving life, has not seen his son for three years because of a serious heart complaint. Consider the case of a prisoner recently released. He was imprisoned in 1979 and his mother died in 1983 without having seen her son. Other families have suffered similar heartbreak.

Needless to say these prisoners are not allowed out for funerals – after all, they are not the Kray twins.

These are just a few examples of Britain's inhuman and degrading treatment administered to Irish Republican prisoners and their relatives. If the prisoners were transferred to prisons in Ireland they would be able to have weekly visits so there would not be the added risk of relatives growing apart. They would not have to spend enormous amounts of time and money for each visit. The sick and elderly relatives could also visit. But it is clearly the intention of the British Government to sentence the families of prisoners as well as the prisoners themselves in refusing repatriation.

*Continued overleaf*



## CHANGING ITS OWN RULES

The hypocrisy of the Government excels in various ways:

- it refuses to implement its own prison rules about prisoners being housed as close as possible to their own homes.
- it refuses to operate European Parliament policy to which it is a signatory which states: "Community citizens serving a custodial sentence for committing a criminal offence must be given the possibility of serving the sentence imposed on them in their country of origin or their habitual country of residence."
- it is a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights. Article 8 states that the individual has the right to "respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence". (We are told that it also applies to women!)
- British soldiers convicted of offences in the North of Ireland are transferred back to Britain on request.

Over the last two or three years TOM has encouraged people to write to the Home Office asking them to immediately implement their own prison rules and the European policy they are supposed to uphold. Hundreds have written, only to receive the identical photocopied letter in reply. It states.

- there are more difficulties if the prisoner's home is in a different jurisdiction (from England and Wales!).
- "public opinion" would not allow transfer to N. Ireland jails because of the 50% remission. ("Public opinion" about fair treatment has rarely concerned the British Government.)
- Each case is decided on its individual merits in the light of the prisoner's current behaviour, attitude, history and background. (What has happened to basic human rights for all?!)
- Can the prisoner be relied upon to cooperate?

The only Republican prisoner to have been repatriated in recent years was Shane O'Doherty from Derry, who discovered religion and has renounced his previous views and actions. Whilst being happy for Shane O'Doherty and his family and the relief of much of the suffering, we believe that the denial of one's beliefs should not be a prerequisite for decent human care, consideration and basic rights.

However, chinks of hope are beginning to appear in the wall of silence. The recent statement by the National Association of Prison Officers, in relation to the transfer of prisoners, points out that mental and physical breakdown and child behavioural difficulties have been the direct result of long enforced separation of prisoners from their relatives.

The British government are determined even to punish the next generation.

## WHAT WE CAN DO

We all need to look at how we can help win more support for the prisoners' demand for repatriation.

- Write to the Home Secretary. The more people write, the less it can be claimed that there is no interest.
- Write to your own MP.
- Raise the issue in your trade union — there's usually a policy on prisoners in South Africa, Chile and Poland; in your Labour Party, students' group, women's organisation etc. Notify the Home Office, MPs, the NCCL, Amnesty International of any resolutions passed.
- Write to newspapers and telephone local radio stations.
- Publicise statements from the Relatives Committee of Irish Political Prisoners in English Jails (based in Belfast).
- Support any protests and prison pickets organised on the issue.
- Send cards etc to prisoners to show they have support.

# Irish prisoners

## Durham

*Troops Out* readers will remember the campaign by the Irish Prisoners Appeal to publicise the strip-searching of Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson in Brixton Prison.

At 4am on the morning of July 31st 1986, they were taken to Durham 'H' wing in a closed prison van. Before leaving Brixton they were strip-searched and then put into the van, having contact only with prison officers. Upon arrival at Durham they were again strip-searched. Durham Prison's 'H' Wing was closed down in the early '70s when it held only men, after several enquiries which condemned the conditions as inhumane — overcrowding and sensory deprivation were two of the main factors criticised. In 1974 it was re-opened for women, holding even more prisoners under basically the same conditions.

## PUNISHED FOR PROTESTING

Ella and Martina, together with the two other category A women-prisoners — Judith Ward and Sonja Schulz and 32 other women are held in a prison

which holds over 400 prisoners. They have 40 hour week doing on their hands and else sewing Nato uniforms. From the outset Martina refused to wear uniforms. They governor that they this work because it their beliefs. On 2 they were put on disobeying a 'law'. This meant they hour solitary confinement. This meant they separate punishment loss of most 'privileges', mirror, beds out of their cells, ings and no association. spent a total of 6 months solitary confinement early October released that the governor ceded to their demand for an alternative work.

However, they were strip-searched, and need support, as these conditions publicised. Another they have is the vision on their relatives. Other not have wardens their visits — Ella have three.

## Prisoners Birthdays

Please send cards and letters to prisoners, especially on their birthdays and at Christmas/New Year. Let them know they are not forgotten. Don't forget to use the numbers.

