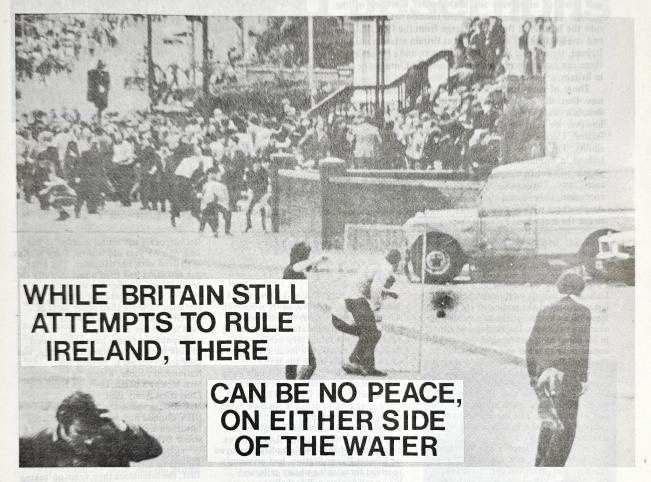
TROOPS OUT

Paper of the Troops Out Movement 15p

Vol. 5. No. 2, November 1981.



The hunger strike in the H Blocks has ended, but the war in Ireland is not over. Within the last month it has once more extended into the heart of the imperialist country, with Irish Republican Army (IRA) bomb attacks on the streets of London.

First came the attack on the Army at Chelsea barracks, where the soldiers involved happened to be Irish Guards, who during the last year have become part of British security forces used in Northern Ireland; and where, regrettably, two civilians lost their lives. Secondly came the attack on the Lieutenant General of the Marine Commandos, Sir Steuart Pringle. The Marine Commandos are 'renowned' in West Belfast, where they have

been stationed for the last four months, for their particularly vicious attempts to drive people peacefully protesting in support of the hunger-strikers, off the streets, with plastic bullets, and it was they who fired live rounds at the thousands of mourners attending Joe McDonnell's funeral.

the IRA placed bombs in London's commercial centre, Oxford Street. The resulting chaos brought forcibly home to British people the war fought in their name in Northern Ireland. Here, clear warnings were given by the IRA, to avoid civilian casualties. As they pointed out to us, the victims of Army plastic bullets in the Six Counties got no such warning.

Continued on Page



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

Continued from Page 1

Our press, police and politicians throw up the smokescreen of horror, outrage and hysteria. In the republican areas of the Six Counties people live with the constant fear of attack from the Security Forces (and loyalist death squads). Seven unarmed civilians were killed on the streets and hundreds injured by plastic bullets during the seven months of the hunger strike alone. This we never hear are Irish lives so cheap?

People in this country (apart from establishment figures and relatives of serving soldiers) remain unaware of the realities of the war in Ireland until the odd bomb explodes into the headlines. But the message from the IRA is a clear and straightforward one: as long as Britain attempts to rule Ireland, through its Army, its politicians, and economically, there can be no peace, in the occupied Six Counties or here in Britain.

Those of us in England, Scotland and Wales who recognise that the bombs over here are simply one part of Britain's war in Ireland have a responsibility to work, however we can, for Britain's immediate withdrawal from Ireland. Currently, we have an extra focus for that responsibility. For people who are not aware of Britain's rule in Ireland, a bombing campaign here is frightening and some people will act in a confused or reactionary, and sometimes racist way. Those who suffer as a result of this fear and confusion, ably stirred up by the police and the media, are simply those with an Irish accent. Five people were arrested under the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in



Royal Marine Commandos fire at Joe McDonnell's funeral. See also front page. INSET: Sharpened plastic bullet as used by Marines against Turf Lodge kids.

a pub in London for having an Irish accent. They were held and interrogated overnight and released without charge. They can truthfully be said to be the lucky ones. We don't hear about the homes of Irish people living here, or supporters of Irish freedom being raided and overturned, but it happens all the time.

LOYALIST TERROR STEPPED UP

Unlike the British establishment, which has represented the ending of the Republican hunger strike as a victory over the prisoners, Ian Paisley and others in his camp have encouraged the Loyalist community to see it as a capitulation by the 'Wet' Prior to the IRA. This version of events has provided the flimsy justification for a new round of murderous sectarian attacks by the UDA and UVF on the Nationalist populations of North and East Belfast. The three who have died, unlamented by the British media, were all civilians.

On Thursday October 8th, two hooded Loyalists gunmen, one armed with a machine gun, attacked the Shamrock Club, where 200 people were gathered. At the entrance, 38 year old Larry Kennedy, an Ardoyne community worker and Independent Nationalist

councillor was shot dead, and his friend Michael Lagan, aged 40, badly wounded. The gunmen then sprayed the interior with bullets, further fatalities only being prevented by a retaliatory barrage of bottles by alerted club members, which caused the shots to hit the wall.

Four days later, only half a mile away in the mixed Old Park area of Belfast, steel erector Bobby Ewing, a father of three, was shot to death in his own living room, while watching TV coverage of Larry Kennedy's funeral. The gunmen escaped in a stolen car to a Loyalist area. Ewing, one of the few Catholics employed at Kilroot Power Station, had previously received threatening phone calls, and his co-religionists will feel all the more insecure at their workplace in the future.

Within another three days, in the Markets, a Nationalist enclave in East vicinity. The Markets had suffered less sectarian violence than other parts of the city; this was the first death of its kind in the last 12 years.

Republican forces have always tried to hold back from vengeance killings, but they are expected to protect the Nationalist people. Within 24 hours of Mrs. McKay's death, the Irish National Liberation Army shot 32 year old Billy

Belfast, came the brutal murder, in her bed, of a 69 year old widow, Mary McKay, who lived with her daughter. This after

her assailants had tried unsuccessfully to break into two other houses in the

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Nationalist people. Within 24 hours of
Mrs. McKay's death, the Irish National
Liberation Army shot 32 year old Billy
McCullough inside the Shankill. The
UDA claimed him as a Welfare Officer,
but it is a well-known fact that he was a
senior UDA Commander in West Belfast.
There are invariably two disturbing

There are invariably two disturbing aspects to Loyalist assassination gangs: first, the intentions they voice of 'taking out' the Republican leadership should be contrasted with the facts that their victims are normally uninvolved civilians, or sometimes unarmed political activists. Secondly, a degree of co-operation with the Security Forces (Army, RUC) is often noticeable. In this respect several features of the attack on the Shamrock Club which killed Larry Kennedy are worthy of note.

- The street lights opposite the Club were switched off that night.
- The getaway car did not take the quickest route back to a Loyalist haven.
- 3. A man who had regularly sold hamburgers on nearby Alliance Avenue (along the escape route), had earlier in the evening been told to move on by the RUC, yet there were no other incidents or patrols in the district all night.



Victims of Loyalism: Winifred Ewing and her three sons. Her husband Bobby was shot dead in their living room by UDA gunmen.

INSIDE STORY Part 2 Derry- Bloody Sunday and Desertions Meurig Parri

speaks

In last month's Troops Out, Meurig Parri (ex-Army Officer) talked about how the British Army in Ireland quickly changed from it's initial 'peacekeeping' role to an active war against the nationalist people. That article ended with the indiscriminate rounding up of over 300 people in the Internment swoops made by the Army in August 1971.

1972 AND BLOODY SUNDAY

(In 1972 another British government idea was that the thing that was needed to solve the Irish question for once and for all, was a short, sharp shock to the Republican side. And for two weeks before Bloody Sunday at least, the ordinary soldiers and - I was in Newry at the time - which is a long way from Derry, but even down in Newry we knew something was going to come up, some big stunt was going to happen that would hopefully end this war.

When Bloody Sunday happened it was no surprise to anybody. The local regiment in Derry, that should have coped with any disturbances that Sunday, was kept well out of the way, and the Paras (Parachute Regiment) who had a reputation for being very tough, very aggressive had been moved up from the reserve barracks in Belfast. They were sent in with orders to teach the 'Micks' a lesson. The whole thing backfired hopelessly . . . instead of the Irish being cowed into submission, many many more people were attracted into active support for the republican cause, and the British Army lost out again.

DESERTION

Many soldiers have left. In the early days you had an enormous desertion rate; Bloody Sunday caused a lot of people in the Army, the thinking soldiers, those that did have concern about the morality of what they were doing, to leave. They were not going to be part of the business any more and got out in disgust.

Before Bloody Sunday the 'Hearts and Minds campaign', which was designed to encourage soldiers to mix with the nationalist population, and influence the nationalist people into support for the Army's ideas backfired. A lot of soldiers who were mixing with nationalist people and dating girls - they came to sympathise with republican ideals and they said "what the hell are we doing

sympathise with?" And there was a period in '71 to '72 when the desertion rate was totally unacceptable to the British Army. You did have a period when only half in jest, it was said by officers that when you went out on military parade you didn't inspect the men, you counted them! According to a staff officer at Lisburn (barracks) over 300 soldiers deserted the Army between '69 and the end of '72. That's a higher desertion rate per 1000 soldiers present than the American Army had in Vietnam, and we all know from the press that the American Army in the Vietnam war was slated for its bad morale.

DON'T SHOW US UP. GET OUT LEGALLY (if you can)

The Army responded to this in the mid 70's by saying soldiers need no longer desert. If you had a solid objection to the Irish war you were allowed to obtain your discharge legally. As an enlisted man you can purchase your discharge, as officers you can resign your commission. In my own mess I know that roughly a third of the junior officers have resigned their commissions prematurely because of their unhappiness with the British Army, largely caused by their unhappiness with the Irish war.

DISILLUSION SETS IN. AGGRESSION GROWS

But many soldiers stay in, for all kinds of reasons. Most of the enlisted men come from areas of high unemployment the North East, Scotland, Wales. They have no jobs to go to, and they feel they have to stay in. They are disillusioned. they know they are losing the war they see this with their own eyes every day. Their response is one of anger, aggression and frustration. Army training is to encourage aggression so these men release their frustration by taking it out on the people in front of them on the streets in nationalist areas of the North of Ireland. This is why you get the acts of harassment - which range from taking an airgun out on patrol and shooting - especially at girls in nationalist areas, wrecking houses, letting down tyres in the dead of night on car searches in lonely country areas - right through whole gambit of aggression to the acts of major terrorism, where metal and plastic ammunition is fired at innocent people and people are killed.

The soldiers know that they will not be subject to disciplinary measures for such aggression, for they'll be tacitly supported by the senior ranks. Those people in the Army that would have objected and would have stopped junior soldiers adopting such methods have left the Army in disgust. The ones left behind who reach senior ranks are the thugs in uniform. Although they might be formally given a slap on the wrist for blasting the face of a child with a plastic bullet, the soldiers know that privately they're encouraged to do such things.

The British government is powerless to curb such acts of terrorism by its own army because its own stated position is that there is no war in Ireland, that the Army is merely helping the police sort out a few religious terrorists. They cannot enforce disciplinary measures for their own soldiers' acts of terrorism.

So, with very rare exceptions, the soldiers are free to do what they like on the streets of Northern Ireland, knowing that they are free from any kind of disciplinary action.>>



The New Lodge, Belfast

THE PRISONERS....IN THE H-BLOCKS....

The hunger strike ended on October 3rd without the prisoners getting their full 5 demands.

Two days later the Government announced the outline of a series of changes which it was making "out of the kindness of its heart", but which were actually forced upon it by the whole campaign for the prisoners' demands,

The Government has lost a huge amount of ground in Ireland and internationally. Making some concessions might make it look more reasonable. Also, the Government must want the prison question settled because the campaign for the prisoners can build up again.

THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCESSIONS

So, some concessions were made, and so far as we can tell what they amount tois as follows:

- 1. The prisoners can wear their own clothing, and most are now doing so. The Government has made some stupid distinctions between what can and cannot be worn, and tried to delay the issue of clothes but, basically the clothes issue may be settled.
- 2. Weekly visits, letters and parcels were always on offer once the protest ended, so that's a second demand won.

3. Free association has been won to a degree. Association with those on the same wing has been started. And access to those on the adjacent wing (the other half of the H in each block) has been promised via a talking grille: limited and controlled discussion could take place in this way but no more.

Segregation from loyalist prisoners has not been mentioned.

4. Only half of remission lost for being on protest has been restored. So many men who might have been due for release tomorrow find themselves with another 2½ years to serve — that being half of the period on protest.

Because the Government is vague about it, the men suspect that any future protest may be met by full loss of remission.

The offer in this area is regarded as being vindictive, and is in fact worse than what appeared to be on offer at the end of the last hunger strike.

5. On prison work, there is some little progress. Both the prisoners and the Government have agreed that the work of orderlies in each wing is acceptable. Three men on each wing are doing these jobs which consist of serving the needs of their own comrades. But as yet there is no other agreement.

From the time of the Government concessions, there was a month during which areas of ambiguity could be clarified. That month ends this weekend,

and the situation may become clearer in the next few days.

But it seems very likely that the Government is trying to sell the prisoners as short as possible and yet not so short as to provoke another crisis. So the Government has an interest in being vague and ensuring that most people are confused.

THE PROTEST IS NOT OVER

Right now the prisoners do not regard the protest as over or the issue resolved. They and their relatives can see how much support their protest has won and how much that has helped the Irish people's struggle for freedom. In a way that must make them feel more despondent about what has been won so far on the 5 demands.

"It is a big step forward that the men can now wear their own clothes. The Government said it was a principle that prisoners had to wear prison uniform. Now, after the death of ten men they don't see it as an issue any longer."

John Connolly said this, he has been released from H Blocks since the hunger strike ended . . . He went on —

"At the moment, they're talking about prison work... If support slackens then the offer they make will slacken too... Carry on the protest."

AFTER THE HUNGER STRIKE

The 2 hunger strikes of Irish prisoners, the the second of which ended on October 3rd, did not gain the prisoners all of their demands. But the hunger strike campaigns produced a very big victory in the fight for Irish freedom

We say that, not to try to cheer people up with some false optimism, but because victory really has been achieved, and because the Government and the media have portrayed the outcome as a defeat for the prisoners and this has confused and demoralised people.

Obviously, the nationalist people in Ireland are very unhappy that 10 Irish men died on hunger strike and at least 5 of their supporters were killed in protests outside the prisons. After all the aim of the national and international campaign was to force the British Government to grant the prisoners' 5 demands so that deaths on hunger strike were unnecessary. The campaign failed in that aim, and grief is deep and widespread.