### REPUBLICAN PRISONERS

Martina Anderson	Durham	D25134	16 April
William Armstrong	Frankland	119085	26 December
Liam Baker	Long Lartin	464984	6 September
James Bennett	Long Lartin	464989	4 December
Martin Brady	Albany	119087	22 September
Eddie Butler	Long Lartin	338637	17 April
Donal Craig	Wormwood Scrubs		
Gerry Cunningham	Long Lartin	132016	24 March
Robert Cunningham	Long Lartin	131877	12 July
Hugh Doherty	Liverpool	338636	7 December
Vincent Donnelly	Albany	274064	25 September
Brendan Dowd	Frankland	758662	17 November
Harry Duggan	Albany	338638	31 October
Noel Gibson	Parkhurst	879225	11 December
Patrick Hackett	Parkhurst	342603	20 April
Sean Hayes	Albany	341418	8 July
Paul Holmes	Frankland	119034	22 June

Paul Kavanagh	Leicester	826380	17 July
Sean Kinsella	Manchester	758661	5 November
Ronnie McCartney	Gartree	463799	3 September
John McComb	Long Lartin	851715	25 February
Gerald McDonnell	Parkhurst	875882	19 December
Con McFadden	Wakefield	130662	19 June
Sean McShane	Wormwood Scrubs	875879	
Patrick Magee	Leicester	875881	29 May
Andy Mulryan	Long Lartin	461576	18 November
Patrick Mulryan	Long Lartin	461575	23 March
Stephen Nordone	Gartree	758663	2 August
Paul Norney	Parkhurst	863532	11 November
Joe O'Connell	Gartree	338635	15 May
Ella O'Dwyer	Durham	D25134	3 March
Eddie O'Neill	Frankland	135722	15 January
Thomas Quigley	Parkhurst	B69204	23 July
Peter Sherry	Parkhurst	875880	30 June
Natalino Vella	Wakefield	871644	24 December
Roy Walsh	Gartree	119083	1 November

### FRAME-UP PRISONERS

Judith Ward	Durham	994466	
BIRMINGHAM SIX			
Hugh Callaghan	Gartree	509499	
Paddy Hill	Gartree	509496	



# ers in Britain

## torture

Over 1000 male have to work a doing cleaning and knees, or Nato uniforms. Atset Ella and d to sew Nato ey told the ey couldn't do se it was against n 22nd August on 'report' for 'lawful order'. ey were in 23 confinement in ment cells with privileges' — ie spread taken ls, loss of earn- socation. They f four weeks in ment. Then in relatives heard nor had con- demands to do

To highlight the unprecedented number of strip-searches they have endured in jail Ella and Martina are taking a legal action against the Government. This is to challenge the legal right of the Brixton Prison governor and the Home Office to assault the women by strip-searching them.

On May 1st 1986 the first hearing, which was to get 'leave' to take the legal action, failed. The High Court ruled that strip-searching was within the remit of prison rules, and that a governor could choose to do what he/she likes, since prison rules are not open to legal challenge.

The first appeal against this decision (October 2nd 1986), was adjourned, as the judges wished another case taken by another prisoner to be resolved first. If this appeal fails, the case will go to the House of Lords, and, if necessary, to the European Court of Human Rights.

This is an extremely important case, which, if won, would challenge the secrecy surrounding prison rules, and will benefit all prisoners, as have many such issues fought and won by Irish political prisoners in this country.

### NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE DISCRIMINATION

*"The Northern Ireland Office, for obvious reasons, are most reluctant to contemplate adding to the sizeable problems of prison administration by taking on additional prisoners when it can be reasonably foreseen that they will not cooperate fully. For example the majority of requests for transfer to Northern Ireland are from prisoners convicted of terrorist type offences. Experience in Northern Ireland over a long period shows that prisoners who have not formally severed their links with paramilitary organisations tend to operate in cohesive groups in prison and are unwilling to accept the constraints of ordinary prison routine. Similarly, the Northern Ireland Office will not accept any prisoner, regardless of his background and the nature of his offence, if he is being uncooperative in other ways in Great Britain."*

This clearly states that whilst Republican prisoners still hold their views and act according to their principles they do not deserve basic human consideration, not to mention their families. It is a case of blatant discrimination and where is the media outrage against this?



Leicester Prison, the scene of a picket in October (photo: Mark Salmon)

## Stripsearching

Judith Ward was convicted of the bombing of a coach of soldiers on the M62 in February 1974 and sentenced to a minimum of 30 years on the basis of her 'confession' which she withdrew in court. She has consistently proclaimed her innocence. Here she writes about present conditions in Durham Gaol's 'H' wing where she has served most of her sentence.

*Our main priority here at the moment is the strip-searching. Over the last nine months the amount of strip and rub-down searches (i.e. body searches) has attained ridiculous proportions. At the very minimum each girl is subjected to six body searches a day! This is before entering and after leaving the workroom twice a day and before entering and leaving the exercise yard. If one were called to see the M.O., the A.G. and the welfare officer all on the same day this would amount to 10 per day per girl.*

*Besides all these unnecessary and futile searches, we are subjected to body searches before a visit and a full strip-search after a visit, whether it be a social or legal visit. Plus we are also subject to full cell and strip-searches twice and sometimes three times a month. During these cell searches, everything in one's cell is put out on the landing. Then one has to strip off all clothes after this cell search.*

*We feel these searches are petty and totally unnecessary. The main reason given for searching is one of security. I was always told that if the perimeter of the prison was secure enough then conditions would be more easy-going, as is the case with other prisons. It does not seem to apply to 'H' wing, which is regarded as something of a special case.*