The protestors were determined never to allow their struggle for national freedom to be treated as crime, and never to allow those who stood up for Irish self-determination to be treated as criminals.

It was this evident determination that they would be treated as prisoners of a war, against the increasingly obvious duplicity of the British Government that brought tens of thousands of mourners to Bobby Sands' funeral, and produced massive international support.

This broad international support has brought the Irish struggle out from its isolation: the Irish people have made friends across the world, who can be turned to again for support in the future. The British Government was isolated, embarrassed and on the defensive.

UNITY IN IRELAND

In Ireland itself, the campaign united in a sustained way very large numbers of people from a wide range of social groups throughout all 32 Counties, to a degree not seen since 1918 and the War of Independence. By the summer of this year, there can hardly have been a single village in the whole of nationalist Ireland without its support committee. Election results on both sides of the border put the unity of the Irish people on the question of the prisoners beyond question.

In southern Ireland, neither of the

Prime Ministers in power during the hunger strikes were prepared to stand up to the British Government, although Mr Haughey takes a more critical stance now he is in opposition.

Similarly, in the North, the Social Democratic Labour Party which claims to speak for the nationalist people could not be forced to take a clear stand against the Government. But Haughey's lack of concrete support for the hunger strike lost him his government in Southern Ireland, and the SDLP have been, similarly, routed in local elections in the North, for failing to represent the people.

And the organisations which led the whole national and international campaign so successfully, the National H Block/Armagh Committee naturally made mistakes. In a broad organisation of that kind disagreements are bound to occur. Indeed there is much debate now about how to build upon and take further the broad unity that was achieved, and what kind of organisation could best do that.

For us in this country, it is now clear that there is quite a lot of support here for the Irish people, and the question is how to do a better job of drawing it together and building upon it.

IN ARMAGH JAIL IN ENGLISH JAILS

the

Gaol

during

the

period



JUST OUT OF A

Eilish O'Connor, from the Bone, Belfast was arrested when she was 19. She was held for 3 days in Musgrave Street Barracks, and later spent 8 months on remand. She was sentenced to 5 years in May 1977, and served the full 5 years, on remand and on the protest. She was released last week. Here she tells of the last fortnight in Armagh Gaol, and then describes the so-called 'medical facilities' there.

"We knew the Brits were not going to give anything voluntarily and that we'd still have to keep on the no work, but we're trying to go forward and see what way things work. Mairead (Farrell, O/C) has been going to see the governor and coming back and telling us what he said, Last week he started on the line, "you do what I say and you'll go to the workhouse". Then the Education Officer, Park, said you'd need five 'O' levels to do full time education but quite a lot of the girls are quite interested in doing 'O' levels. Mairead put forward the names of four girls who are willing to do cleaning if they weren't taken off our wing which we have always said we'd do. The governor said no, he'd chose the four girls to maintain the wing, yet on Tuesday morning when they came to call the four girls it was the four whose names Mairead had put forward - four short termers who can well benefit from the remission. The screws are baffled 'cause the girls haven't been moved from the wing yet. If the screws give any hassle the girls just go through Mairead or do the work in the way they think best. It's hard for them not to lose their temper but they are making out so far.

"We had a meeting last week and talked everything out and cleared everything. When I left Armagh this morning the girls were determined to keep on the no-work protest till the Brits come across with what we want.'

"Medical facilities are nil. No matter what your ailment is you get a Panadol. The nurse comes onto the wing twice a day. If you go to see the doctor, Cole, he always has a big smile on his face and

tells you it's all in your imagination. You don't lose remission if you're sick so you really have to be half dead before he'll sign you sick.

"Pauline McLaughlin is one example I'll never forget. Cole never did anything for Pauline. He only acted on pressure from us and from outside and even then only did that when she was nearly dead.

Marion Clegg is now on the hospital wing, but they have no X-ray machines or equipment there and she needs to be moved to an outside hospital. T.B. is also very contagious so all the girls would really need a medical check up now, but they'll not get one.

'I took shingles a couple of months ago but I was just given cream and Panadol, that's all he ever gives. I asked what the cream was and what it was for but he was very vague. The girls need to be very cautious.

'My cell-mate Ann-Marie Quinn had a lump on her breast for 3 years. She kept pestering the surgery staff (3 nurses and the rest screws with white coats). The doctor always hummed and hawed and Ann-Marie was no wiser any time she came back from seeing him. She thought it was a cyst and told him this, but he said "it's nothing". Eventually he called a specialist and a couple of months later the specialist came. He was really shocked as soon as he saw the lump. He said "that's a cyst". He wanted to take Ann-Marie to an outside hospital that Friday but Cole said it had to be fixed up with the prison. It was three weeks before they let Ann-Marie go out to have the operation.

"Cole comes in every morning from 9 to 10am except Sundays and he has to deal with 70 prisoners in all. If you take ill at dinner time the surgery staff could take one or two hours to come. They only come at 8am, 2pm and 8.30pm. They refuse to give us Panadol because they say some prisoners (non-political) tried to take an overdose, yet if you ask for a nerve tablet or something to make you sleep you'd get it right away."

(Reprinted from Belfast H Block/Armagh Bulletin)

Prisoners of War 5 Armagh

There are over seventy prisoners in English jails serving sentences connected with the war in Ireland. Some are in for bombings but mostly they have been framed. The most recent example is Gerry McLoughlin, a leading Sinn Fein activist, who went down for six years. The evidence against him? Possession of a remote control unit for a model aeroplane!

The prisoners are consistently maltreated and abused by the administration. Many are kept for long periods in segregation units where they are totally isolated. Their main demand is for transference to a prison in Northern Ireland, since they are extremely isolated in Britain and relatives have to make long and expensive journeys for visits. A favourite trick of the Home Office is to transfer a prisoner to another jail without warning the day before a visit. The result of this is a missed visit and a fruitless

Already there are two prisoners on the blanket demanding the right to serve their sentences in Northern Ireland, and the prisoners have said they may go on hunger strike. One of the blanketmen. Patrick Hackett, is enduring treatment described by Amnesty International as 'cruel, inhuman and degrading". Patrick, who lost a leg and a hand in a premature explosion, was accused of the remarkable feat of assaulting two screws. For this he received 28 days' solitary.

Despite all this pressure the prisoners are undefeated and have managed to gain support from other prisoners (although one, John McCluskey, was recently scalded and stabbed by another prisoner).

These prisoners are prisoners of war just like those in the H Blocks and Armagh. You can support them by attending prison pickets, sending birthday cards and getting resolutions passed in your union/organisation.

These prisoners have birthdays coming up - please send them a card to show they are not forgotten or without support:

PAUL NORNEY

863532 **HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs** Du Cane Rd. London W12

11th Nov

both 7th Dec

BRENDAN DOWD 758662 HM Prison Leicester, Welford Rd, Leicester 17th Nov

SEAN HAYES 341418 HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics.

18th Nov LIAM BAKER

464984 HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics. 6th Dec

HUGH DOHERTY 338636 and REV. FR. FELI 501559 HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight





INTERVIEW WITH BERNADETTE

Northern Ireland usually comes across to us as news of violence and a problem that the politicians cannot solve. We don't get to hear about what it's actually like to live there. 16-year-old Bernadette came across to England in the autumn for a holiday and the Manchester 'Women and Ireland' group interviewed her: she lives in a small town outside Belfast and her own experience has taught her that British rule has brought the violence and the "problem". That British rule has caused constant suffering for her and her family and her people, and the only answer is to get them out.

What are your experiences of living and growing up in the North of Ireland during the present war?

Well, in 1968 I was four years old when the civil rights started and then in 1971 when internment began I was six years old. I saw our house being raided by the British Army and my brother being dragged out of the house. He was sixteen years old at the time. After a couple of hours they let him go. It was a case of mistaken identity. They were looking for my older brother. He had to walk the street at about twelve o'clock wearing only his pyjamas. He has since been arrested and is now on the blanket doing 25 years. From the time of internment, my family has never been together. My father has been on the run since 1971. One of my brothers has been interned twice, he is now on

LIVING U

'I feel very very de

the blanket doing twelve years. Another brother has been in jail once. In 1974, my mother was in jail for nine months on a trumped-up charge. The British Army planted magazines (ammunition) in our back yard and put my mother in jail.

How old were you when this happened?

I was nine. There was just my sister, who was nineteen at the time, and myself left at home. Out of a family of eight, there was just the two of us still at home.

And how did you cope?

You'd just try and get by as best you could. I was used to the family being divided and not being together anyway. I just used to go and see my mother every week and try not to think about it. We got by the best way we could.

Did your mother ever speak about what it was like in Armagh Jail?

Yes. She talks about it and tells of her time in Armagh: she says it was quite an experience being inside. She says the feeling of solidarity and togetherness among all the Republican prisoners in Armagh Jail was very strong as they all had the same principles and ideals.

Has this experience affected the family as a whole? How do you feel about the way you have to live?

I feel very bitter and angry at the British — the British government and the British Army because of what they have done, not only to my family, but to a lot of other families and to my country. All that people like myself want to do is to live a normal life. I feel very very deep bitterness, anger and resentment.

So what has been your reaction to this?

I've tried peaceful protest to demonstrate my anger and bitterness, but the British government won't even accept this as can be seen in Derry, when, in 1972, the British Army killed 14 people who were taking part in a peaceful protest to demonstrate against internment. There is nothing else that ordinary people can do except protest on the streets. When the IRA took up arms to do something about this, they were condemned from all roads and directions, but too many people seem to forget that if it was not for the IRA, the nationalist population of the North would have been slaughtered.

Also, people condemn the IRA for using violence, but they conveniently seem to forget that the state also uses violence. The so-called violence that the IRA uses is only a defensive reaction by an oppressed people against a foreign power which is trying to dominate us. They also conveniently forget that violence is inflicted daily on over 400 men and women, who as prisoners of war refuse to accept criminal status. Is it not an act of violence for five or six screws to attack a defenceless prisoner?

You have two brothers on the blanket at the moment what does it feel like when you go to visit them?

The first time I saw them I was shocked. When I first saw my brother who is doing 25 years, he had been on the blanket over a year. He refused to take a visit even, because he did not want to put on the criminal uniform: but after a year he thought he was cutting himself off too much from the family and so he decided to take visits. The first time I saw him it was really terrible. From a man who had been 22 years when he was arrested, he had turned into an old man of sixty. He had a long scraggly beard and his hair was matted down with grease. His skin was a waxy colour and

NDER BRITISH RULE

ep bitterness, anger and resentment'

his hands were freezing and he could not stop them shaking. There was nothing I could see in him that I recognised from before. It was awful seeing him like that. You didn't want to look upset to annoy him, or you wouldn't break down in front of the screws because they would just love to see you doing that. But despite his appearance, his morale was great, so high. There seems to be so much comradeship between all the prisoners. Their morale is really 100% despite the unending petty harassment which they suffer. For example, on a recent visit, my mother was going to visit my two brothers. They had both been brought to the visiting area to separate cubicles at different ends of the room. Each had no idea that the other was there. My mother had to have her half-hour visit with one before speaking to my second brother who had no idea at all why he was being kept waiting or why my mother was late. In over two years in the same prison, my brothers have not seen each other once.



We have heard quite a bit recently about the effect of plastic bullets which have been used indiscriminately by the police and army. Has this been particularly so in your town as well as in other areas?

There are plastic bullets fired in all areas. The British Army and RUC just seem to like a chance to fire plastic bullets and kill or injure a "paddy" as they seem to think we are. For example, when Kevin Lynch died on hunger strike there was a traditional banging of binlids and blowing of whistles. There was a crowd of about fifty walking down the road when the RUC just opened up and fired into the crowd with plastic bullets. As the crowd were running away they were firing at their backs. It was very, very lucky there was nobody killed. In fact, there was one person injured and he was taken to hospital. He was unconscious for a couple of days.

You are over here on your holidays. Tell us a little of the reactions to the hunger strike over here.

The people seem to be very ignorant of what is going on at home because of the propaganda which has been put across by the British media. They make out that the IRA and the hunger strikers are thugs and terrorists and common criminals who are doing this for their own ends.

This is a complete lie because common criminals would not go on hunger strike and die for their principles. The truth is that the IRA are fighting for the people and the freedom of their country and the hunger strike is just another part of that struggle. It has brought worldwide attention. But the worldwide attention does not seem to include the British press and media.

Another attitude that is prevalent over here is that the war in the North of Ireland is simply a religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants.

That is a complete lie. It is a religious war in the sense that the politicians who gain the most from it try to keep it going as a religious war but the nationalist people of the Six Counties do not want to fight with their protestant neighbours. Of course there has been a lot of sectarian killings, but this has all been done by organisations such as the UVF, UDA and UFF (all loyalist paramilitary gangs), who have killed people simply because they are Catholics. The IRA and INLA do not kill people because they are Protestants but because they are in the RUC (police), the British Army and the Ulster Defence Regiment, because they are part of the oppressor who has put its boot on the neck of the Irish people all down the centuries.

What type of Ireland would you like to see when it is united?

When the Brits go, Ireland isn't magically going to become a Utopia overnight. There is going to be an awful lot of hard work to build up a democratic and just society for the Irish people. The fact that Irish men and women have died fighting for freedom and on hunger strike, and that there are many more ready to step forward and take their places, is going to help make that new Ireland, as they are, people who love their country and their people. The type of Ireland I would like to see is a democratic country in which all people regardless of their religion could live together free from foreign domination.

What kind of role do you see women playing in the struggle now and in the future?

Women have always played an important role in the struggle all down the years, e.g. Countess Markievicz and many other women were actively involved in the Irish Citizens' Army and the 1916 rising. The same applies to this phase of the struggle. From 1971 when internment was introduced they saw their men being dragged away and therefore women naturally became more independent. They were the people who marched to end internment, they were the people who started up the Relatives Action Committees when the blanket protest began. There are also women who go out alongside men and fight as equals. Therefore I see women playing a very important role in the Ireland of the future.

Women are now taking a very active role, but do you think that when there is a United Ireland, there is a danger that women will be relegated to the kitchen sink?