In sisterhood and solidarity,  
Judith Ward

Gerry Hunter	Durham	50949-
Richard McKenny	Wormwood Scrubs	509498
Billy Power	Wormwood Scrubs	509497
John Walker	Long Lartin	50949--
GUILDFORD FOUR		
Paddy Armstrong	Gartree	
Gerry Conlon	Long Lartin	
Paul Hill	Wormwood Scrubs	
Carol Richardson	HM Prison, Styal, Cheshire	

### OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS

Billy Grimes	Albany	
Peter Jordan	Long Lartin	H22338

### PRISON ADDRESSES

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX.  
HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS.  
HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE.  
HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 5TZ.  
HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7RP.  
HM Prison Leicester, Welford Road, Leicester, LE2 7AJ.  
HM Prison Frankland, Brasside, Co. Durham.  
HM Prison Wakefield, Love Lane, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 9AG.  
HM Prison Durham, Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HU.



# Breaking the ice

## Interview with Sinn Fein councillor

Eight Sinn Fein councillors visited England at the end of October. During the week they were able to tell a wide audience of people what British rule actually means in the North of Ireland. In this interview with *Troops Out* Cllr Tommy Carroll gives his impressions of the tour, his personal experience as a Sinn Fein councillor and how the Anglo/Irish Agreement is being implemented.

**TOM:** What has been the impact of the Sinn Fein tour in England?

**TC:** The first thing the trip to London and other parts of England has done is to present Sinn Fein to a wide audience of people – elected councillors, community groups, trade unions and black groups etc. It has allowed us to present ourselves as a normal political party and to break through the stereotyped image the public here might have of Sinn Fein.

They've been able to speak to Sinn Fein members in a sensible way and to see us not in a hostile manner as the popular press presents us. To see Sinn Fein as it really is and not as they've been led to believe.

**TOM:** As a councillor what would you like to see people in this country doing to further the cause of a United Ireland?

**TC:** People in this country if they were given the choice would want the British army to withdraw from our country (N Ireland) and would wish the British government to have no involvement in Ireland. We would ask people to organise together to raise the issues of Ireland with their elected representatives. Start to do this at council level, community groups and black minority groups.



A British helicopter on patrol in S. Armagh (photo: AP/RN).

We would hope that in the Labour Party the pressure would start from the grass roots right up to the top so that when they come into power they would have a positive attitude. A new policy towards Ireland. Not the bi-partisan policy between the Labour Party and the Conservatives that has helped to continue the strife in Ireland.

People here must end the silence on Ireland. There are a great many issues affecting Irish people which if not stopped will start to affect people in Britain.

**TOM:** What level of awareness of the conditions in Ireland did you find amongst those you talked to?

**TC:** I found the meetings with the Labour councillors very useful as some of them were completely ignorant of what is happening in Ireland. Most of the councillors we met wanted a British withdrawal and so were out of step with Labour Party leadership.

Trade unionists were also not well briefed on what British policy was on Ireland. We explained to them that when they met Trade Union representatives from the 6 counties they would be meeting people who in the main support British policy in Ireland and who would represent the loyalist position of privilege.

**TOM:** Have you a particular message for British trade unionists?

**TC:** Yes. Partition has split the working class of Ireland. Within the 6 counties you have another split between the loyalists and nationalists. We ask trade unionists to recognise that before you can have working class unity you must have a united Ireland so the working class are one group within the whole island.

The Northern Ireland Committee of Trade Unionists stated that they unambiguously supported the RUC (police). Can anyone imagine black trade unionists in S. Africa supporting the police there? We would ask trade unionists to look at this contradiction. We would like them to look at the nature of employment in the 6 counties. All employment is in loyalist areas. Some of these trade union representatives back in Ireland don an RUC reserve uniform or become part-timers in the Ulster Defence Regiment when they finish work. On the one hand they're trade unionists and on the other they're part of these reactionary forces.

As the majority of people unemployed are nationalists they are unable to form trade unions because they've got no jobs.

We ask trade unionists at their general congress not to support the position of the 6 county unionists but to take an independent position and call for a British withdrawal.

### ANGLO/IRISH AGREEMENT

**TOM:** The Anglo/Irish Agreement has provided much uncertainty here. Some feel it is preparing the way for an eventual united Ireland now that the Unionists have had the carpet pulled from under their feet. Others consider it is a strengthening of partition. Did you find such confusion?

**TC:** A lot of people asked us about the Hillsborough Accord, was it going to bring about peace or a United Ireland? There seems to be a lot of confusion in people's minds.

The first thing is that it was not meant to bring about a British withdrawal from Ireland. It was meant to stabilise Britain's rule and strengthen the loyalist veto. For the first time since the 6 county state was formed the veto is now enshrined in an international agreement. In the last 12 months the loyalists have falsely perceived a threat to their position in the 6 counties. That has brought about a renewed campaign of sectarian violence on the Catholic population.

This year there have been about 30 churches and 40 schools burned or destroyed, about 450 Catholics have been petrol bombed out of their homes, hundreds have been intimidated out of jobs, while there has been a rise in assassinations and attempted assassinations of Catholics.

**TOM:** Why have they reacted in this way if their veto is still intact?

**TC:** The loyalist are doing this because they fully understand that the Accord will give middle class Catholics a say in running the 6 county state, in other words they won't be the sole patrons of British rule in Ireland. That is why they are reacting in their traditional manner of assassinating and intimidating Catholics. This is not new.