I don't think that will happen because women have become so politicised due to the situation in the North. They are showing that they are perfectly capable of being on a par with men and so I don't think that they would even try to put women down. If they did try I think that women would not take it.

SOLIDARITY WORK IN BRITAIN



Just before the police move in: Kilburn High Road, April 26, 1981. People are chanting "Bobby Sands MP".

TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT CONFERENCE

Recently the T.O.M. held its six-monthly conference in Leeds. Attendance was encouraging and the atmosphere was confident. Messages of support were received from Sinn Fein (Britain) and relatives of Irish political prisoners in England.

The reports from around the country were inevitably dominated by the hunger strike, which had dominated the activities of T.O.M. branches. Some areas were represented by Hunger Strike Committees, a number of them affiliated to our movement. An incredible amount of work had been done, leading to many new recruits and contacts. Liaison between the London-based Steering Committee and the rest of England, Wales and Scotland had improved considerably in the past few months and the office could now be staffed full-time.

The conference split into workshops on the Labour movement, the Irish Community in Britain, Anti-Imperialism and Anti-Racism (with the participation of a delegate from the Indian Workers' Association), Propaganda, Prisoners, Anti-Recruitment and Security.

There was a discussion on the hunger strike and its aftermath; a minute's silence was observed for the H Block martyrs. Decisions taken by the conference included the production of a pamphlet on Loyalism, the setting up of a Women's Caucus in the T.O.M., increased support for Irish PoWs in English jails, and the holding of a day school on 'Self-Determination for the Irish People' and possible neo-colonial solutions.

MANCHESTER MEETINGS

On Wednesday 28th October Mrs Bernadette O'Hagan, mother of two H Block prisoners, received an ovation from a packed general meeting at Manchester University. Almost 500 people heard Mrs. O'Hagan explain that without the British military presence in Ireland, there would be no H Blocks and Long Kesh or Armagh. She appealed to students in Britain to use every possible means to pressurise the British government into making a declaration of withdrawal from Northern Ireland.

On Thursday 29th October, a meeting of the Troops Out Society at Manchester Poly and an enthusiastic gathering of over 100 at UMIST heard a similar message. The meeting at UMIST went ahead after a public meeting organised by the Manchester Hunger Strike Committee was cancelled, in the face of police threats to withdraw UMIST's bar licence. This followed a vicious smear campaign initiated by the Manchester Evening News which attempted to deny the right to voice opposition to the Irish war because bombs are being exploded in London.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST PLASTIC BULLETS

27,000 plastic bullets have been fired against nationalist civilian population in Northern Ireland, some with fatal results and many causing permanent serious injuries.

Birmingham TOM reports that it is starting a campaign against these vicious weapons. Already it has persuaded two trade union branches and one Labour Party branch to call for them to be banned, and the issue to be debated at the next meeting of Birmingham Trades Council.

They are going to circulate the revealing

article about plastic bullets recently published in New Statesman as widely as possible in the Labour and trade union movement with an appeal for them to be banned.

Also, the Birmingham H Block/Armagh Group is starting to raise money to help relatives of the protesting prisoners in the H Blocks. The prisoners have now won the right to wear their own clothes but the extreme poverty of Northern Ireland means that their families cannot afford to buy them.

If you can help, contact your local H Block/Armagh Committee or TOM branch, or write to PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

KEN LIVINGSTONE PETITION

Troops Out Movement believe the campaign against Ken Livingstone, which has focused on the question of Ireland, has serious implications for the right of public figures to speak in this issue. It has thus been agreed to circulate the following petition:

We, the undersigned, deplore efforts by the Sun newspaper and others, to misrepresent Ken Livingstone's remarks on the war in the North of Ireland, and by implication to gag freedom of speech by public figures on this issue

We also applaud Ken Livingstone'e courageous attempts to break down the silence on Britain's own responsibility for the war and the necessary step that must be taken to end it, namely the complete military and political withdrayal of Britain from Ireland.

We wish all concerned individuals to:

1. Circulate this petition. Copies are available with a SAE from PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH, and they should be returned to this address by Monday 30th November 1981.

2. Pass a resolution based on the petition in all areas where they have influence and/or write to the GLC Labour Group, their local councillors, MPs and newspapers, supporting the right of Ken Livingstone to express his views in a free and democratic manner.

OXFORD ARRESTS

On Saturday 17th October, 2,000 members of the Orange Order were imported into Oxford to parade their opposition to the Pope's visit next year. Supporters of Oxford Charter '80 peacefully leafleted local people on the true nature of the Orangemen. Within half an hour police moved in and arrested five leafleters under the Public Order Act for 'handing out literature likely to cause a breach of the peace'. Another person was arrested for asking why the others had been held. In contrast, the Orangemen leafleted unmolested along the entire route to the Protestant Martyrs' Memorial where they a wreath. Charter '80 heckled them throughout. They have now formed a Defence Group for those arrested, exercising their right to free speech. Contact the office for details.

CRUSADES, GUARANTEES, ASSEMBLIES AND SUMMITS

There has been a run of diplomatic skirmishes over the past month which have not yet borne fruit but all point in the same direction — towards setting up Ireland "free and united" but very much under Britain's thumb.

CRUSADE

First of all there is the 'Crusade' of Irish premier Garret FitzGerald to legalise divorce and to amend the Irish Constitution which at present lays claim to the whole of Ireland. He is arguing that the power of the Catholic Church in the State is a main barrier to unity (with the Protestants in the North) and that if the territorial claim is deleted then the North can be wen over by consent. This argument lets Britain off the hook completely! Most likely he is expecting Britain to return the favour by withdrawing the 'guarantee' that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland will not be changed without the consent of the Protestant majority.

TORIES

At the Tory Party Conference, Northern Ireland secretary Prior reaffirmed this guarantee, and also the continued army occupation of the North. However, this policy outline contained a powerful whiff of an "all-treland dimension". Such a dimension failed in the 1973 Sunningdale Conference and Council of Ireland, but Prior hopes to carry it off now on the back of the near total collapse of the North's economy. With unemployment running at nearly 20% and massive Government subsidies, the Unionist and loyalist opposition to all things Irish hasn't got much of a leg to stand on. There is a political border between North and South, said Prior, but there needn't be an economic one. He also proposes for consideration a new Assembly for the North as a forum for limited self-rule. This would have to involve either power-sharing between Unionists and nationalists, or safeguards for nationalists' rights.

Neither of these initiatives is likely to bring results in the near future, but the Anglo-Irish Summit between FitzGerald and Thatcher in November will perhaps make some issues clearer. Ian Paisley is probably close to the truth when he 'revealed' that the Summit is to work out a gradual uniting of North and South starting with economic integration on safe non-controversial issues like tourism and fisheries, and finishing up with political integration.



James Prior

EAT SE INDEDENDENCE

Well, that would be fine except that the plan also presupposes that the interests of the British State will be well looked after and Ireland's "independence" will be mainly an illusion. For example, there is pressure coming from Lord Carrington at the EEC's foreign ministers' meetings for Ireland to dilute its neutrality and non-membership of NATO: this has mainly been expressed in the last month by wranglings in the Dublin Parliament between the present foreign minister, Dooge, and his predecessor, Lenihan, as to who has most betrayed Ireland's neutrality. Britain's nuclear missile sites in the North need a guarantee more than the Unionists do.