Every time Britain tries to reform the system the loyalists have reacted in this manner. In 1974 when the Sunningdale Agreement was signed they reacted in the same way. They mounted a sectarian murder campaign on Catholics.

It has been put about by the popular media that the loyalists are doing this now as a reaction against the IRA's campaign on contractors who service and build British army and RUC installations in the North. A close look at the facts will show that this is a false portrayal as this pogrom on Catholics started before the IRA's campaign on contractors. It started soon after the signing of the accord and has increased in momentum since the loyalist day of action on March 3rd.



**TOM:** Much has been made of closer ties between Britain and the Republic. Has this been evident on the ground?

**TC:** Another factor that is very obvious to those living in N Ireland that Britain has no intention of pulling out is the building of spy posts in South Armagh. In the past few weeks the British army have seized over a hundred acres of land and proceeded to strip away the hedges, trees and build large look-out posts. They are equipped with the latest surveillance equipment. They are tapping into the telephone system in the area and no-one can move anywhere without being observed.

While these posts were being erected the British troops were being guarded by the Free State Army. We can clearly see that the 26 county government is collaborating with Britain in strengthening partition.

**TOM:** Hasn't this created contradictions with those who support the Agreement and yet are representing the people living in these areas?

**TC:** Indeed Seamus Mallon of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) who fully supports the Agreement was placed in the position of making representations to the British government through the Anglo/Irish conference about the seizing of land in S. Armagh. So we have this man on the one hand saying that he disagrees with what the Agreement is actually doing to the people on the ground, while on the other hand supporting it.

Twenty six county government ministers state that the nationalists are more and more supporting the RUC. While at the same time the Catholic Bishops, elected representatives on the nationalist side (both SDLP and Sinn Fein) complain about the rising tide of harassment and increased house searches that have been carried out by both the RUC and British army.

There is nothing in the Accord for the nationalist people. It is just another attempt to try to reform the 6 county system. We know it is irreformable, it can't be tinkered with.

## REACTION TO SINN FEIN IN THE COUNCILS

**TOM:** What's been happening in the councils since your election in May 1985?

**TC:** On Armagh City council where I am an elected representative, the structure of the council was changed in order to prevent me from attending all meetings about council business. The council was restructured into committees – finance, recreation and planning. I can't attend any of these meetings because the loyalists proposed that council business be done by committees. Naturally enough I wasn't elected to any of these committees. The SDLP protested about this but then accepted places on these committees – so they participate in loyalist plans to isolate Sinn Fein.

When I get up to speak in the council chamber the chairman ignores anything that I say. He will immediately look to a

unionist councillor and they will proceed to talk about something else and I am totally ignored. This is not just happening in Armagh but in every other council where there is an elected Sinn Fein member.

**TOM:** Does this attitude extend beyond the council chamber?

**TC:** I come in for special attention from the RUC because I am an elected representative. I have been stopped 88 times this year – asked my name, where I am going, address where I've come from, my pockets are searched, all my mail both public and private gets scrutinized.

Shortly after we were elected a directive was issued from the N Ireland Office to all heads of departments, that is DHSS, DOE, Housing Executive and permanent council officials, that any enquiries that were made on behalf of our constituents were to be recorded and logged. These were then to be returned to the N Ireland Office so that British Intelligence could monitor the work that Sinn Fein was doing. Six months after this they issued another directive thanking the heads for

their co-operation and saying that they now require more information – the time telephone calls were made, where from, the nature of the enquiry and the number of calls on that enquiry.

We believe that this action is paving the way for some other restriction on the way Sinn Fein operates in a further attempt to isolate us in the community.

We are able to counteract our obstruction in the council chambers. We have 26 advice centres in the 6 counties staffed on a voluntary basis. We deal directly with heads of departments in DHSS etc on behalf of our constituents instead of going through the council. So the British government has actually forced us closer to the people.

Another directive issued against Sinn Fein members is that elected representatives cannot visit anyone in gaol. I used to go regularly to Long Kesh. I visited a prisoner the week before the election. When I came down a week after the election I was pulled into an office and a governor read out a notice. I was no longer allowed to visit anyone in gaol.



One of the British Army spy posts recently constructed in S. Armagh. Nationalists call them the Hillsborough Wall (photo: AP/RN).





Historic meeting: Máire O'Shea, Mary Pearson and Chris Mullin calling for the release of the Birmingham Six.

## Birmingham Six

*"It's the first meeting of its kind in Birmingham and it's taken twelve years to happen"* — Mary Pearson, Birmingham TOM.

200 people came to hear Chris Mullin (author of *Error of Judgement — the Truth about the Birmingham Bombings*) outline the background to the wrongful conviction of six men for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings which killed 21 and injured 162.

Máire O'Shea, herself cleared earlier this year of a bombing conspiracy charge, told the meeting *"I hope more people will get to know the truth and add to the pressure on the government to re-open the case"*.

## Reaction to SF tour

Leeds City Council's red-blooded Labour group voted with the Tories recently to urge *"all visitors to the Civic Hall to join them in condemning all politically motivated terrorist violence emanating from Northern Ireland"*. The motion was in response to the visit to England of Sinn Féin councillors during October.

This attitude is in sharp contrast to Labour councils in London which welcomed Sinn Féin councillors to address their meetings and adopted a comprehensive policy in favour of British withdrawal from Ireland.

Commenting on only two councillors turning up to a reception and meeting at Leeds Civic Hall, Sinn Féin councillor Jim McAllister said: *"Those so-called socialist councillors who refused to meet us are saying to the Irish people there is no point in your getting involved in the electoral process, because we will not speak to you."*

*"Councillors in Leeds are delivering a stark message to the Irish people. They are saying 'get your gun, because we will not speak to your politicians and your elected representatives.'"*

(Leeds Other Paper)



Labour prospective parliamentary candidate for Leicester South, Jim Marshall (left) with councillors Theresa Holland (West Belfast) and Jim McAllister (South Armagh) during October's visit by Sinn Féin councillors to England (photo: Mark Salmon).

## Durham day of action

A successful day of action demanding the repatriation of Irish Republican prisoners hit Newcastle and Durham city centres on November 8th.

A march headed by relatives of the prisoners, carrying "Repatriation Now" posters, and its ranks swelled by four Republican flute bands from Scotland, had a powerful impact on shoppers in Newcastle's main pedestrian precinct.

After making their point in Newcastle, the demonstrators travelled by bus to Frankland prison complex outside Durham, where five Republican prisoners are serving life sentences. The bands' Republican marching songs and the cheers of the demonstrators rebounded off the gaunt 15-foot walls.

The sound gave a surge of confidence to the PoWs and brought home the message to ordinary prisoners too. As for the screws, they patrolled the outside walls with guard dogs as the march moved off.

At Durham prison, where Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer are incarcerated following the Brighton bomb show-trial, another loud and defiant demonstration was staged, after which a rally was held in a nearby hall.

Isobel Anderson, Martina's sister, told the audience of the horrors of strip-searching that Martina had suffered along with Ella O'Dwyer and the women at the new Maghaberry jail in N. Ireland.

*"The women feel they are being raped — that's what strip-searching is,"*

Anne-Marie Keenan, secretary of the committee representing relatives of PoWs in British jails, told the rally: *"We want to see the same attention given to the Irish PoWs in Britain as is given to the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six."*

*"As far as we are concerned, they are all innocent. None of them has ever had a fair trial: they were all tried on the front pages of the daily papers."* Relatives are being sentenced to treatment *"as severe as that of the prisoners"* because repatriation is refused, she said.

James O'Neill of the Republican Band Alliance said: *"We supported these Volunteers while they were on active service; we will continue supporting them as long as they are in prison."*

Dave Temple, of the Durham Mechanics' section of the miners' union, speaking in a personal capacity, said that

miners were changing their attitude to the Irish struggle, because during their own strike they saw the police occupation of their pit villages, their comrades beaten up and jailed.

*"We are here today because we are up against the same thing: the British state,"* he said. *"We are determined to bring home to the working class here what the real situation in the north of Ireland is."*

The Day of Action was organised by the Glasgow Prisoners of War Committee, Clydeside Troops Out Movement and the Republican Band Alliance. The Crossmaglen Patriots, Wolfe Tone, Spirit of Freedom and Kevin Barry Memorial flute bands took part, along with trades unionists, political groups and Irish solidarity organisations, including the Newcastle Troops Out Movement and the Labour Committee on Ireland.



# Plastic justice

**A Chara,**  
In the November issue of *Troops Out* you printed a letter from Brenda Downes about the murder of her husband John and the consequent acquittal of Nigel Hegarty the RUC reservist who was charged with his manslaughter. I would like to elaborate on some of the points Brenda made about the court case. It took two years for Nigel Hegarty's case to come to court and when it did neither Brenda nor her solicitors were informed. Hegarty was so confident of winning the case that he never gave evidence during the whole proceedings. The only witnesses that were called were police witnesses.

As a visitor in the public gallery during the court case I initially noticed that all the 'visitors' with the exception of myself looked distinctly like plain-clothes policemen. As the second day of the case progressed these men sat in court

with typewritten statements to which they constantly referred as the sergeant in charge the day of John's murder gave evidence. When this sergeant had given evidence another police witness was called. This witness turned out to be one of the 'visitors' who had sat in the court all through the proceedings with statements in his hands! Where then is the justice in a court system which permits such a practice? A practice which I may add allows the evidence to be rehearsed and ensures that no witness gives 'independent' evidence.

The evidence which these officers gave was nothing short of amazing and would never stand up as proper evidence in any other legal system. The sergeant's evidence was full of 'maybes' and 'perhaps'. He described how he had been in charge of the vehicle Hegarty was in that day and said that he had been under instructions

to arrest Martin Galvin. He was one of the party to try forcibly to enter Connolly House. When asked how he got over the wall to Connolly House he said that *maybe* another policeman had hoisted him up. The wall of Connolly House is approximately 10ft high while the sergeant in question was about a mere 5'6". He also said that Hegarty only came to him at 6.00 that evening to say that he *thought* he *might* have shot someone. These kind of blatant suppositions were accepted as evidence despite the fact that the world's media captured the shooting of John Downes at point blank range.

The sergeant also gave character evidence on Hegarty's behalf, stating that he was an excellent police officer not prone to using aggression for the sake of aggression. When asked how long he had been working with Hegarty to enable him to make such judgement, the answer was *four hours!* On the basis of this type of evidence Hegarty was acquitted and walked free from the court.