Also, the initiatives do little or nothing to deal with the sectarian injustices of Unionist domination in the North. It is these injustices, and British rule, which are the causes of the war.

All these diplomatic moves are taking place against a background of continued Republican resistance to British-imposed "normalisation" of the Six County set-up — in other words, keeping things the way they have been since the country was divided in 1921. That pressure looks like being maintained in the future: no way can British domination, whether by direct rule or indirectly by political and economic control, continue forever.

BRITAIN'S INTERESTS

During this year we have seen a great change in "public opinion" — that maybe after all it isn't right for Britain and its army to be in Northern Ireland and that withdrawal would be a good thing. But to justify the past some commentators go on to say that Britain really wants to get out. If only the loyalists weren't so intransigent, if only the republicans weren't so violent . . . then the army could honourably return home and leave Ireland to itself. So runs the argument.

It is a lie. How come the colonised people are to blame for their oppression? In fact the British State has very good reasons for holding onto Northern Ireland, in spite of the high economic cost. The reasons are political and strategic.

At this very moment an underground installation is being constructed between Crossmaglen and Forkhill in South Armagh costing millions of pounds and which could be used either as a nuclear missile silo or a fall-out shelter for the top-nobs. The army claim that the building work, which has been going on for five months, is for bunkers against a possible IRA rocket-attack - one of the most absurd explanations we have heard for a long time. There is no way the IRA or INLA have this sort of fire-power, and anyway there'd be no point in fortifying just one army base and leaving the others just the same. Do they think there is an Irish Republican Airforce?

There is already in Northern Ireland a site for an Early Warning System at Downpatrick and work is in progress for nuclear rocket launch pads in Co. Derry.

'NEVER AGAIN SIT IDLY BY'

A meeting of the Federation of Irish Societies on October 3rd discussed the hunger strike and the situation in the North of Ireland — for the first time in a long whis. and in great depth and sincerity. The Irish Societies have been confining themselves to social activities and welfare for the two million and more Irish per ple living in this country, but the hunger strike compelled them to take a stand for their divided and oppressed country.

The discussion had a terrible irony in that it took place on the very day the hunger strike ended, and this prompted the representatives to take a long painful look at their previous lack of support: "Never again must we sit idly by, never again must we run away. Ten dead Irishmen is ten too many" (speaker from Haringey). A motion was put by Liverpool Irish Society

and amended by Portsmouth calling for a conference within six months "on the situation in Northern Ireland to formulate a policy on Northern Ireland and the future of Ireland as a whole. The policy adopted by this conference shall become Federation policy". This amended motion was passed.

There is no doubt that the Federation of Irish Societies has been intimidated over the past years by the Prevention of Terrorism Act, under which thousands — mainly Irish — have been arrested and hundreds deported. The law has made a climate of suspicion and provided a cutting edge for the anti-Irish prejudices and hostility that are so shamefully strong in Fngland.

Thousands of Irish people marched on the Anti-Internment League demonstrations in the early seventies; then came the Prevention of Terrorism Act in November 1974: arrests, detentions, police visiting your work, talking to your neighbours. No wonder the Irish organisations kept their heads low, no wonder it took a crisis as grave as the hunger strike to force a reassessment.

The same day as the meeting of the Irish Societies saw also the founding of a new group for the Irish community – the Irish in Britain Representation Group, to be concerned mainly with civil and political rights of Irish people here. And the two-year-old Irish Lobby Group has dissolved itself to form a wider political organisation to represent "the views of the Irish people in Britain on the serious political and economic problems facing Ireland", particularly in the North.

SEPTEMBER

In Glasgow a month's ban is put on marches concerned with Ireland. But Loyalist parades against the Pope's visit are excluded from the ban — because they are religious! Protests and petitions are organised against the ban.

30th

Newry and Mourne District Council by election is won by James McCreesh, father of the late hunger strike Raymond, on an anti-H Block ticket. The only other candidate was from the SDLP which has not taken a clear stand in support of the hunger strike or against British rule in the North: he was soundly defeated by 2,017 to 3,830.

New Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior announces plans to spend £42 million on new police stations over the next five years. Positive thinking?

Two loyalist prisoners in Crumlin Rd Jail hold warders at gunpoint in protest against solitary confinement and lack of exercise, and to demand segregation from Republican prisoners. A senior UDA man (loyalist paramilitary gang) persuades them to surrender.

OCTOBER

3rd

HUNGER STRIKE ENDS. Northern Ireland Office grants their demand on clothing and admits more association and visits; it is less forthcoming on work and restoring remission lost through the five-year protest. The protesting prisoners issue a statement outlining the history of their protest and drawing the lessons: first, that the nationalist people of Northern Ireland can have no political power in the Six County set-up and will always be "subjected to the British and Loyalist veto". Second, that British democracy is a sham: when Bobby Sands was elected MP the British Govt changed the rules to prevent prisoners from standing: when Owen Carron was elected the Govt refused to meet with him. Third, that the Irish Establishment (Dublin Govt, Church and the SDLP) in the end sided with Britain and cannot be trusted as allies to win a free united Ireland. "We believe that the age-old struggle for Irish self-determination and freedom has been immeasurably advanced by this hunger strike and therefore we claim a massive political victory. . . . Our comrades have lit with their very lives an eternal beacon which will inspire this nation and people to rise and crush oppression forever".

News of the end of the hunger strike calls out a large rally in New York outside British Consulate. British Army bands on tour in USA are booed. In Derry a women's cross-border demonstration meets up with a march commemorating the first civil rights march in October 1968: their joint rally urges maintaining vigilance and pressure on British authorities. H Block protests are continued throughout this period in Ireland and elsewhere.

4th

Ex-Brixton prisoner Gerard Tuite gives radio interview in Ireland explaining how he escaped.

5th

UDR soldier Hector Hall is shot dead by IRA in hospital grounds in Derry. (The Ulster Defence Regiment is the local wing of the British Army, and very sectarian.)

Tory MP alleges financial irregularities in the De Lorean car company. A police inquiry is set up but announces all-clear on Oct. 12th: with £80 million of Govt funds in the company it's not in their interests to pry too closely. No publicity is given to complaints from the shop floor about low grade materials, shoddy methods and low pay.

6th

Prior announces prison reforms: own clothes at all times; half of lost remission to be restored after three months' "good behaviour"; associ-



ation between the two wings of each "H"; broadening the scope of prison work. He allows the prisoners 28 days to decide, and his sidekick Lord Gowrie will go to Long Kesh to clarify.

8th

Debate in the Irish Senate about Premier Garret FitzGerald's "crusade" to make Ireland "more acceptable to Protestants" (by permitting divorce and repealing the terrorial claim to the whole of Ireland). The main Government party Fine Gael sees anti-Protestant sectarianism as the main barrier to unity, while the opposition party, Fianna Fail, points to British rule in the Six Counties as the barrier. Their words speak louder than their deeds.

EEC security debates: Irish Govt will take part only if defence and military topics are excluded, since Ireland is neutral and not in NATO. Carrington agrees to redraft proposals but there is a thin line indeed between 'security' and 'defence'.

Tourism in Northern Ireland records a 10% drop during the hunger strike. And an estimated £1 billion loss from the war since 1970.

Members of the 26 Counties General Council of County Councils call on Thatcher to make a declaration of intent to withdraw troops from the North. Eight soldiers of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders are found guilty of a series of thefts, including a break-in of the UVF (loyalist paramilitaries) headquarters from which they took the cash and dumped a whole lot of incriminating documents.

Belfast city councillor Lawrence Kennedy is shot dead by loyalists. He was an independent councillor who supported the hunger strikers.

9th

IRA plant bombs against commercial premises and government offices in Armagh, Derry and Strabane.

Statistics of the Prevention of Terrorism Act: the first six months of 1981 saw 236 held — more than the whole of 1980 (222, itself the highest year of repression since 1976).

10th

IRA bomb injures 20 soldiers in London, and two civilian bystanders killed.

11th

Newly built Catholic church in Limavady, Co. Derry, is bombed by loyalists.

12th

In Belfast Robert Ewing is shot by loyalists for being a Catholic.

13th

Prior outlines future policy at Tory Party Conference: maintain British rule, keep the troops in, maintain the Unionist 'guarantee' against constitutional changes without their consent but blame the "people of Northern Ireland" for their problems and inability to get on together. Govt is to consider the possibility of a new Assembly with some powers, to be elected by proportional representation and to be either power-sharing or have in-built safeguards for the nationalist 'minority'. Also an inter-parliamentary grouping between London and Dublin and increased cross-border cooperation — "there is no need for an economic border".

More commercial bombings by IRA in Strabane and Armagh.

14th

Gowrie visits Long Kesh and meets four of the surviving hunger strikers.

Springfield Rd RUC police station damaged by IRA bomb in Belfast.

Fine Gael, the ruling party in the 26 Counties, plan to raise the issue of Northern Ireland in the EEC, but defer the motion until after the Anglo-Irish summit in November. The motion calls on the EEC to assist the people of Britain and Ireland to work out a solution for the North.

15th

68-year-old Mary McKey is shot dead by loyalists for being a Catholic (they had attempted to break into another house first, failed and then broke into hers and shot her. Clearly a random attack on Catholics as such). The shooting is claimed by the "UFF" – the name used for its illegal activities by the legal UDA, but the UDA disclaim it, suggesting that they have dissident members annoyed at loyalist passivity during the hunger strike.

16th

Billy McCullough shot dead by the INLA in Belfast: he was the UDA commander of the Shankill district.

17th

Commander of the Royal Marines Steuart Pringle is seriously injured by an IRA bomb in London,

The Irish Post (newspaper of the Irish in Britain) discloses that Republican prisoner John McCluskey was scalded and stabbed by another prisoner in Parkhurst in September. Another Irish prisoner Francis McGee (not a Republican) was stabbed to death there on July 10th.

19th

Stephen Hamilton, a young loyalist just released from prison, is shot dead by RUC while joy-riding (stolen car) in Belfast. Several nationalist youths have met a similar fate but this is the first loyalist and the UDA call for an inquiry.

Owen Carron, MP, is refused a visa to the USA and shots are fired at a house he is staying in. On October 8th he had also been refused an

adequate gun licence even though the local adequate had recommended that he carry a gun for his own safety.

20th Unemployment figures for Northern Ireland: Unemploy Worst areas are nationalist Strabane 19.5%. Strabane (36.2%), Dungannon (32.7%) and Cookstown (36.2%), In the 26 Counties unemployment is 10.4% and in Britain 11.5%.

Another UDR soldier killed by IRA in Belfast A writ for a by-election in Cavan-Monaghan is woted down by the Irish Government - they are "too busy". The seat had been held by are Doherty who died on hunger strike; the local H Block/Armagh Committee want a prisoner to stand.

22nd

Kidnapped businessman Ben Dunne is released. Irish justice minister criticises RUC for their inability to operate in South Armagh at night, but later denies it.

Gay rights activist in Northern Ireland wins a case in the European Court of Human Rights that the outlawing of homosexual acts infringed his freedom - likely to lead to a change in the

National H Block/Armagh Committee is asked by the prisoners to monitor the implementation of Prior's reforms.

A delegation of the SDLP meets Prior to urge him to drop the Unionist guarantee and to express concern over the use of plastic bullets.

SDLP spokesperson Canavan points out that according to the guidelines laid down by Whitelaw earlier in the month regarding the use of plastic bullets in English riot situations, most of the 27,000 plastic bullets fired in the North should not have been fired. Four British Labour Euro-MPs promise support for a motion banning plastic bullets.

26th

Three IRA bombs planted in Oxford St, London: one explodes, killing a bomb disposal policeman. A warning was given, and the IRA statement referred to the deaths of innocent children by plastic bullets in Northern Ireland.

REVIEWS

The women in Armagh said to me "Tell them everything" and this I have tried to do."

Margaretta D'Arcy Pluto Press 1981, £1.95p. 127pp.

Why and how did a middle-aged, middle-class woman from the 26 counties get herself into Armagh jail for three months in 1980 during the no-wash protest? The how and why are contained in the first part of this book which is about political experience of discussing politics, debating the role of women and the place of feminism in the struggle, having individual viewpoints and different strategies. There is a frantic pace to this part of the book with events and perspectives piled on top of each other to create this political existence of which Margaretta D'Arcy is a part.

Part 2 is about coming from this existence into being in Armagh Jail. The pace changes and Margaretta D'Arcy seems very hesitant about what she is writing. There is a curiously strained atmosphere of mutual acceptance between her and the other women. They don't understand her and what brought her there and she doesn't understand them and their political existence. She tries to break down barriers but not with much success. There are glimpses of personal anger, militancy, confusion, bigotry, warmth and impressive clarity as the women are trying to pace themselves through sentences of up to 20 years.

It is like a metaphor of how distanced from the struggle women in solidarity can become as their political activity of solidarity becomes a reality in itself. Just as Margareta D'Arcy couldn't quite handle the fact that all these militant politicised women are into drinking, clothes, pop-music, boyfriends and marriage, women here often can't match up their own leisured right-on debates about the struggles with the hard reality of women's lives in the Six Counties. Some of them (shock horror) believe in marriage, are anti-abortion and even ally themselves with men in the struggle.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

We like to hear your point of view. If you have anything to say about what's in this paper, or your ideas on the situation in Ireland, please write to us. We will print as many letters as we can. Send them to 2a St Pauls Rd,

London N1

For information about coming events, ring the TOM office, 01-267 2004, or write to PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Women there just can't wait for us here to work out which bits of the struggle we do want to embrace. I am sure Margaretta D'Arcy wouldn't argue for a blanket uncritical, unquestioning 'sisterhood', and neither would the women in Armagh.

Blood Sisters

Novel by Valerie Miner, The Women's Press

Between the preface and the chronology of Blood Sisters is a page which reads:

" 'Two Irish Killed By IRA Bomb' - Daily Mirror, London. As in all stories our headline was written at the end and then placed at the beginning."

So perhaps the best place to begin is at the end of the story where the main character, an American feminist, Liz, finally loses the need to please her mother and employer and strikes out on her own to write her book. The catalyst in this is the death of her Irish aunt in an explosion caused by a bomb planted by her (the aunt's very own daughter Beth). In agreeing to plant the bomb, Beth had fallen prey to cajoling and bullying from her Provo comrades. As Val Miner herself comments, in an essay entitled "Feminist Fiction and Politics" (see Tales I Tell My Mother - Women's Press) "our writing is shaped by our politics".

Scant attention is paid to such political facts as the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the retreat of the Irish community during the period in which the book is set - a time of vicious racism as many an Irishwoman and man has real bruises and emotional scars to prove. Throughout, Val Miner presents the most ridiculously stereotyped Irish characters (with a few other equally stereotyped 'foreign' women thrown in for good measure).

The melodrama is centred around the home of Liz's aunt and cousin. Miner has Provos meeting in Kilburn pub discussing whether and where to plant bombs, and the poor aunt who couldn't make a living in Dublin is miraculously working as a typist in Government offices in Whitehall, while Irish figures complete with 'brogues' and 'beery breaths' litter the story.

Miner would do well to read the various publications on British media censorship and distortion of Irish affairs, Much play is made of the Birmingham bombings despite the evidence of a frame-up of Republicans and the fact that Birmingham has never been claimed by any Republican organisation (see "The Birmingham Framework" by Frs. Faul and Murray). Reference is made to the case of the Price Sisters but the author evidently didn't consult even those feminists who involved themselves in that campaign let alone the various women's groups which have supported the liberation struggle in Ireland over the past decade.

In the preface to this book, Miner refers to the "random violence" and screaming headlines and links the IRA's military campaign with the Jonestown suicides in Guyana and the murder of two pro-gay Californian politicians. Throughout the book the writer alludes to "convicted terrorists". It is clear that "violence" is Miner's theme. This book, published as it is with all the hindsight available in 1981, must fall into the category of subpornographic, sex-and-violence novels, so well exposed in the July 1980 issue of Troops Out. The variation to the theme is provided by the reference to some issues of real contention between the political outlook of feminism in imperialist countries and the fight against women's oppression as prioritised in imperialist-dominated countries, but such references must not be allowed to pass as a fair attempt at coming to terms with this debate.

We'd like to know what the Women's Press is doing publishing such racist and dishonest material which obscures the real experience of women actually involved in the Irish struggle and feeds the worst fears of British feminists in relation to that struggle.

****** CUCHULAINN

Cuchulain, with a broken bottle in his hand, hid in a doorway, like a hunted man in his own land....

"the poor old woman" bared to the waist and whipped raw, then handed around from lord to lord, like a saxon whore.

Cuchulain a starved creature, cornered in a cage, went straight for their hearts

like a shot, in his

moral-blind rage

"Cuchulain is sick" they wrote "blowing innocent people in half -INNOCENT PEOPLE he murders. . . . and yet, innocent people can starve. BD

Bangor, North Wales

EVENTS AND RESOURCES

BENEFIT
for the Troops Out Movement
7.30, DECEMBER 11
CENTRAL LONDON POLYTECHNIC
New Cavendish Street Annexe

with
THE RAINCOATS
and other bands

HARINGEY TOM PUBLIC MEETING

"If the army left, would there be a bloodbath?

Is the army a peace-keeping force? What about the Protestants in Northern Ireland?"

Tuesday 10th November, 8.15pm Denmark Road Community Centre Denmark Road, London N8 (off Wightman Rd, nearest tube Turnpike Lane)

TROOPS OUT is produced by an editorial collective drawn from TOM branches in London. Contributions are welcome (although we can't guarantee to publish everything that comes in).

Copy for the next issue must be sent to arrive not later than:

25th November

Subs: Britain and Ireland £3 for 10 issues yearly. Europe £4. USA and Australia £6.

Make cheques payble to Troops Out (Literature Committee).
Send to Box 10, 2a St Pauls Rd, London 1.1.

If you want to join one of the TOM branches listed below, or if you don't live near a branch and want to join as an individual, fill in the coupon below.

ENGLAND
Barnsley
Basingstoke
Bedford
Birmingham
Brighton
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Cambridge
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Sheffield
Swindon
York
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Camden & Islington
Central London
Fast London
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To: P.O. Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

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the Tr	oops O	ut	Moveme	ent.		

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Membership of a branch is £4, payable through the branch. Individual membership is £5 which includes a subscription to *Troops Out*.

Open Conference:
IRELAND — A WAY FORWARD
Organised by Greenwich Labour Party
29th NOVEMBER

at Goldsmiths College, New Cross

SPEAKERS INCLUDE: Paddy Logue, National H Block/Armagh Cttee; Mike Biggs, former Army officer; Carl Gardner; Prof. John Murphy; Richard Balfe MEP; Sinn Fein Workers Party Rep.; Clive Soley MP

For more details and credentials write: Greenwich Labour Party, 32, Woolwich Rd, London SE10. Phone: 858-1013,

MANCHESTER MARTYRS DEMONSTRATION

Sunday 29th November, 2pm Assemble: St Patricks Church, Oldham Rd, Manchester

Commemorates the execution of 3 Irish republicans in 1867, framed on a murder charge.

"I am not astonished at my conviction. The Government of this country has the power of convicting any person. They appoint the judge; they choose the jury, and by means of what they call patronage — which is the means of corruption — they have the power of making the laws to suit their purposes." (Michael O'Brien, one of the three martyrs). And his words still apply today.

WHO ARE THE REAL TERRORISTS?

Smash the PTA Campaign
North & Midlands labour mwmt. conference
Saturday 5 December, 10am-5pm,
Belle Vue Community Centre,
Belle Vue Road, Leeds.

Workshops on: trade unions and Ireland, students and the Irish War, Report from Six Counties. Evening social, Phone 01-274 3951.

POSTERS

Large colour poster of Derry mural. £1 from PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH



LONDON NW5 4N H T-SHIRTS

"The Spirit of Freedom, Bobby Sands"
Black with white design.

BIN LIDS AND BARRICADES

A series of panels of photographs and written explanations: the history of Irish women's involvement in the struggle for national liberation starting from Partition in 1921. Also Armagh Jail, living conditions in the North, social pressures, republican organisations, the nature of loyalism and many other topics.

Available for hire from the Armagh Women's Group from early December. Write to 374 Grays Inn Rd., London WC1, for details.

CALENDARS

Concentrate your mind in 1982 on the most urgent question facing us in Britain with a calendar portraying events in the North of Ireland. 2 designs available, both with good quality photographs.

From Troops Out Society, c/o 108 Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Rd, Cathays, Cardiff. (In Welsh and English) Price: £1.75 Or from Open Rd Printing Co-op, The Basement, 57 Micklegate, York. Price: £2

York Community Bookshop has produced a very useful booklist on Ireland, both historical and present day. Send a stamped addressed envelope (and a contribution if possible) to:

York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate York YO1 2TZ

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 economic. We believe that British troops are in Ireland not as a peacekeeping force, but in order to maintain British rule, and that their presence is the most serious obstacle to any progress towards peace. For over ten years the troops have been occupying a part of Ireland, coercing and oppressing the nationalist people, maintaining the division of Ireland and ensuring that its people cannot unite to determine their own

We have been working as an organisation for immediate British withdrawal since the early 1970s. We now have over 40 branches in England, Scotland and Wales. These branches, working locally in what-

open to any individual or group supporting the demands:

open to any individual or group supporting the dema
TROOPS OUT NOW

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE

future.