As well as these injustices suffered by Brenda and other relatives of victims of the use of deadly force by the security forces in the courts, it is important to note that there has yet to be an inquest into John's death. In the North of Ireland it is well known that coroners courts fail to carry

out independent and impartial enquiries into the cause of death. These inquests are delayed unreasonably and John's case is only too typical. Coroners courts are supposed to enquire into unexpected, unexplained or suspicious deaths. They are supposed to establish facts and ensure that any necessary action is taken by the authorities to prevent similar fatalities. This would be the norm in any other country; however in the North of Ireland the authorities have the power to prohibit the holding of inquests by a coroner on bodies. The coroner can also postpone the inquest until the police and DPP announce that they can proceed. This has happened in the case of John Downes, an inquest has yet to be held despite the fact that the trial is over. Brenda Downes therefore still does not have a death certificate stating the cause of death, yet the RUC reservist who caused that death is a free man.

The shooting of John Downes, the farce of a court case and the lack of justice nationalists encounter in the legal system should be vigorously opposed by all people who say they care anything about human rights and civil liberties.

Is mise le meas.

Una Gillespie  
Dublin

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

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

Dear *Troops Out*,

When considering Sinn Fein's dropping of abstentionism it is important to remember the differences in local government practice between England and Ireland.

In England there is a comprehensive rating system to which the public contribute and a rate support grant from central government to bridge the difference between what is raised locally and what is required. Councillors here may debate and decide how a block grant is divided up among local services and how a rate is fixed and spent locally.

In Ireland however, there is no such rating system — only a small rate on businesses. Also, the population is much smaller, with fewer urban workers and a much greater proportion engaged in agriculture and on small-holdings.

So in some cases as much as 90% of money for local government comes from Dublin and councillors have little local freedom for manoeuvre. This results in deputations of councillors to see government ministers, TDs and civil servants. But at the moment no delegations containing elected Sinn Fein councillors will be met by ministers and civil servants, and there are no Sinn Fein TDs to speak for them in Leinster House.

There is in addition the Section 31 legislation banning Sinn Fein from being broadcast by sound or vision. But it will be difficult to prevent a TD from being heard, especially as Irish parliamentary proceedings are broadcast.

Frank Parker  
Birmingham

## Background to SF vote



Standing ovation for John Joe McGirl as he calls for an end to abstentionism.

Photo AP/RN



# REVIEWS



## Timber – The Concert flute tutor, by Fintan Vallely

Long Note publications, Clare.

This little book attempts to fill the information gap about the wooden transverse flute, an instrument ignored up to now by writers of home tutors, but popular in Irish traditional music sessions. Presuming no prior knowledge, the informal text ('If you have a flute made of plastic resin, then you haven't much to worry about except playing in hell'), clear photographs and diagrams, lead you through the basic skills and written notation so that by the end you should be able to play the thirty or so graded pieces of traditional Irish music printed in full.

So far so good. But the real strength of this book is the wealth of interesting bits of historical information, paintings, and photos

of players and instruments ranging from prehistoric to contemporary, fascinating to hilarious.

With its sections on almost every eventuality likely to befall the player, like getting out of breath due to smoking, buying a new flute, playing while drunk(!), routine care – and its lists of records, further reading and playing, repair shops and so on, this is obviously a labour of love.

The only real criticism I have, apart from a smudginess of some of the photos, is that there are a few mistakes in the transcribing of some of the tunes, which could be confusing for a beginner. Highly recommended, both as a tutor, and a general introduction to a beautiful instrument.

Chris Ransome

Available from TOM, PO Box 353, London, NW5 4NH. Price on application.

## THE IRISH CIVIL WAR

Frances M. Blake

Information on Ireland £1.75

English born author Frances Blake has catalogued a large selection of Civil War documents for University College Dublin.

In her introduction she deals with the British plans to retain control over Ireland by setting up parliaments in the six and twenty six counties. After three years guerrilla warfare by the IRA a bilateral truce was arranged with the British.

A treaty was signed on December

5th 1921 after Lloyd George had threatened 'immediate and terrible war' if it was not signed that night. The twenty six counties would become a self-governing dominion still very much under British control.

A pro-treaty campaign was launched by the media, Catholic church and academics. On January 7th 1922 the Dail (Irish parliament) ratified the treaty by 64 votes to 57. Opposition to the treaty was strongest among IRA activists.

To counteract this threat a regular army was established. A general election victory in June seemed to further consolidate the pro-treaty position.

The Republican forces elected a new executive and took over the Four Courts in Dublin as their HQ. Pressured by the British, the Irish government sent its army to attack the Four Courts. This building, scene of some of the fiercest fighting during the 1916 rising, was now being attacked by former comrades of the present occupants using British guns.

The Four Courts was captured and the Republican forces retreated from Dublin to be hounded throughout the countryside. The deaths of two of the treaty signatories Arthur Griffiths and Michael Collins marked a turning point in the Civil War. It was felt by many that the killing in an ambush of Collins, Commander in Chief of the National Army, prevented any quick or reasonable settlement of the Civil War.

Their successors William Cosgrave and Richard Mulcahy were to take a harder line. Executions of captured Republicans became routine. During this period of state terrorism there were 77 official executions.

Nine IRA prisoners many with severe injuries were bound together and roped to a land mine which was

then detonated. Miraculously one man survived. This was one of the many unofficial executions carried out by the state forces.

The IRA were by now a depleted and demoralised organisation. A cease fire was ordered in May 1923.

The government in the ensuing general election won 63 seats but were shocked when Sinn Fein captured 44.

A decision was taken to criminalise the 13,000 Republican prisoners who were being kept in appalling conditions. The prisoners went on hunger strike. It ended after 41 days, two deaths and no concessions. However by the following summer most of the prisoners had been released.

A reading of this informative pamphlet should help bring about a better understanding of the history of Irish Republicanism. It is to be especially recommended to those in Britain whose knowledge of Irish history does not predate the beginning of the present 'troubles' in 1968.

Frank Murphy

Available from TOM, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

## The Irish Civil War



and what it still means  
for the Irish people

Frances M. Blake

## TERENCE MAC SWINEY MEMORIAL LECTURES 1986

This first collection of lectures, from the series set up by the Greater London Council Irish Unit, was given to commemorate Terence Mac Swiney. Mac Swiney was arrested, tried by a military court for his part in the 1922 Cork rebel administration and sentenced to 2 years in prison. Refusing to serve this he stopped taking food. He was transferred to Brixton prison in



London where doctors decided he was already too weak to be force-fed. He was dead 59 days later.

Mac Swiney died for an Ireland which does not yet exist – an Ireland free of British rule and interference. These memorial lectures address many different aspects of Irish history and Anglo-Irish relations but none strays far from that continuing trouble. Given that knowledgeable and impressive speakers they are informative and refreshingly detailed though never sounding like chapters in a bad History text book. There are many stimulating opinions along the way.

Fr Des Wilson observes that in Anglo-Irish relations one side has always stressed domination and the other autonomous friendship. Margaret Ward gives an introduction to the subject of Women And Irish History noting first off the separation implied in the title. Irish history is posed as men's history, while her brief account of suffragists and republicans shows just how inadequate that characterisation is.

Donall Mac Amhlaigh, a building worker and writer here since 1951, gives an excellent short history of Irish workers in Britain (including the Paddy caricature and participation in the Chartists) and then throws in a parenthesis about the 'kind of slaughter' he fears will follow British withdrawal from the Six Counties. He ends this by calling it a digression. Unfortunately, in London and the British Labour

Movement at large the 'bloodbath' question is never a digression.

Liam De Paor addresses the history of Irish constitutional arrangements under British Rule and asks the question – why does the British State stay? He considers the strategic context (Britain and NATO's 'security' depends on a cowed Ireland) but gives no final answer. As for the Anglo-Irish Agreement he concludes that 'Its actual implementation from the Irish point of view (and the Irish got very little out of Hillsborough) depends entirely on goodwill on the part of the British authorities in Northern Ireland', which, on past experience, is like depending on Santa Claus.

I can see nothing but benefit coming from these lectures – and why not the odd speaker from England, Scotland or Wales (perhaps on withdrawal movements here or British imperialism and state repression generally)? The 1987 series will take place in the Spring with another list of distinguished speakers. People here do need to know a lot more about Irish history and Anglo-Irish relations but we also need a constant reminder that the perfidious connection is not over yet. Terence Mac Swiney did not die in Brixton for the past but for Irish freedom in the present.

Mike Belbin

Available from Middlesex House,  
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London  
SW1V 2SB. (01)-633 3735.

## NEED IDEAS FOR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS?

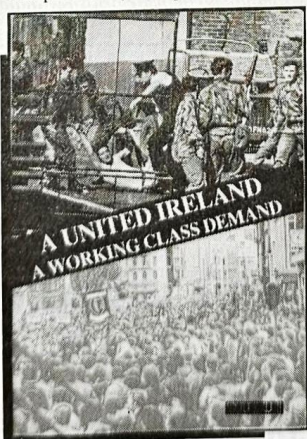
How about one of these books? All obtainable from TOM at PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

The following three publications will be reviewed in next issue:

@ £3.95 plus 35p p&p:



Or the latest pamphlet from Trade Unionists for Irish Unity and Independence, at 75p incl. p&p:



Also:

## THE POLITICS OF IRISH FREEDOM by GERRY ADAMS President of Sinn Fein

Brandon Press  
Available from TOM at £3.95 + 35p p&p



## OCTOBER

### 14th

Organisation of Concerned Teachers (N Ireland) Issues the results of research into violence against Nationalists. The results show 'that the position of Nationalists has seriously worsened since the Agreement.'

### 16th

Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, is to reconsider the cases of Mrs Annie Maguire and six others convicted in 1975 of handling nitroglycerine. Mrs Maguire was released from prison last year after serving a ten year sentence.

### 17th

The Irish Republic's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Barry, accuses the Fianna Fail leader, Mr Haughey, of trying to shatter the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

### 19th

Mr Billy Dickson is shot dead in a bar in Belfast's Ormeau Road. His death is thought to have been as a result of an internal loyalist squabble. A member of the RUC is injured in an IRA grenade and gun attack in Derry.

### 20th

Mr Frank Cluskey a TD in the Republic's Dail, discloses details of Dublin Gas's 'golden handshake' to a former executive amounting to £600,000.

### 22nd

William Quinn appears before Lambeth Court on a charge of murdering PC Stephen Tibble in 1975. Mr Quinn was extradited from the US the previous day following a 5 year legal battle against extradition.

### 30th

The Irish economy loses £42 million because of the decline in the number of American tourists in 1986.

Mr Peter Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Republic, claims in a speech to Fianna Gail members that Ireland's continued membership of the EEC would be in doubt if the Dail did not ratify the Single European Act amending the 1957 Treaty of Rome.

Spokesperson for the Campaign against Repression group in Strabane, Co. Tyrone claims that harassment of local people by security forces has continued, despite the outspoken protests by the Bishop of Derry, Dr Edward Daly, and Catholic clergy in the town. Three weeks ago Dr Daly gave details of 14 cases and accused the RUC and British troops of making 'despicable and unprovoked attacks on local people'. The Taoisach Garret Fitzgerald in an interview about the Anglo-Irish Agreement states that this government's 'only interest in Northern affairs was the elimination of the

Provisional IRA'. He stated it was the growing threat to stability caused by nationalist alienation, resulting in increased support for the Provisionals and their 'so called political party' Sinn Fein, that had led both governments to embark on the Agreement.

The solicitor acting for Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer states that the case against the strip searching of women prisoners in Britain's high security prisons will be taken to Europe if it fails in the court of appeal. The strip searching of these two women has continued since their conviction.

### 31st

The Anglo/Irish Conference meeting in London discusses cross border security problems. The meeting was attended by the RUC Chief Constable Sir John Herman and the Garda Commissioner Mr Laurence Wren. The RUC and Garda are instructed to work together on the installation of new secure radio equipment in border stations.

Secretary for Northern Ireland Tom King announces that Republic of Ireland citizens will be allowed to vote in elections to future N.Ireland assemblies. The N.Ireland assembly was dissolved some months ago.

## NOVEMBER

### 2nd

A MRBI opinion poll published in the Irish Times shows that Fianna Fail is not assured of obtaining an overall majority in the next election. Fianna Fail slips by five points from its overall majority of 51% of first preference votes in last June's poll. Delegates at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis vote to end abstentionist policy by 429 votes to 161.

### 3rd

Another MRBI poll in the Irish Republic shows that 70% of those interviewed think that divorce should be permitted in certain circumstances. Earlier this year a motion calling for the Republic's constitution to be changed to allow divorce was defeated in a referendum.

Official Unionist leader, Mr James Molyneux, declares his opposition to any moves to form an 'Ulster Citizens Army'. He said 'I think it would worry all right thinking people'.

A group of Protestant clergymen in N.Ireland call for a referendum on the Anglo/Irish Agreement to let Unionists show their opposition to it by peaceful means.

### 4th

Mrs Thatcher in a confidential letter to Dr Fitzgerald turns down the Irish government's case that the number of judges in N.Ireland's Diplock courts should be increased from one to three.



# COMING EVENTS & RESOURCES

## DOING A TURN AT XMAS?

Get your copy of  
**SONGS FOR SOCIALS**  
compiled by Birmingham TOM  
Favourites of Ireland's fight for freedom  
— past and present.  
Plus songs of women and international  
struggle.  
£1 + 30p p&p from:  
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## COMING SOON

**PLASTIC BULLETS VIDEO**  
by Women in Troops Out  
and the London Armagh Group.

Launch early 1987  
See next issue for details

## 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**  
Birmingham  
Brighton  
Bristol  
Cambridge  
Colchester  
Coventry  
Leeds  
Leicester  
Manchester  
Merseyside  
Northampton  
Norwich  
Nottingham  
Redditch  
Sheffield

Tyneside  
York  
**LONDON AREA**  
Camden  
East London  
Haringey  
Hillingdon  
Islington  
Lambeth  
West London  
**SCOTLAND**  
Glasgow  
**WALES**  
Newport

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 unem-  
ployed) which includes a subscription to  
*Troops Out*.

## Demonstration and rally on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday

### Calling for British withdrawal from Ireland

#### JANUARY 30TH 1972

In Derry thousands march calling for equality in jobs, housing and political  
representation, and protesting against imprisonment without trial. British  
army paratroopers fire on the crowd killing fourteen.

#### JANUARY 1986

Nationalists still face discrimination in job prospects and housing. Their  
elected representatives are ignored by the British government and the  
judicial system is made up of showtrials before a single judge in the  
juryless 'Diplock' courts. Since 1972 they have had to face added forms of  
repression — the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Emergency Powers Act,  
plastic bullets, stripsearching, and shoot-to-kill operations. The prison  
population is five times greater than it was in 1969.

2,500 people have died as a result of the conflict since the troops were  
put on the streets of Northern Ireland in August 1969. The equivalent  
proportion of the population in Britain would be 93,000.

*The only solution is complete British withdrawal.*

On Sunday 30th January British paratroopers shot dead 14 civil rights demonstrators. . . 15 years later the oppression and  
bloodshed continues. Only when Britain withdraws from Ireland politically and militarily will peace be possible.

## Sat. 31st January '87

## Sheffield

Assemble 1pm Abbeyfield Park  
March to rally at City Hall

Demonstration called by Troops Out Movement, Labour Committee on Ireland, Irish in Britain Representation Group,  
and the Women and Ireland Network who comprise the Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland.