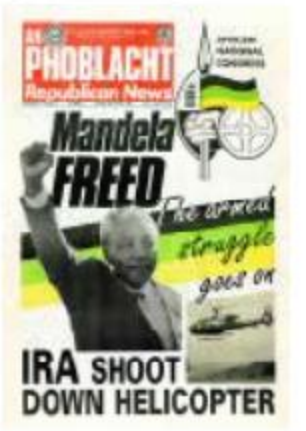


# anphoblacht



ISSUE NUMBER 4 - 2020 - UIMHIR EISIÚNA 4

**50**  
**YEARS OF**  
**UNCENSORED**  
**NEWS**





**MAKE  
SURE  
YOU  
DON'T  
MISS  
OUT**

**FOR OVER  
50 YEARS**

**anphoblacht**

**HAS  
BEEN THE  
VOICE OF  
REPUBLICAN  
IRELAND.  
YOU CAN BE  
PART OF THE  
NEXT PHASE  
OF THIS  
HISTORY.**



March 2018 Márta



August | September 2018  
Lúnasa | Meán Fómhair



Issue Number 1 - 2019  
- Uimhir Eisiúna 1



Issue Number 2 - 2019  
- Uimhir Eisiúna 2



Issue Number 3 - 2019  
- Uimhir Eisiúna 3



Issue Number 4 - 2019  
- Uimhir Eisiúna 4



Issue Number 1 - 2020  
- Uimhir Eisiúna 1



Issue Number 2 - 2020  
- Uimhir Eisiúna 2



Issue Number 3 - 2020  
- Uimhir Eisiúna 3



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AN PHOBLACHT  
Editor: Robbie Smyth

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# anphoblacht

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UIMHIR EISIÚNA 4 - 2020 - ISSUE NUMBER 4

The affection and regard that republicans have for *An Phoblacht* came into sharp focus when we were putting together this anniversary edition. Former editors and writers took up the quill and keyboard to revisit their time at the paper. The result is a unique new history of the two papers now merged into the one *An Phoblacht*.

There are firsthand accounts of each decade of the paper, which reveal the challenge of creating a publication that the British and Irish governments attempted to drive underground. Their efforts failed because of the resilience and commitment of *An Phoblacht* staff over the years. Here's to the next 50 years.

17

From an activist selling *Republican News* to editing the merged AP/RN, Danny Morrison writes of 'seven months that changed the world', as he tells the story of *An Phoblacht* in the H-Block protest and the 1980-81 hunger strike period.



33

Nearly every contributor mentions the impact of Rita O'Hare. Here, she writes of her time as *An Phoblacht* editor.



66

Laurence McKeown writes on Brian Campbell's journey from prison poetry workshops to producing the *Captive Voice* magazine and editing *An Phoblacht*.



• **AN PHOBLACHT - A MOMENT IN TIME.** There are very few photos of all *An Phoblacht* staff at any particular phase of the paper. Even this snapshot is missing some key people working at the paper at the time. The drivers at the time were still unwilling to be photographed! This snap shot was taken in the late 1990s.



# *An Phoblacht* at 50



ROBBIE SMYTH  
editor@anphoblacht.com

The paper  
has been a  
witness and  
participant in  
all the years  
of conflict  
and peace  
since 1970

**T**he republican voice will be heard. This simple commitment has been the driving force behind *An Phoblacht* for half a century. This idea has brought people together through multiple generations to produce editions of *An Phoblacht*.

Whether you were a writer, a driver, in reception guarding the doors, cleaning the offices, typesetting, designing, proofing, taking and printing photos, editing, and, most importantly, selling *An Phoblacht*, you were part of a chain that made an idea into a reality.

Preparing for this edition, we were for a long time unsure of how to tell the *An Phoblacht* story. The paper has been a witness and participant in all the years of conflict and peace since 1970. It has been a unique record of the transformation of Ireland.

There are hundreds of great covers. Some of them are in this edition and many of which we have included in recent issues. There were ground-breaking exclusive stories, with eye witness coverage of the war and then peace in Ireland. Alongside this was an analysis of Irish political life not found anywhere else. It is daunting to attempt the telling of this story.

How do you tell the story of a paper that carried the some of the earliest writings of Bobby Sands, smuggled out of the H-Blocks? How do you tell the story of the workers who shouldered the ongoing task of getting *An Phoblacht* to the printers every week, and then selling the paper at doors, in pubs, shops, and marches or protests?

What we did do was ask some of those people to tell their own unfiltered story of *An Phoblacht*. And so, we have a unique collection of writers and former editors in this edition. Their words provide a new history of this important aspect of the republican struggle.

As we were gathering material, we heard of the passing of former editor Gerry O'Hare. Danny Morrison penned an excellent reflection which is available on [anphoblacht.com](http://anphoblacht.com). In print, Laurence McKeown gave us some thoughts on his friend and our late former editor Brian Campbell.

*An Phoblacht* is the sum of the people who gave their time to it. For example, our MEP Chris McManus texted to remind me of the "thousand jacket sleeves ruined on a Friday night with ink" from selling the paper across Sligo town.

We must thank the sellers of *An Phoblacht*, as well as those in the offices who collected the money, paid the bills, wrapped the paper for posting, answered phones, managed the stream of callers to our offices. For many of my years in *An Phoblacht*, it seemed that the paper's day to day operations were dependent on the greater republics of Cabra and Finglas. Thank you all.

Finally, the history of *An Phoblacht* and *Republican News* is inextricably linked with the history of republican struggle over the last 50 years. We thought it was fitting to mark this by including the Roll of Honour of the volunteers and Sinn Féin members who died during the conflict.



**BELFAST BRIGADE**

|                           |           |      |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|
| <i>1st Battalion</i>      |           |      |
| Vol Tony Henderson        | Apr 4th   | 1971 |
| Vol Terence McDermott     | Oct 2nd   | 1971 |
| Vol Martin Forsythe       | Oct 24th  | 1971 |
| Vol Tony Jordan           | June 28th | 1972 |
| Vol John Finucane         | June 28th | 1972 |
| Vol Francis Hall          | Aug 30th  | 1973 |
| Vol Daniel Burke          | Apr 9th   | 1974 |
| Vol Gerard Fennell        | Nov 8th   | 1974 |
| Vol John Rooney           | Nov 15th  | 1974 |
| Vol Seán McDermott        | Apr 5th   | 1976 |
| Vol Thomas Kane           | July 6th  | 1976 |
| Vol Danny Lennon          | Aug 10th  | 1976 |
| Vol Brendan O'Callaghan   | Apr 23rd  | 1977 |
| Vol Dan Turley            | June 9th  | 1983 |
| Vol Tom McGill            | Feb 28th  | 1986 |
| Vol Jim McKernan          | Sept 14th | 1986 |
| Vol Margaret McArdle      | June 7th  | 1987 |
| Vol Kevin McCracken       | Mar 14th  | 1988 |
| Vol Caoimhín Mac Brádaigh | Mar 16th  | 1988 |
| Vol Patricia Black        | Nov 15th  | 1991 |
| Vol Frankie Ryan          | Nov 15th  | 1991 |
| Vol Pearse Jordan         | Nov 25th  | 1992 |
| Vol John O'Rawe           | Apr 4th   | 1994 |
| Vol Jimmy Roe             | Aug 12th  | 1996 |

|                        |           |      |
|------------------------|-----------|------|
| <i>2nd Battalion</i>   |           |      |
| Vol Liam McParland     | Nov 6th   | 1969 |
| Vol Jimmy Steele       | Aug 9th   | 1970 |
| Vol Peter Blake        | Oct 27th  | 1970 |
| Vol Tom McGoldrick     | Oct 27th  | 1970 |
| Vol Charles Hughes     | Mar 8th   | 1971 |
| Vol Séamus Simpson     | Aug 11th  | 1971 |
| Vol Danny O'Neill      | Jan 7th   | 1972 |
| Vol Albert Kavanagh    | Mar 4th   | 1972 |
| Vol Gerard Crossan     | Mar 9th   | 1972 |
| Vol Tony Lewis         | Mar 9th   | 1972 |
| Vol Seán Johnston      | Mar 9th   | 1972 |
| Vol Tom McCann         | Mar 9th   | 1972 |
| Vol Patrick Campbell   | Mar 25th  | 1972 |
| Vol Robert McCruden    | Aug 3rd   | 1972 |
| Vol Michael Clarke     | Aug 11th  | 1972 |
| Vol Jimmy Quigley      | Sept 29th | 1972 |
| Vol Daniel McAleavey   | Oct 6th   | 1972 |
| Vol Patrick Maguire    | Oct 10th  | 1972 |
| Vol John Donaghy       | Oct 10th  | 1972 |
| Vol Joseph McKinney    | Oct 10th  | 1972 |
| Vol Stan Carberry      | Nov 13th  | 1972 |
| Vol Francis Liggett    | Jan 18th  | 1973 |
| Vol Edward O'Rawe      | Apr 12th  | 1973 |
| Vol Joseph McKenna     | May 16th  | 1973 |
| Vol Patrick Mulvenna   | Aug 31st  | 1973 |
| Vol James Bryson       | Sept 22nd | 1973 |
| Vol Martin Skillen     | Aug 3rd   | 1974 |
| Vol John Kelly         | Jan 21st  | 1975 |
| Vol John Stone         | Jan 21st  | 1975 |
| Vol Paul Fox           | Dec 1st   | 1975 |
| Vol Seán Bailey        | Feb 13th  | 1976 |
| Vol James McGrillen    | Feb 15th  | 1976 |
| Vol Paul Marlowe       | Oct 16th  | 1976 |
| Vol Tommy Tolan        | July 27th | 1977 |
| Vol Billy Carson       | Apr 25th  | 1979 |
| Vol Kevin Delaney      | Jan 17th  | 1980 |
| Vol Terence O'Neill    | July 1st  | 1980 |
| Vol Liam Hannaway      | Feb 2nd   | 1981 |
| Vol James Burns        | Feb 23rd  | 1981 |
| Vol Tony Campbell      | Aug 4th   | 1985 |
| Vol Brian Dempsey      | June 25th | 1986 |
| Vol Finbarr McKenna    | May 2nd   | 1987 |
| Vol Proinsias Mac Airt | Jan 8th   | 1992 |
| Vol Harry Burns        | Feb 3rd   | 1999 |

|                        |           |      |
|------------------------|-----------|------|
| <i>3rd Battalion</i>   |           |      |
| Vol Michael Kane       | Sept 4th  | 1970 |
| Vol James Saunders     | Feb 6th   | 1971 |
| Vol Billy Reid         | May 15th  | 1971 |
| Vol Patrick McAdurey   | Aug 9th   | 1971 |
| Vol Tony Nolan         | Dec 8th   | 1971 |
| Vol Gerald McDade      | Dec 21st  | 1971 |
| Vol Joseph Cunningham  | Feb 10th  | 1972 |
| Vol Gerard Bell        | Feb 21st  | 1972 |
| Vol Gerard Steele      | Feb 21st  | 1972 |
| Vol Robert Dorrian     | Feb 21st  | 1972 |
| Vol Joseph Magee       | Feb 21st  | 1972 |
| Vol Samuel Hughes      | Apr 7th   | 1972 |
| Vol Charles McCrystal  | Apr 7th   | 1972 |
| Vol John McErlean      | Apr 7th   | 1972 |
| Vol Edward McDonnell   | May 28th  | 1972 |
| Vol Jackie McIlhorne   | May 28th  | 1972 |
| Vol Joseph Fitzsimmons | May 28th  | 1972 |
| Vol Martin Engelen     | May 28th  | 1972 |
| Vol Louis Scullion     | July 14th | 1972 |
| Vol James Reid         | July 15th | 1972 |
| Vol Joseph Downey      | July 21st | 1972 |
| Vol Séamus Cassidy     | July 28th | 1972 |
| Vol James Sloan        | Feb 3rd   | 1973 |
| Vol Tony Campbell      | Feb 4th   | 1973 |
| Vol James McCann       | Feb 4th   | 1973 |
| Vol Patrick McCabe     | Mar 27th  | 1973 |
| Vol Brian Smyth        | Apr 17th  | 1973 |
| Vol Seán McKee         | May 18th  | 1973 |
| Vol Frederick Leonard  | May 7th   | 1974 |
| Vol Séamus McCusker    | Oct 31st  | 1975 |
| Vol Martin McDonagh    | Jan 13th  | 1976 |
| Vol Frank Fitzsimmons  | Oct 16th  | 1976 |
| Vol Joseph Surgenor    | Oct 16th  | 1976 |
| Vol Trevor McKibbin    | Apr 17th  | 1977 |
| Vol Jackie McMahon     | Jan 18th  | 1978 |
| Vol Jackie Mailey      | June 21st | 1978 |
| Vol Denis Brown        | June 21st | 1978 |
| Vol Jim Mulvenna       | June 21st | 1978 |

|                         |           |      |
|-------------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Laurence Montgomery | Jan 5th   | 1979 |
| Vol Frankie Donnelly    | Jan 5th   | 1979 |
| Vol Martin McKenna      | Oct 23rd  | 1979 |
| Vol Laurence Marley     | Apr 2nd   | 1987 |
| Vol Brendan Davison     | July 25th | 1988 |
| Vol Thomas Begley       | Oct 23rd  | 1993 |

**CLARE**

|                |         |      |
|----------------|---------|------|
| Vol Hugh Hehir | May 6th | 1988 |
|----------------|---------|------|

**CORK**

|                    |           |      |
|--------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Tony Ahern     | May 10th  | 1973 |
| Vol Dermot Crowley | June 25th | 1973 |

**CUMANN NA mBAN**

|                          |           |      |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|
| <i>BELFAST</i>           |           |      |
| Vol Dorothy Maguire      | Oct 23rd  | 1971 |
| Vol Maura Meehan         | Oct 23rd  | 1971 |
| Vol Anne Parker          | Aug 11th  | 1972 |
| Vol Anne Marie Petticrew | Sept 1st  | 1973 |
| Vol Bridie Dolan         | Feb 9th   | 1975 |
| Vol Laura Crawford       | Dec 1st   | 1975 |
| Vol Rosemary Bleakley    | Jan 13th  | 1976 |
| <i>DOWNPATRICK</i>       |           |      |
| Vol Vivien Fitzsimmons   | Feb 10th  | 1973 |
| <i>NEWCASTLE</i>         |           |      |
| Vol Pauline Kane         | July 21st | 1973 |
| <i>PORTADOWN</i>         |           |      |
| Vol Julie Dougan         | July 8th  | 1972 |

**DERRY BRIGADE**

|                     |           |      |
|---------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Thomas McCool   | June 27th | 1970 |
| Vol Joseph Coyle    | June 27th | 1970 |
| Vol Thomas Carlin   | July 8th  | 1970 |
| Vol Eamonn Lafferty | Aug 18th  | 1971 |
| Vol James O'Hagan   | Aug 19th  | 1971 |
| Vol Colm Keenan     | Mar 14th  | 1972 |
| Vol Eugene McGillan | Mar 14th  | 1972 |
| Vol John Starrs     | May 13th  | 1972 |
| Vol Seamus Bradley  | July 31st | 1972 |
| Vol Michael Quigley | Sept 17th | 1972 |
| Vol John Brady      | Nov 28th  | 1972 |
| Vol James Carr      | Nov 28th  | 1972 |
| Vol James McDaid    | Dec 29th  | 1972 |
| Vol Joe Walker      | Dec 3rd   | 1973 |

|                      |           |      |
|----------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Gerard Craig     | June 24th | 1974 |
| Vol David Russell    | June 24th | 1974 |
| Vol Michael Meenan   | Oct 30th  | 1974 |
| Vol John McDaid      | Dec 7th   | 1974 |
| Vol Ethel Lynch      | Dec 7th   | 1974 |
| Vol Jim Gallagher    | May 17th  | 1976 |
| Vol Brian Coyle      | June 30th | 1976 |
| Vol Dennis Heaney    | June 10th | 1978 |
| Vol Pat Harkin       | Oct 2nd   | 1978 |
| Vol Patsy Duffy      | Nov 24th  | 1978 |
| Vol George McBrearty | May 28th  | 1981 |
| Vol Charles Maguire  | May 28th  | 1981 |
| Vol Eamonn Bradley   | Aug 25th  | 1982 |
| Vol Phil O'Donnell   | Dec 24th  | 1982 |
| Vol Richard Quigley  | Apr 21st  | 1984 |
| Vol Ciaran Fleming   | Dec 2nd   | 1984 |
| Vol Danny Doherty    | Dec 6th   | 1984 |
| Vol Willie Fleming   | Dec 6th   | 1984 |
| Vol Charles English  | Aug 6th   | 1985 |
| Vol Tony Gough       | Feb 22nd  | 1986 |
| Vol Philip McFadden  | May 31st  | 1986 |
| Vol Patrick O'Hagan  | Aug 9th   | 1986 |
| Vol Gerard Logue     | Mar 22nd  | 1987 |
| Vol Paddy Deery      | Oct 28th  | 1987 |
| Vol Eddie McSheffrey | Oct 28th  | 1987 |

|                      |           |      |
|----------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Gerard Russell   | June 24th | 1974 |
| Vol Michael Meenan   | Oct 30th  | 1974 |
| Vol John McDaid      | Dec 7th   | 1974 |
| Vol Ethel Lynch      | Dec 7th   | 1974 |
| Vol Jim Gallagher    | May 17th  | 1976 |
| Vol Brian Coyle      | June 30th | 1976 |
| Vol Dennis Heaney    | June 10th | 1978 |
| Vol Pat Harkin       | Oct 2nd   | 1978 |
| Vol Patsy Duffy      | Nov 24th  | 1978 |
| Vol George McBrearty | May 28th  | 1981 |
| Vol Charles Maguire  | May 28th  | 1981 |
| Vol Eamonn Bradley   | Aug 25th  | 1982 |
| Vol Phil O'Donnell   | Dec 24th  | 1982 |
| Vol Richard Quigley  | Apr 21st  | 1984 |
| Vol Ciaran Fleming   | Dec 2nd   | 1984 |
| Vol Danny Doherty    | Dec 6th   | 1984 |
| Vol Willie Fleming   | Dec 6th   | 1984 |
| Vol Charles English  | Aug 6th   | 1985 |
| Vol Tony Gough       | Feb 22nd  | 1986 |
| Vol Philip McFadden  | May 31st  | 1986 |
| Vol Patrick O'Hagan  | Aug 9th   | 1986 |
| Vol Gerard Logue     | Mar 22nd  | 1987 |
| Vol Paddy Deery      | Oct 28th  | 1987 |
| Vol Eddie McSheffrey | Oct 28th  | 1987 |

**COUNTY DERRY**

|                                 |          |      |
|---------------------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Martin Lee                  | Dec 18th | 1971 |
| Vol John Bateson                | Dec 18th | 1971 |
| Vol James Sheridan              | Dec 18th | 1971 |
| Vol Danny McMullan              | Feb 7th  | 1982 |
| Vol Antoine Mac Giolla Bhrighde | Dec 2nd  | 1984 |
| Vol Francis Bradley             | Feb 18th | 1986 |
| Vol James Kelly                 | Mar 25th | 1993 |

**DONEGAL**

|                        |           |      |
|------------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Peter McElcar      | July 17th | 1976 |
| Vol Raymond McLaughlin | Sept 9th  | 1985 |
| Vol Damien Brolly      | Dec 30th  | 1991 |

**DUBLIN**

|                     |           |      |
|---------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Patrick Cannon  | July 17th | 1976 |
| Vol Colm Dalton     | Jan 15th  | 1983 |
| Vol Mick Timothy    | Jan 26th  | 1985 |
| Vol Christy Harford | May 5th   | 1992 |
| Vol Martin Doherty  | May 21st  | 1994 |

**ENGLAND**

|  |           |      |
|--|-----------|------|
| Vol Michael Gaughan (Parkhurst Prison) | June 3rd  | 1974 |
| Vol James McDade                       | Nov 14th  | 1974 |
| Vol Brian Fox                          | Dec 21st  | 1974 |
| Vol Francis Stagg (Wakefield Prison)   | Feb 12th  | 1976 |
| Vol Edward O'Brien                     | Feb 18th  | 1996 |
| Vol Diarmuid O'Neill                   | Sept 23rd | 1996 |

**FIANNA ÉIREANN**

|                        |           |      |
|------------------------|-----------|------|
| Fian Gerald McAuley    | Aug 15th  | 1969 |
| Fian Michael Sloan     | Jan 11th  | 1972 |
| Fian Eamon McCormick   | Jan 16th  | 1972 |
| Fian Gerry Donaghy     | Jan 30th  | 1972 |
| Fian David McAuley     | Feb 19th  | 1972 |
| Fian Seán O'Riordan    | Mar 23rd  | 1972 |
| Fian Michael Magee     | May 13th  | 1972 |
| Fian Joseph Campbell   | June 11th | 1972 |
| Fian John Dougal       | July 9th  | 1972 |
| Fian Tobias Molloy     | July 16th | 1972 |
| Fian Joseph McComiskey | Sept 20th | 1972 |
| Fian Bernard Fox       | Dec 4th   | 1972 |
| Fian Seán Hughes       | Dec 4th   | 1972 |
| Fian Michael Marley    | Nov 24th  | 1973 |
| Fian Robert Allsopp    | Mar 23rd  | 1975 |
| Fian James Templeton   | Aug 29th  | 1975 |
| Fian Kevin McAuley     | Nov 6th   | 1975 |
| Fian James O'Neill     | Feb 12th  | 1976 |
| Fian Paul McWilliams   | Aug 9th   | 1977 |
| Fian John Dempsey      | July 8th  | 1981 |

**GHQ STAFF**

|                      |           |      |
|----------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Jack McCabe      | Dec 27th  | 1971 |
| Vol Thomas O'Donnell | May 17th  | 1973 |
| Vol Mairéad Farrell  | Mar 6th   | 1988 |
| Vol Dan McCann       | Mar 6th   | 1988 |
| Vol Seán Savage      | Mar 6th   | 1988 |
| Vol Séamus Twomey    | Sept 12th | 1989 |

**LAOIS**

|                    |           |      |
|--------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Michael Motley | June 12th | 1993 |
| Vol Patrick Kelly  | June 11th | 1997 |

**LIMERICK**

|                    |         |      |
|--------------------|---------|------|
| Vol Patrick Sheehy | Jan 2nd | 1991 |
|--------------------|---------|------|

**LONG KESH**

|                    |          |      |
|--------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Francis Dodds  | Sept 9th | 1973 |
| Vol Teddy Campbell | May 3rd  | 1974 |
| Vol Patrick Teer   | July 2nd | 1974 |
| Vol Hugh Coney     | Nov 6th  | 1974 |
| Vol James Moyne    | Jan 13th | 1975 |
| Vol Henry Heaney   | June 4th | 1978 |
| Vol Seán Bateson   | June 7th | 1990 |
| Vol Pól Kinsella   | Dec 13th | 1994 |

**REPUBLICAN ROLL OF HONOUR**

1969 Liosta Laochra na Poblachta 2020

**H-BLOCK MARTYRS**

|                          |           |      |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Bobby Sands          | May 5th   | 1981 |
| Vol Francis Hughes       | May 12th  | 1981 |
| Vol Raymond McCreesh     | May 21st  | 1981 |
| Vol Patsy O'Hara (INLA)  | May 21st  | 1981 |
| Vol Joe McDonnell        | July 8th  | 1981 |
| Vol Martin Hurson        | July 13th | 1981 |
| Vol Kevin Lynch (INLA)   | Aug 1st   | 1981 |
| Vol Kieran Doherty       | Aug 2nd   | 1981 |
| Vol Thomas McElwee       | Aug 8th   | 1981 |
| Vol Mickey Devine (INLA) | Aug 20th  | 1981 |

**MONAGHAN**

|                  |          |      |
|------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Seán McKenna | June 5th | 1975 |
| Vol Peadar Mohan | Feb 1st  | 1981 |

**NEWRY**

|                     |          |      |
|---------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Colm Murtagh    | Aug 9th  | 1972 |
| Vol Patrick Hughes  | Aug 22nd | 1972 |
| Vol Oliver Rowntree | Aug 22nd | 1972 |
| Vol Noel Madden     | Aug 22nd | 1972 |
| Vol Brendan Quinn   | Dec 24th | 1973 |
| Vol Edward Grant    | Dec 24th | 1973 |
| Vol Patrick McKeown | Aug 27th | 1974 |
| Vol Michael Hughes  | Oct 18th | 1974 |
| Vol Robert Carr     | Apr 1st  | 1980 |
| Vol Brendan Watters | Aug 8th  | 1984 |

**NORTH ANTRIM**

|                    |          |      |
|--------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Phelim Grant   | Feb 5th  | 1972 |
| Vol Charles McCann | Feb 5th  | 1972 |
| Vol Henry Hogan    | Feb 21st | 1984 |
| Vol Declan Martin  | Feb 21st | 1984 |
| Vol Peter Rodden   | Dec 7th  | 1987 |
| Vol Gerard Casey   | Apr 4th  | 1989 |

**NORTH ARMAGH**

|                        |          |      |
|------------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Michael Crossey    | Nov 22nd | 1971 |
| Vol Charles Agnew      | Dec 17th | 1971 |
| Vol John Francis Green | Jan 10th | 1975 |
| Vol Terry Brady        | Dec 5th  | 1975 |
| Vol David Kennedy      | Dec 10th | 1975 |
| Vol Seán Burns         | Nov 11th | 1982 |
| Vol Gervase McKerr     | Nov 11th | 1982 |
| Vol Eugene Toman       | Nov 11th | 1982 |
| Vol Eddie Dynes        | Mar 1st  | 1983 |
| Vol Seán McIlvenna     | Dec 17th | 1984 |

**PORTLAOISE**

|                   |          |      |
|-------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Tom Smith     | Mar 17th | 1975 |
| Vol Brendan Seery | Feb 19th | 1992 |

**SLIGO**

|                     |          |      |
|---------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Kevin Coen      | Jan 20th | 1975 |
| Vol Joseph MacManus | Feb 5th  | 1992 |

**SOUTH ARMAGH**

|                      |          |      |
|----------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Michael McVerry  | Nov 15th | 1973 |
| Vol Seán Boyle       | Feb 1st  | 1975 |
| Vol Francis Jordan   | June 4th | 1975 |
| Vol Seán Campbell    | Dec 6th  | 1975 |
| Vol James Lochrie    | Dec 6th  | 1975 |
| Vol Peter Cleary     | Apr 15th | 1976 |
| Vol Séamus Harvey    | Jan 16th | 1977 |
| Vol Peadar McElvanna | June 9th | 1979 |
| Vol Brendan Burns    | Feb 29th | 1988 |
| Vol Brendan Moley    | Feb 29th | 1988 |
| Vol Fergal Caraher   | Dec 30th | 1990 |
| Vol Eugene Martin    | Apr 8th  | 1996 |
| Vol Malachy Watters  | Aug 8th  | 1996 |
| Vol Keith Rogers     | Mar 12th | 2003 |

**SOUTH FERMANAGH**

|                     |          |      |
|---------------------|----------|------|
| Vol Louis Leonard   | Dec 15th | 1972 |
| Vol Séamus McElwain | Apr 26th | 1986 |

**SOUTH DOWN**

|                          |           |      |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|
| Vol Peter McNulty        | Jan 26th  | 1972 |
| Vol James Carlin         | Aug 26th  | 1972 |
| Vol Martin Curran        | Aug 26th  | 1972 |
| Vol Leo O'Hanlon         | Feb 10th  | 1973 |
| Vol Francis Rice         | May 18th  | 1973 |
| Vol Alphonsus Cunningham | July 21st | 1973 |
| Vol Paul Magorrian       | Aug 14th  | 1974 |
| Vol Colum Marks          | Apr 10th  | 1991 |



# Republican, radical and relevant

## AN PHOBLACHT STOOD STRONG IN THE STORM AND CHANGED THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN IRELAND

BY MARY LOU McDONALD

The role played by *An Phoblacht* in shifting the political discourse in Ireland over the last half a century is undeniable. Over the course of fifty years, it gave an authentic voice to the politics of Irish republicanism. This is particularly true of the dark days of Section 31 when the establishment did everything possible to ensure that the republican message and analysis was suppressed.

We have to remember that Gerry Adams gave his first interview to RTÉ television in January 1994. Due to the state directed policy of censorship, it was hard for republicans to be heard and it was easy for the establishment to demonise republicans. *An Phoblacht* stood strong in the midst of that storm. It was the main outlet for the opinions and arguments of the Republican leadership for three decades.

*An Phoblacht's* editors, reporters, cartoonists, distributors, and sellers risked their lives to get out the truth about what was happening. It wasn't easy. Often, they did this even as the threat of death and imprisonment hung over themselves, their families, and their communities. We owe them great debt of gratitude. We might never have built the political strength we enjoy today if it wasn't for their work.

The publication has been fundamental in advancing Republican politics and in preserving the morale and unity during some very difficult times. The paper's reporting on the dark and heart-wrenching days following Bloody Sunday and during the 1980-1981 hunger strikes are key examples of how *An Phoblacht* married the responsibilities of politically challenging the injustice

of Britain's brutal policies in Ireland, while also describing poignantly the human loss experienced within nationalist communities. *An Phoblacht's* reporters were eyewitnesses to history as it unfolded on their streets and their writings covered important events ignored by the mainstream media.

*An Phoblacht* writers bravely countered the propaganda and lies of Britain's dirty war in Ireland. It was the newspaper of the risen people. When a real opportunity for peace

presented itself, *An Phoblacht* was again to the fore in articulating the republican position, in facilitating debate, and it played a unique role in maintaining the cohesion as Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness, and others led Irish Republicans in a new direction. *An Phoblacht* was a front row witness and chronicler of the historic moments in the peace process and to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

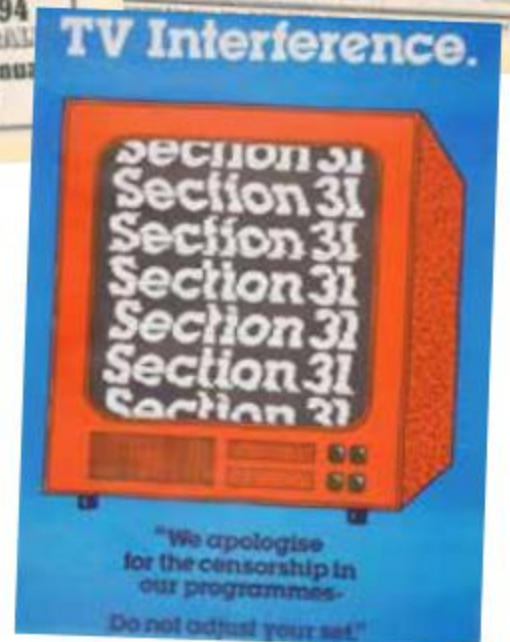
Those editing and writing the *An Phoblacht* were acutely aware of the inseparable relationship between national liberation, the ending of partition, and the pervasive socio-economic inequalities experienced by workers and families across the entire island. While shining a bright spotlight on the systemic abuses of the Orange State in the North, *An Phoblacht* also took on the anti-worker, anti-republican politics of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael and the southern state.

*An Phoblacht* has been a debating ground for big ideas on the issues that matter in the everyday lives of

—“—

*An Phoblacht has been a debating ground for big ideas on the issues that matter in the everyday lives of ordinary people in all thirty-two counties*

—”—







- A campaigning paper - Defending Britain miners and workers worldwide, opposing the invasion of Iraq and showing international solidarity to oppressed and supporting the abused people in society like the Travelling Community

ordinary people in all thirty-two counties. It has relentlessly championed workers' rights and trade unionism, the importance of social and affordable housing, the need for a strong all-Ireland public health service, spoke up without fear against criminal drugs gangs ruining communities, critiqued the many failings of capitalism and privatisation and it provided insights into how a fairer economy and society could be achieved.

Like all good journalism, it stripped the spin of the powerful from the facts on the ground and based its reporting on the lived experiences of those in communities.

The commitment to this approach ensured that *An Phoblacht* sustained its revolutionary verve and remained taboo to the establishment. The best way to judge the effectiveness of political writing is by how well it unsettles the powerful.

*An Phoblacht* certainly did that as it persistently challenged the prescribed narratives and oppressive norms of official Ireland. These writings have come not only from members of Sinn Féin and the republican movement, but from progressives of all political hues in Ireland and throughout the world.

*An Phoblacht* has a rich history of reflecting the internationalism of Irish republicanism. The paper played a key role in fostering bonds of friendship and solidarity between the republican movement in Ireland and struggles for freedom and economic justice throughout the world, most notably in Palestine, South Africa, Cuba, and the Basque Country.

It came to the defence of the working class in Britain in 1984 when Thatcher tried to crush the miners and mining communities during the great strike. For decades, it reached out and spoke to our allies in Irish America, a relationship that proved so influential in the success of the peace process.

As a campaigning paper with an international audience, it rightly opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq and regularly criticised the folly of the push for US-British hegemony through aggressive military interventionism.

The writings in *An Phoblacht* have been staunchly and expressively anti-racist and anti-fascist. It has stood for the equal rights of women and it has never hesitated in fighting for rights of the most marginalised people in our society. It has been an unwavering advocate of the Travelling Community and a long-time ally of the LGBT community.

The paper has always prioritised radicalism and relevance over taking the easy path. It has never shied away

from speaking truth to power or from holding to account the powerful institutions in Irish life whether that has been the state, the church or, more recently, the banks and financial institutions.

Interwoven with the role of providing a republican perspective on contemporary political issues, *An Phoblacht* has rightly placed an equal importance on the telling and the safeguarding of Irish revolutionary history. It recognised how essential it is that Irish republicans are to the fore in recounting the long story of the fight for Irish independence and how relevant the ideals of those revolutionaries are today.

For Republicans, *An Phoblacht* has been a forum for uncomfortable conversations and fierce debate on the direction of our politics.

In a wider sense, it has always focused on standing for justice and afflicting the comfortable.

*An Phoblacht* has given expression to the unmanageable and unconvertable revolutionaries of our time. As it has evolved into a digital platform, it has retained its most important aim - helping to bring about change.

We know that change in Ireland - North and South - is needed now more than ever. This is what Sinn Féin's teams in the Oireachtas and the Assembly are focused on delivering.

The cause of Irish Unity has never been stronger. We know that the prospect of a Sinn Féin led government in the south after the next election is very real. As Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil continue to resurrect the politics of the privileged insiders and the old boys' network, workers and families are looking to Irish republicans for leadership.

As our people contend with the challenges of the pandemic and Brexit, they are looking to Irish republicans for a better politics, a better way forward, and a brighter future. *An Phoblacht* will remain an important part of our efforts to deliver for them. As Irish Republicans, we are proud of *An Phoblacht's* legacy and confident of its future. Here's to the next fifty years of radical, relevant, republican writing and reporting.

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# An Phoblacht will drive the Irish unity agenda

BY MICHELLE O'NEILL

For half a century, *An Phoblacht* has played a key role in the development of republicanism, providing a platform which has helped shape our struggle. *An Phoblacht/Republican News* played a role in shaping my own political development and it remains required reading for republicans, and anyone interested in progressive politics.

Throughout the era of state censorship, north and south, *An Phoblacht* was one of the only outlets for unfiltered republican news and views. It played a key role in keeping republican communities up-to-date with what was happening across the island.

It tracked the struggles of workers at a time when Tory elites, north and south, were attacking workers and trade union rights, driving down standards of living, and trying to erode the rights and progress made by the labour movement over many decades.

As a young Republican feminist, it was a beacon for progressive politics and an advocate of my political beliefs rooted in fairness and equality. It gave particular focus to the integral role of women in the struggle and subsequently in the political reconciliation process and ongoing social transformation.

It has been a driver in the campaign to achieve gender equality in this island. It's worth noting the appointment of its first female editor in 1985 and how it has highlighted the work of female activists in driving the republican agenda.

It has ensured that the demand for equal rights for our LGBT+ brothers and sisters was to the fore and it has been an ongoing connection to home for the Irish diaspora forced to emigrate in their hundreds of thousands.

In particular, during the prison protests of the 1970s and early 1980s, *An Phoblacht*, and the amalgamated *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, played a pivotal role in highlighting the conditions faced by republican prisoners at a time when very few in the media were interested.

It gave prisoners and their supporters a voice that was denied to them and a means of highlighting and explaining their demands.

In the period leading up to the hunger strikes and during both the 1980 and 1981 hunger strikes, *An Phoblacht* was the definitive organ for the voice of the prisoners, their families, and supporters.

It was also invaluable in highlighting the role of British state collusion with loyalist death squads throughout the conflict. While others were still trying to dismiss collusion, *An Phoblacht* exposed the actions of the British state and its proxies and laid the evidence of collusion bare for all to see.

It was often said that, throughout the early



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1990s in particular, *An Phoblacht* was essential reading in many newsrooms and even at the British NIO. It regularly drove the news agenda with exclusive stories and interviews on key developments in the peace process.

*An Phoblacht* has always been, and remains, a key platform for republicans to put forward views for debate and discussion about where we are going.

And it is not just for republicans. One of the most interesting and useful discussions to take place in the pages of *An Phoblacht* in recent years has been the 'Uncomfortable Conversations' initiative where people from a unionist background discussed their views on republicanism, reconciliation and the future.

This is exactly the type of discussion we, as a



# Belfast newsagent shot dead

A THIRTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD nationalist newsagent was shot dead behind the counter of his West Belfast shop in a loyalist gun attack on Saturday, August 10th.

Jim Carson, the proprietor, was alone in his '7-Deven' shop at the junction of the Donegal and Falls Roads when, around 9am, two masked men got out of a red Ford Sierra car, entered the shop and shot him several times at point-blank range. The car, hijacked earlier from the Shankill, driven by two gunmen, sped off towards the M1 and was later found abandoned in Tavana Street in the loyalist Village area at the far end of the Donegal Road.

A local butcher, whose shop stands directly opposite the newsagents, heard four or five shots and immediately ran to assist the fatally wounded man but, with a number of shots in the chest and back, Jim Carson was already dead.

## THREAT TO APPEAR

A statement issued by the Attorney General's Office on Sunday said that the Attorney General was aware of the threat to the life of Jim Carson.

Commenting on the loyalist statement, local Sinn Féin councillor Fra McCann questioned the source of this "comprehensive" information on shops stocking the paper. He said:

"It seems highly unlikely that a loyalist gang would have the capability to draw up a comprehensive list of shops stocking *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, particularly in nationalist areas. In the

wake of the murder of Falls Road newsagent Jim Carson and the statement issued by the so-called Loyalist Retaliation and Defence Group, I am calling upon RUC Chief Hugh Annesley to state publicly whether documents, which included lists of paper sellers, that were seized during an RUC raid of APRN's Belfast office in January of this year have been linked to loyalist death squads."



# Malachy Carey — Stood up to be counted

MALACHY CAREY was shot on Saturday night, 12 December 1992 by a loyalist assassin. Although he struggled with the person who attacked him and managed to beat him off, he was shot once and subsequently died at home the following morning, Sunday.

For those who have actively pursued a policy of dismantling Sinn Féin, Malachy was just "a member of Sinn Féin", a "Sinn Féin election worker", or someone who "stood as a candidate for Sinn Féin in an election".

In most of the media reports nothing is said of who this man was and there is no indication of his background.

Malachy Carey was born in 1959 in Loughlinch, County Antrim, on 20 September 1959. He was the fourth son of Willie and the late Mrs Carey and brother to Stephen, Thomas, John, Harry, Martin, Philip, Peter, Nicholas, Paul, Andrew, Anthony, and John.

His mother would frequently recall the time she went into school with Malachy. At the time she, the father, and another sister in search of a place where to settle had been in vain as his wife had already given birth to their fourth son.

Malachy took over his father's shop many years and had three daughters that were then such a remarkable man. The interest and love of teaching that

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# Omós d'fhear dílis, dána Sinn Féin murder victim laid to rest

WITH THE COLD, biting winter wind blowing in off the Sea of Moyle over the North Antrim hills down to Loughswilly, the funeral of Malachy Carey took place on Tuesday, 15 December.

With them, this was the case of the second funeral of a Sinn Féin member.

The funeral of Malachy Carey took place on Tuesday, 15 December.

# Death squad kills Belfast newsagent

A 63-year-old CATHOLIC shop-keeper has become the latest victim of pro-British death squads who are currently intensifying their campaign of terror against the nationalist community.

Larry Murchan, who owned a corner shop in St James' Road was gunned down as he prepared to open his business at 8.50am on Saturday, September 28th.

The gunmen, who arrived and fled in a hijacked white Astra car, shot Larry five times in the head and chest as he emerged from the rear of the shop where he had just completed his morning routine of burning rubbish before commencing the day's business.

Larry Murchan who hailed originally from South Armagh, but who

had lived for most of his life in Belfast, was a well-known local shop-keeper who was notable if anything for his lack of any type of political involvement. This fact was testified to by his family, Sinn Féin and the SDLP, all of whom described his death as a purely random sectarian killing.

Responsibility for the killing was claimed by a pseudo-gang calling itself the Loyalist Retaliation and Defence Group, a flag of convenience also used by the well-styled Combined Loyalist Com-



Shop-keeper Larry Murchan was gunned down by a pro-British death squad as he opened up his St James' Road shop (above).

mand in another killing, that of neighbouring shopkeeper, John Carson, who was gunned down last month. On this occasion too the 'excuse' given for the killing was that Larry Murchan had sold *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, a claim which was categorically denied by APRN general manager David Mackin, who stated that Larry Murchan had 'never stocked the paper nor expressed an interest in stocking it'.

Commenting on the killing APRN editor Michael Mac Donncha said: "The timing of this excuse for the murder of Larry Murchan is ludicrous, even leaving aside the fact that he was not one of APRN's customers. It shows the killing to have been purely sectarian. Shops which do stock APRN do so to provide a service to their customers in the same manner as they stock a wide range of other political newspapers, and an array

of Irish and British papers. "We fully appreciate that some of these retailers are now placed in an intolerable position and would fully understand if they ceased to stock the paper. But our sales and distribution and service to our readers will continue and expand. Such murders, which ultimately are the responsibility of the British government, make the wide distribution of APRN's uncensored news even more important."

- People were killed by loyalists for selling or distributing the paper, including Belfast newsagents James Carson and Lawrence Murchan and Sinn Féin and *An Phoblacht* worker Malachy Carey

society, need to have. *An Phoblacht* is an ideal vehicle for such conversations.

It is also important to remember and pay tribute to everyone involved in the writing, design, printing and distribution of *An Phoblacht* thought the years. It wasn't always an easy task, particularly when the paper was the target of harassment by the state, and a target for loyalists.

And whilst many faced harassments and threats, others paid with their life. Sadly, a number of people were killed by loyalists for selling or distributing the paper, including newsagents James Carson and Lawrence Murchan, and *An Phoblacht* worker Malachy Carey.

Despite this, those involved stood tall in the face of such aggression, and continued to bring news to republican communities.

There have been many changes to *An Phoblacht* over the years and, as editors have come and gone, the format has changed from a weekly, then to a monthly paper, and now in its current format as a magazine.

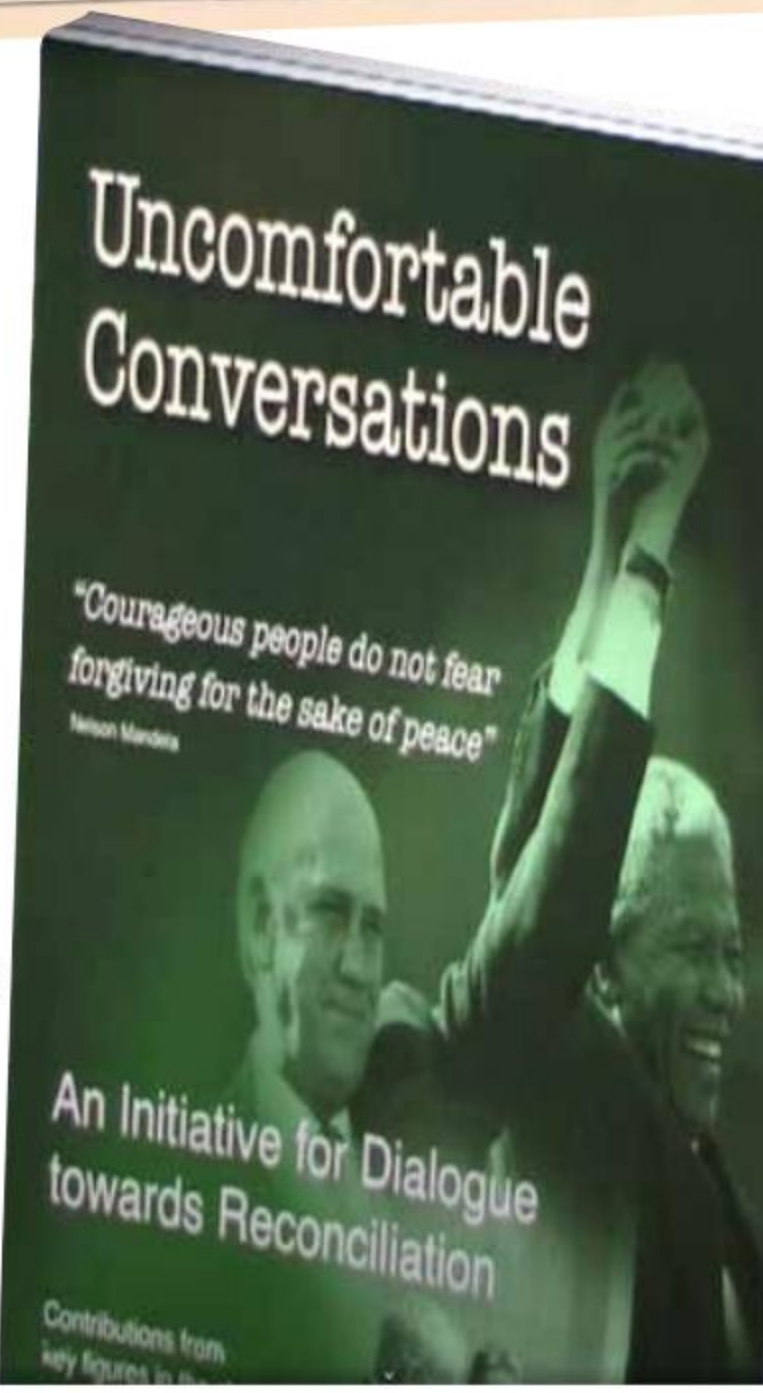
As the media industry changes and how we consume news continues to evolve, so too has *An Phoblacht*. It has and is embracing new technologies and continues to provide

first-class coverage and analysis of Irish and international politics.

Indeed, it was the first newspaper in Ireland to provide an online edition. Its social media platforms, alongside the monthly magazine, ensure that people are kept up-to-date with news and developments.

Like the republican struggle itself, *An Phoblacht* has gone through many changes and it has continued to develop. Like our struggle, it will continue to do so as it drives the agenda and documents the ongoing journey towards Irish unity.

— “ —  
Throughout the early 1990s in particular, *An Phoblacht* was essential reading in many newsrooms, and even at the British NIO  
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# THE FIRST TURBULENT YEARS

BY MÍCHEÁL Mac DONNCHA

**D**uring the 1970s, when the conflict was at its most intense, republican newspapers played a vital role in community solidarity within the besieged but risen nationalist population in the Six Counties, and in getting the message to the wider public in the rest of Ireland and overseas. From 1970 until 1979 there were two republican papers – *An Phoblacht* ‘the official organ of the Republican Movement’ in Dublin and *Republican News* in Belfast.

Following the split in the IRA in December 1969 and Sinn Féin in January 1970, one of the first actions of those who rejected the Goulding/MacGiolla leadership and who formed the Provisional Army Council of the IRA and the Caretaker Executive of Sinn Féin was to launch a publicity fund with a view to establishing their own republican newspaper.

Since 1948 the newspaper of the Republican Movement had been *The United Irishman/An tÉireannach Aontaithe* and in the ‘69/’70 split the Goulding/Mac Giolla organisation retained control of that paper. The Caretaker Executive of Sinn Féin, which was formed by the delegates who walked out of the Ard Fheis on 11 January and resumed what they regarded as the legitimate Ard Fheis in Kevin Barry Hall, 44 Parnell Square, announced their intention to start a new monthly publication.

The name chosen was *An Phoblacht* (*The Republic*), the title of the IRA paper of 1925 to 1937. The paper was initially based at the Irish Book Bureau, 33 O’Donovan Road, South Circular Road, Dublin, which was run by 1916 veteran Joe Clarke, a member of the Caretaker Executive. Another member, Seán Ó Brádaigh, was the first editor.

The inaugural issue consisted of eight pages and contained the first statements of the Provisional Army Council and the Caretaker Executive and carried reports from around the country of IRA units and Sinn Féin cumainn pledging allegiance to these bodies. An article described how some 250 members of Sinn Féin in North Kerry had been expelled in 1966 because they disagreed with the direction taken by the Goulding/MacGiolla leadership.

*An Phoblacht* was anxious to show that the position represented by the Caretaker Executive was not right-wing but advocated the development of an Irish form of socialism based on the tradition of ‘Comhar na gComharsan’ (co-operation of neighbours). It called for control of industries by workers’ co-operatives. Two articles covered the housing crisis in Dublin.



• Seán Ó Brádaigh, editor 1970

The paper’s Northern Correspondent had a lengthy feature on the Civil Rights movement. This is interesting in the light of subsequent events. It warned against either Socialists or Republicans trying to have their political demands adopted by the Civil Rights movement.

Instead the writer urged unity on the basis of the original demands for an end to discrimination in voting, housing and jobs and the repeal of repressive legislation. The writer commented:

“I would point out that agreeing to work within the Constitution does not mean agreeing to uphold it – or even to like it, as many Unionists seem to think. The right to work openly and democratically for one’s political aims (which may or may not be the re-unification of Ireland) is one of the civil rights we claim.”

The March issue of *An Phoblacht* reported that 20,000 copies of issue No. 1 had been sold, the first papers going on sale at Dublin’s GPO on 31 January.

**S**ix months later republicans in the Six Counties founded *Republican News* under the editorship of Jimmy Steele. The need for an additional paper in the North was felt given the torrent of events that were occurring as the Orange state lurched from crisis to crisis, with nationalist districts under



• Young sellers of *Republican News* at Dublin’s Mansion House



## ON THIS WE STAND

### The Rock of the Republic

The Republic, the rock of the Republic, is the only one which stands firm and steady in the face of the storm of reaction and the tide of reaction.

On December 8, 1917, the Irish Republic was proclaimed in the name of the people of Ireland. It was the only Republic in the world at that time. It was the only Republic which stood firm and steady in the face of the storm of reaction and the tide of reaction.

THE FREE STATE  
The Free State was proclaimed in 1922. It was the only Republic in the world at that time. It was the only Republic which stood firm and steady in the face of the storm of reaction and the tide of reaction.

A Worthy Memorial to Wolfe Tone  
A worthy memorial to Wolfe Tone, the first President of the Republic, is the only one which stands firm and steady in the face of the storm of reaction and the tide of reaction.

ARD-FHEIS APPOINTS CARETAKER EXECUTIVE  
The Ard-Fheis has appointed a caretaker executive to manage the affairs of the Republic during the absence of the President.

ROSCOMMON STATEMENT  
The Roscommon branch of the Republic has issued a statement regarding the activities of the British forces in the county.

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## S.O.S. FROM THE NORTH

### Defence Committees Appeal for Help

DEFENCE COMMITTEES  
The Defence Committees of the Republic are appealing for help from the people of the North to support the Republic in its struggle for freedom.

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siege from the RUC and loyalists and with the British Army playing an increasingly aggressive anti-nationalist role.

Jimmy Steele brought to his position as editor a lifetime of experience as an active IRA volunteer. Born in 1907 in Belfast, he joined Fianna Éireann and then the IRA. He was only 16 when he was first arrested, an experience repeated many times in the '20s and '30s. He was one of 12 republicans arrested in Belfast's Crown Entry in 1936, leading to their famous trial for treason. Steele was sentenced to five years in Crumlin Road Prison. Released in 1940 he was re-arrested in December of that year and received a ten-year sentence. In January 1943 Jimmy Steele escaped from Crumlin Road with Hugh McAteer, Paddy Donnelly and Ned Maguire. Jimmy Steele served several more terms of imprisonment in the '40s and '50s, his final release being in 1960.

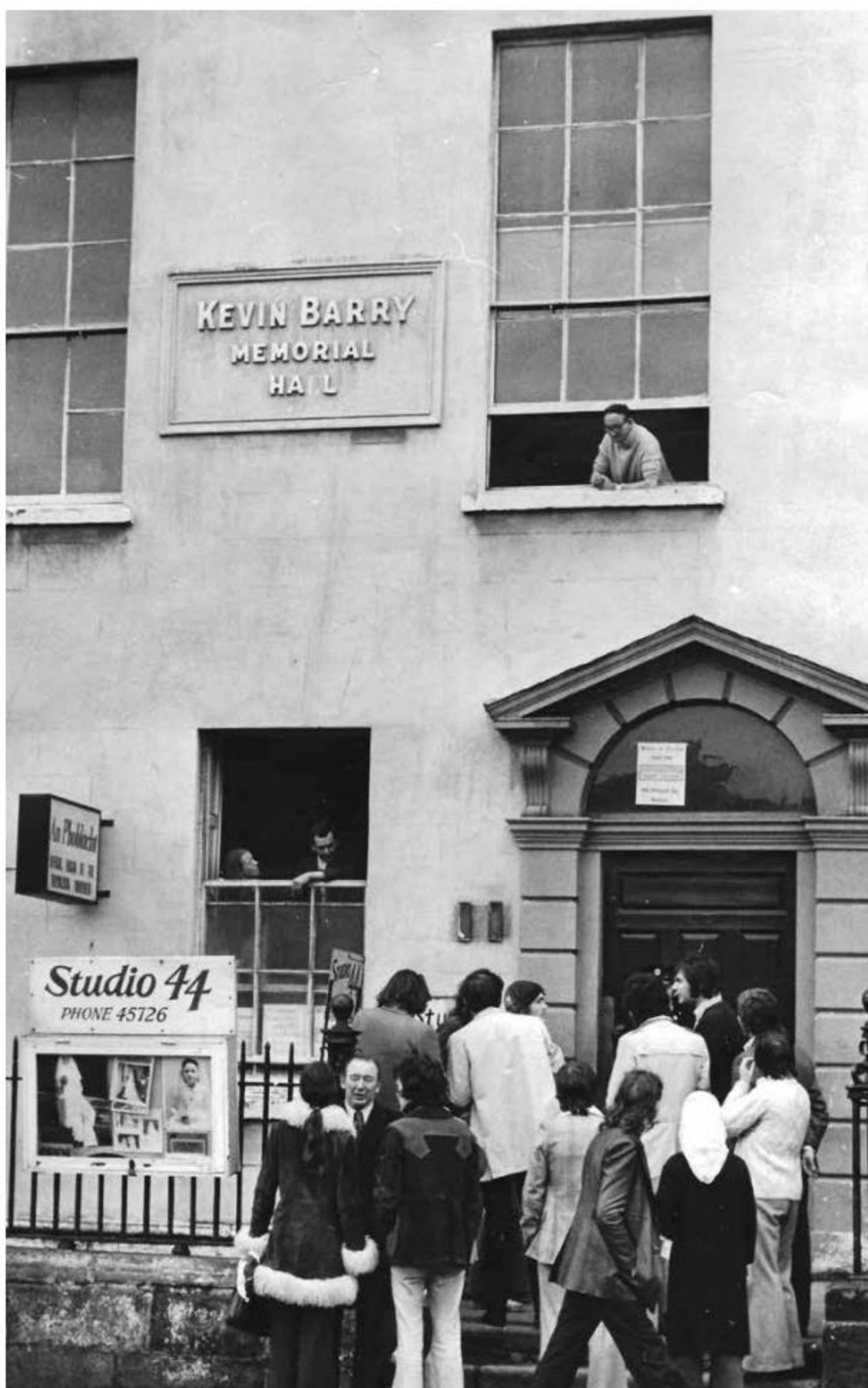
Steele pledged his allegiance to the Provisional Army Council in 1969. He was appointed Publicity Officer of the Belfast Brigade and in that capacity established *Republican News* as a monthly republican journal for the Six Counties. The first issue appeared in June 1970. It was a crucial period as the British Army became increasingly aggressive and was being seen in its true role as an occupying force by growing numbers of nationalists. This was seen most clearly in the Falls curfew of 3-5 July.

Steele in *Republican News* brought the traditional republican analysis to the situation, highlighting the reality of British imperialism then and in the past. He also used its pages to stress the anti-sectarian nature of republicanism, writing of Protestant patriots and appealing to the unionist population as fellow Irish people.

His editorship was to be short-lived, however, as, after two issues of *Republican News*, Steele died on 9 August 1970.

In the summer of 1972, Coleman Moynihan succeeded Seán Ó Brádaigh as editor of *An Phoblacht* and in August the paper moved from its offices at 2A Lower Kevin Street, Dublin, to Kevin Barry House, 44 Parnell Square. On October 1st, *An Phoblacht* became a fortnightly paper. Eamonn Mac Thomáis, the Dublin historian and author, took over as editor from Moynihan, following the latter's arrest in November and within a few months, made major changes to the paper, with improved lay-out and more news reports. It eventually became a weekly paper on March 4th, 1973, with a circulation of 40,000 copies per issue.

By this time *An Phoblacht* had become a target for increased harassment from the Garda



• Eamonn Mac Thomáis looks out of the window of 44 Parnell Square as Gardaí raiders and *An Phoblacht* supporters wait outside

Special Branch. In July 1973, Mac Thomáis was arrested and charged with IRA membership at the Special Court in Dublin and the following month was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. He was succeeded as editor by the Dublin journalist Deasún Breatnach.

Having completed his sentence in July 1974, Mac Thomáis once more became editor of *An Phoblacht*, but within two months he was arrested during a raid on the paper's offices and again sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment.

During the following years, when the political

establishment, through Section 31, attempted to stifle news from the republican viewpoint, *An Phoblacht*, edited at different times by a number of people including Gerry Danaher (1974-'75), Gerry O'Hare (1975-'77) and Deasún Breatnach (1977-'79), performed a key role in publicising the republican position in the 26 Counties. The amalgamation of the two papers in 1979 led to an immediate improvement in reporting and presentation and provided a vital national overview and a national network of sellers and readers.



©anphoblach.com

**RESISTANCE**

Since August 1982 the British government and the Southern government agreed to the Supply, Use and Control of Arms (SUCRA) Bill which, if passed, would allow the British government to supply arms to the Southern government. The bill was passed by the British House of Commons in July 1983. The bill was passed by the British House of Commons in July 1983. The bill was passed by the British House of Commons in July 1983.

Source: U.S.A., authorship: working documents in Ministry archives.

[illegible]

11. Answer: A. At the end of the 19th century, the United States had the highest literacy rate in the world.

THE REPUBLIC  
Official Organ of the  
Republican Movement

**NEVER BE AT PEACE**

THE MICHIGAN of July, 1977, will go down as one of the most successful in inland fly-fishing. The long-awaited migration in Grand Traverse when rainbows, trout, brook trout and splanetic, better not in the Grand Traverse and Traverse Lake. Night after night the young fish and women of these streams have shown healthy growth, the trout and brook.

BRITISH BOOTS DID THIS  
TO HIM!!!



— 100 —



**BRITISH ROOTS DID THIS  
TO NIAGARA**

By Mike, 2001. Recently, I was in the hospital and noticed that the nurses were all wearing white coats. I was in the hospital for a while and I noticed that the nurses were all wearing white coats. I was in the hospital for a while and I noticed that the nurses were all wearing white coats.

STEWART (111) is a former member of the Communist Party, and has been convicted of kidnapping the late Sen. Edward Brooke. He was 22 at the time of the crime. He is now 30, and is still serving a 10-year term for the kidnapping. He is also serving a 10-year term for the kidnapping of the late Sen. Edward Brooke. He is also serving a 10-year term for the kidnapping of the late Sen. Edward Brooke.

## FAULKNER'S FOLLY

[illegible]

But a frightened man is a dangerous man and Faulkner showed just how dangerous he was when, with a calico draped for the loss of Irish civilians and British soldiers after he ordered his troops into the ghettos in a last desperate effort to save his own position.



The tragic results of this action have not yet been revealed to his own supporters. The British army admitted a total casualty when in fact 10 of their soldiers were killed. They claimed to have killed 22 "I.R.A. gunmen." To cover their wholesale murder of unarmed civilians.

The *Chloris pyramidalis* cluster have been effectively cleared by the normal mowing of the CRA pastures. They are being used as further land cleared at the moment. The stands of the *Bromus* ssp. and its Central supporters is at an average of three August 1969, and would certainly dry even lower if the CRA's exploit last Sunday night, when they successfully launched the cannon in the heart of the Palace Demerits, were avoided.

[illegible]

But Paulsen must go well beyond the whole. He must reject. Now is the time for a new kind of effort, a better technology. And, it is all done on all water from within and without.

The Extremeist opinion is found in the "Newspaper," gives Faulkner one month to deal with the situation. Then, when the month of Craig and Faulkner and the liberation of a young man to deal with himself. This is just another sign by the threat of the Catholic and Government's Association.

With his back to the wall, Faulkner will not give up easily. He realized his life's ambition when he became *Press* columnist. He will not



It is therefore imperative that in this, our final hour, we stand united to face what may be the most desperate period of our history. Each one's life is at stake, and it is only by the united action of all people that we have anything left to offer as our last gift. It is our duty to make every hour count to our preparation for it.

The Republican Movement must be assured of the willing co-operation of all our people. Political unity is indispensable now. The nation now takes precedence over the party. The die is already cast. "This is War."

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"At this time of price it is important to people to look clearly and above all to think ahead," Dean spoke Cardinal Conway last Tuesday and with this part of his statement we are in full agreement.

The majority was not  
satisfied with the Cardinal's  
statement, thinking that he is  
refusing to think clearly and is  
simply repeating the clichés  
of political and clerical lead-  
ers whose authority has been  
weakened by the ordinary  
people. If the Cardinal gave  
any thought to the current  
crisis, he would realize that  
the people who advocate  
violence are a minority, the vast  
majority.

When Cardinal Cullen says that violence has been rejected by all responsible political parties does he not realize that Mr. Smith and Mr. Wilson are both regarded as "responsible" but they are the people who maintain patience by violence. And all thinking people must admit that patience is the problem. What response is given to the question, "What is the best way to solve the problem?"

Dr. Conway must be very politically naive indeed when he states that there is a very strong current of opinion in Britain, which asks the need for a new political movement to 'democratise' this country. There is not one shred of evidence to support this view. If such were the case why was Mr. Pankhurst allowed to introduce 'democracy'?

But even if Cardinal Conway was never admitted to the papal palace, his Catholic credentials alone, he thought, would have won him his political settlements before.

**continued on back page.**

FINISH (February) 1972



### *The 13 shot dead at Bogside rally*





Vol. 8, No. 1, SATURDAY, 14th February 1974. Printed & Made in Great Britain by the printer to the Queen at Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

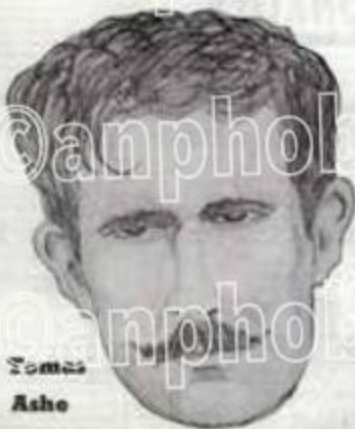
# MURDERED



**Frank Stagg**



**Michael Gaughan**



Somas  
Ashe



**Terence  
MacSwiney**

# An Phoblacht

Iml. 7, Uimbir 44, Sp. Samhain 2, 1976

It shall be the duty of the government of this Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter, but that all shall be provided with the means and facilities requisite for their proper education and training as citizens of a free and Gaelic Ireland.

(*The Gaelic Review*)

**Maire Bn. Uí Dhroma**  
murdered by  
pro-British elements



**Thursday, October 28, 1976**



THE VOICE OF  
NARRATIVE CULTURE

# REPUBLICAN NEWS

Vol. 7 Nos. 25 September, 8th August, 1917

**"I CANNOT FORGET THAT I WAS CROWNED  
QUEEN OF ENGLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND"**



**SHE WON'T!**

# An Phoblacht

## REPUBLICAN NEWS



How Strong and T. Am. J. SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 1971

1992 AND 1993 AND 1994 IS 10% PER YEAR

**OUT OF  
THE ASHES**

**NOT SUCH** a big surprise after all, eh?

One paper, one message, the harnessing of Republicanism in 32 Counties behind our independence and socialist struggle, and our statement, in brief, last, that we the oppressed people of Belfast, Derry, and Ballymun, of Wexford, Cork, Limerick and Galway, that we the nationally dispossessed, the country rebels of Crossmaglen and Tyrone, the poor, the unemployed and the underpaid are in the business of achieving power and establishing a real democracy.

Fianna Fail, the "Republican" jokers, take fright. Our deadly seriousness should annoy you from now on.

[illegible]

workshop in the two states of partitioned Ireland, in its quest for international economic integration and local British and Irish economic growth, have offered an interesting all-activity to growing industrial areas. This has taken the form of the establishment of a network of industrial parks, which have been established in the

and disputes in the South, but those, contrary, representations were disputes and justly warranted either for us or not.

[illegible]

— VICTORY TO THE  
ARMY, VICTORY TO THE  
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC.

## IRA CLAIM LONDON BOMBINGS

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) claimed responsibility for the bomb attack at Glasgow on the Thursday the 12th January. Warnings were issued so that a million spectators of the game could be made

The intention is to highlight the situation in the occupied territories of Ireland where British military presence is the cause of a high level of tension.







# Bobby Sands writing

**in *An Phoblacht/Republican News***

BY MÍCHEÁL MAC DONNCHA

BOBBY SANDS was the most prolific writer of the republican prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh during the Blanket Protest which lasted from 1976 until 1981. He was in prison for most of that time, being arrested in October 1976 and sentenced in September 1977.

During his earlier term as a political prisoner, from 1973 until April 1976, Bobby was in 'the Cages' of Long Kesh where he and his comrades had special category status, effectively prisoner-of-war conditions. It was the British Government's decision to end this status for people sentenced from March 1st 1976, in a bid to brand IRA prisoners as criminals, that led to the tragedy of the H-Blocks which would take the life of Bobby and nine of his comrades.

Bobby Sands was noted by comrades as a deep thinker and a

profound reader, intense in political discussion, and talented in music and sport. His term in the Cages was a period of study and politicisation; like many of his comrades, he had been catapulted into the republican struggle by the tumultuous events of the early 1970s and had had little time to develop his politics.

The fruits of his time in the Cages were seen in his writings from the H-Blocks. During his short few months of freedom in 1976, he produced a local republican newsletter *Liberty* in Twinbrook.

## REMARKABLE

The volume of material produced by the H-Block prisoners is remarkable, given the appalling conditions in which they lived, with all writing material strictly forbidden but ingeniously smuggled



into the prison and passed between prisoners. These 'comms' (communications) were written in tiny handwriting with biro on cigarette paper.

In 1978, Bobby's writings began to appear regularly in the Belfast-based weekly *Republican News*. He wrote mostly under the pen-

name 'Marcella' (his sister's name) but also as "a young West Belfast republican" and as PRO of the prisoners in H-Blocks 3, 4 and 5.

One of Bobby's earliest published pieces, 'I am Sir, you are 1066' appeared in *Republican News* on July 1st 1978 and shows his ability as a writer to put the reader into his own position:

## "I AM SIR, YOU ARE 1066!"

I must have died last night, because when I awoke this morning I was in hell. I don't really know how I got here. I don't think I've done anything to deserve being here. But I am here, and I am suffering terribly. I think I am in some sort of tomb. I can not see, as everywhere is in total darkness. I have no clothes on, except some sort of rag around my waist.

The floor of my tomb is covered in a wet mushy substance, the source or nature of which I don't know. There is a revolting stench lingering in the darkness and the air is warm, heavy and humid. There is something soft and damp lying in the corner, which seems to be some sort of bedding to lie upon.

I can hear heavy booming noises echoing all around me like thunder. Somehow it reminds me of heavy doors closing. I check the four walls of my tomb; there appears to be some sort of a door in one of the walls.

I can't understand my being here. What, I wonder, will become of me? I know I am a human being, although I'm naked and bearded. I can think and breathe. Am I in hell or some sort of limbo?

I can hear heavy footsteps approaching. They stop quite near to me. There is someone or something nearby. I can hear it moving and breathing. It is watching me. More noise directly outside my tomb, a rattle of metal against metal. A square form of light begins to materialise, revealing an entrance as a door swings open. A figure stands in the grey dim light of the doorway. It is a human figure, dressed in what appears to be some sort of black uniform. It stands scrutinising me in silence for several seconds before letting out a terrifying yell that sends shivers through my body.

"I am Sir!" The words echo around my tomb. "I am Sir!" it bellows again. "I am Sir, you are 1066!" The door slams shut with a

loud explosive boom, killing the dim light where the entrance had been. Still afraid to move I stand in the total darkness.

What is 1066, I think? Obviously it is me, but I can think, speak, smell and touch. I have all my senses, therefore I am not a number, I am not 1066. I am human, I am not a number, I am not 1066! Who, or what, is a Sir? It frightened me. It was evil. I sensed its hatred of me, its eagerness to dominate me, and its potential violent nature. Oh, what will become of me? I remember I once had a family. Where are they now? Will I ever see or hear of them again?

It's watching me. Once more the door opens. The dim light gives off a little illumination, revealing the black uniformed figure at the doorway. "I am Sir," it says, "Here is your food, 1066." A bowl is thrust into my hands as the door slams. Before the light dies I catch a glimpse of the floor. It is covered in filth and rubbish. There are several maggots clinging to my legs. The walls are covered with a mass of fat bloated flies.

Once again I am terror-stricken. I pace the floor, aghast at my surroundings. The bowl in my hand is cold, it contains some sort of porridge or gruel. The smell from it revolts me. I set it down on the floor. Pacing the floor in total darkness, I become engulfed with depression and despair. I wish I was dead. "But I am dead," I say aloud: I can't even kill myself, I think.

A breeze: I feel a breeze coming from the wall behind me. Feeling about, I touch a piece of cloth. I tug it and it falls. A light of great intensity hits my eyes, temporarily blinding me. My tomb becomes illuminated with light, revealing a window divided with concrete bars. Stepping closer, thousands of lights of every size and colour appear in my view. These lights are perched upon mountains of barbed wire that glitter and

sparkle on the ink-black horizon.

Another step forward, and still looking straight ahead, a small building looms up in front of me, displaying a dozen or so windows all of which are brightly lit up. Several naked figures appear at the windows. The building is thirty yards away. I can see that all the figures are bearded, they all seem to be fairly young, but all their faces are pale and haggard. They are young men but have old men's faces. Am I gazing at death? These figures keep staring out at nothing, or pacing to and fro.

Footsteps again! I turn, apprehension again gripping me, to await my door being opened again. My new-found curiosity having diminished, I fall deeper into the depths of depression and despair. The thought of what lies on the other side of that door tortures me.

The door swings open, and several black uniformed figures stand there, surrounding a very small, fat, evil-looking person who evidently is their leader. They all glare at me, and then begin to shout at me: "I am a Sir," "I am a Sir," "You will conform," "Conform," "Conform."

They all grab me and start to beat and kick me while screaming: "You will conform," "You will conform in H Block ..."

I awake, shouting and rolling in a filthy mattress on the floor. "Where am I?"

"Are you all right?" asks my cellmate.

"Where am I?"

"You are in your cell, you must've been having a nightmare," he says. Our cell door opens and a black uniformed figure stands there,

"Food," he says.

"What was that, Mister?" I ask.

"You call me Sir. You're in the H Blocks now! You're in H Block ... Don't forget it, 1066!"

He described the reality of the H-Blocks in many pieces for the amalgamated *An Phoblacht/Republican News* from January 1979.

He also wrote more creative short stories and poems, including a lengthy trilogy; 'The Crime of Castlereagh', 'Diplock Court', and 'The Torture Mill - H-Block'.

### BOOKS

Bobby's work was first published in book form as he neared death on hunger strike in April 1981.

The *Writings of Bobby Sands*, a 36-page booklet, was published

initially by the Sinn Féin POW Department, 5 Blessington Street, Dublin and thousands of copies were sold immediately; the booklet being reprinted many times both then and in the years since.

Bobby Sands died on May 5th 1981.

In June 1981, Bobby's hunger strike diary was published, his *Prison Poems* followed in October and his book, 'One Day in My Life', came out in 1982.

Also available now are 'Bobby Sands - Writings From Prison' (Mercier Press) a collection of Bobby's writings and 'Nothing but an Unfinished Song', the excellent biography of Sands by Denis O'Hearn.







**An Phoblacht**  
**REPUBLICAN NEWS**

FORMER H-BLOCK O/C  
LEADS NEW FAST

# FORCE THATCHER TO TURN AGAIN!

**HUNGER-STRIKE MARCH** Belfast, Sunday 1st March

**BOBBY SANDS**, the hunger-strike republican, will recently O/C of the H-Block in Belfast, is to lead the hunger-strike for political status, which began this Sunday, March 1st, in Long Kesh prison camp, on the 10th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King.

It is the aim of Bobby Sands and the other O/Cs of the H-Block, to lead the hunger-strike for political status, which began this Sunday, March 1st, in Long Kesh prison camp, on the 10th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King.

...the aim of Bobby Sands and the other O/Cs of the H-Block, to lead the hunger-strike for political status, which began this Sunday, March 1st, in Long Kesh prison camp, on the 10th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King.

**An Phoblacht**  
**REPUBLICAN NEWS**

# SAVE SANDS LIFE!

**NEXT THURSDAY'S** election battle in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, where republican hunger-striker Bobby Sands, now in the prison hospital in the H-Block of Long Kesh, has a close personal friend against every kind of the Official Unionist, has elevated the political status campaign onto a new plane, with the corner of the six counties dominating the stage and engendering national attention for the next week, at least until the result is announced on Friday.

Bobby Sands, 'Anti-Block/Fermanagh political prisoner', as he will be popularly referred, on the ballot paper, and whose name will be a national household word throughout, will be forty days in prison on Thursday.

The thousands of votes cast for Bobby Sands will amount to a major repudiation of the Unionist's policy of high republicanism and for the Unionist's policy of the British parliament, will show the Unionist's policy, in the eyes of the world, as a double British parliament, that the Unionist's policy in the north of Ireland is a double British parliament.

While republicans and the prisoners' supporters in Fermanagh and South Tyrone are involved in intense electoral work, that is not the case for the broader republican campaign to win, in fact the campaign should be happening in order, to see the life of Bobby Sands and the lives of his three fellow hunger-strikers, Frankie Hughes, Patsy O'Brien, and Ray McCreesh.

This election, both in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone and in the other five counties, will show a popular repudiation of the Unionist's policy and will be the occasion for the Unionist's policy in the north of Ireland, in the process, showing that the Unionist's policy in the north of Ireland is a double British parliament.

**BURN BRITISH CENSUS FORMS: SUNDAY 5TH APRIL**

**An Phoblacht**  
**REPUBLICAN NEWS**

# BOBBY SANDS THE FINAL SALUTE

**National H-Block / Armagh Committee OPEN CONFERENCE** Belfast

**HUNGER-STRIKE MARCH & RALLY** Dublin

**The final salute, at Andersonstown, Belfast, on Thursday, for Bobby Sands, IRA Volunteer, H-Block hunger-striker and Westminster MP**



# AN INCREDIBLE PAPER OF RECORD

**Danny Morrison was editor of *Republican News* from 1975-79 and of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* from the merger in January 1979 until October 1982 when he was elected to the northern Assembly for Mid-Ulster**



**As a teenager, I'd sold *Republican News* surreptitiously from under my coat outside mass at St Paul's Chapel, not long after the Falls Curfew. In the 1940s, it had been a small underground publication, but, in 1970, the re-established paper was navigating its way through the astonishing and daunting circumstances that northern nationalists found themselves in while republicans were processing a major split in the IRA and Sinn Féin.**

**Within a short period - from the RUC attack on civil rights marchers in Derry's Duke Street, to the pogroms against largely unprotected nationalist areas in Belfast, the brutal curfew of the Falls and the gassing of thousands of people in their homes - the Ulster Unionist Party had been given use of the British Army for free, not as peace-keepers or protectors, but as defenders of the status quo, the Orange State.**



By 1972, I was an internee in Long Kesh and wrote a few pieces for *Republican News*. After my release, and during the disastrous IRA ceasefire of 1975 when I worked in the Republican Press Centre, which doubled as a truce monitoring centre, I was invited by Billy McKee and Proinsias Mac Airt to become the editor of the paper.

I was 22 and jumped at the challenge. With Tom Hartley as manager, we were later joined by former POW Danny Devenny as designer, Gerry Adams began writing a weekly

column from the Kesh, Brian Moore contributed his inimitable Cormac cartoons, and we built up a fleet of delivery vans to expand distribution over about twelve counties.

We had also become a major irritant to the British – just as successive Dublin governments took great exception to *An Phoblacht* and attempted to disrupt it through arrests and prosecutions of editors.

Many supporters bought the paper because of the *War News* column. We were

regularly supplied exclusive details about IRA attacks or IRA interviews.

However, in September 1976, with the introduction of criminalisation and with the criminal Roy Mason as British secretary of state presiding over torture in RUC barracks, we began coverage of a blanket protest by an 18-year-old from the Falls Road, Kieran Nugent – a protest which grew exponentially with hundreds joining in despite the scale of prison brutality which we would expose in our weekly paper.

This coverage (just as much as *War News*), championing the political status campaign, resulted in the Brits concertedly trying to close the paper down between 1977 and 1979. Most of the staff were arrested and imprisoned. The case against us collapsed just as *Republican News* and *An Phoblacht* were merging.

Having one unified national paper was a great development. While the prison struggle and the armed struggle dominated the front pages, we broadened much more substantially the coverage of such subjects as feminism, gay rights, environmentalism, trade union

activism, international solidarity, and, of course, followed ongoing struggles in Palestine, South Africa, and in Nicaragua.

AP/RN was the most popular, most important, most muscular left-wing paper in Ireland.

I remember in 1979 when the IRA gave us a copy of a secret assessment of the organisation written by Brigadier James Glover, the Commander of Land Forces in the North and distributed to just fifty people, including Thatcher. Our copy was No. 37, thus its name Document 37. It completely contradicted the public



• Tom Hartley and recently released Kieran Nugent addressing a Smash H Blocks rally in support of the blanket protest

position of the British government, which aimed to depict the IRA as criminals overseen by godfathers who were always on the verge of being defeated!

We printed it and it caused a storm, exposing the lies of the British.

Glover said the IRA had the capacity and support to continue its struggle for the foreseeable future and that only a political settlement would end the conflict. In 1988, Glover said publicly what he had said privately: "In no way, can or will the Provisional Irish Republican Army ever be defeated militarily."

In 1992, a senior British Army officer in the *Times* went further: "the IRA is ...better equipped, better resourced, better led, bolder and more secure against our penetration than at any time before. They are an absolutely formidable enemy. The essential attributes of their leaders are better than ever before. Some of their operations are brilliant."

AP/RN played a crucial role throughout the

— “ —

We had also become a major irritant to the British – just as successive Dublin governments took great exception to *An Phoblacht*

— ” —









- The stress, emotion, and anger experienced in the year 1981, didn't stop the staff producing an incredible paper of record of Seven Months That Changed Our World

struggle as the alternative media to the bullshit of RTE with its Section 31 censorship and to the facile propaganda espoused by most British journalists who were cheerleaders for their country's wrongs - whether it was torture, shoot-to-kill, the killing of kids with plastic bullets, collusion.

But, of all the times I was editor of AP/RN, nothing could come close to the stress, emotion, and anger experienced in the year 1981 and our coverage of the hunger strikes. Our writers in our northern office on the Falls Road, which also housed the H-Block Information Centre, doubled up as Sinn Féin press officers, gave interviews, were out covering protests and marches, or speaking at rallies, or canvassing the villages of Fermanagh and South Tyrone. The Falls Road office never closed from mid-March to early October. During the hunger strike, staff slept on the floor while other members of the AP/RN production team, who travelled to Dublin to join their colleagues in 44 Parnell Square, worked for days on end without sleep as the 6am Thursday deadline approached and they produced an incredible paper of record of Seven Months That Changed Our World.

An Phoblacht/Republicans News, in all its incarnations, all its editors, journalists, typesetters, photographers, distributors, and, of course, its frontline sellers, can be proud to have been a part of the republican struggle, and part of the invincible Republican Movement.

— “ —  
*AP/RN played a crucial role throughout the struggle as the alternative media to the bullshit of RTE with its Section 31 censorship; and to the facile propaganda espoused by most British journalists*  
 — ” —



# An Phoblacht

## REPUBLICAN NEWS

**March To The British Embassy**

**Save the hunger-strikers' lives!**

**Saturday 18th July**

**DUBLIN**

**Assemble 2 p.m.**

**Stephen's Green**

**Save the hunger-strikers' lives!**

32 pages  
10 pence

Full price of this week's special extended thirty-two page issue of An Phoblacht Republican News, which includes full coverage of the funeral of IRA Volunteer Martin Hurson, is 15p. Single copies 10p. Subscriptions: £10.00 per annum (including postage).

# Sadness

IRA Volunteer Martin Hurson died on hunger-strike, July 12th 1981

IRA Volunteer Alf McGuire died on hunger-strike, July 10th 1981

# An Phoblacht

## REPUBLICAN NEWS

**32 PAGES**

**25 PENCE**

**10th Anniversary of Internment**

**SMASH H-BLOCK**

**March & Rally**

**Sunday 9th August**

**BELFAST**

**Assemble 2.30 p.m.**

**Downville Park**

Full price of this week's special extended thirty-two page issue of An Phoblacht Republican News, which includes full coverage of the funeral of IRA Volunteer Martin Hurson, is 15p. Single copies 10p. Subscriptions: £10.00 per annum (including postage).

# EIGHT DEAD

How many more?

# An Phoblacht

## REPUBLICAN NEWS

**MICKY DEVINE**

**H-Block hunger striker**

Full price of this week's special extended thirty-two page issue of An Phoblacht Republican News, which includes full coverage of the funeral of IRA Volunteer Martin Hurson, is 15p. Single copies 10p. Subscriptions: £10.00 per annum (including postage).

IRA Volunteer Martin Hurson died on hunger-strike, July 12th 1981

IRA Volunteer Alf McGuire died on hunger-strike, July 10th 1981

# Cracks in death policy

THE GUARDIAN

Dissent grows over Cabinet's Ulster policy

# An Phoblacht

## REPUBLICAN NEWS

**HEROIC**

**H-BLOCK MEN**

**UNDEFEATED**

Full price of this week's special extended thirty-two page issue of An Phoblacht Republican News, which includes full coverage of the funeral of IRA Volunteer Martin Hurson, is 15p. Single copies 10p. Subscriptions: £10.00 per annum (including postage).

IRA Volunteer Martin Hurson died on hunger-strike, July 12th 1981

IRA Volunteer Alf McGuire died on hunger-strike, July 10th 1981

# TEN H-BLOCK MARTYRS

How many more?



# anphoblacht

# abú

BY GERRY ADAMS

Congratulations to everyone who was ever involved in any aspect of producing or distributing *An Phoblacht* over the last fifty years.

And all our readers. Others more learned than me may chronicle the history of the first *An Phoblacht*, founded away back at the beginning of the last century, and its illustrious contributors including Liam Mellows, Peadar O'Donnell, and Frank Ryan.

Former editors may vie with one another to give us the inside story of their stewardship of this fine publication in our own time. Me? I want to extol all their virtues. All the *An Phoblacht* team. All the proof readers, typists, lay outers, graphic designers, managers, papersellers, photographers, van drivers, columnists, and Cormac and his cartoons. And those who managed the accounts or collected the paper money. The van drivers deserve special mention. They literally took their lives in their hands, especially the ones who distributed the paper throughout the North.

Printers also should have honourable mention. Special Branch harassment in the South or worse in the North was their lot. So too with papersellers. Back in the day, selling the paper around the doors or at the weekends around the pubs was a Shinner's duty. Censorship was widespread. These were pre-social media days. The paper was the only reliable way to get out the republican message. The late Eddie Fullerton was a legendary paper seller up in North East Donegal. So was Florrie French in the county of Meath. And Eddie Caughey and others in Britland.

The first time I was arrested was for selling a republican newspaper. In this case, *The United Irishman*. It was banned in the North, like Sinn Féin. So, in 1967, the ban was broken in organised public protests. In Belfast, this involved publicly selling the paper downtown, in Castle Street.

The aim was to get charged with selling the paper so as to open up publicity and legal opportunities. Myself and Malachy McNally were the chosen ones. We were both quickly arrested by a cohort of RUC officers, bundled into a land rover, and deposited in Queen Street Barracks.

Malachy proceeded to engage the posse of peelers in fisticuffs and, as he was escorted to the cells, I walked out of the Barracks and joined the picket outside. I was eighteen. Neither Malachy or I were charged with selling the paper, although he

ended up in court and was fined for assaulting the peelers. The law of unintended consequences. Or the consequences of unintended protest.

Some three years after, in February 1970, a pogrom and a split later, I read the first edition of *An Phoblacht*. Its front page contained, if I recall properly, the mission statement of what became known as The Provisionals, a term I never liked. Later that year, Republican News was published in Belfast to deal with northern matters. Veteran activist Jimmy Steele was the first editor and it was produced mostly in the home of Prionsais Mac Airt in Kane Street in the Clonard area.

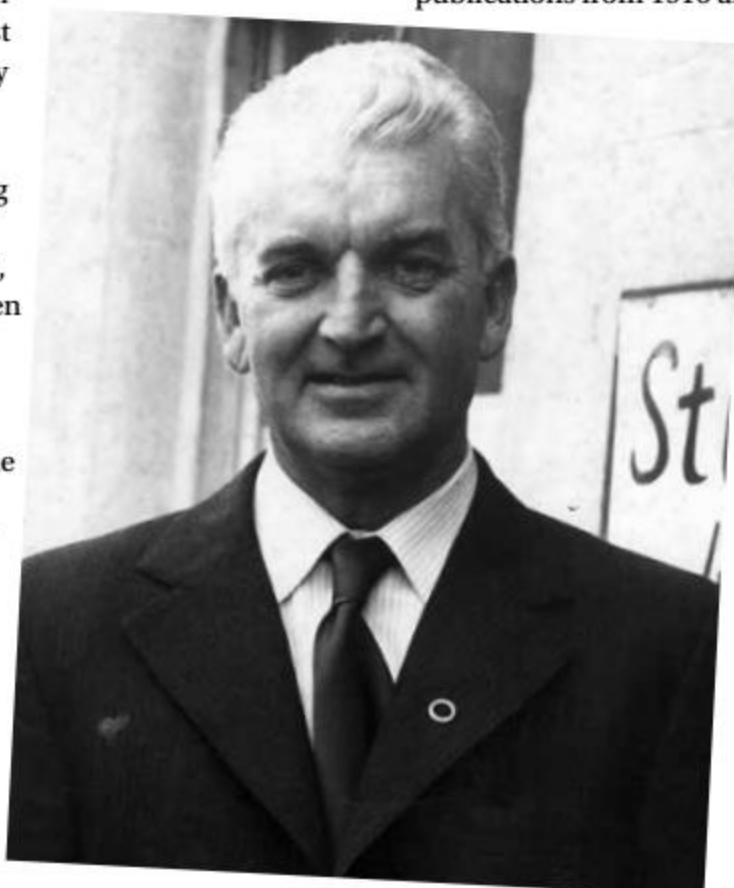
I recall being in a flying column of young *Republican News* sellers who descended on Free Derry on an evangelical mission. Jimmy Steele was not long dead and there was a tribute to him and a postage stamp sized photo on the front page of that particular edition. In Rossville Flats, an old lady exclaimed when she saw his image.

'Awh', she said to me as she bought the paper, 'Poor Jimmy Steele is gone.'

We also sold the paper in the Upper Springfield in West Belfast, around the doors in Ballymurphy and the Whiterock. For some time, we had a stall at The Top of The Rock, selling both *An Phoblacht* and *Rep News*, alongside books and other publications from 1916 and Mount St Bridge Ambush veteran old Joe Clarke's Book Bureau. We had our own local newsletter *The Tattler* which we gave away, free gratis and for nothing. Oh the joys of Gestetner printing in back



• Jimmy Steele



• Prionsais Mac Airt

— “ —  
*The first time I was arrested was for selling a republican newspaper. In this case The United Irishman. It was banned in the North, like Sinn Féin*  
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• Tom Hartley and Gerry Adams reading during the 2007 Assembly Elections count in Kings Hall, Belfast

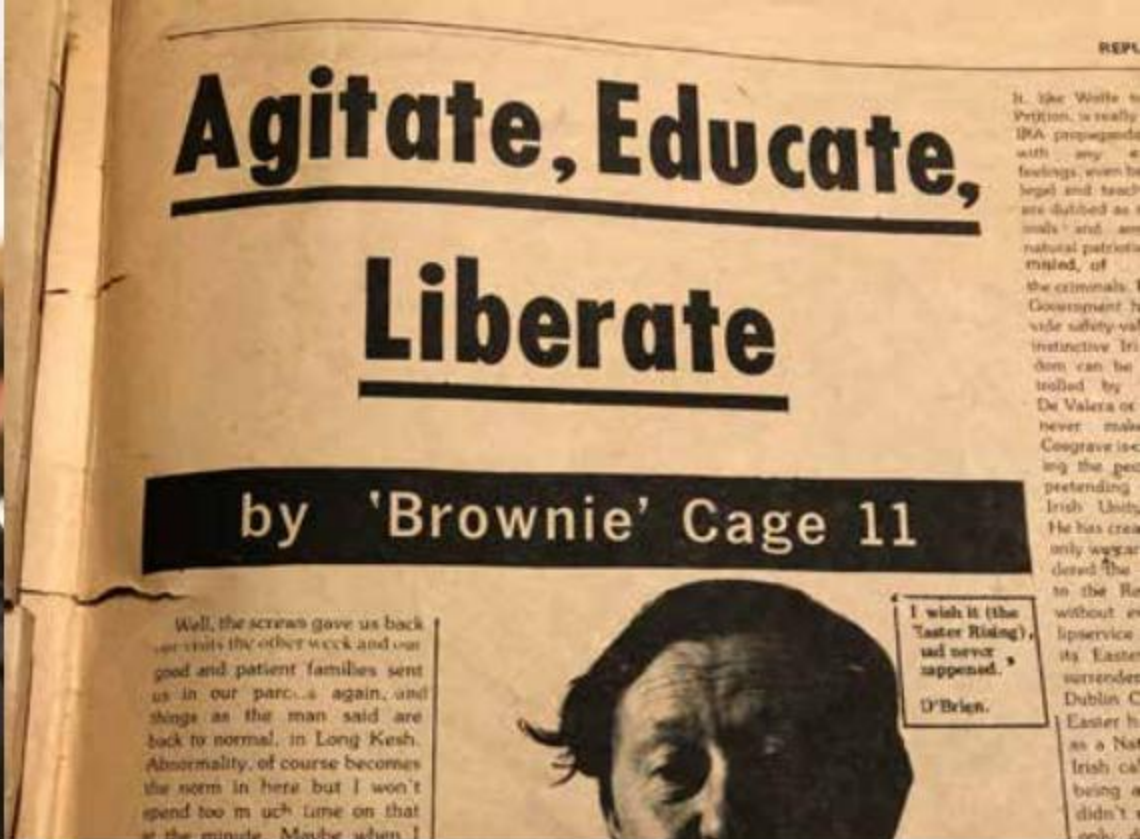
bedroom. Our Top of The Rock stall vanished in 1971 when it became too dangerous to staff and too easy a route for its republican vendors into Long Kesh and Armagh Women's Prison.

Elsewhere in this celebratory publication, someone is bound to tell the story of the merging of *An Phoblacht* with *Republican News*. You may even read of the incarceration of some of the paper staff in Belfast Prison. I can vouch for them. I was there myself and helped them to do their time. For a while before this, I did my own time in the Kesh. I was commissioned by Danny Morrison to write a *Republican News* column in exchange for an occasional cigar.

That's how I met the legendary Richard G McAuley. Well we didn't actually meet. He was in Cage 12. I was in Cage 11 so we shouted across the wire at each other. He was the Public Relations Supremo for the Republican Sentenced Prisoners. He was very strict. Very diligent. Everything I wrote, he had to clear. That meant me putting my script into a pigeon and throwing it over to him so that he could wield his censoring red pen.

A pigeon was a weighed down -with pebbles in it- tobacco tin. This was secured with tape and flung from cage to cage, flying high over the wire and over the heads of the grounded British soldiers and screws. So the Brownie columns emerged. The legendary RG McAuley later claimed authorship of some of these. He was plagiarist, censorious as well as strict and diligent. He still is, but he is very lovable.

Years later in another part of Long Kesh - the notorious H Blocks- I met an old friend. He told me one of the great joys of his time there



was receiving smuggled miniature copies of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*. He said he loved reading them during the Blanket protest and he loved giving these to new blanket men. These tiny copies were smuggled into the prison.

'Would you like a read of AP/RN?' he would ask newly arrived and slightly disorientated comrades. Then, from under his blanket, he would produce a miniature copy of the newspaper which he had banged earlier.

'Nothing like it for catching up on all the republican *scéal* especially after remand in The 'Crum where you never got anything. I also used to enjoy the Brownie articles from years ago, about prison before I went to prison myself.'

'Is it true' he asked 'that the legendary RG McAuley wrote them?'

I said nothing in silent respect to the power of the legend that is RG McAuley. Here was proof if proof is needed of the power of propaganda.

Tom Hartley, an amazing collector of thousands of republican publications which he has faithfully donated to The Ulster Museum and The Linen Hall Library, is also celebrated among former republican prisoners who served time in Britain because of the



• Richard G McAuley



• Danny Morrison

— “ —

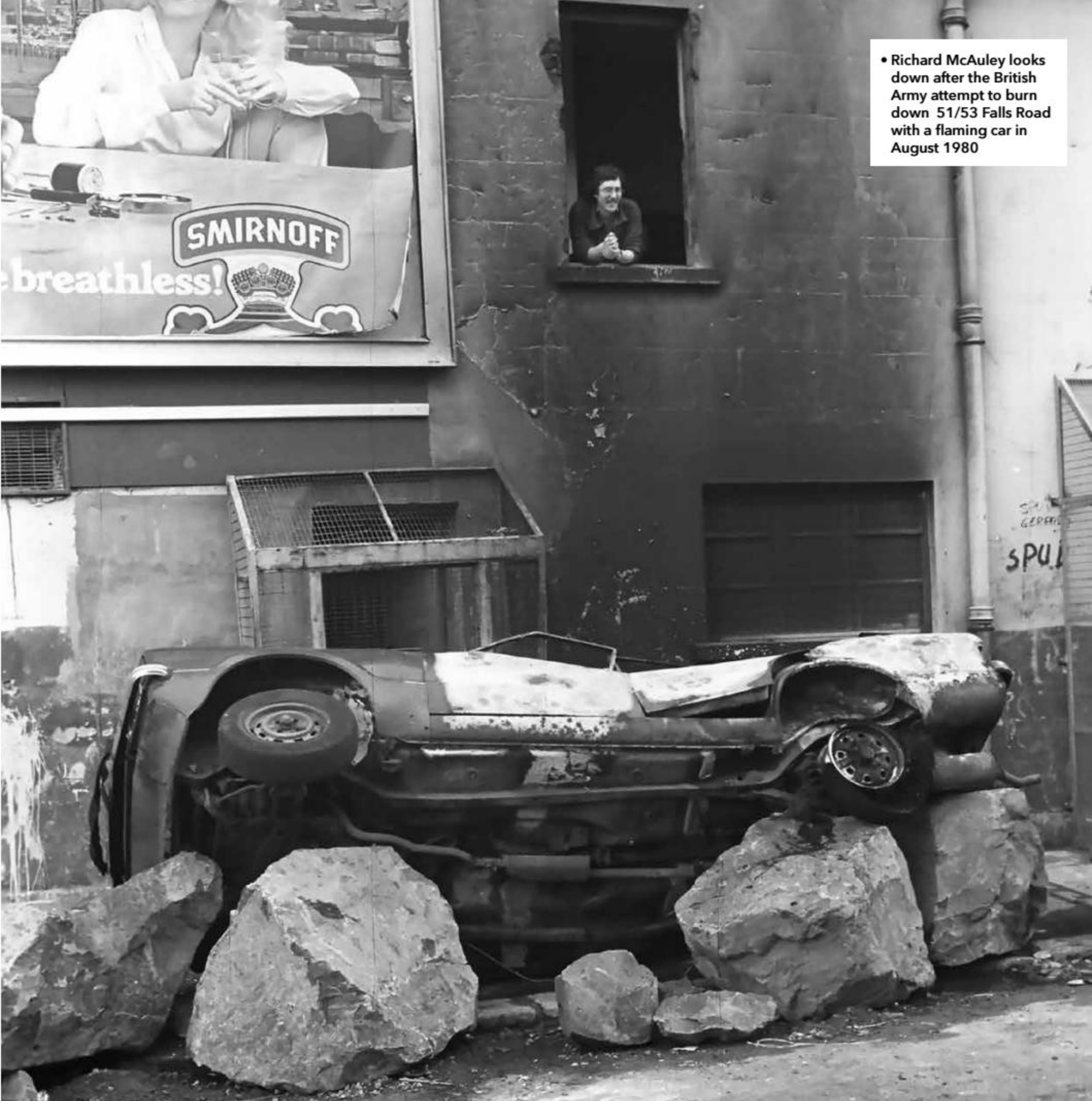
*So, long live An Phoblacht  
and all who sailed in her.  
Go raibh maith agaibh.  
And a special thank you  
to all those undaunted  
generations of faithful  
readers*

— ” —

letters he sent asking them to pay up their subscriptions to the paper during one of the many efforts by the paper's management to clear up its debts. No one escaped these periodic debt collecting surges. Little wonder the paper survived. It's hard to keep a good idea down.

So, long live *An Phoblacht* and all who sailed in her. Go raibh maith agaibh. And a special thank you to all those undaunted generations of faithful readers. Without you there would have been no fifty years of unbroken publishing of our oldest republican publication. Well done.





• Richard McAuley looks down after the British Army attempt to burn down 51/53 Falls Road with a flaming car in August 1980

# A PAPER ON-THE-RUN

BY RICHARD McAULEY

There are some dates that stick in everyone's memory. Birthdays. Anniversaries. Historical events. One such for me is the date of the first edition of the merged *An Phoblacht/Republican News* (AP/RN) which was published on 27 January, 1979. I remember it well. The previous day, I had gotten out of Long Kesh. That's

the real date I remember. AP/RN is incidental.

However, two weeks later, I was in the AP/RN office at 170 Falls Road - which doubled up as the Republican Press Centre. I was working for both. For a time in the Kesh, I was the camp PRO with responsibility for writing statements on behalf of the prisoners, letters to

the media, and, occasionally, articles for those outlets that would take them, including *Republican News*. Somebody, somewhere decided that that made me a fit for AP/RN and the Press Office.

The previous year, the Brits and RUC had arrested the *Republican News* editor Danny Morrison and others in an attempt to close down the paper.





As a consequence, when I arrived fresh out of the Kesh, the new AP/RN was operating underground.

It was as if the paper was on-the-run. Those involved in writing the articles, Brian who drew the hugely popular Cormac cartoons, those doing the editing and design and sorting out photographs were all operating out of safe houses scattered across west

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*The danger that the drivers and those writers who travelled to their stories faced every week was enormous*

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Belfast. From Divis Flats to Twinbrook, there were sound people who allowed three or four and sometimes more people to congregate in bedrooms to produce the paper.

Keeping the writers and our sole designer and layout artist Danny D supplied with writing materials, newspapers, information on current developments outside of their four walls, sourcing photographs, holding

editorial meetings to decide what that week's front page would be, and collecting the finished product for the train to Dublin was very challenging.

Sometimes even finding the house or flat being used could be a challenge in itself! No mobile phones then. No computers or laptops. If there was a phone in the house, the first thing done was to disconnect it. And avoiding the countless RUC/ Brit mobile and foot patrols required care and patience.

170 was always busy. As well as being the northern managerial hub for the paper, it was also the office that the northern drivers worked out of. They had the unenviable task of travelling each week to the printer in Portlaoise, pick up their copies, and then distribute AP/RN across the northern nine counties. They also drove writers to stories that had to be covered. That was dangerous for the drivers and the reporters.

During the hunger strike, *An Phoblacht/Republican News* was sometimes printing 50,000 copies a week. At times, the paper contained over 50 pages. Writing profiles of the hunger strikers, covering street protests, demos and funerals, and the weekly activities of republican activists, as well as the raids and killings carried out by the British occupation forces and their allies in the unionist death squads, involved a lot of work for the small team of writers.

The wear and tear on the cars

which carried the thousands of papers every week was enormous. Many were jalopies picked up for a song. Consequently, it wasn't unusual for vehicles to break down.

While everyone who contributed to the publication of AP/RN deserves

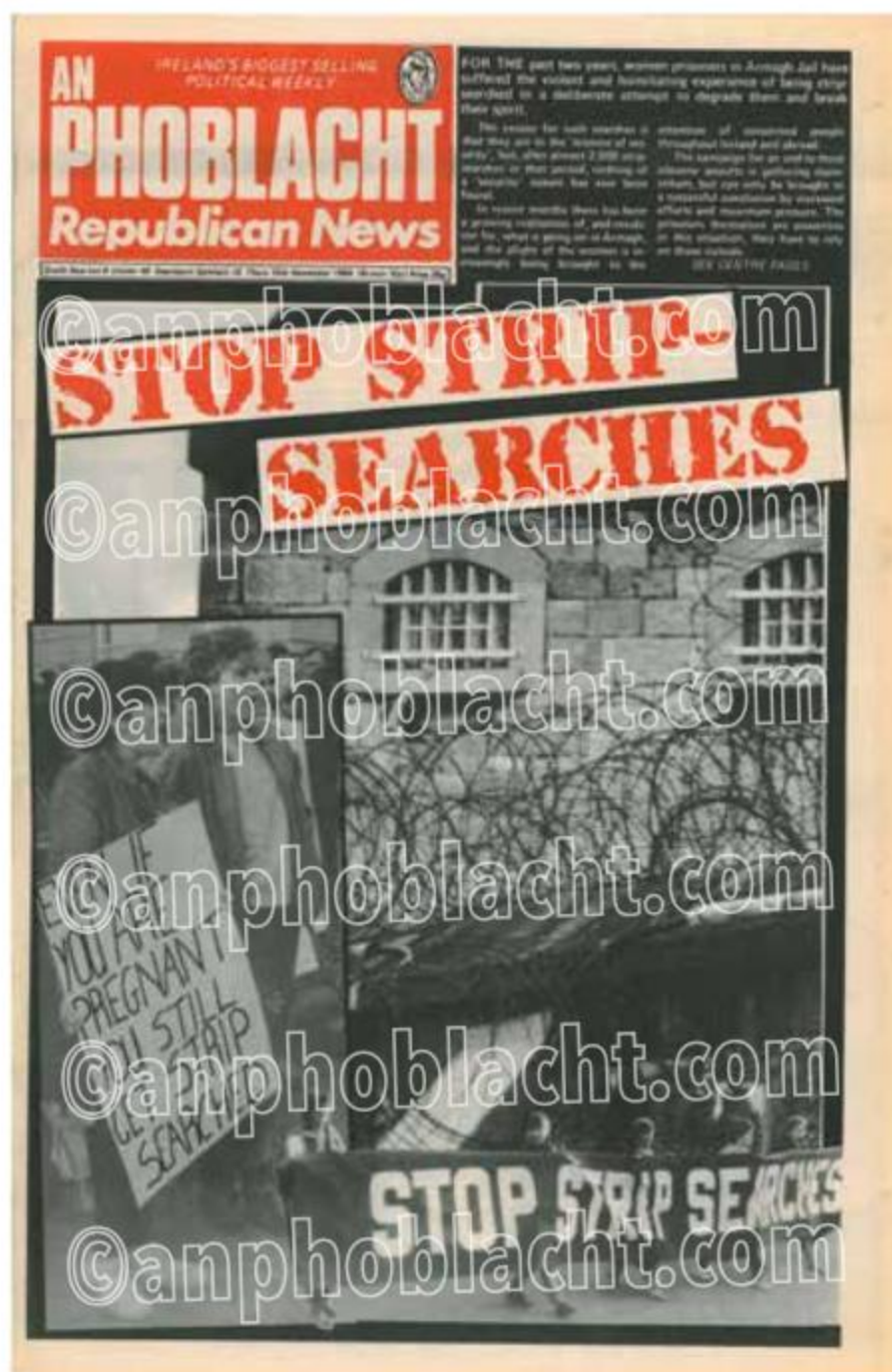
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*An Phoblacht and separately Republican News and then together as AP/RN shone a light on the injustice and repression that was an integral part of the British state in Ireland*

— ” —

great credit for their dedication and commitment, the danger that the drivers and those writers who travelled to their stories faced every week was enormous. Their routes were well known to the Brits/RUC/UDR. Being stopped by them in the dark of a winter's night on a country road in Tyrone or South Derry or other parts of the occupied North,







with a headline praising that week's IRA attack, was not for the faint hearted.

Working in 170 had its moments also. It was occasionally raided. Getting in and out of the building without being stopped by the Brits was a daily chore. Watching out for possible attacks by unionist death squads was also necessary. One morning in February 1980, the UVF planned to shoot whoever would unlock the wire cage outside the front door. They opened fire on Joe Austin as he walked down Clonard Gardens. Brendan McLaughlin, a Catholic man who worked for the Housing Executive, was killed.

In 1980, we moved across the street to 51/53 Falls Road. It was essentially two houses knocked into one. It was in an awful state. Damp walls, floors that looked ready to collapse, rain coming through the roof, and metal gates as doors to deter the unwelcome.



*During the hunger strike, An Phoblacht Republican News was sometimes printing 50,000 copies a week. At times, the paper contained over 50 pages*



For many years, a large mural of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* used to adorn the gable wall. The building was bombed more than once. It was the target of at least one loyalist RPG attack and, in 1992, an RUC man killed Pat McBride Paddy Loughran and Michael O'Dwyer in the reception area.

It was also raided many times. Following one such raid in which the RUC decided to lift filing cabinets and documents from the variety of offices in the building, Tom Cahill decided enough was enough and he took the RUC to court for disrupting the business of the party and damaging the property. On the morning of the case, I was suddenly told by Tom to go and give evidence in the court. A rare and unusual experience. The last time I had been in a Belfast court, I was refusing to stand and recognise its jurisdiction. However, we won the case.



• Ian Paisley and his sledgehammer threat to 'Smash Sinn Féin'

For a couple of years, I was working in the Twinbrook and Poleglass end of west Belfast, organising the party. Following the local government elections in 1985 in which Sinn Féin picked up 59 seats, including two in our area, I was moved back into the AP/RN.

The paper was no longer underground. The dangers remained but our small cadre of journalists were working out of the office. Between the summer of 1985 and the end of 1987, I was the northern editor of the paper working to Rita O'Hare in Dublin.

To write this piece, I borrowed a set of the hardbound editions of the paper for the three years I was doing that job. I thought it might be helpful in getting my thoughts together. The truth is I was

amazed by the breadth and depth of articles and stories that the small team of writers I worked with in AP/RN in the North covered.

All of us – for obvious reasons – used pseudonyms. Our output was nothing short of phenomenal. Shoot-to-kill actions; war news; political analysis; reporting on the latest machination by Thatcher; or connivance from the Irish government; sectarian killings; collusion between unionist death squads, the RUC, UDR and British Army; Ian Paisley and his sledgehammer threat to 'Smash Sinn Féin'; the paid perjurer arrests and trials; the strip searching of the women prisoners in Armagh; unionist efforts to silence Sinn Féin Councillors; housing stories; discrimination against Catholics in employment; house raids that often left homes wrecked; distraught families trying to pick up the pieces after a terrible event; surveillance cameras watching homes; the deaths of friends and comrades; and so much more.

*An Phoblacht* and separately *Republican News* and then together as AP/RN shone a light on the injustice and repression that was an integral part of the British state in Ireland. It also reported on all of those acts of resistance that took place every day and was the one consistent source of news and information that could be relied upon by the nationalist and Republican people of the North. It played and continues to play in these changing communication times an important role in advancing the republican agenda for Irish Unity.



• Tom Cahill



# THE REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM OF MICK TIMOTHY

BY BRIAN MacDOMHNAILL

Former AP/RN writer Brian Mac Domhnaill remembers the revolutionary journalism and editorial policies of *An Phoblacht* editor Mick Timothy. From 1982 to his sudden death in 1985, Timothy revamped and expanded the paper. He directed the focus of *An Phoblacht* onto an expanded range of key social and economic issues in Ireland and internationally, while chronicling the electoral growth of Sinn Féin and the intensifying IRA campaign.

Mick also ensured a forensic concentration in the pages of *An Phoblacht* on the British Shoot to kill and collusion strategies as well as the reactionary policies employed by the Fine Gael Labour Coalition of the mid-1980s.

I was approached by Mick Timothy at the Ard Fheis in late October 1982 and asked if I was still interested in joining the staff of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*.

The front page of the paper being sold at that Ard Fheis proclaimed Danny Morrison as one of five Sinn Féin candidates



elected to the then Stormont Assembly. With Danny's election, Mick Timothy succeeded him as editor. The larger than life and apparently gruff Mancunian was already working with the paper, but now he had the responsibility for driving it forward, broadening its coverage and its appeal.

In the week that I started working in 44 Parnell Square, the British shoot-to-kill strategy began. Over the period of a few weeks, six people were assassinated. The dead included three Lurgan IRA volunteers (Gervais McKerr, Eugene Toman and Seán Burns), two Armagh-based INLA volunteers (Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll), and Michael Tighe, a boy who had stumbled upon a disused weapons cache in a shed near Lurgan that was being staked out. Photographs of all six appeared on the cover of the December 16th issue.

While the armed struggle ebbed and flowed, it was the Assembly election results and the results of subsequent by-elections at council level that would dominate AP/RN coverage throughout Mick Timothy's period as editor. By challenging the hegemony of the SDLP, Sinn Féin had become a target every bit as much as the IRA.

Mick Timothy laid down a marker that change was afoot when, in the first issue of 1983, AP/RN appeared with a red masthead. Since the hunger strikes, a dark grey masthead had been used. Prior to that, following the merger of the two papers in January 1979, it had been green.

The change upset some who saw it as a shift towards a more left-wing editorial approach. While such a shift would indeed take place, the colour choice for the masthead had nothing to do with it. When challenged at the 1983 Ard Fheis to explain and defend the change, Mick bluntly stated: 'I like red!'

The real reason was his determination to get the paper onto newsstands, thereby widening

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*At a time when it was neither popular nor politically advantageous, under Mick's editorship AP/RN made clear its support for the right to divorce and sided with those organising to oppose violence against women and the sexual abuse of children*

the readership beyond those who traditionally bought AP/RN directly from a local republican activist.

Mick's contributions generally appeared under the name Kevin Burke. An extremely witty man, his satirical 'Burke's at the back' column was a must-read item. Following his untimely death, The Last Word and the Liam Óg column continued this style of satire while I contributed a 'Jack's at the back' column for a couple of years also, but I believe that it's fair to say that none of its imitators were as consistently entertaining as Mick's pieces.

As a political weekly affiliated to the Republican Movement, articles were written from a republican and socialist perspective.







• Concerned Parents Against Drugs met establishment disapproval, but were supported and reported in the paper

Mick encouraged us to be as objective as possible, but when it came to reporting on IRA operations, successes were celebrated and near misses were described as 'unfortunate.'

At a time when it was neither popular nor politically advantageous, AP/RN under Mick's editorship made clear its support for the right to divorce and sided with those organising to oppose violence against women and the sexual abuse of children.

An example of this arose in the summer of 1984 when Mick wrote an editorial condemning a decision by the High Court in Dublin to uphold the dismissal of Eileen Flynn from her teaching post in a County Wexford school. She was pregnant and living with her long-term partner who was separated some years from his wife.

'An Mála Poist' the following week and for several weeks afterwards carried attacks on the editorial from those scandalised that the paper should take the side of immorality, as well as support from those who wanted to break with the confessional State and were thrilled that AP/RN had nailed its colours to the mast.

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*Occasionally editorial work on the paper would grind to a halt for cricket at Lords, Mick having grown to adulthood in Manchester and having a passion for the game that his staff could not fathom*

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We loved the to-ing and fro-ing of 'An Mála Poist'. It evolved into a forum for real and heartfelt debate on a range of serious issues, such as abstentionism from Leinster House or the IRA's policy on punishment attacks on criminals/anti-social individuals, as well as frivolous issues such as the perceived bias of the weekly sports columnist!

1983 was also the year when the party began to challenge for and win seats at local government level in the Six Counties. Séamus Kerr became the first SF councillor in 50 years when he won a by-election for Omagh District Council.

It was Alex Maskey's election to Belfast City Council in July, and his subsequent brief attendance at a council meeting, that provided the paper with the first of many reports on the bitter and often violent opposition that Sinn Féin councillors faced as they took their seats on Unionist-dominated local authorities.

The election of Gerry Adams as MP for West Belfast provided further evidence that the electoral tide was turning. The issue of June 16th

featuring Adams being carried shoulder high by supporters marked a new editorial and design departure for AP/RN as several other stories were graphically highlighted on the cover page.

Also in 1983, AP/RN highlighted the emergence of a community-based campaign to tackle the scourge of the heroin trade in Dublin's working class communities. The efforts of the Concerned Parents Against Drugs to put a stop heroin dealing met with establishment disapproval, but were supported and regularly reported in the pages of Ireland's largest selling political weekly.

There could only be one lead story in the issue of Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup> and that was the dramatic breakout by 38 prisoners of what had been described as 'the most secure prison in Europe'. While election success had provided morale boosts, the breakout from the H Blocks of Long Kesh provided a huge lift for Irish republicans everywhere.

There was palpable excitement in the offices of AP/RN as we awaited the first interview with an escapee. This duly appeared in the following issue and included a memorable



• Alex Maskey's election to Belfast City Council showed the bitter and often violent opposition on Unionist dominated local authorities





account of 'how we did it', complete with graphics of the H-Block complex and the route taken by the escapees to freedom.

Sinn Féin became the focus of condemnation every bit as much as the IRA, the lead article of the final issue of 1983 declaring that *'a determined attempt is being made to justify an attempt to crush Sinn Féin, a legitimate and democratic political party. And the main reason is its success at the polls both proven and potential.'*

It is no exaggeration to say that we went on our traditional Christmas/New Year break fully anticipating that the paper might have to go underground.

Far from maintaining a low profile until the hysteria abated, the lead story in the first issue of 1984 was an exclusive IRA interview and a headline declaring the intention to 'fight on.' Meanwhile in a strong editorial, Mick Timothy attacked establishment parties North and South who *'toy with ideas of how to stop the expression of electoral support for Sinn Féin - the only party with the prospect of achieving radical change in Ireland'*.

The 1984 European elections was Sinn Féin's first all-Ireland contest of that period and AP/RN provided weekly updates on the vigorous campaign fought by activists the length and breadth of the country. The results proved very disappointing, with John Hume comfortably retaining his seat and Sinn Féin securing about 10,000 votes less than had been won a year earlier.

'No soft options' was the headline in the following issue of AP/RN, quoting from an



#### • Protest against the strip searching of women prisoners in Armagh Prison

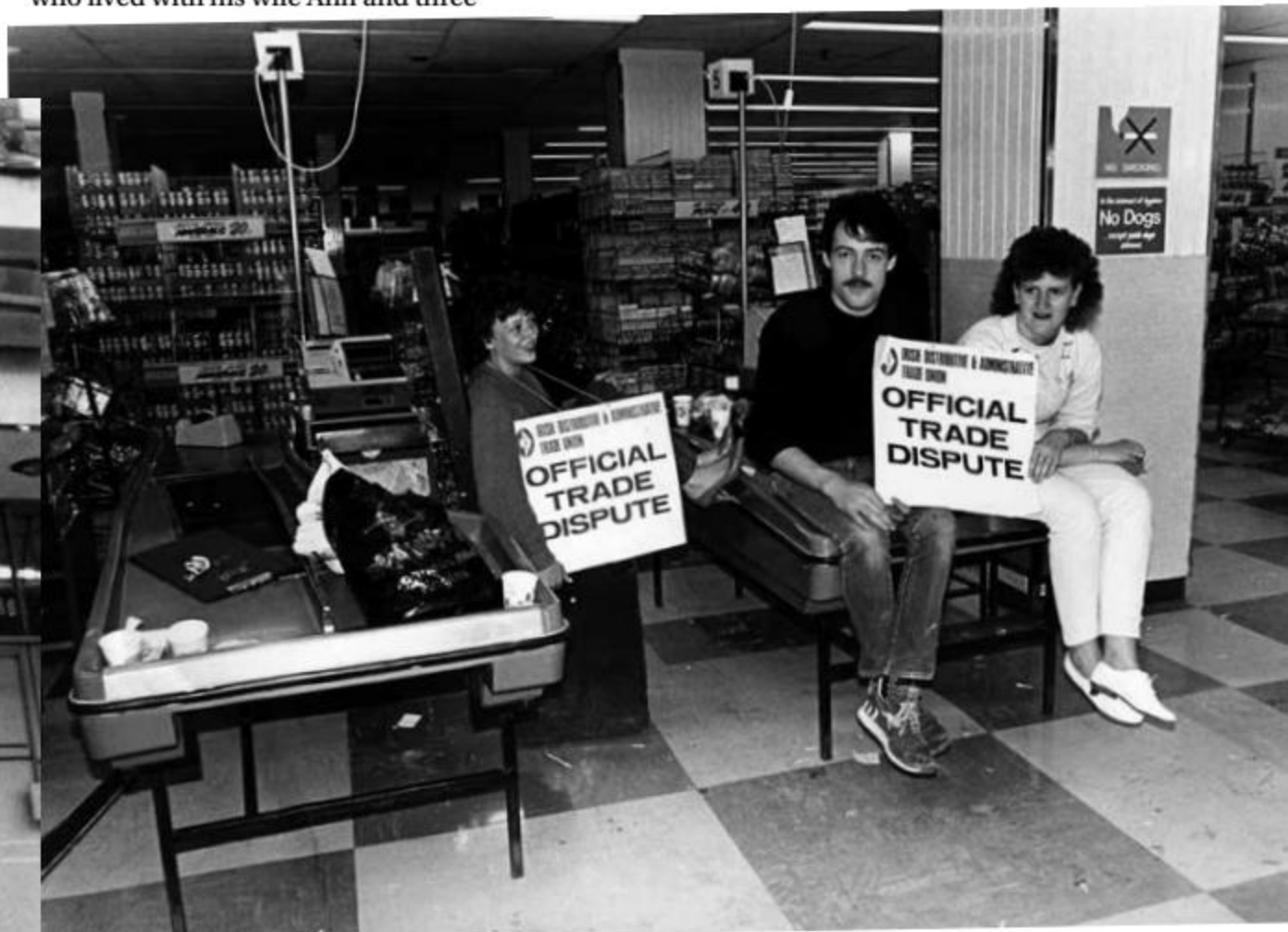
interview with Gerry Adams in which he explained that the election results had come as a reality check for the party.

That Gerry Adams was fit to be interviewed at all was an achievement, as he came close to death in a loyalist gun attack in central Belfast in which he and several colleagues were shot and seriously injured. I have a vivid memory of Mick Timothy emerging from his little office to break the news. He was as shocked and distressed as I ever saw him.

On May 10th 1984, Mick published my centrespread stories on 'The Hidden Ireland' and the 'Life of a Traveller' based on an interview with Stephen McAuley, a traveller who lived with his wife Ann and three

young children in a lane just off Leinster Road in Rathmines. This was the first of a series of articles highlighting the prejudice and discrimination faced by the Travelling community that Mick had me and others cover.

Occasionally, editorial work on the paper would grind to a halt for cricket at Lords, Mick having grown to adulthood in Manchester and having a passion for the game that his staff could not fathom. Another of his pleasures was 'Coronation Street' and several of our wonderful typesetters would join him in his office at 7.30pm on Wednesdays to catch the then bi-weekly soap opera.



• AP/RN consistently reported industrial issues, such as the Dunnes Stores strike, and on a range of international issues from the campaign for nuclear disarmament, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa



- Mick Timothy's widow Alice unveils the plaque naming Teach Mick Timothy, 58 Parnell Square, the new *An Phoblacht* offices, 23 January 1988

In this period, only *AP/RN* was providing a consistent insight into the extent of daily oppression endured by republicans in particular and by nationalists generally. This included; strip searching of women prisoners in Armagh Prison, destructive raids by Crown forces on thousands of homes, petty harassment at checkpoints, the RUC turning a blind eye to and even encouraging the activities petty criminals and joy riders, and increasing evidence of close co-operation between the British army and RUC and loyalist paramilitary gangs. All of these issues and more were covered in the pages of *AP/RN* on a weekly basis, but were only occasionally highlighted by other media, if at all.

Similarly in the South, *AP/RN* was the only major publication consistently reporting on the deteriorating conditions for prisoners, on industrial issues such as the Dunnes Stores strike, and on a range of international issues from the campaign for nuclear disarmament, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, liberation movements in central America, Israeli oppression of Palestinians, ETA's fight for Basque freedom, and the repression being inflicted on oppressed peoples by regimes and despots, many of which were funded as part of US foreign policy.

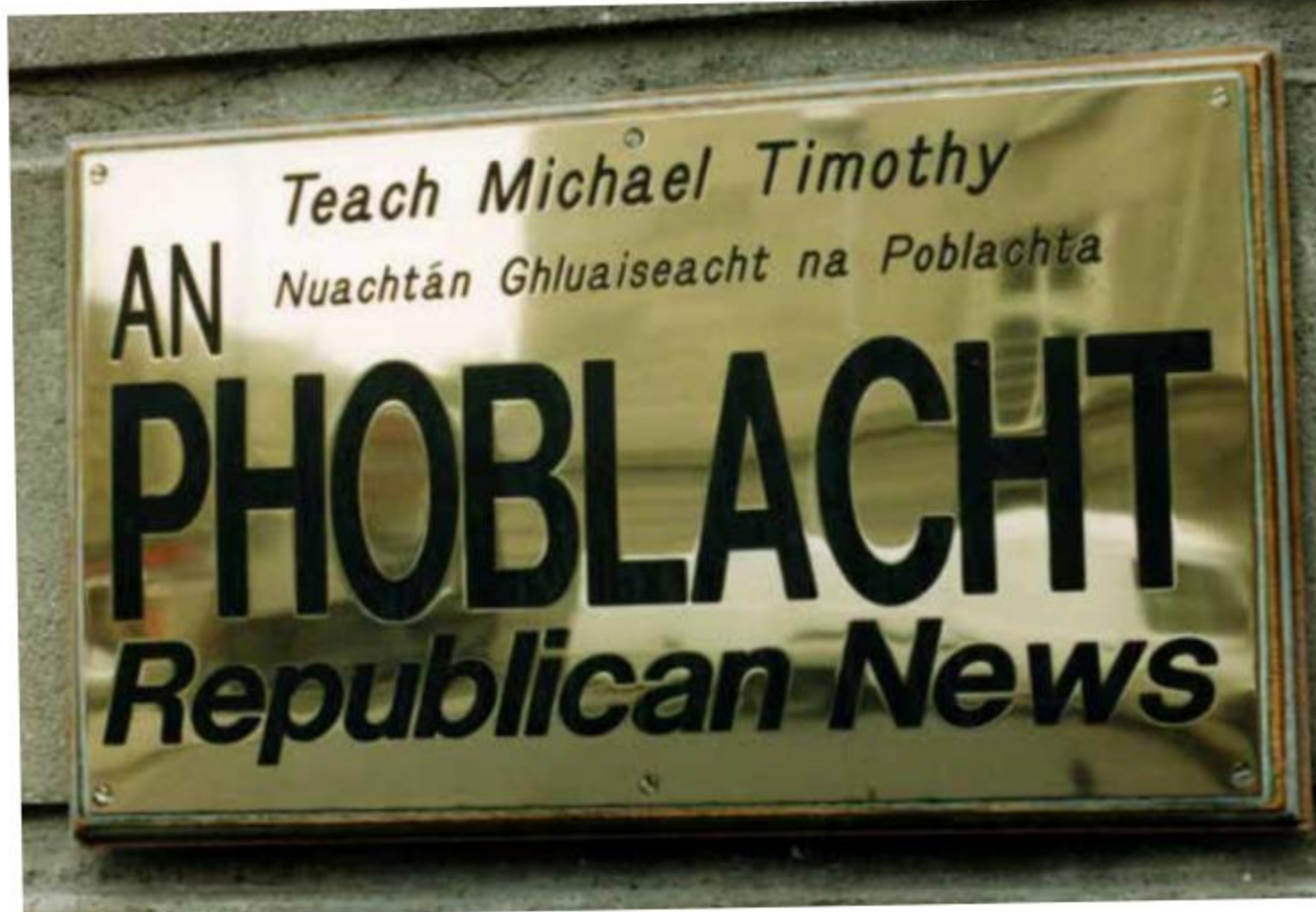
With the highs and lows of the previous year behind us, the staff of *AP/RN* regrouped in January 1985 after the Christmas/New Year's break, with Mick planning another new departure; the introduction of full colour photographs.

In late January, a man walked into the offices of *AP/RN* with a story about the sale the previous month of the B + I Jetfoil ship, on which he had been employed, explaining that the deal smacked of corruption.

For Mick, the story was especially important precisely because it was not the sort of story that would have been offered to *AP/RN* in the past. This man could have gone to any of the media offices in Dublin city centre, but he chose us. This was evidence that the strategy of widening the appeal of the paper by making it relevant, accurate, and professional, was working.

I vividly remember the devastation I felt at hearing the news that Mick had died of suspected heart failure. At his funeral, the day before we went to print, Danny Morrison said, that Mick's "parting is a serious blow to our organisation in the twenty-six counties since he was a key figure in the research and planning committees of Sinn Féin. In the paper, he developed a style of revolutionary journalism which *AP/RN* is going to be hard put to, but has to, maintain".

For the staff of *AP/RN*, that was exactly what we intended doing.





• Rita O'Hare, in the old editor's office in 44 Parnell Square



# THE BEST POLITICAL WEEKLY IN EUROPE

BY RITA O'HARE

My years as editor of *AP/RN* began in January 1985 after the sudden death of Mick Timothy.

We carried the account of his funeral and Danny Morrison's eulogy in that week's edition. Mick's photo was on the front page.

I wrote then "That Mick Timothy will be missed, that the many positions of responsibility he held will be difficult to fill is an understatement. The loss to the Republican Movement is immeasurable and will become more evident when the shock of his death eases."

We went from his graveside to 44 Parnell Square. It was Wednesday, deadline day. The paper was published Thursday. The proofs had to get to the printers on time. The paper was crucial, particularly in a time of censorship, a hostile media, and the propaganda of both British and Irish Governments.

We never missed a deadline. Remember, no computers then. No email. No mobile phones. We met Fridays to plan content for the next week. Consult with the northern editor, decide on the editorial and front page.

The hardest working of all, the artists and layout people and typesetters arrived Tuesday and worked through Wednesday till the paper was ready. We often worked all through the night. We did everything except print it.

These are my memories of those years.

The first paper of February carried the headline 'IRA Call the Shots'. It came from a media story about John Hume saying that he would speak to the IRA rather than Sinn Féin. A poster was made from it and, years later, it was used to convict a young Sinn Féin member from Cork of membership of the IRA.

February brought news of a conference in New York, organised by the City Comptroller Harrison Goldin. He raised the issue of discrimination in employment in the north of Ireland. This became the McBride Principles campaign. It was fiercely opposed by both British and Irish governments and by the SDLP.

The deaths of IRA Volunteers, Diplock courts, prisoners, the show trials, extradition, and the sectarian murders by loyalists acting with impunity filled the pages of the paper.

48 Volunteers died in those years. We carried obituaries for them all and accounts of their funerals. Most of them were so young, yet they gave their lives to that struggle for freedom.

We carried all the social issues of the day that affected people all over Ireland. Housing, health, homelessness, women's rights, unemployment, gay rights, emigration, discrimination.

The front page of May 9, 'The Writing on the Wall', is a photo of a young soldier, hunkered down, his rifle at the





**MAGHERAFELT**  
 In Magherafelt, where Sinn Féin and the SDLP each hold four seats to the unionists' combined total of seven, the election as vice-chairperson of Sinn Féin's Lughaidh Mac Giolla Bhrighde was the pretext for a series of petty unionist disruptions, which culminated, more seriously, in physical assaults on the Sinn Féin members. As Mac Giolla Bhrighde took his place, the unionists turned their chairs and tables round and for the rest of the meeting sat facing the window. A DUP councillor was removed by the RUC after he sprayed aerosol at the republican group.  
 When the Sinn Féin members were leaving the council chamber, unionists began to sing *The Sash*. The Sinn Féin contingent continued on their way, but were physically attacked by both OUP and DUP councillors wielding fists and furniture. Sinn Féin Councillor John Davey suffered a head wound when struck with a chair by Official Unionist Richardson.



• After an assault by a unionist councillor, Sinn Féin councillor John Davey, with blood running down his face outside Magherafelt Council

ready. The single word NO on the wall above him. Brian found the poem *Letter to a British Soldier on Irish Soil* by Patrick Galvin, which captured that moment. And the layout perfectly conveyed the starkness and sadness of it.

Sinn Féin won 59 seats in the north's local government elections that May, facing the bigotry and violent attacks of Unionist councillors who tried to silence them.

A frontpage photograph in June shows Magherafelt Councillor John Davey with blood running down his

face after an assault by a unionist councillor. John was murdered 4 years later by the UDA. This was what Sinn Féin candidates and Councillors faced.

**1986**

The Hillsborough Treaty, signed in November 1985, had promised to reform the Orange State. The loyalist day of action on Monday March 3rd 1986 showed how meaningless that was.

The loyalist organisations ordered the closure of work places, shops, and public transport, enforcing them

with threats and violent assaults. And the RUC looked on.

Extradition was highlighted by the dramatic arrest of Eibhlin Glenholmes in Dublin on March 22nd. She was pursued through the streets of Dublin by armed Gardai. It made international news, along with the ongoing extradition cases being fought by H Block escapees Bik McFarlane and Gerry Kelly in the Netherlands.

Joe Doherty, another escapee, was fighting extradition in New York, a case that galvanised Irish-America, and Robert Russell was in Portlaoise prison waiting a judgement on his extradition.

And another show trial opened in Belfast. It was internment via the courts.

The scale of sectarian attacks increased in a widespread campaign of intimidation, targeting Catholic families in Belfast, Derry, and Portadown. There were four sectarian murders in North Belfast by May alone.

Cormac was our cartoonist, original, funny, politically sharp, and cutting. It was what everybody turned to read first. He was brilliant.

— “ —

*The paper was crucial, particularly in a time of censorship, a hostile media, and the propaganda of both British and Irish Governments*

— ” —

I really liked the headline 'Currie Chickens Out' over a story about Austin Currie and Ken Maguinness storming out of a meeting in Dublin when Sinn Féin's Brian McDonald spoke. I can't remember who came up with that headline, but we got a lot of amusement from it.

The attacks on nationalist and republican communities increased. Homes were raided and wrecked, parents arrested and dragged away, children terrified. These were ordinary people and AP/RN reporters, in particular 'Maeve Armstrong' made sure their stories were told with humanity and sensitivity. It was these stories of the endurance of ordinary people in the face of daily



• 1986 - The dramatic arrest of Eibhlin Glenholmes after she was pursued through the streets of Dublin by armed Gardai



harassment and brutality that brought home the reality of life for northern nationalists.

It was policy, designed to break a people's spirit and force them to turn against us. It did not work. The front page of August said it "The People Stay Strong".

Sinn Féin's big political debate of the year was on the policy of not taking seats in the Dáil. At the Ard Fheis, after a long, tense and, at times, emotional day, the motion to change the policy was passed. It was

an essential move for Sinn Féin's relevance in the 26 Counties.

Gerry Adams' book 'The Politics of Irish Freedom' was published in December by Brandon Press. It was a significant work on the right to sovereignty and how it could be won.

1987

The murder of Larry Marley, shot at his home in Ardoyne on April 2nd, made world news. The RUC surrounded the house, blocking all access. They tried to take over the funeral. The family refused to give in. It lasted for six days. Thousands of people stood in silent

solidarity with his wife and young family.

Sinn Féin published 'Scenario for Peace' on May 1st. It sought to create the conditions for peace and a negotiated British withdrawal.

The conflict was already at a height when a severe blow came on Friday May 8th. Eight volunteers were killed in an ambush at Loughgall in County Armagh. A civilian also died in the hail of bullets.

A caption on a photograph of the funeral stated,

"Loughgall will become a tombstone for British policy in Ireland and a bloody milestone in the struggle for freedom, justice, and peace."

Gerry Adams retained his West Belfast seat with an increased mandate in the Westminster elections.

The British Army began blocking border roads in July. People came from all over the country to reopen these country roads, essential to local farmers and communities.

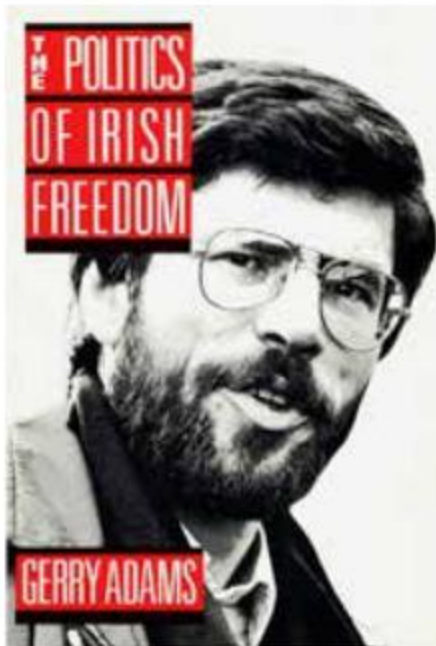
The IRA statement after a bomb exploded prematurely in Enniskillen on November 8th described it as "catastrophic" and "a monumental error" that should not have happened.

11 people died in the explosion. It was a shocking tragedy.

1988

1987 was a hard and tragic year. 1988 was brutal. It opened with the death on January 15th of Sean McBride, a giant of Irish and international politics and a proud republican. It closed with the death on December 8th of another republican legend, John Joe McGirl, a Chief of Staff of the IRA and a former Sinn Féin TD for Sligo/Leitrim.

Big changes to AP/RN, not least our move to new premises at 58 Parnell Square. While sorry to leave the historic 44, the new premises gave much needed space



• 1987 - Larry Marley funeral, the RUC tried to take over the funeral but thousands of people stood in silent solidarity with his family







• Rita O'Hare, editor of AP/RN, speaking to the media from the window of 58 Parnell Square during a raid by Special Branch. Dessie Mackin, General Manager, is in the background





to editorial and production staff. The building was named for Mick Timothy, a fitting tribute to someone who contributed so much to the development of the paper and to Sinn Féin strategy.

Jake Mac Siacais joined us as Northern editor when we lost Richard to the Six County Press office.

John Hume had talks with Gerry Adams on January 11th. Unionists were not happy. But it was, in most people's view, about time. Gerry's tenacity in getting these talks started eventually led to the negotiations that led to the peace process.

The SAS execution of three Volunteers, Máiréad Farrell, Dan McCann, and Sean Savage, in Gibraltar on March 6th shocked and saddened

us all. Three people were murdered by loyalist Michael Stone during their funerals in Milltown Cemetery, one of them Volunteer Kevin Brady. With the deaths of Volunteers Brendan Burns and Brendan Moley in South Armagh the week before and of Kevin McCracken in Belfast, the IRA lost seven Volunteers in as many days.

On Wednesday 16th, two undercover British soldiers drove into the funeral of Volunteer Kevin Brady who was killed in the cemetery. The crowd saw it as another attack and the two soldiers were caught, disarmed, and killed. It was 10 days of unimaginable horror.

The British Government imposed censorship and members and supporters of Sinn Féin were banned from TV and Radio in the North and Britain.



• 1987 - The SAS execution in Gibraltar of three Volunteers, Máiréad Farrell, Dan McCann, and Sean Savage, with funerals and Milltown Cemetery attack and killings by loyalist Michael Stone



1989

An IRA interview in early January spoke of the steps it had taken to avoid civilian casualties and the mistakes that had caused them. It made a strong point of the IRA's support for Sinn Féin's efforts in building a political movement north and south.

A young Tyrone Volunteer was killed in February. He was the same age as the British soldier killed by the IRA a week earlier, which was noted in the IRA's statement. Two young lives lost in a war not of their making.

Gerry Adams launched his latest book 'A Pathway to Peace' in March, calling for the building of an all-Ireland political movement for national self-determination. It was another contribution to the growing calls for real dialogue about a resolution of the conflict. The resistance by both governments delayed the search for peace for years.

My tenure as editor ended in January 1990. My memories of those times are mostly about what was happening in the north. It was a life or death struggle and the paper was a vital voice for that struggle.

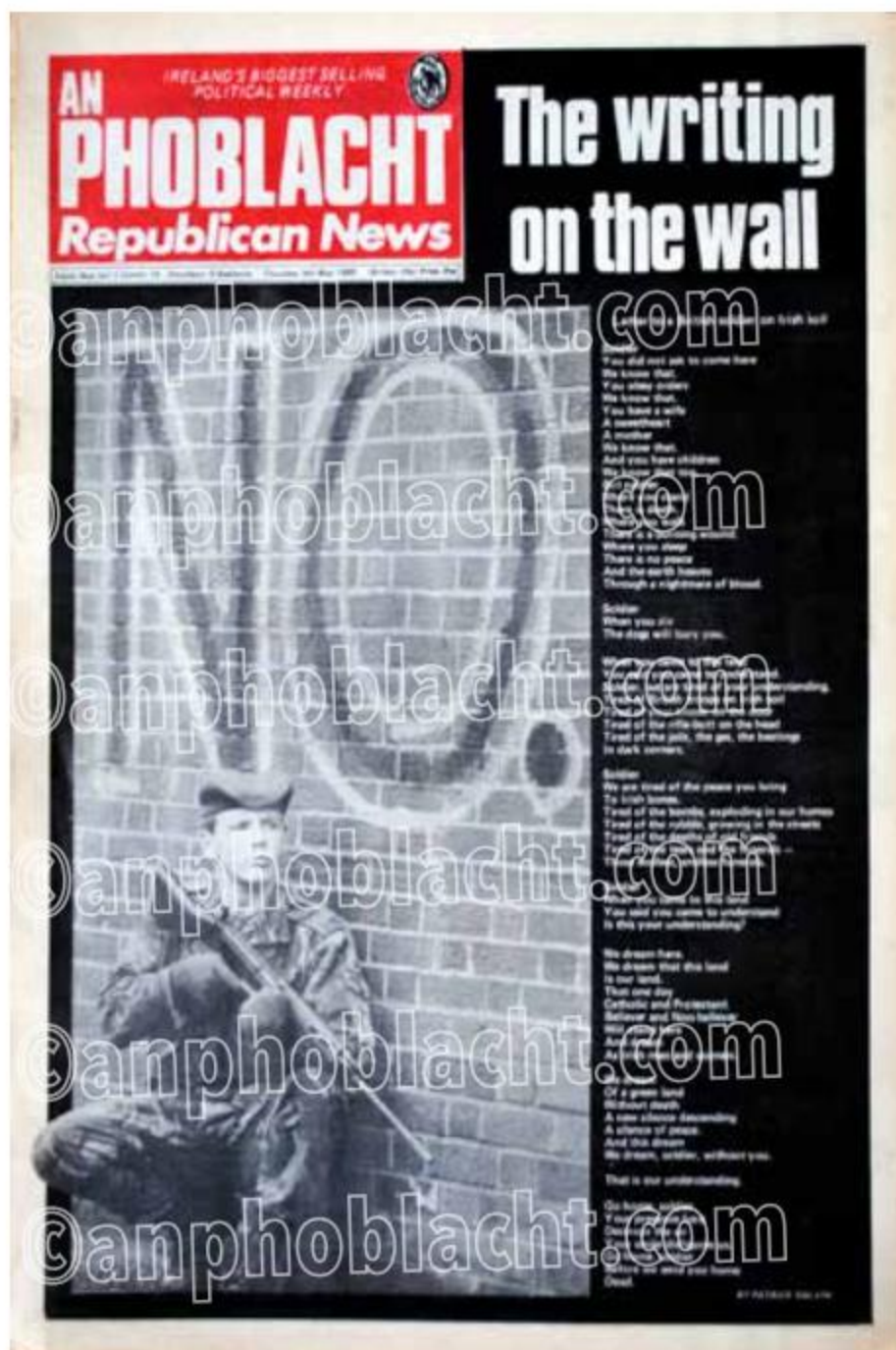
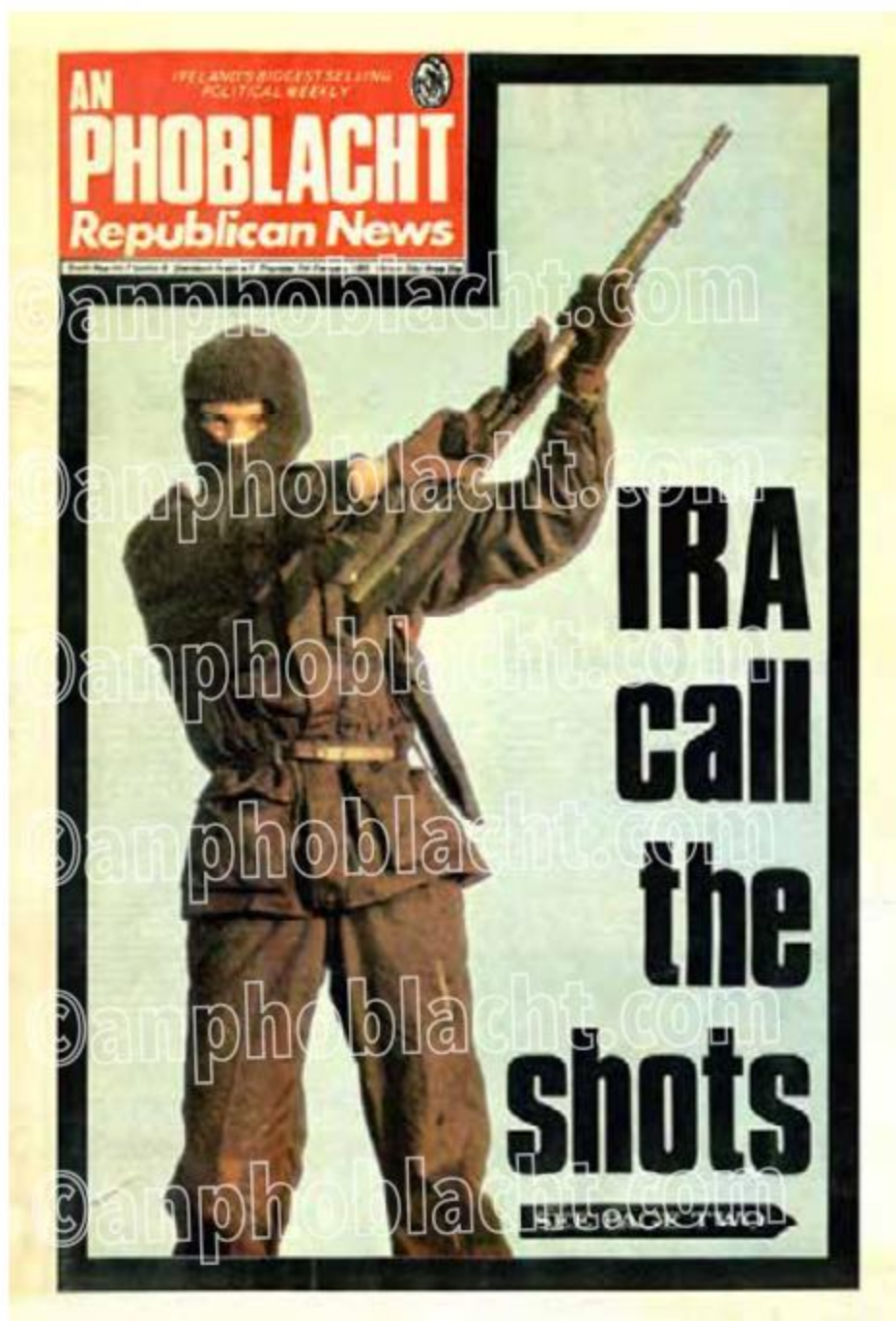
Thanks to all of you who dedicated your considerable talents to "The best political weekly in Europe". To the writers, to the production teams who typed it, to the artists who designed it and laid it out, to the sub editors, proof readers, columnists, to Cormac, to Pat for Remembering the Past. And to our brave drivers who delivered AP/RN all round Ireland, particularly those who put their lives at risk bringing it to the north, Thank you.

— “ —

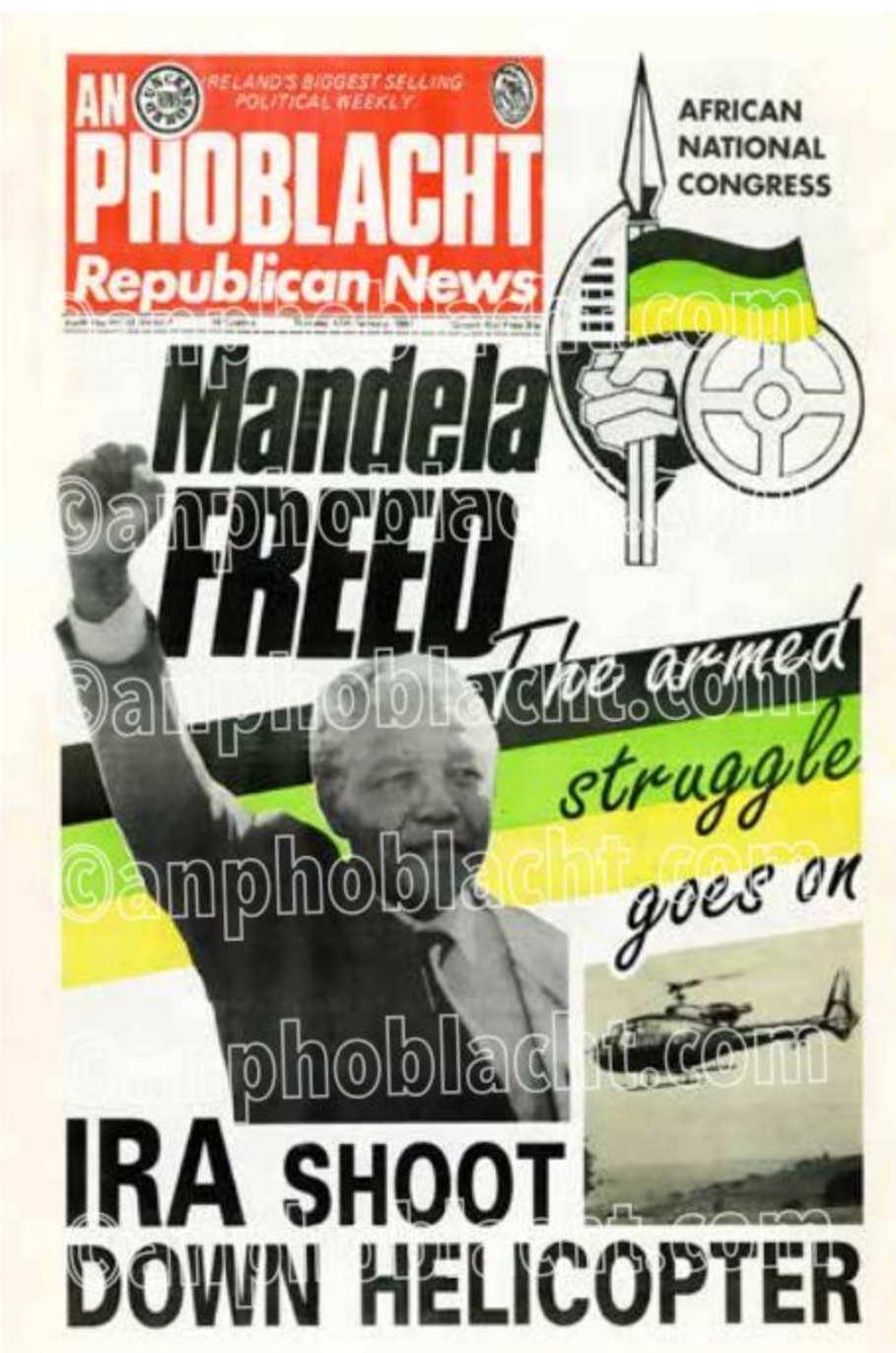
*48 Volunteers died in those years. We carried obituaries for them all and accounts of their funerals. Most of them were so young, yet they gave their lives to that struggle for freedom*

— ” —











# For the Republic – ar son

BY MÍCHEÁL Mac DONNCHA

The first copy of *An Phoblacht* that I bought was the one that reported the death and funeral of Bobby Sands. Four years later I was working in the paper. Five years later again I was editor. I was still in my 20s but how quickly time flew and here I am heading for 60 and wondering where all the time went.

I blame Rita O'Hare. It was she as editor who 'head-hunted' me in the summer of 1985 when I answered the call and started work at a desk in Kevin Barry Memorial Hall, 44 Parnell Square. At that time *An Phoblacht* shared the historic building with Sinn Féin Ard Oifig, the shop and the photography business of veteran republican Cathal Holland.

The paper's accounts and dispatch department was in the basement and the editorial and production department were on the first floor. Sinn Féin was on the second floor and at the top of the house lived the late Rose O'Brien, whose family had been connected with the building, and with the Republican Movement, since the 1920s. The building was named after Kevin Barry, whose centenary is this year, because his IRA unit used the building for meetings and training.

In my first year as a 'scribe' (as Rita called us young journalists) I interviewed a man who had done weapons training with the IRA in the back yard of 44. He was the late Bob Doyle who lost an eye fighting the Blueshirts on Dublin streets and went to Spain to fight for the Republic against Franco. And a man who was sentenced to death in Belfast in 1942 but reprieved had his office in the basement – the legendary Joe Cahill, comrade of Tom Williams, who looked after Sinn Féin finances. So for someone like me with a passion for Irish history I was, as the old Dublin saying goes, "in my alley".

I am writing this on a laptop, it will be sent by email, edited and laid out on screen before the completed edition of the magazine is sent to the printers at the touch of a key, ready for printing. It is a world away from the arduous and physical process by which we produced the paper in the '80s and early '90s.

When I started I didn't even have a typewriter. I wrote my articles in longhand on an A4 pad which was then typed up by one of the two typesetters. It took them a while to get used to my scrawl. The typed pieces then had to be 'pasted up' – actually glued to a page – in columns, to which headlines and photographs were added. There were special machines for making headlines and a huge camera to copy and reduce or enlarge the photos. These came from our own photographer's darkroom or from photo agencies. All this required a sizeable staff on the journalistic and production side, including sub-editors and proof-readers who ensured that the paper was free of errors.

There was a great team spirit in the paper which we just saw as an extension of wider republican comradeship at that time of struggle and frequent tragedy for republicans and for all involved in the conflict. Of course our staff comrades in the Six Counties were on the front line and especially our drivers who delivered the paper directly to republican sellers and to shops locally at great risk. Even in the worst of times we never missed an edition and the drivers always ensured that the paper got through.

All the efforts of our enemies to thwart us drove us on. The censorship of Sinn Féin on both sides of the Border and the murder of Sinn Féin activists were two sides of the one coin, something that had become very clear by the time I took over as editor in 1990. By then we had moved from 44 to our own building in 58 Parnell Square. I will never forget May 1991 and hearing of the murder in his own home, by British agents, of Sinn Féin Donegal County Councillor Eddie Fullerton, and seeing Eddie's local election posters ready for collection in the hallway of 58.

The depth of political censorship and attempted isolation of republicans at that time is hard to fully comprehend today. Not only Sinn Féin members but anyone with a republican outlook was banned from the broadcast media on both sides of the Border.

That made the work of *An Phoblacht* hugely important and a mighty



• Sinn Féin Donegal County Councillor Eddie Fullerton selling *AP/RN*. In the aftermath of his murder his local election posters lay ready for collection in the hallway of 58 Parnell Square

— “ —  
*There was a great team spirit in the paper which we just saw as an extension of wider republican comradeship at that time of struggle and frequent tragedy for republicans*  
— ” —



• Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD, former general manager, and Micheál Mac Donncha, former editor - the first Sinn Féin team in Leinster House

effort went into producing it and thousands of Sinn Féin members and others, at home and overseas, sold it in their communities, week in, week out. In so doing they helped to build a republican political base and network that endures to this day. In my work as a City Councillor I still meet people who recall that they first met me “as a young fella” selling *An Phoblacht* around the pubs of North East Dublin.

The importance of *An Phoblacht* at the time in sending out the republican message cannot be over-estimated. We helped to rally wider opinion, not necessarily all Sinn Féin supporters, who nonetheless were alienated and disenfranchised by the political and media establishment

— “ —

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— ” —

in the 26 Counties who had turned their backs on the people of the Six Counties and who had tried to undermine and denigrate the struggle for Irish unity and independence, be it in 1916 or 1991.

I had the privilege of being editor 1990-1996 as the Peace Process developed, the making of history before our eyes. Again, the paper played a pivotal role in keeping republicans informed and engaged, with extensive reports, debates and discussion of strategy as a new era slowly took shape. It was vital in maintaining



unity at a time of great change. As always we were rooted in republican ideas and republican history, applying progressive politics to current events and expanding coverage to all aspects of social, economic and cultural life. When Sinn Féin made the breakthrough in 1997 and got our first participating TD elected to Leinster House, both the new TD Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, former general manager of the paper, and myself, his Parliamentary Assistant, and former editor, knew we were carrying the banner of *An Phoblacht* into the corridors of power.

Today ‘the paper’ continues online and in magazine format and *An Phoblacht* archives remain as a huge resource for our ongoing struggle, for the battle of ideas and for helping to shape the future.

As you go back through those pages of 50 years you will see many who lost their lives in the struggle, and *An Phoblacht* preserves their memory and their legacy and their message. Compared to their sacrifice our own efforts seem little enough, but whatever the contribution made over those decades, no matter how small or great the part we have played, as Bobby Sands urged us, it was and is all for the same objective – for the Republic, ar son na Poblachta.



• *An Phoblacht* Editor Micheál Mac Donncha in the ‘Production Room’ as the final touches are put to ‘The Paper’ by Mark Dawson in August 1995





• Plastic bullets; shoot-to-kill; collusion; we gathered and recorded the detail

# A SHORT FERRY TRIP AWAY

BY LAURA FRIEL

"What do you need?"

"Regular hours and childcare".

It was 1989, my second child was just four months old and my eldest just two years. Regular hours and childcare; it's what every working parent needs. But if the hours were regular, the work was not. In fact, there was nothing regular about life in Belfast or the rest of the north at that time and for years and years to come.

Rita O'Hare was editor when I scribbled my first reports for *An Phoblacht*. Yes, we used pen, paper, and a fax machine prior to persuading Joe Cahill that computers and the internet were more than "a passing fad". Rita was ruthlessly fair and, as a rookie reporter, I loved her for it. Down the phone line from Dublin, she'd yell "that's fucking crap, rewrite it", but she'd also take the time to tell you what was good and there was no better teacher.

In Belfast, our offices were fortified slums, with daylight in short supply and more than an occasional rodent, but nevertheless places where good humour and solidarity flowed as freely as the tea. There is something very special about comrades, they aren't your family, they aren't your friends, but shared collective endeavour forges its own bonds.

The phone rings; "This is the UVF, you've five minutes to get out". "Can you make it ten? We're just having a cuppa".

I had joined the team just two weeks after the killing of human rights lawyer Pat Finucane. His death, sadly, was one of many disputed killings to be reported in *An Phoblacht*. Disputed because the facts on the ground did not correlate with the official story.

Plastic bullets; shoot-to-kill; collusion; we gathered and recorded the detail and, together with their families, friends and neighbours, refused to allow the truth to be buried alongside those we'd lost.

With official 'police investigations' perfunctory, inquests often denied, court hearings delayed and inquiries refused, many killings remained contested for years, some remain unresolved today. For their families, friends, and supporters, truth-seeking was, and continues to be, an arduous journey. And now, it could become more difficult with the introduction earlier this year of new legislation in the British Parliament.

Westminster's Overseas Operations (Service Personnel & Veterans) Bill 2020 is an insidious

piece of legislation. To diminish the search for truth and justice by those wronged by British forces as "vexatious" is in itself subterfuge. It's also disingenuous to complain about the passage of time, when the central strategy of the British Ministry of Defence, if confronted with evidence of wrong-doing by their soldiers, is delay, delay, delay.

In Westminster, Tory MPs and their colleagues in the Lords, claimed new legislation was necessary because the law had been "weaponised" by allegations of torture and arbitrary execution made against British forces operating overseas. "This government is going to go to war against lawfare," declared a spokesperson for the MOD.

But what qualifies as 'overseas'? British politicians were reassured that NIO officials were considering provisions relating to 'Northern Ireland'. Clearly, the classification is both literal and euphemistic. Somewhere 'other'; somewhere 'over there'; a colony; a former colony; 'foreign' or, when it suits, somewhere just a short ferry trip away.

This is not the first time the constitutional ambiguity of the north of Ireland has been the focus of British state deliberations. Buried deep within the Saville Report into Bloody Sunday are details of a covert Cabinet-led committee, GEN 42. According to the minutes, in 1971, the then British Prime Minister, his Home Secretary, Lord Chancellor, and senior military commanders were also considering the military implications of that constitutional status.

The dilemma they were facing was this. If the north of Ireland was a colony, then the

— “ —

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— ” —





• Senior British military strategist, Frank Kitson

British Army could restore order without recourse to law. Presumably, they could unleash military violence on a scale usually reserved for 'overseas' operations.

But if it was part of the British State, then the British army can only 'assist' local 'policing' to restore law and order. With some reluctance, they settled on 'part of the UK,' comforted by the thought that any internal rebellion could be classified as treason, a crime that at the time still carried a death sentence.

But there was still a problem. Members of GEN 42 were very keen to discuss the implications of shooting dissenting unarmed civilians, a practice not usually considered conducive to a western democracy. What could be done?

A senior British military strategist, Frank Kitson would provide the answer, weaponize the law. In an article about the Saville Report, 'Bloody Sunday; So who was guilty?', *An Phoblacht* pointed out;

"Kitson argues that to defeat subversives

— “  
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and insurgents the government must harness all agencies of the state. The British Army could deliver law and order if the law and all its manifestations were subservient to military objectives. Ironically, in terms of democracy and civil government, that must make Kitson one of the most dangerous subversives of our times."

As the staff of *An Phoblacht*, we witnessed and recorded much of that weaponization; no-jury courts; enhanced interrogation techniques; extra judicial executions; collusion with death squads; shootings of unarmed protesters; and all the rest.

As a young woman, I had taken that short ferry trip across the Irish Sea, eventually choosing to make Ireland my home. It's a journey I've never regretted. Hopefully, within the foreseeable time ahead, we will get to vote on the future constitutional status of the north. Let's choose sovereignty, unity, human rights, equality, and real democracy.

"Up the rebels!"

• The Saville Report into Bloody Sunday contains details of a covert Cabinet-led committee











# An Phoblacht

REPUBLICAN NEWS

Issue No 101 10/11 2011  
Glasgow, London, Dublin, Belfast, Belfast

## SEIZE THE MOMENT FOR PEACE

### Historic announcement from Ograigh na hÉireann



**IN A HISTORIC MOMENT** on Wednesday, 21 August, Ograigh na hÉireann announced the potential of a historic peace process and the potential to end the conflict in Ireland. We believe that an opportunity to create a just and lasting settlement has been created. We are therefore entering into a new situation in a spirit of determination and a firm belief that the conflict will be resolved and that the strength and justice of our struggle will be achieved.

We note that the Downing Street Declaration is not a solution, nor was it presented as such by its authors. A solution will only be found as a result of genuine negotiation. Orders and laws of the British government have a duty to be met by those who oppose them. It is our duty to resist any attempt to impose a solution on the people of Ireland. We urge everyone to approach this new situation with energy, determination and patience.

— P. O'Neill, Irish Republican Publishing Bureau, Dublin

— FULL REPORTS, ANALYSIS AND COMMENT INSIDE



# An Phoblacht

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## HISTORIC HANDSHAKE



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— FULL REPORTS AND PICTURES OF ALL THE WEEK'S HISTORIC EVENTS INSIDE

# An Phoblacht

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Issue No 101 10/11 2011  
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## ONE LAW for the RICH



**IN HIS POCKET** — Gerry got over £700,000 from the British state. But this is not a bribe. It is the result of a system where the rich are protected and the poor are exploited.

**AS THE CORRUPT LINKS** between big business and politicians in the 26 Counties are exposed, the people are getting a lesson in who really runs the state in the political system.

John Bruton said in a speech in Dublin on Tuesday that the state is not a neutral referee. It is a system of privilege and power. The state is not a neutral referee. It is a system of privilege and power. The state is not a neutral referee. It is a system of privilege and power.

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# An Phoblacht

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## The People's MPs



**Sinn Féin has transformed the political landscape** with stunning election victories in West Belfast and Mid-Ulster and an increased vote across the Six Counties.

**CONTESTATION** on the Falls Road after Gerry Adams' victory on 7 May.



# BLOOD ON BRITISH HANDS



THE MURDER OF JOHN DUFFY, 27, of the RUC station in the past few days has been a...  
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# Deireadh mo sheal in AP/RN - a leithéid de mhí

LE JAKE Mac SIACAIS

Tús Mí Feabhra 1992 a bhí ann, chóir a bheith tríocha bliain ó shin, ach mothaím go bhfuil sé cosúil le inné. Thosaigh mé an mhí sin ag spastóireacht thart ar Chluain a Bhogaidh leis an trí pháiste a bhí agam ag an am, Orlaith, Conchúir agus an babai beag Eimear. Bhí muid ann le feaga a bhaint le go dtiocfadh linn Crosóga Bhríde a dhéanamh mar ba nós linn ar an chéad lá den Earrach. Bhí mé ag baint sult as an deireadh seachtaine agus ag meabhrú ar an mhí a bhí romham. Bhí cinneadh déanta go mbeinn ag éirí as mar eagarthóir Thuaisceartach AP/RN, dualgas a bhí orm ó bhí 1988 ann.

Bhain mé sult as mo sheal sa nuachtán, cé go raibh sé ina obair crua, ach bhí orm bogadh ar aghaidh chuig dualgais eile. Bhí an uallach, le clann óg agus cúraimí eile sa Ghluaiseacht róthrom agus bhí sé in am an eagarthóireacht a thabhairt do dhuine eile sa dóigh is go dtiocfadh liom níos mó ama a thabhairt do rudaí eile. Mickey McMullan, iar-chime eile a bhí roghnaithe mar chomharba agus bheinn ag bualadh leis agus le Peadar Whelan, iar-chime eile, a bhí le toiseacht in AP/RN ag tús na seachtaine.

Mar a tharla scriosadh an deireadh seachtaine ar an lá dar chionn, Dé Domhnaigh an 3ú Feabhra, nuair a mharaigh drong gunnadóirí dílseacha cara do mo chuid agus Gael aitheanta díograiseach, Pádraig Ó Cléirigh, (52), ag a theach chónaí i dtuaisceart Bhéal Feirste. Bhí níos measa fós le teacht roimh dheireadh na míosa fuilte sin.

Chuaigh mé isteach ar mo chuid oibre go luath ar an Luan mar bhí neart le déanamh. Bhí Mary Robinson, Uachtarán na hÉireann le teacht go Béal Feirste ar an Mháirt agus bhí Charlie Haughey i ndiaidh éirí as mar cheannaire Fhianna Fáil.

Rinne muid cruinniú gasta san oifig a bhí muid ag roinnt le Uachtarán Sinn Féin agus foireann s'aige i gCorrán na Móna ag an am. D'imigh mé ansin chuig cruinniú eile thíos in oifig an phreas ag Sráid Sevastopol, áit a mbeadh orm pilleadh chuige ag am lóin.

Ag a haon ó cloig thosaigh mé féin, Laura Friel agus Mickey McMullan cruinniú beag eagarthóireachta ag roinnt tuaraimí agus ag dáileadh amach na tascanna a bhí le déanamh. Bhí Peadar Whelan sa seomra taobh linn agus é ag fanacht ar chruinniú a dhéanamh liom féin agus le Mickey. Bhí Kevin Hillick agus Kieran Flynn ann chomh maith. Thosaigh an guthán ag bualadh díreach tar éis 1.15in. Bhí duine éigin i ndiaidh ionsaí a dhéanamh ar Oifigí Shinn Féin ag Sráid Sevastopol. Dúirt mé láithreach le Peadar agus Kevin dul caoil díreach chuig láthair na hionsaithe. Ansin léim mé sa ghluaisteán le Kieran agus rinne muid féin amhlaidh.

Bhí muid ann roimhe an RUC agus b'olc an radharc a bhí romhainn. Bhí an doirseoir, Paddy Loughran, (61), ina luí marbh taobh leis an doras sa seomra feithimh, ag a thaobh dheis ar bhinse bhí Michael Dywer, (24) ina luí marbh, os a chomhair sin amach bhí Pat Wilson, (28) gortaithe go dona agus é as a stuaim agus Pat McBride (40), ina shuí gortaithe ach é ag caint go fóill. Sa seomra chúl bhí oibrí eile de chuid Sinn Féin, Norah Larkin, gortaithe ach chan go dona. Bhí toit agus deatach an gunna le feiceáil go fóill, é ag crochadh ina scamall ar láthair seo an áir agus an bháis. Bhí boladh na fola agus na coirdite bréan inár bpolláirí. Labhair Pat McBride le rá gur chóir Pat Wilson a thabhairt amach ar dtús nó bhí an cuma air go raibh sé gortaithe go dona. Thángthas ar mhac Micheal Dywer, é ina luí faoi chorp a athair. Ní raibh an tachrann, nach raibh ach dhá bhliain go leith d'aois, gortaithe.

I ndiaidh tamall tháinig an RUC agus na hotharcharranna. Bhí troid lámh le lámh leis na péas a bhí ag iarraidh achán duine a chur amach as na hoifigí. Shocraigh rudaí síos rud beag ach bhí daoine ag choinneáil an RUC amach. Chuaigh mise isteach chuig Siopa na hEalaíona béal dorais leis an ghuthán a úsáid agus d'inis Marguerite Gallagher domh go ndearna sí iarracht gréim a fháil ar an ghunnadóir ach gur éalaigh sé i ngluaisteán a bhí aige i Sráid Sevastopol.

Tháinig cnag chuig an doras agus dúirt Marguerite go raibh duine do mo lorg. Chuaigh mé chuig an doras; bhí strainséar os mo chomhair a chur é féin in aithne mar an Chigire Bleachtair

## News

### Locals say RUC land rovers nearby FIVE DIE IN MASSACRE AT BOOKMAKERS

LOCALS SAY RUC LAND ROVERS WERE NEARBY DURING THE MASSACRE AT THE BOOKMAKERS...  
LOCALS SAY RUC LAND ROVERS WERE NEARBY DURING THE MASSACRE AT THE BOOKMAKERS...  
LOCALS SAY RUC LAND ROVERS WERE NEARBY DURING THE MASSACRE AT THE BOOKMAKERS...



Sean Graham

### RUC member murders three in Sinn Féin centre

RUC MEMBER MURDERS THREE IN SINN FÉIN CENTRE...  
RUC MEMBER MURDERS THREE IN SINN FÉIN CENTRE...  
RUC MEMBER MURDERS THREE IN SINN FÉIN CENTRE...



RUC member

### Sinn Féin's right to exist the issue in Falls murders

SINN FÉIN'S RIGHT TO EXIST THE ISSUE IN FALLS MURDERS...  
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SINN FÉIN'S RIGHT TO EXIST THE ISSUE IN FALLS MURDERS...



Sinn Féin member

## NEWS



### Death in shoot-out on Fermanagh border

DEATH IN SHOOT-OUT ON FERMANAGH BORDER...  
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- Mharaigh dílseoirí ceathrar ag an siopa seo; (ar dheis) an RUC ag sochraid Poblachtánach



Derek Martindale den RUC. D'iarr sé orm teacht amach agus daoine a bhogadh ar leathaobh agus go dtarraingeodh sé na péas siar tamall.

Fuair Pat McBride bás ar a bhealach chuig an otharlann. Chuaigh na péas isteach ach d'imigh siad roimh i bhfad. Nuair a chuaigh muid féin isteach arís tháinig muid air mála culaith a raibh na cartúis caite den gunna gráin ann go fóill. Ba léir gur scaoil an gunnadóir fríd an mhála agus nach ndearna na péas cuardach ar bith.

Tháinig sé amach ar ball gur bhall den RUC/UDA a rinne an ionsaí. Bhí Alan Moore, i lámha na bpeas an oíche roimh ré nuair a scaoil sé urchair thar uaigh cara da chuid Norman Spratt, ball eile den RUC/UDA a fuair bás in eachtra lámhachta ina theach féin. Bhí Moore agus Spratt ina mbaill den scuaid céanna den Divisional Mobile Support Unit de chuid an RUC in Iarrthar Bhéal Feirste. Thángthas ar chorp Moore ní ba maille an lá sin in aice le bruach Loch nEachach ag Baile an Doire. Dúradh gur chur sé lámh ina bhás féin.

An lá ina dhiadh bhí briseadh croí eile ann nuair a fuair Óglach Joe McManus, (21), bás agus é i mbun gníomhaíochta d'Óglaigh na hÉireann i gCondae Fear Manach. Mac le cairde de mo chuid Seán agus Helen McManus a bhí ann agus aithne agam air ó bhí sé ina ógánach. Bhí rudaí le héirí ní ba mheasa fós roimh deireadh na seachtaine nuair a rinne an UDA ionsaí ar Siopa Geallglacadóireachta Seán Graham ar Bhóthar Ormeau, fágadh cúigear marbh, Jack Duffin, (66), Billy McManus, (54), Christy Doherty, (52), Peter Magee, (18) agus James Kennedy, (15). Sula raibh an mí caite fuair ceathrar óglach bás nuair rinne an SAS luíochán orthu ag Demagh, cóngarach d'Oileán a' gCuail i gCondae Thír Eogháin. B'iad Sean Ó Farrell, (23), Kevin Barry Ó'Donnell, (21), Patrick Vincent, (20) agus Peter Clancy, (19).

Sa seachtain deireanach den mhí uafásach sin i 1992 gheobhfhadh ceithre sibhialtach caitliceach eile bás ag lámha an UDA agus an UVF. Fuair Anne Marie Smyth, (26), bás tar éis don UVF í a chéasadh agus a sádh chun báis. Thángthas ar chorp s'aici, leis an sceadamán gearrtha siar go dtí an cnámh droma, ag Sráid Ballarat in Oirthear na Cathrach. Scaoileadh Terence McConville, (43) agus James Gray, (39), chun bás i bPort An Dúnáin agus maraíodh Liam McCartan, (32), ag teach s'aige in Ard Eogháin.

Mí fuilteach, mí uafásach, mó mhí deireanach in AP/RN. Ní thig liom moladh ard go leor a thabhairt do na chomrádaithe a d'obair taobh liom le linn an tréimshe corraitheacht sin.

- Óglaigh a fuair bás i mí Feabhra 1992 (ar chlé) Joe MacManus (ar dheis) Seán Ó Farrell, Kevin Barry Ó'Donnell, Patrick Vincent, Peter Clancy





# STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?

BY HILDA Mac THOMAS

Happy 50th birthday *An Phoblacht*!

I am old enough to have been involved with you when you were born in your current all-Ireland form, as *An Phoblacht/Republican News*. In 1979, I was asked to write some book reviews (under another name), and left pretty much to decide which.

Two pieces I remember particularly; a survey of the so-called 'thrillers of the Troubles' - mostly anti-republican, sexist, and racist trash and a review of 'The Women's Room' by Marilyn French. In 1981, I was part of a team who wrote extended pen portraits of the prisoners as they embarked on hunger strikes. A heart-breaking and solemn task.

In 1982, then Editor Danny Morrison was looking for someone to write what he described as a weekly look at the political manoeuvrings of unionists, the SDLP, and the London and Dublin governments in relation to the struggle.

The brief was to gather what the various players had said, analyse them, and comment from a republican viewpoint. All the more important as this was a time of censorship. The asymmetrical propaganda war was full on, explicitly by law, such as Section 31 in the south, followed in 1988 by a British ban on republican voices (remember "his words are spoken by an actor"! ). And this despite, or

— “ —  
*In times of war, pen names were used for obvious reasons, and so there was always this sense of my words not really belonging to me*  
— ” —

indeed because of, the growing endorsement of republicans at the polls.

But, I digress. I cleared my study a couple of years ago and shredded notes taken in longhand for my early articles and carbon copies of typewritten articles; the top copy being sent to Dublin with other pieces on the Wednesday morning, the carbon copy kept for a phone conversation with the Editor if changes were needed.

Printouts with the recognisable narrow font of an Amstrad PCW, and 3.5 inch discs that travelled from me to the Northern Editor

and back. A hidden history of technological change. Today, I sit at my computer, with a search engine open on the desktop, yet feeling the familiar excitement and remembering the many Tuesday all-nighters of frantic writing, with the week's press cuttings scattered over the room. No 'cut and paste' then, you young wusses!

But enough nostalgia. This weekly piece was given a pen-name of Hilda MacThomas (a tale for another day), and became known as 'the Hilda piece', with a small following of faithful readers. In times of war, pen names were used for obvious reasons, and so there was always this sense of my words not really belonging to me and taking a life of their own once the paper went to print, the writer being merely a small cog in the media machine. And so, I feel free to speak about Hilda in the third person, even though I have been secretly very proud to know it was me.

Many key events I remember covering and many more have got lost in the recesses of my ageing memory. The dramatic entrance of Sinn Féin onto the electoral scene in 1982 with the assembly elections, giving voice to a hitherto silenced and demonised section of the population.

1983: Gerry Adams MP! And Danny Morrison missing being an MP by 78 votes in mid-Ulster!! (Sorry Danny, I couldn't help

## • Hillsborough Agreement of 1985 and Unionist protest







Facemaker Ltd Hst-20-10-82-Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams was out and about early this morning to encourage voters to support his candidates in the upcoming election.



• Section 31 and 1988 British broadcasting restrictions



• 1982 and 1983 elections in the north



casting this up!). The Hillsborough Agreement of 1985, an opportunity for the far right DUP to strut through Belfast's Donegall Square (Table quiz question: How many "nevers" did Ian Paisley shout on the platform?).

The DUP rhetoric an implicit encouragement to its grassroots to throw petrol bombs through 'Catholic' windows. And after nationalists in Ballynahinch organised night watches to defend against such attacks, trusting themselves more than the RUC for obvious reasons, the immortal words of the local SDLP councillor were – to my mind – a great summary of SDLP ideology; "Leave it to those who are in charge to look after things."

Some of the longer pieces I was asked to write, sometimes over five consecutive weeks, looked at the history of Irish Unionism (now curiously downloadable as an e-book!), or the SDLP as a political phenomenon (no e-book there, though I would have liked to read it again).

I remember a piece on Church-state relationship. An analysis of Peter Brooke's speech in 1990, when he uttered the now famous sentence: "Britain has no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland".

This is one of the few pre-ceasefire pieces for which I remember being briefed before putting pen to paper. One of my regrets is to not to have made more of the missing comma after "selfish".

**“**  
*The hands off approach of AP/RN left me free to develop my voice and gave me space to research more substantial pieces*  
**”**

I remember writing about Articles 2 and 3 of the Free State Constitution and the need for an all-Ireland referendum, as opposed to a referendum in each jurisdiction. But, by the time those Articles were amended in 1999, Hilda had retired her pen. I have just now tormented myself a little by reading the Wikipedia entry on the articles.

By and large, I wrote without detailed direction. A brief conversation with the Editor or Northern Editor on the Monday to agree the topic. Less frequently, a conversation on the Wednesday if a rewrite of a section was needed. The hands off approach of AP/RN left me free to develop my voice, and gave

me space to research more substantial pieces. It is because of this for example that I was personally moved at the recent passing of historian Margaret MacCurtain, whose books supported my thinking on the question of women in Ireland.

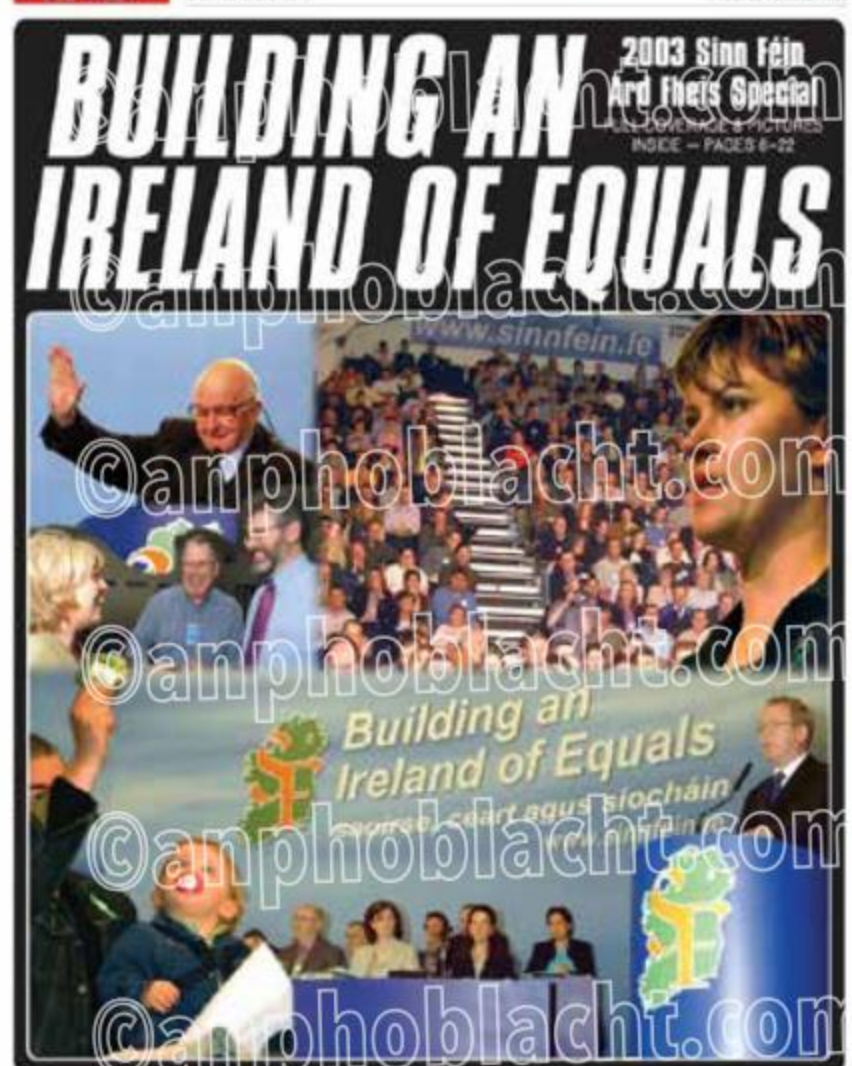
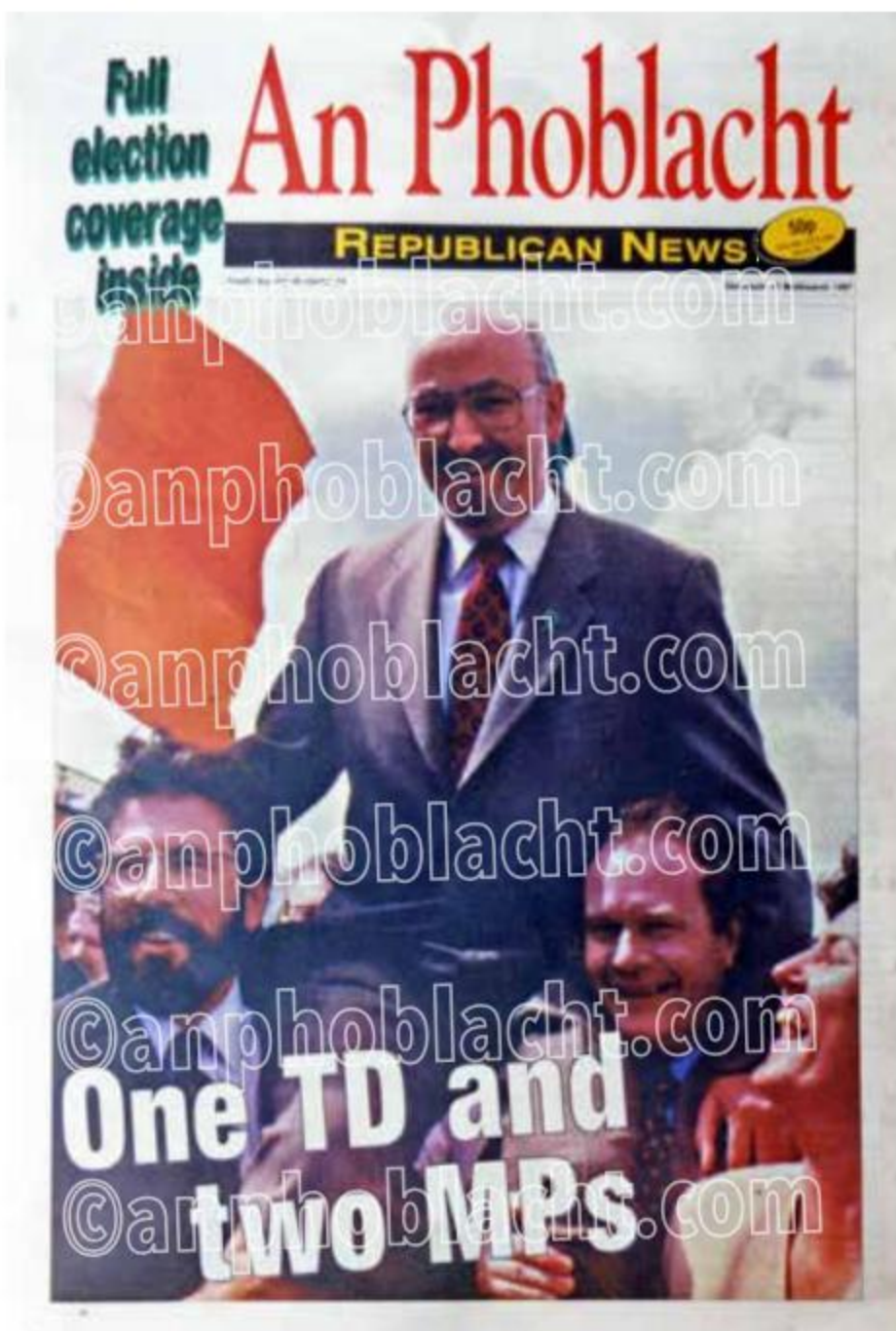
Editorial freedom ended in the period after the ceasefire. For obvious reasons, the Republican Movement wanted its message to be tightly controlled. This made the Hilda piece, as it had become, redundant. It took me a while to accept this, but I did, in December 1996.

In these narcissistic times, we can find out who we are by Googling ourselves. Until today, I had never Googled 'Hilda MacThomas'. There, I discovered a book entitled 'The Long March: The Political Strategy of Sinn Féin, 1981-2007'.

The author, M. Frampton, said of a piece I wrote under my pen-name for Fortnight magazine in 1991: "An article by 'Hilda MacThomas' (a nom de plume generally understood to represent the views of the Adams-McGuinness leadership) in the February 1991 edition of Fortnight, for instance, explicitly refuted the idea that the British were neutral, declaring that, 'the only neutral act a colonising power can perform in relation to a colony is to leave, taking care to make full reparations and helping to demilitarise the conflict it created.'"

I could not have said it better myself!







# Reporting in a War Zone

BY CHRISSIE McAULEY

I went from being Chris Graham, newly released Mountjoy POW to reporter Maeve Armstrong – my by-line with *Republican News* from 1978-89. The name held its own wee story. Maeve, well, the Irish Warrior Queen herself no less! I was living in a war zone so it might be handy to have a warrior around me and Armstrong, that was my wee granny Julia's maiden name. She was my real-life heroine, so between the two names, I hoped the strength of character they both encapsulated might rub off on me!

Little did I know what I was getting into joining the 'Rep News' as we called it.

I'm rushing ahead – it hadn't been my plan to join the paper when I got out of Mountjoy in March 1978 – I'd gone into gaol at 19, one of the Cork 7 republicans tried in Dublin's Special Criminal Court for possession of explosive components. Being the only woman in the group, I went to Mountjoy, the others to Portlaoise.

Officially, there was no political status as such in Mountjoy so, as the only political prisoner there, I had to assert my political status every day until the regime begrudgingly acknowledged it.

In the North's prisons, it was a different story as our prisoner's political status was removed to criminalise them and our struggle. The rest is history – H-Blocks, two hunger strikes, mass mobilizations on the streets, dead comrades and civilians, the rise of Sinn Féin, its democratic mandate secured, peace process – a tide turned forever in our struggle towards Irish reunification.

When I was released and headed north to West Belfast, it was with a mind to defending our areas and our people again. So, when instead I was asked to take care of the security of the "Rep News" staff in order for the paper to be produced and circulated, I must admit I was a little perplexed.

I clearly had a lot to learn about the significance of publicity in the struggle. I became a fast learner – the paper was underground, hounded by the Brits who wanted it silenced or at the very least, seriously disrupted. Collectively however, we weren't going to let that happen. The voice of the oppressed – when it is provided a platform – is more powerful

than any amount of repressive legislation or the lies of establishment spin doctors.

I met Rep News's motley crew who included among others Belfast republicans Jim Gibney, writer, and Danny Devenny (layout artist) – absolute salt of the earth. Danny Morrison too who merged the paper with *An Phoblacht* in January 1979 – a smart move.

The paper had to be produced from a series of safe locations in Belfast because it had been shut down and several people, including Danny Morrison, arrested. The paper was literally produced on the hop – it was my responsibility to secure and organise a safe operating network around the paper's team. I also ensured the mock-ups got to the printers every week –

• Jim Gibney



## • Comms from the prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh

others dealt with distribution across the North.

This was a logistical challenge at times because there was always the threat of the Brits/RUC finding out which venue or home we were using. Sometimes, areas would be swamped with crown forces and there were some near misses regarding deadlines being met which delayed printing. Those good folks who opened up their doors to facilitate the paper getting onto the streets risked being arrested or worse, being set up for reprisals later on.

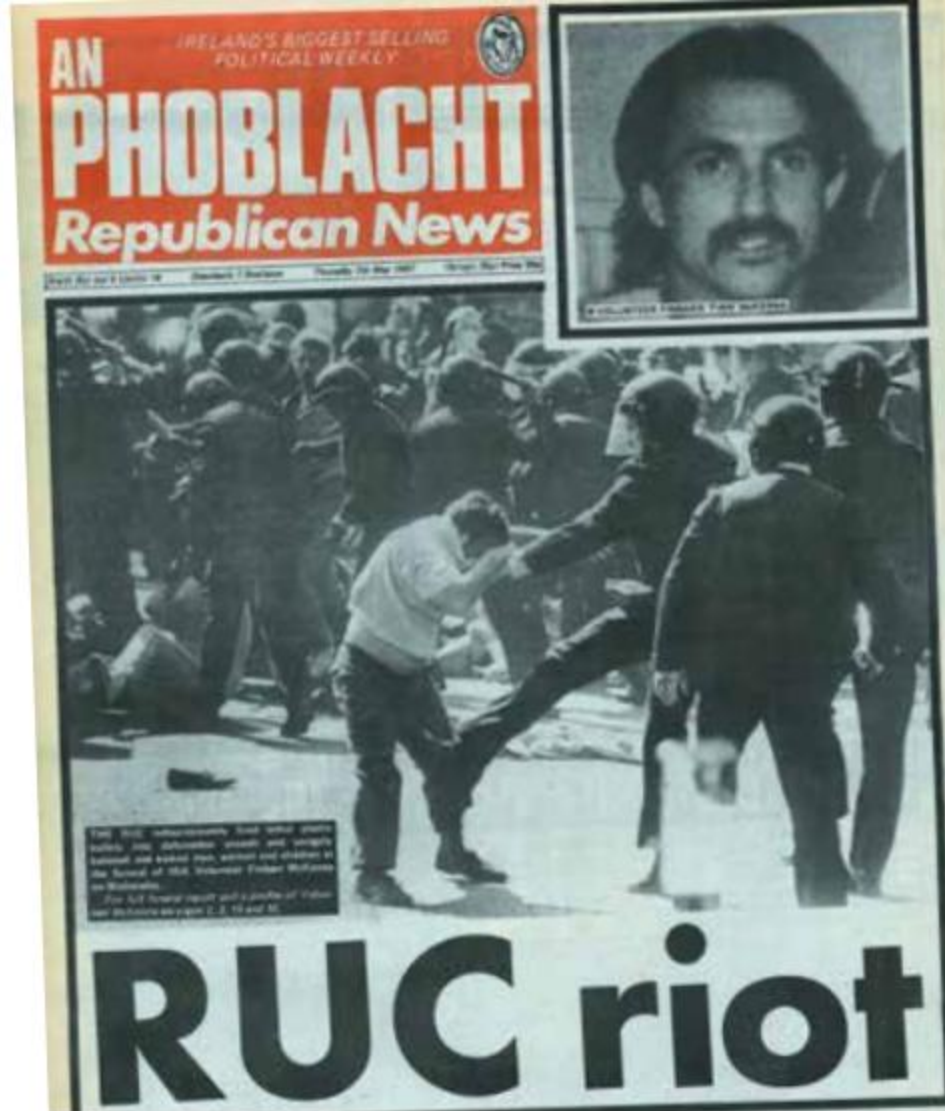
At that stage, I wasn't formally writing for the paper – I would transcribe the Comms coming into us from the prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh. The most powerful emotional memories I have to this day is about opening several of the comms with their tiny writing on toilet roll paper from Bobby Sands.

You were the first person to see his words – and hear his voice as I imagined it in my head – graphically describing that prison hell he and his comrades were experiencing every day in the H-Blocks. Having been so soon out of prison myself, it tore through my heart and soul reading 'I am Sir, you are 1066!' first published in *Republican News* July 1st 1978 or 'I fought a monster today' October 7th 1978. (The Comms were signed Marcella, his sisters name so we knew they were Bobby's.)

— “ —  
*The most powerful emotional memories I have to this day is about opening several of the comms with their tiny writing on toilet roll paper from Bobby Sands*  
— ” —







# • Battle of the Funerals - RUC and Brits attack the funeral of IRA Volunteer Finbarr McKenna

Richard McAuley, Northern Editor of the paper for a time - and my husband for a time too - was mostly responsible for encouraging me to write more for the paper as I'd dipped my toe into doing some harassment stories.

You just did whatever was required, I would also work as typesetter on *An Phoblacht* in Dublin, working through the night, getting a few hours' sleep on a sleeping bag on the office floor and then the train back to Belfast to begin all over again.

One night, Danny Devenny was shot in the leg by a UFF gunman in the hallway of Parnell Square while I was upstairs typesetting. I was heavily pregnant at the time. You didn't think risk, just that Danny was ok and got to hospital - I told Mick Timothy our editor to tell Ruairí Ó Brádaigh that we weren't letting the Gardaí in to question us. It would delay the paper and anyhow, the Gardaí who were usually camped outside the building probably had a ringside view of everything that happened and didn't stop it.

It would be impossible in this short piece to describe the range of issues and political events which are historically significant which I covered in my role as Maeve Armstrong but essentially I didn't do things by half - I would dig into issues, suss out eyewitnesses and ensure as far as possible that their testimony was substantiated, because I knew that the

establishment media and the Brit propaganda machine of the NIO was always poised to discredit our accounts of events.

I travelled everywhere around the North meeting hundreds of people affected by the conflict and giving voice to the social economic poverty they experienced. I also covered the whole hunger strike periods and had access to many of the relatives, friends, and comrades as I pieced together the profiles of these heroic young men who had taken on to fight the monster from inside their prison cells.

One of the most enduring memories caught in slow motion in my mind is of Owen Carron, sitting in my home shortly before going to see Bobby Sands. Back and forth, he brushed and polished his shoes amidst the silence of all around him, a silence before the storm that was to be brought upon us by Thatcher's vicious decision to let Bobby die.

That period in our history is for many of those who lived through it, including myself, still far too horrendous to fully recount. The amount of activism on the streets by extraordinary, ordinary people and the brutal response of the British Army and RUC was horrendous. We could not keep up with the scale of incidents which needed reported.

In the years that followed, I covered many of the shoot-to-kill incidents around the Lurgan and Portadown areas - we would often be tailed in and out of the areas by undercover units. One time, we were stopped and myself and the driver taken into Lurgan RUC barracks - they wouldn't let me go to the toilet. After several requests, I warned them I would need to go - I did. We were thrown out 5 minutes later!

Yes, it could get a bit dodgy writing for the paper. I was covering the republican funeral of Volunteer Finbarr McKenna who died on active service on 2nd May 1987. This was the period known as the Battle of the Funerals when the RUC, clad in full riot gear, supported by the British Army, endeavoured to inflict maximum intimidation and saturation techniques to try and deter peo-

— “ —  
*What amazed and humbled me every time was the dignity of our people in the face of some of the most horrendous treatment at the hands of the Brits and RUC.*  
 — ” —



# • Layout Artist, Danny Devenny was shot in the leg by a UFF gunman in 44 Parnell Square, Dublin





• 11 year-old schoolboy Stephen McConomy killed by a British plastic bullet in 1982



ple from attending republican funerals.

It was a grim time for mourners and a disgusting tactic to use against grieving families who had lost their loved ones. That day at Finbarr's funeral, they attacked us with plastic bullets and batons, charging at young and old and stampeding people who fell on top of each other.

I only remember thinking "I'm gonna die at a funeral" before the darkness enveloped me. The next thing I heard was "There's a girl under here!" before I took a breath and got pulled out by the ankles.

Thank you Joe Leatham from Poleglass and Bernard Fox from St James's. But that wasn't the end of it – my glasses and my tape recorder were broken, I had

no shoes and just across from me my poor dad Sam Graham, was being kicked mercilessly by the RUC. I went berserk and got him away from "the farces of law and disorder" as my dad would rightly call them.

What amazed and humbled me every time was the dignity of our people in the face of some of the most horrendous treatment at the hands of the Brits and RUC.

The use of plastic bullets to terrorise ordinary people from going on protests was not just confined to that – they also shot those weapons indiscriminately at passers-by as they patrolled our areas. A member of the Royal Anglian Regiment, sitting safely in his armoured personnel vehicle, opened up and shot little 11 year-old schoolboy Stephen McConomy from Derry on April 16th 1982. He was in the street, innocently playing with his friends. There were no disturbances in the area at the time.

I will never forget the beautiful wee face of Stephen, his entire head wrapped in white bandages and tubes and wires trying to keep him alive for the three days he lay motionless in Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital. Having two young children at the time myself, I especially connected with the anguish of Stephen's distraught mother, Maria.

Stephen's uncle, the late Michael Sweeney and his Auntie Rhona Toiland also kept vigil and I had the privilege to look after them at my home

too when they needed a short break. Can you imagine what it was like for them to watch while armed British soldiers and RUC walked into the intensive care unit while Stephen, an innocent child, fought for his life?

That's how it was. So, when Maria asked me to take a photo of Stephen on his life support and get it to the media, the job was done. There was mayhem in the intensive care unit as the staff and RUC demanded the camera off me, threatening me with arrest.

The family, dignified but determined, stood their ground and insisted they had authorised the photo. It was intense – and as they say, a photo tells a story better than a thousand words. Stephen's battle for life tragically ended when he died without gaining consciousness from his head wound but his iconic image was transmitted worldwide.

At a time when British propaganda had unlimited resources aimed at labelling us "criminals and terrorists" it was vital in my view that our truth had its own pathway of expression through our own paper and publicity outlets.

Stephen McConomy's life force was slipping away because a British soldier, safe inside his personnel carrier, fired a plastic bullet at young Stephen's head – he knew he could get away with it.

Today, that soldier and the rogue state actors who armed him with such lethal weapons continue to act with impunity and immunity. The British Ministry of Defence can hold onto "classified files" relevant to plastic bullets which could assist Stephen's family in obtaining a fresh inquest into his death.

Those files can remain shut until 2071, nearly 100 years after Stephen's death – that in itself should demonstrate, if nothing else does, the kind of monster which many in our communities have been dealing with and continue to deal with in trying to gain justice and truth from the British state.

It is why, nearly 100 years on since the partition of our country, that we need our nightmare to end and a new beginning, in a new Ireland for all communities, to come as quickly as possible.

— “ —  
Stephen McConomy's life force was slipping away because a British soldier, safe inside his personnel carrier, fired a plastic bullet at young Stephen's head – he knew he could get away with it  
— ” —



# WE WILL ALWAYS NEED OUR GUIDING LIGHTS

BY GRACE McMANUS



Guiding lights are moments of illumination along our pathways, that show us where we are, and where we might go.

Often, guiding lights are left by people who've walked a path before us, or are created by those companions who are on our journey with us.

When I think about *An Phoblacht*, what purpose it plays in the hands of activists, and what role it can play into the future, I think it can continue to be road map, a place to educate, connect, and inspire, and bring a lightness to the struggle for a better Ireland.

One of the things that is hard to reconcile as an activist is that you cannot be an expert in everything. However, that realisation is precisely the moment where you learn gratitude for being a part of a team, a movement of people, each with their own knowledge, skills, and experience to share.

Articles in *An Phoblacht*, be it historical insights from Mícheál Mac Donncha or a perspective on a United Ireland from the depth of experience of Gerry A, give younger activists

like me the language and ideas on a vast range of relevant and important topics.

That political education is everything in a grassroots movement like ours. Every read expands the republican mind and every copy on the bedroom bookshelf adds to an archive for reference for whatever challenge or obstacle is being faced in the moment. I see *An Phoblacht* needing to continue this role, for as long as our activism exists.

Of course, journeys of political movements are little without the connections between people. *An Phoblacht* is a home for our shared experiences, shared history, and shared stories. Those shared tales come together to shine a light on our shared vision for the future, not just a 32 county socialist republic, but a shared goal of what that'll look like in reality and our goalposts for getting there.

It's a really lovely feeling to pick up an edition, see an author's name that you don't recognise, and read their words that speak directly to your own sense of purpose and perspective on the world. It almost feels like you could go anywhere in Ireland and find a friendly face of someone who'd have a welcome for you, even though you've



• Sharing knowledge, skills, and experience - Gerry Adams and Mícheál Mac Donncha

never met. There is little more powerful than that, and I believe *An Phoblacht* continues to be a living space of such connections.

That old phrase of "we stand on the shoulders of giants" is true, and you don't need to look further than the contributors to *An Phoblacht* to feel that connection either. It feels like being a part of a relay race, where long time activists and powerhouse's hand over their achievements, lessons, and perspectives for the reader to take and carry forward. That is an essential fabric of connection in a social movement that will continue to be essential into the future.

Finally, *An Phoblacht* inspires and energises. A fabulous example that comes to my mind is from the edition that came out after the last general election in the 26 counties earlier this year. Who could deny the power of the faces of some of our newly elected reps under the banner "Championing the Change" in the article where they so passionately laid out their priorities for the term ahead?!

I know I have gone back to that article several times since, especially on colder and darker nights when a boost of inspiration is needed. And we will always need that boost; for activism is a steady

and driven heart, but sometimes the body is tired. It is then when you read the words of somebody who is on the same journey as you that can guide you back to your fullest enthusiasm. *An Phoblacht* provides this for activists, and I hope it continues to do so, in whatever way, into the future.

The way we consume media has changed and will continue to change. Change from words to videos, long reads to 30 second attention grabbers, letters to tweets. I think *An Phoblacht*, as an entity, will need to continue to adapt and grow with society into the future.

However, my hope and vision would be that this publication continues to educate, connect and inspire the hearts and minds of activists who will deliver on our core mission, and I look forward to the time in the not so distant future, when we can pick up the "United Ireland - Achieved!" edition. Until then, we will rely on it as a guiding light on our republican struggle.

— “ —

*It's a really lovely feeling to pick up an edition, see an author's name that you don't recognise, and read their words that speak directly to your own sense of purpose and perspective on the world*

— ” —



# The facts about Ireland

BY MARTIN SPAIN

Not many people can say that they went to work every day under the watchful eye of the Special Branch. Or that the main (only) perk of their working week was a free meal on a Wednesday night, our publication deadline. That was what it was like to work for AP/RN in the late '80s, when I got my start.

We worked hard and earned practically nothing, but that was a decade when most young people had a choice of the dole or emigration. Like many people my age at the time, I was angry at what was going in Ireland and the world, and idealistic about how it could be changed.

Most of my contemporaries in the paper had been heavily politicised by the hunger strikes. For me, if there was one incident that motivated me to get involved, it was the 1988 SAS killings of three unarmed IRA Volunteers in Gibraltar.

In AP/RN, alongside like-minded people, what we didn't get in pay was made up for with the education we got from the then editor, Rita O'Hare.

I'd barely been North of the border or out of the country before I started, so I had a huge amount to learn. Outside of our own struggle, in any given week, I might be researching and writing articles about everything from the struggle of the Mapuche people in South America to the Celtic League's work to expose how British submarines had sunk several trawlers in Irish waters.

My fondest memories of the paper, as journalist and editor, are of the people. I worked with amazingly talented individuals over the years, many of whom have gone on to achieve great things. As editor, I even gave a start to the woman who, for her sins, would later become my wife.



• 1989 Anti Extradition picket - Martin Spain (former editor), Brendan Ó Caoláin, Pauline Brady (former proof reader), Larry O'Toole, Mícheál Mac Donncha (former editor) and Sean Mac Bradaigh (former editor)

— “ —  
*The struggle was ignored, maligned, and revised by those who never wanted to admit the truth about Britain's dirty war in Ireland*  
— ” —

The value of the paper leading up to the late nineties can't be overstated. The struggle was ignored, maligned, and revised by those who never wanted to admit the truth about Britain's dirty war in Ireland and AP/RN went some small way to giving the Republican family and some of the wider public the actual facts of what was happening on our island.

Over time, the success of the peace process, the defeat of state censorship, and Sinn Féin's electoral advances meant the paper's importance as a newspaper of record receded.

It was to be expected, especially with the challenges faced by all news print in the modern age. But it can still play a role, shouting through the noise to advocate for progressive politics in the age of social media.

I don't know yet what the inevitable united Ireland will look like, but I am confident it will be enjoyed by my children's generation. I was delighted the other day when my 11-year-old son revealed he knows all the lyrics to Come Out Ye Black and Tans. The next day, he got into the car and started humming Rule Britannia, which is, apparently, 'a banging tune'.

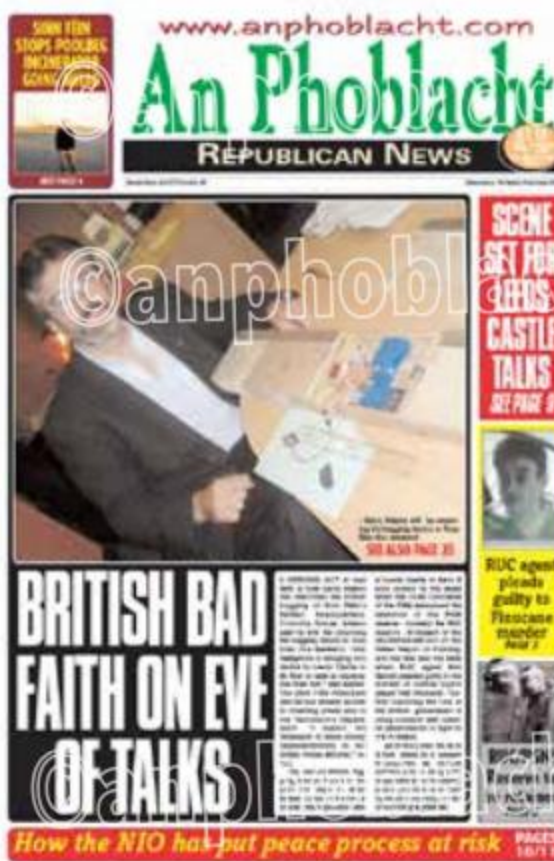
I'm sure they'll sort it out for themselves.

Martin Spain was editor of An Phoblacht/Republican News from 1999 to 2005.

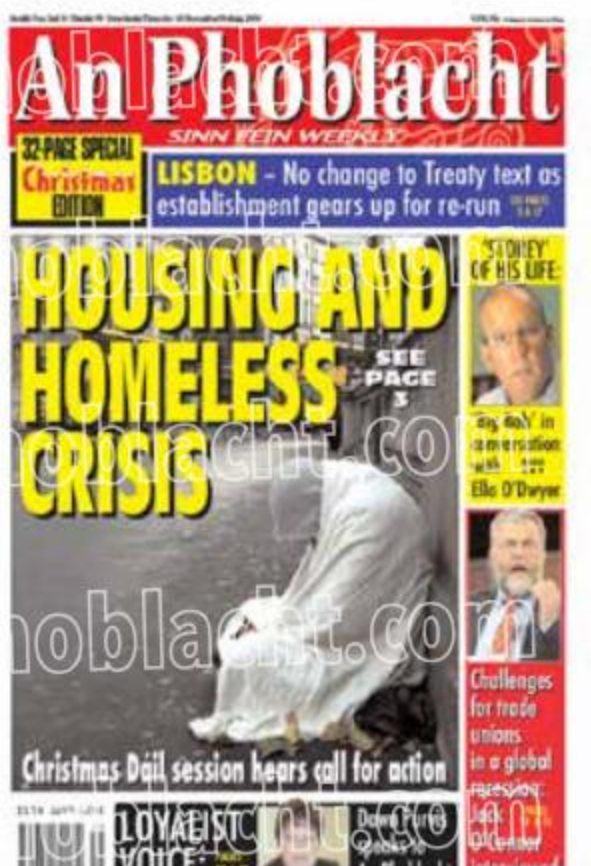
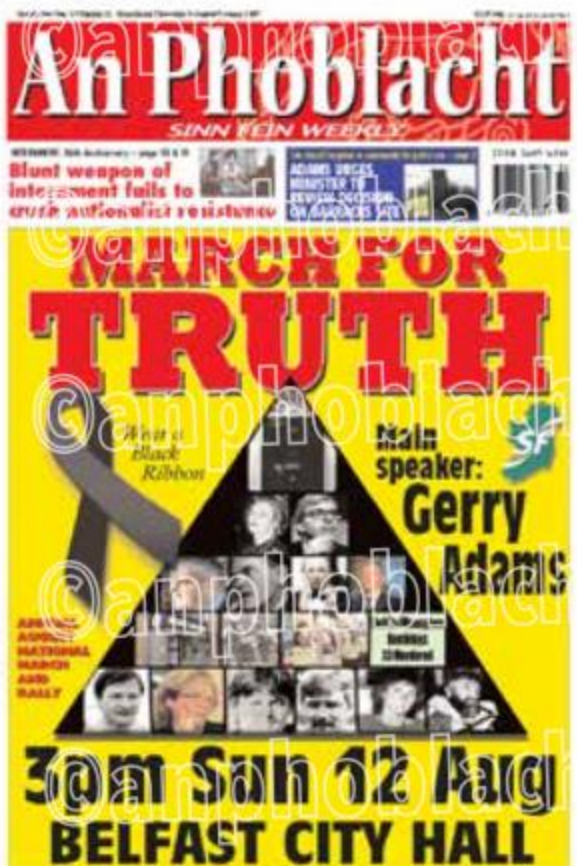


• The 1988 SAS killings in Gibraltar politicised Martin











# A JOURNALIST'S POLITICAL EDUCATION

BY PEADAR WHELAN

On my release from the H Blocks after 16 years, I began work with *An Phoblacht*. As a former life sentence prisoner, writing for the '*Phoblacht*' was a platform for political work, an extension of the political education I was involved in while in jail. It was about promoting republican ideals and policies as well as challenging the narrative of the struggle, particularly that of the mainstream media and our political opponents.

Writing for this 50th Anniversary edition of the paper, I recall how often in situations where I would be labelled a journalist, I would retort "I'm not a journalist, I'm a political activist who uses the media to further republican politics."

However, these political aspirations, these ideas that what I would be engaged in high flying political argument, promoting the ideals and vision of the republic with our ideological enemies, came crashing down in the reality of Belfast in February 1992.

In my first week, eight nationalist civilians were gunned down in two separate attacks on the Sinn Féin centre on the Falls Road at Sevastopol Street and in Sean Graham's Bookmakers on the Ormeau Road. Eleven others were wounded in the shootings which were carried out by an RUC member and a notorious UDA gang based in the Annadale area of South Belfast.

I recalled that week in an article titled 'February 1992 - A Baptism of Fire', which was carried in the February 2017 edition which marked the 25th Anniversary of the killings.

In that article, I highlighted the killing of IRA Volunteer Joe McManus who was shot dead by a British soldier in Fermanagh.

Also shot dead by loyalists that week was Pdraig Ó Cléirigh an Irish language activist and Black Taxi driver.

And, reading through that 25th anniversary article, I

described how I got to know women like Rita McCracken, mother of IRA Volunteer Kevin McCracken killed in action in March 1988, and Patricia Campbell from Turf Lodge who supported me and other life sentence prisoners who were released on license through the North's 'Work Out' scheme.

Both these strong republican women are now dead.

With the reality of these attacks comes the realisation that the political establishments across the North, in Britain, and in the 26 Counties were willing to ignore the British military strategy that we now know and accept as collusion.

And the more and more republicans pointed out that the British military and RUC were facilitating the loyalist death squads in one way or another, the more we were told that our claims of collusion were merely propaganda.

A lot of credit must go to Laura Friel and our other writers who logged so many incidents involving loyalist death squads, listing the activities of the crown forces before and after attacks and seeing the patterns emerge. One all too common

example was when a heavy crown force presence in an area would disappear only for a loyalist gun gang to appear.

The killing of Kathleen O'Hagan in August 1994 by the UVF is an example of the fundamental nature of collusion and exposes how the RUC campaigned against the family. Kathleen's husband Paddy was a former H Block prisoner, The RUC continually carrying out raids on their home and sent out a message to loyalists that the O'Hagan family were 'legitimate targets.'

*An Phoblacht* travelled to the O'Hagan home in County Tyrone and spoke to local republicans. They brought us to where the 'getaway' car was abandoned and speculated that, given the remote nature of the area, their suspicions were that members of the UDR were involved and that they melted into the countryside 'on patrol.'

— “ —  
*In my first week, eight nationalist civilians were gunned down in two separate attacks on the Sinn Féin centre on the Falls Road at Sevastopol Street and in Sean Graham's Bookmakers*  
— ” —



• Rita McCracken shares a joke with Martin McGuinness as Mary Lou McDonald and Stephen McCracken look on





## FEBRUARY 1992 **A baptism of fire with *An Phoblacht***

On the 28th anniversary of the end of the civil war, thousands of the conflict taking in the last two weeks of February **MADEIRA** walking back on the first week in an **Amphibious** Republican forces, **phosphoric acid**. It will be seen that the new **nationalist** **defence** **legislation** **pro** **attacks** **across** **defiant** **while**, **all** **the** **February** **starting**, **a** **young** **200** **Nationalist** **born** **from** **high** **March** **March** **2008** **defiant** **action** **force**, **and** **read** **for** **a** **member** **of** **the** **Black** **Army**.

In the first of two **official** **statements** **on** **Tuesday** **6** **February** **2008**, **Repub** **Lester** **Constitutional** **Public** **Order** **Alan** **Moore** **that** **last** **three** **months** **all** **unarmed** **two** **others** **in** **the** **first** **defiant** **defendants** **at** **Repub** **of** **street**.

The following day **Wednesday** **6** **February**, **republican** **gun** **going** **from** **the** **Ulster** **Defence** **Command** **commanded** **proceeds** **South**.

[illegible]

July 3 **PLANNED** 2002 wedding with the bride and groom at a historic home. Planning for the wedding was a family affair, with the bride's mother, the groom's mother, and the bride's father all playing a role in the planning. The wedding was a celebration of the couple's love and the family's traditions.

[illegible]

...man had entered  
Sinn Féin offices  
on Davastopol Street  
off the Falls Road and  
started fire

It is in situations like this that heroes are found in the most unlikely of places.

[illegible]

and used my Political Science faculty and Art Program staff to teach the course.

My response to the question "What do you think is the most important reason for the success of the course?" was:

My appreciation of the role of the subject in the curriculum.

Responding to my question "What do you think is the most important reason for the success of the course?" I was again very laconic and terse:

It is the subject.

[illegible]

...the fact that the company has been able to secure a PPA in the UK, which will provide it with a long-term source of power, is a significant step towards securing its future energy supply.

...to be surrounded by  
...could contribute  
...in his book  
...to be the  
...the (New York) Society  
...the world's greatest  
...the world's greatest  
...the world's greatest

[illegible][illegible]

Where the story of Kathleen O'Hagan's killing leads is into the fraught and highly contentious area of legacy and how we deal with consequences of the conflict.

In the years after she was gunned down, two of Kathleen's five children have died in tragic circumstances. Tomás, the youngest when his mother was shot dead, died in a fire on the family farm. He was seven when he died. Niall was killed in a motor cycle crash in 2008, while, in between in 2002, Paddy died of a massive heart attack.

These children and their remaining siblings were

traumatised by the killing of their mother and are 'victims' of the conflict.

The British and the unionists want to define 'victimhood' in a way that suits their narrative and their hierarchy of 'victimhood' excludes this family.

Of course, it was always important for us as activists that we stayed focused on the nature of the Orange State, particularly with the issue of loyalist parades becoming a dominant feature of the North's politics.

Through our coverage and reporting, we built relationships with people across the North in

- 'A Baptism of Fire', Peadar's article in February 2017 that recalled a week in February 1992 that eight nationalist civilians were gunned down (left) Kathleen O'Hagan with her husband Paddy

Portadown on the Garvaghy Road, in Ardoyne, and on the Ormeau Road. In one memorable night on the Ormeau Road, we, amongst many other vigilant residents, sat with the English comedian Jeremy Hardy in the Lower Ormeau Residents offices with the RUC surrounding the building.

The RUC had imposed a curfew on the area in order to facilitate an Orange Parade the following day. Hardy who was supporting the residents' objections to the Orange Parade referenced the experience in a *Guardian* article written in August 1999.

Describing the issue at the core of the marching dispute, Hardy wrote "We are not dealing with competing traditions. We are dealing with expressions of dominance and the reactions of the Commission cannot balance the right not to be humiliated."

If there is one point I would make to finish off and sum up the important role *An Phoblacht* played in these situations, it would be that around this time I ended up 'doing the photos' and was in Ardoyne to cover the annual coat-trailing Orange Parade on its return journey to Ballysillan.

In a stroke of genius, the British deployed the Parachute Regiment to the area and, needless to say, the tension in the area was sky high and unsurprisingly erupted into severe rioting, during which I was hit on the head with a missile!

The cover of that week's paper carried one of my photos, a young man on the ground as an RUC officer stood over him with his baton raised. Every other media outlet that week pointed the finger of blame on the people of Ardoyne for the trouble, whereas our image exposed the RUC as the aggressors.

A job well done.

- Peadar's picture from 2004 Ardoyne coat-trailing Orange Parade showing the RUC were aggressors (right) the late English comedian Jeremy Hardy

— “ —  
A lot of credit must go to  
Laura Friel and our other  
writers who logged so  
many incidents involving  
loyalist death squads





# An important and historic role in the struggle

BY SEÁN Mac BRADAIGH

Although I had come across the odd copy here and there since at least 1979, the first issue of *An Phoblacht* that I actually bought was during the Hunger Strikes in the summer of 1981.

I was on my holidays in Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim and I bought the paper from Anna Gallogly, a republican who worked for the late John Joe McGirl, the well known and lifelong republican activist and Sinn Féin Vice President at the time.

This was shortly after the celebrated break-out by republican prisoners from Belfast's Crumlin Road jail. Adorning the front page was a photograph of Dingus Magee who was now 'on the run' and giving a defiant, clenched fist salute to a cheering crowd from the platform at Bodinstown during the Wolfe Tone Commemoration.

At that time, John Joe and Anna were probably the only real, live republicans I had actually met. But, back home in Dublin, I didn't know any republicans. My only contact with republican politics was *An Phoblacht*, which I read avidly. I often brought copies of the paper into school to pass around among my classmates.

One particular edition had a major impact on my teenage self. It was during the summer of 1983 and the edition covered the Wolfe Tone commemoration at Bodinstown, including the oration by Gerry Adams. I was hugely inspired by Gerry's words and it was there and then that I made the decision to join Sinn Féin.

After a few years of peripheral and intermittent involvement, I eventually joined the Martin McKenna Cumann on the northside of Dublin. A fellow cumann member was Mícheál Mac Donncha who worked as a journalist at *An Phoblacht*. Mícheál soon became my conduit to getting articles published in the paper.

Around 1988, I became a full-time *An Phoblacht* staff member under editor Rita O'Hare. The paper had recently moved from offices in the Kevin Barry Memorial Hall on Dublin's Parnell Square to new premises a few doors away at Number 58.

*An Phoblacht* then was an exciting place to work - a hive of activity staffed by a collection of enthusiastic, energetic, and mainly young republicans. I felt very much at home.

Although diminutive in stature, one figure loomed very large in *An Phoblacht* in those days - the brilliant Rita O'Hare. Rita was a focussed, disciplined republican activist and committed to *An Phoblacht's* role in the struggle. She engendered loyalty and a strong work ethic in her young charges among the editorial and layout staff. Full of straightforward common sense, she also didn't suffer fools gladly and



• The late John Joe McGirl

— “ —  
*All of us who have worked on the paper share a deep affinity with An Phoblacht and its important and historic role in the struggle*  
— ” —

had a fearsome reputation! I very much looked up to Rita and still do.

A year or two after I joined the paper, Rita moved on to the role of Sinn Féin Director of Publicity and Mícheál Mac Donncha was appointed editor. Mícheál was a very capable editor and steered the paper through the early years of the Peace Process with great skill. As editor, he was very good at giving feedback and direction and he was and is an excellent writer.

Producing a weekly newspaper like *An Phoblacht* in the 1980s and early 1990s was a much more labour intensive exercise than a similar operation would be today. It required considerable skills from the paper's layout and design people such as Danny Devenny, Mark Dawson, and Liam Murphy. Light boxes, glue, scalpels, and typesetting machines were the order of the day.

This very physical process lent a busy, industrious atmosphere to the office, especially on Wednesday evenings when the paper went to print. The vitality and excitement of the place was enhanced by the free-spirited youth of the staff who were great fun to work with in those heady days.

Initially writing reviews of various types, I also served my time as a proof-reader, working alongside more experienced proofers such as Robin Dunwoody and Margaret Robertson - colourful, interesting, and intelligent characters whose company I was privileged to share.

I soon moved on to writing news and features with my pieces typeset by Tina Smith. I was in *An Phoblacht* when computers arrived,



• An Phoblacht was one of the first newspapers in Ireland to be fully computerised



# An Phoblacht

SINN FÉIN WEEKLY

• NEWS • FEATURES • WORLD VIEW • REVIEWS  
SPORT • IRISH LANGUAGE • HISTORY • HUMOUR



• Seán Mac Bradaigh at a relaunch of the paper in October 2005

and, in this regard, we were ahead of many of the much greater resourced mainstream newspapers.

Everyone at *An Phoblacht* had the greatest respect and admiration for the paper's delivery drivers in the North. They risked their lives every week to ensure the paper got to our readers despite constant harassment from British forces and targeting by unionist paramilitaries.

I made lifelong friendships in those early years at *An Phoblacht* - too many to list here.

When I later moved on to work in various other capacities for the Movement, my relationship with the paper continued and I contributed articles whenever I could.

I had the honour and privilege of being appointed as the paper's editor in 2005, the centenary year of Sinn Féin's foundation, and served in that position for five years.

My time as editor was an eventful period for Irish republicanism. It covered seismic events, including Sinn Féin's historic agreement with the DUP which restored the North's Executive, serious violence caused by forcing Orange marches through nationalist areas in north Bel-

fast, and the financial meltdown in the South and fateful state bailout of Irish banks.

But it is the edition of 28 July, 2005 which, for me, stands out most from my time as editor. That week, we covered the IRA's decision to end its armed campaign. It seemed an awesome re-

— “ —

*It is the edition of 28 July, 2005 which, for me, stands out most from my time as editor. That week, we covered the IRA's decision to end its armed campaign*

— ” —

sponsibility to me to deal with this truly historic moment in our country and our Movement's history.

How to pay worthy tribute to the huge courage and sacrifice of the IRA's Volunteers over three decades in a newspaper with finite space? But we did our very best and I was relieved and gratified by the response from key republican figures who served at the forefront of our struggle over all those years.

All of us who have worked on the paper share a deep affinity with *An Phoblacht* and its important and historic role in the struggle.

When I bought that first copy back in 1981, it was the only way of getting a republican view of what was going on in the country. Today, people of the same age go online for political news and analysis. And, in a vastly changed media environment, *An Phoblacht*, as always, has adapted and moved with the times with an expanded online presence and an attractive hard copy magazine format.

*An Phoblacht* is still very much playing its role within Irish republicanism and long may it continue. *An Phoblacht Abú!*





# From the Den to Dublin

BY ROBBIE SMYTH

**JOHN HEDGES** came to *An Phoblacht* as a reporter in 1982 and was the paper's editor from 2010 to the end of 2017

Anyone involved with *An Phoblacht* in the past 40 years has a John Hedges story. If you were a writer, it was often to recount how he cheerfully highlighted a grammatical error in your work that had passed the proofers and editors by.

And as gleeful as John is about other people's grammatical errors, he was more likely to offer words of encouragement and interest in your articles. In the robust

world of an often turbulent weekly *An Phoblacht* production schedule, this was an unusual feat.

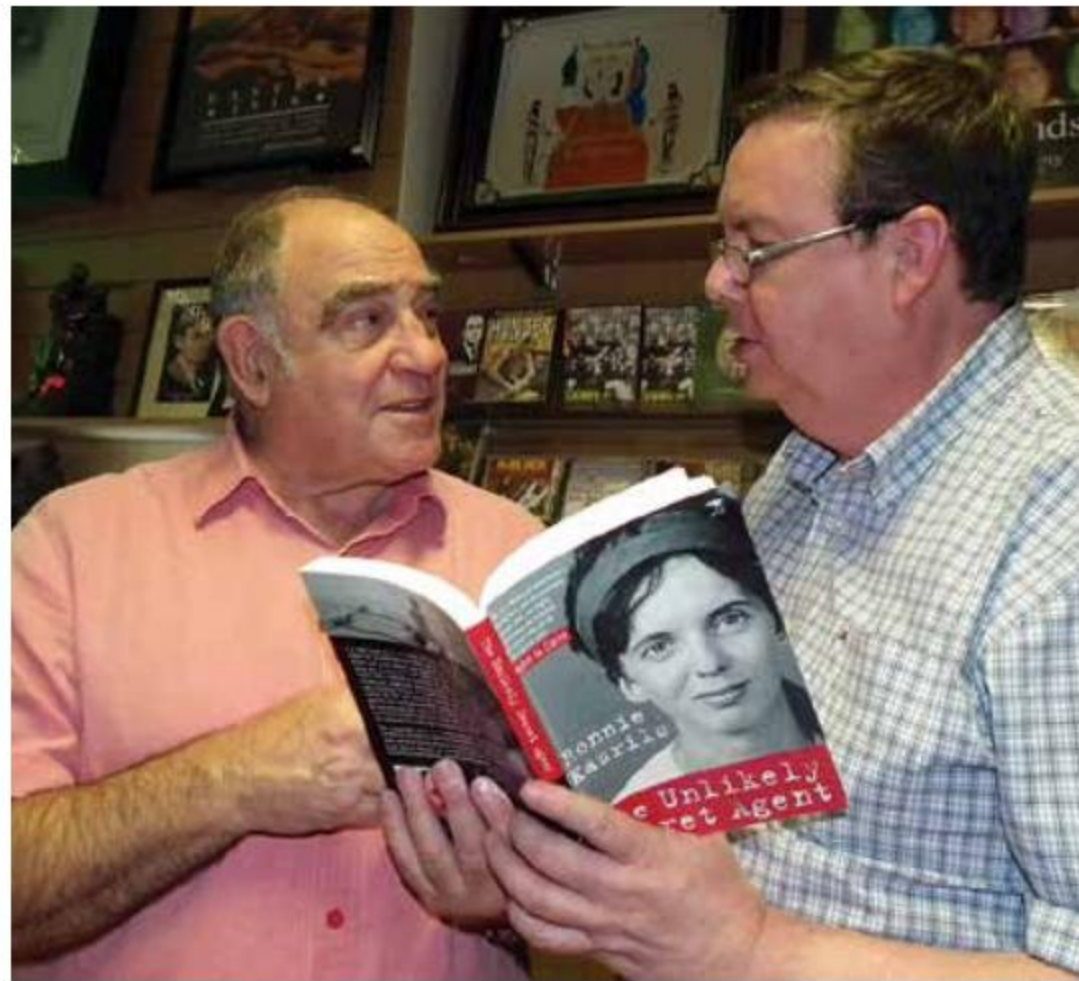
John's avuncular calmness was an asset during his time as a reporter, sub editor, and, finally, editor of *An Phoblacht*. He encouraged and gently pressed writers to up their game and stretch themselves.

Even when John wasn't working for the paper and was gainfully employed elsewhere, he was still often to be found on the production floor in Dublin. And on Thursday when the fresh printed copies came back from the printer, John was always to be found pouring over that week's output.

—“—

*John's avuncular calmness was an asset during his time as a reporter, sub editor, and, finally, editor of An Phoblacht. He encouraged and gently pressed writers to up their game and stretch themselves*

—”—



• Former ANC Minister, Ronnie Kasrils at the Dublin launch of his book 'The Unlikely Secret Agent' with *An Phoblacht* Editor John Hedges, June 2011

In 2010, when John returned to *An Phoblacht* as editor, he was interviewed by Ella O'Dwyer. He explained how he had applied for a reporter and proof reading job in 1982.

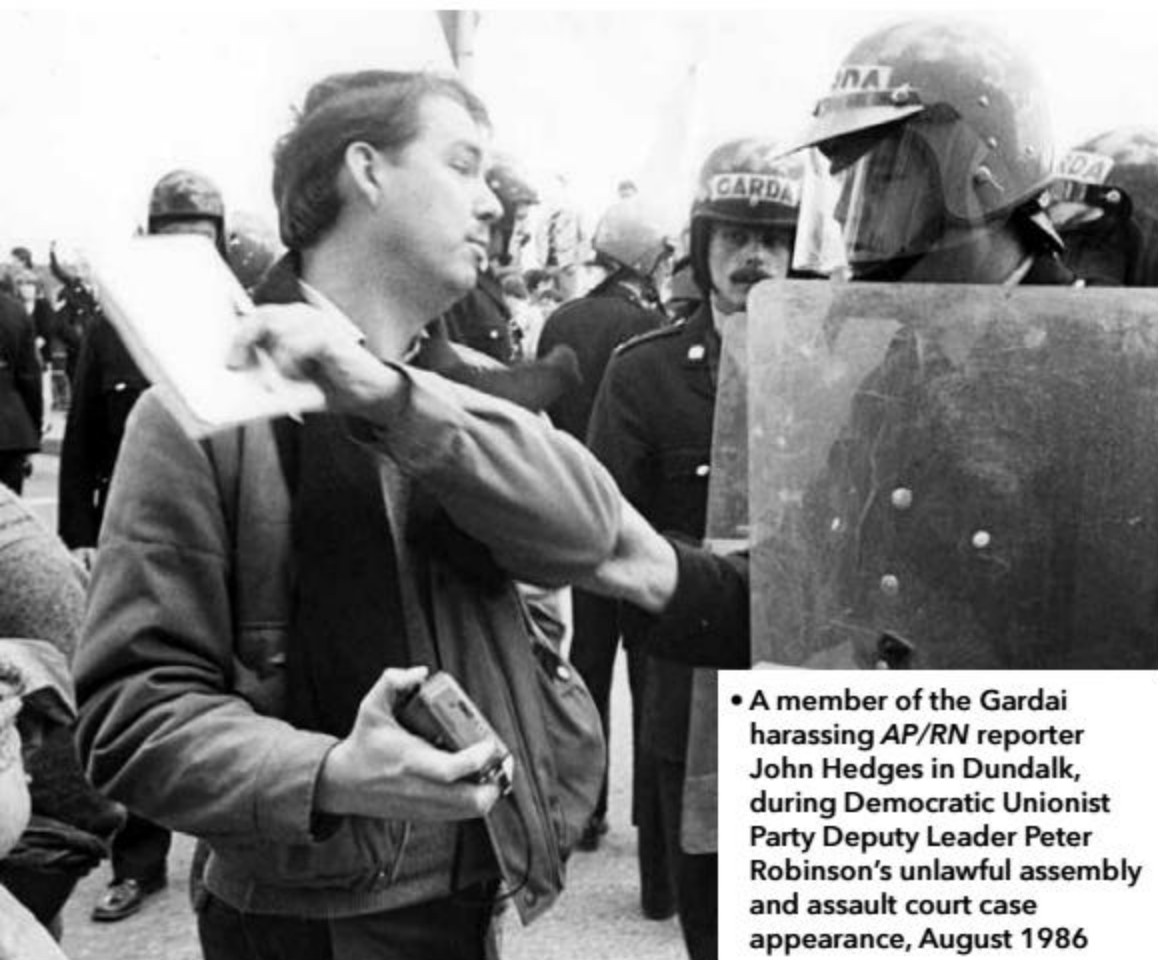
He told Ella that, "The late, great Mick Timothy was editor then and he taught me practically everything I know about writing for newspapers". Ella wrote that, "The lessons were sometimes painful from the genial, but no-nonsense, Manchester-born editor".

John told Ella "My very first attempt at an article was on four hand-written A4 pages. Mick looked at it, told me (encouragingly) everywhere I was going wrong and sent me off to give it another go".

"My second draft was better but still not quite there; try again, Mick said. The third was handed up and he said that I was almost there - once more. I was losing the will to live and begged Mick to add his expert touch to what was needed and push the piece through. He heard my plea... and tore up the hand-written pages into pieces and tossed them in the bin, making the obvious observation that he couldn't finish it now and I'd just have to do it all again and properly. I did - and I never forgot that lesson."

Like Mick Timothy, John was born in Britain, London rather Manchester, and, like Mick, found his way to Ireland.


John has a breadth of political and historical knowledge and a vocabulary to match. His commitment to working class politics and the struggles of people around the world to basic rights is undiminished. The only commitment that matches this is his ongoing devotion to Millwall FC. You can take the boy out of East London but....



• A member of the Gardai harassing AP/RN reporter John Hedges in Dundalk, during Democratic Unionist Party Deputy Leader Peter Robinson's unlawful assembly and assault court case appearance, August 1986



The 'Postcards from the New Republic' series is a hat tip to British designer, artist, entrepreneur and Socialist William Morris's 'News from Nowhere' series of articles from 1890 published in the Commonweal, the newspaper of the Socialist League and set in a distant future where Morris's socialist and romantic utopia has been secured. Our story's protagonists are Willa Ní Chuairteoir and Lucy Byrne accompanied by their four children James, Afric, Banba, and Alroy who together enjoy and endure the equity and exigency of the future's New Republic.

To check in with the family, visit  
 [fb.me/PostcardsfromtheNewRepublic](https://fb.me/PostcardsfromtheNewRepublic)

# POSTCARDS FROM A NEW REPUBLIC



• BY SINÉAD  
• NÍ BHROIN

'Ma, shouts Alroy. Have you ever heard this one?

'Janey Mack me shirt is black,  
'What'll I do for Sunday?

'Go to bed and cover your head,  
'And don't get up till Monday.

'Ma, did you hear me yells' Alroy. 'God himself heard you', his Nana Eileen shouts back. 'Put that project away and give me a hand with the dinner. Why does everyone in this house have to roar at each other' Eileen mumbles as she laughs to herself. Eileen is Lucy's Mam. She moved in with the family earlier this year.

Alroy grabs a big cardboard display, stomps noisily down the stairs and bursts into the kitchen. 'Where's Ma?' 'She left ages ago' Eileen tells him as she gently places an apron over his head. 'Turn around and I'll tie that for you. She got the lunchtime train to Dublin. It's her Mam and Dad's anniversary, remember?' 'Oh yeah. I forgot. Did the others go with her?' 'They did love. It's just you and me tonight. Now put that project down and start peeling those carrots for me'.

Willa's Mam and Dad died a few years ago. First her Mam, and then her Dad a year later to the day. Eileen was great friends with them both and misses them more

than she ever lets on. When their anniversary comes around, she always volunteers to mind the kids that need to stay at home. Best to keep herself busy.

This year, James, Afric, and Banba have all taken the new high-speed train to Dublin with Willa. It's the kids first trip on the new line which completes Ireland's high speed rail network. When cars were taken off the roads after the Great Global Flood, a massive public investment was rolled out in Ireland and across all EU member states. Intercity buses have now been replaced by high speed trains and local solar powered feeder buses. As Minister for Economic Sustainability, completion of the network is a big deal for Lucy, and the family.

'Ah Nana, I hate peeling veg' Alroy moans. 'Why don't you do the carrots while I show you my project', he says with an impish grin. 'Go on then'. Eileen knew she would have no chance of getting the young fella to give a hand with the cooking but as her own Mother used to say, 'God loves a trier!'

Alroy lifts his project onto the kitchen

table and asks his Nana *what she thinks?* Jeepers, that's brilliant Eileen exclaims. It's a vision board, he says proudly. Eileen sits down with mock seriousness and says so, tell me what I'm looking at kiddo.

Alroy stands up and with a little flourish begins his presentation. 'My project is called 'Me Darlin Dublin'. We had to create our own magazine about where we were born. Everyone in my class was expecting me to do one like Ma's magazine but I got a much better idea. Willa is the Editor of Dublin's oldest Magazine, 'The Voice'.

'Banba had these really old books all about Dublin. This man called Éamonn Mac Thomáis wrote them' Alroy said, his lisp a little stronger with the excitement of having an audience. 'He was a real Dub as you would say Nana. He even used to be on the telly! His books are really cool. But then Banba told me that he used be an Editor like Ma but for 'An Phoblacht'. Did you know that Nana?'

'An Phoblacht' has been in print for as long as Eileen can remember. It has remained a critical and, at times, lone voice for progressive republican values throughout the decades.

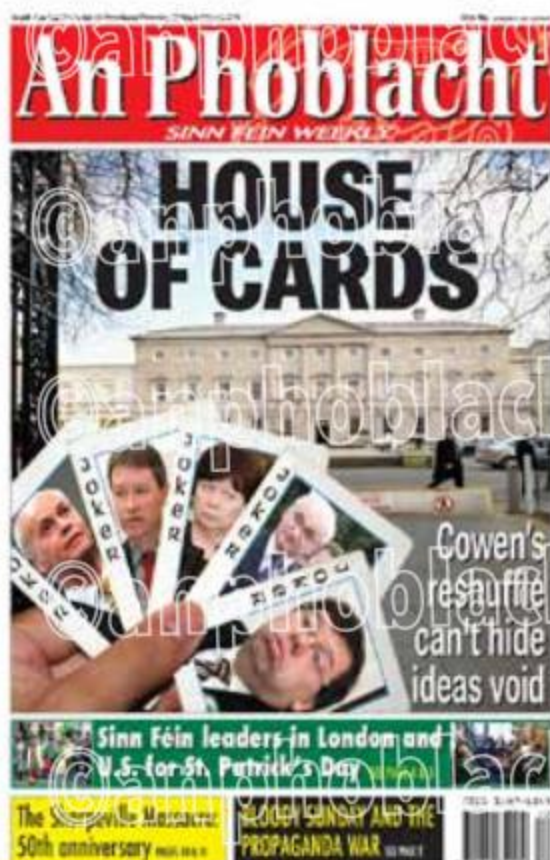
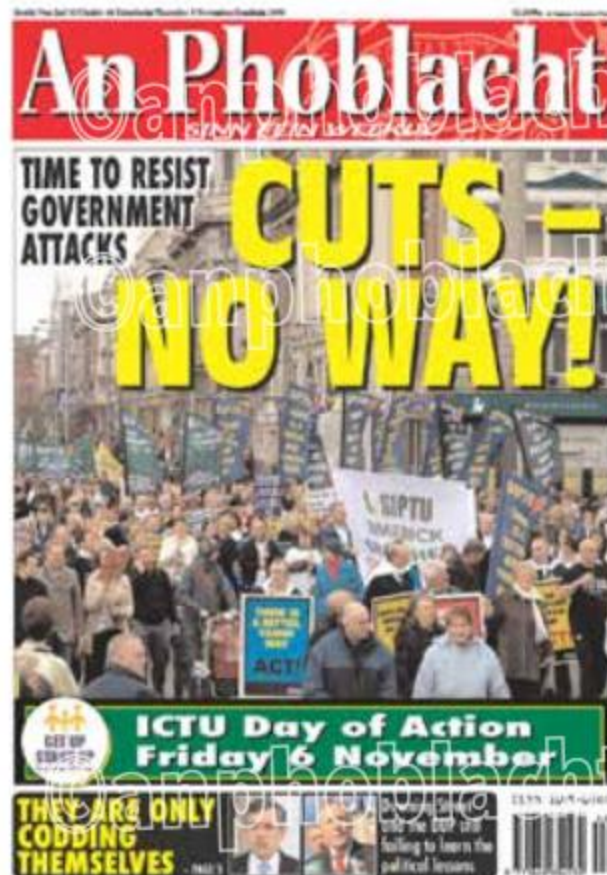
'Come on Nana, pay attention! So, what I've done is made my magazine just like 'An Phoblacht' was when Eamonn was in charge. He wrote some brilliant books about Dublin and about the people. They had cool names like 'Janey Mack me Shirt is Black', just like the nursery rhyme. And he wrote this other one, 'Gur Cake Coal Blocks'. I love that one. Ma said your Mammy used to buy gur cake, and that it was made from leftovers. Imagine that!'

Eileen heart is now bursting with pride and happy memories. She swoops Alroy up in her arms and hugs him tightly. 'My Mam used to get her gur cake from St Catherine's Bakery in Thomas Court. No-one loved the Liberties like my Mam. She was so proud of where she came from'. 'Just like Eamonn', Alroy says as he nuzzles into his Nana. 'Yes kiddo, just like Eamonn'.

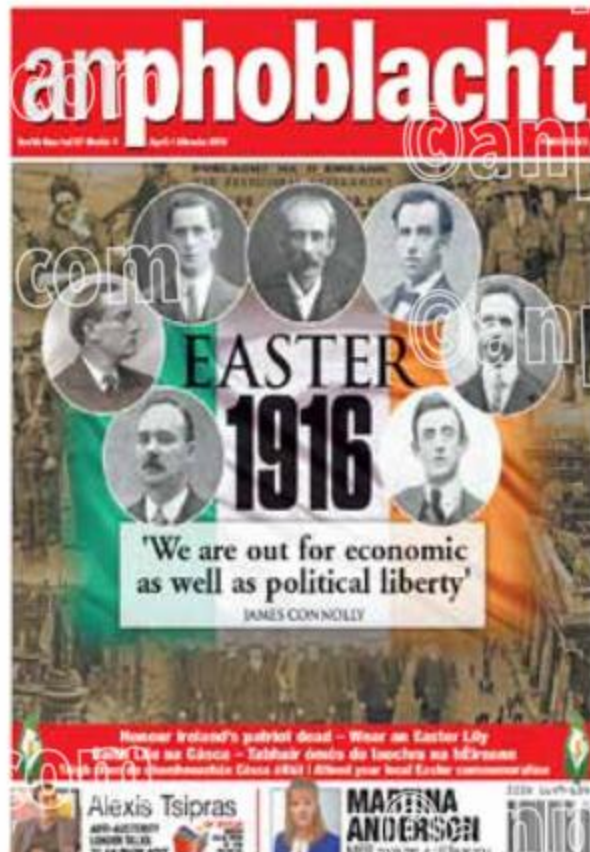
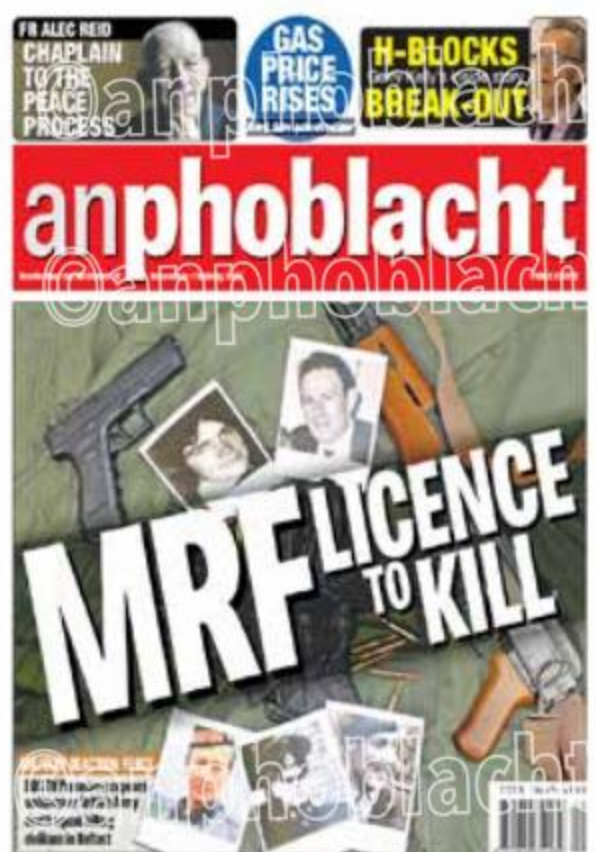
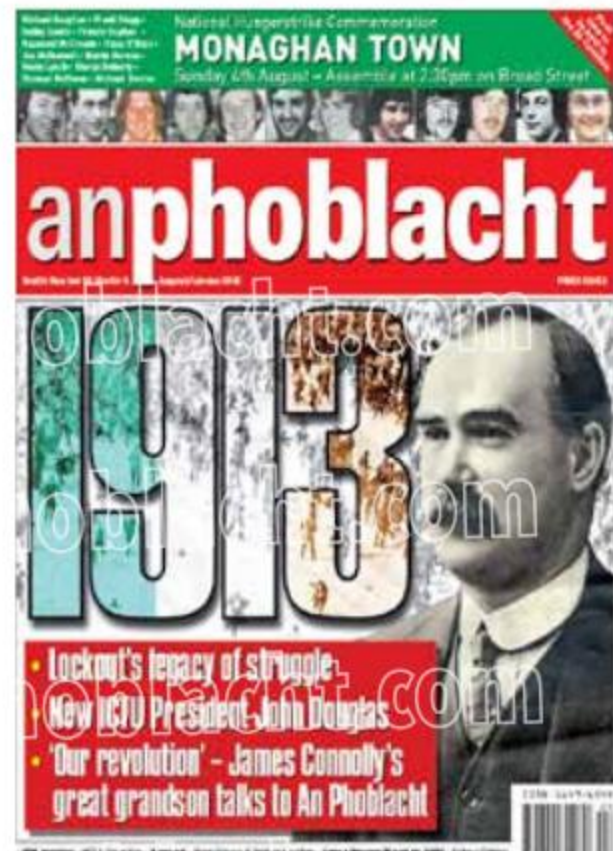


• Éamonn  
Mac Thomáis











# YOU'LL KNOW WHAT TO WRITE

**BRIAN CAMPBELL** was editor of *An Phoblacht* from 1996 to 1999. He came to the paper in 1995 as a Reviews editor.

Brian died suddenly in 2005. Here, his long time writing collaborator **LAURENCE MCKEOWN** gives a personal insight into Brian's years of writing and political activism.

For Brian, politics was about more than dry theories. It had to be about the life of real people and expressed through art, satire, humour, personal narrative, and more

I first met Brian Campbell shortly after he arrived into the H-Blocks in the mid-1980s. Brian took to jail like a duck takes to water. He had access to political books and magazines, was immersed in a culture of political debate and discussion, and could play football daily in the yard. All that was missing was his friend, soulmate, and wife, Gráinne.

At that time, as a member of the IRA's camp staff, I was in charge of our political education programme – a programme that was by then moving into a more cultural, creative, and artistic phase. Brian had both an interest and skill in writing and we just happened to be on the same wing together. It was the beginning of what was to become a very creative collaboration and lifelong friendship – though tragically that life was cut short so abruptly in 2005 when Brian died, aged just 45.

My first experience of Brian's writing and editing skills was when we started poetry workshops. By coincidence, around that time typewriters were introduced to the prison, having become obsolete in the outside world with the arrival of computers and word processors.

Although it should not be the case, reading something in print can give it more credibility than reading the same words handwritten on a page. Brian and I decided, therefore, that we should produce a small magazine containing a selection of poems from the workshops. The outcome was, *Scairt Amach (Shout Out)*, a few A4 pages which Brian typed up, using his

customary one finger of each hand to strike the keys with. A friendly teacher photocopied the pages, stapled them into an A5 format, and we distributed the magazine around the camp.

The poetry workshops, in turn, gave rise to other literary endeavours which further expressed our desire to 'have our own voice heard'. The most significant of those occurred in the autumn of 1989 when we

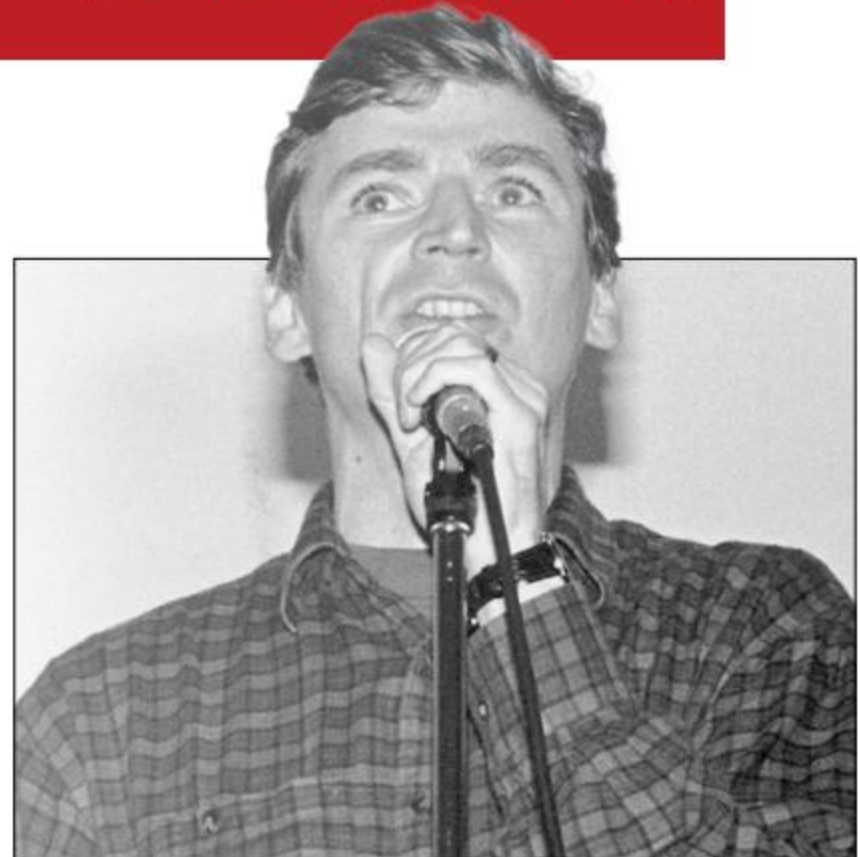
established the magazine, wholly compiled and edited by prisoners, *An Glór Gafa/The Captive Voice*.

Brian was the ideal choice to become first editor of the magazine. In an interview I conducted with him years later for a doctoral thesis about the prison, he recalled; "I think some people may have seen it as being purely about politics and the argument I made, and I'm sure you made the same one, was that it had to be a variety; art work, politics, satire, and humour."

And that's the approach that Brian took in all his future works. For Brian, politics was about more than dry theories. It had to be about the

life of real people and expressed through, art, satire, humour, personal narrative, and more. *Nor Meekly Serve My Time: the H-Block Struggle 1976-1981*, which Brian (clandestinely) compiled in the prison in 1989/1990, is based on personal narratives - narratives which contain many accounts of humour, pain, comradeship, and personal challenges faced.

When both of us were released from prison in the early 1990s, we



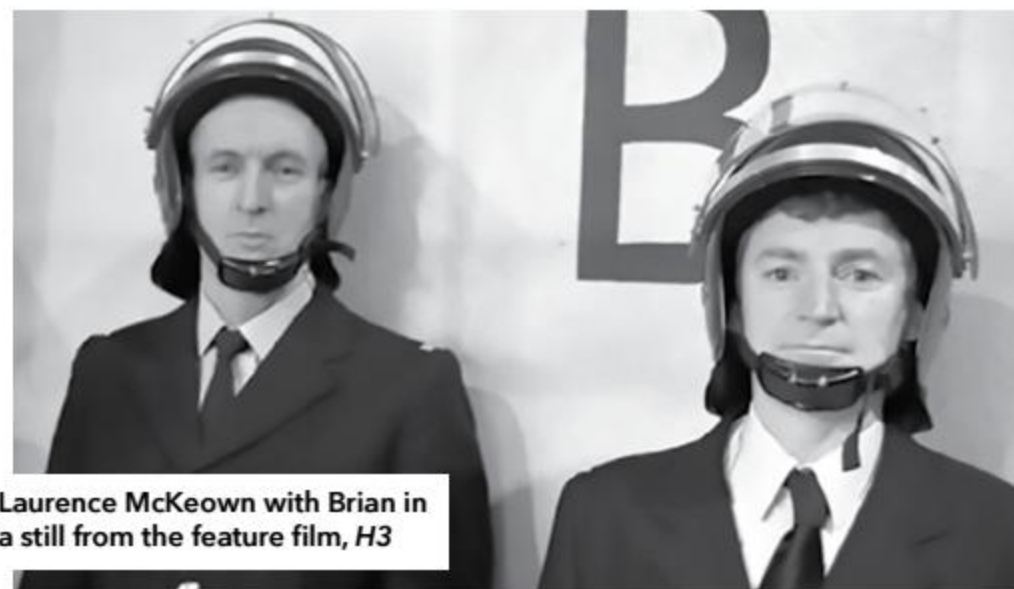
collaborated on other creative projects; including the feature film, *H3*, the plays, *The Laughter Of Our Children* and *A Cold House*, produced by Dubbeljoint Theatre.

When he was appointed Editor of *An Phoblacht* in 1996, a position he held until 1999, he asked me to write a weekly column for the paper. I asked him what he wanted me to write about. He replied, "You'll know what to write."

He never questioned the content of my articles, but, of course, did challenge the writing. Brian despised redundant words or worn-out clichés. For him, each word had to have a reason for being on the page. Gentle by nature, he was rigid when it came to word excess, preferring brevity to make the intended point.

Brian was not one to make a dramatic entrance. Not the one at the meeting who raised his hand repeatedly to restate what several speakers before him had just said. He was the one you spoke to afterwards to see what thoughts he had on taking forward the outcome of the meeting, as he was sure to have them. And not just thoughts but notes too, because Brian always carried a pen and small notebook with him wherever he went.

Not one to make a dramatic entrance, his sudden departure from this world left me, and others who knew him, devastated. Because Brian grew on you; grew on you until one day you suddenly realised he is not just important to you, he has become an important part of you.



• Laurence McKeown with Brian in a still from the feature film, *H3*





# CORMAC STRIKES BACK

## Remembering **BRIAN MOORE**, *An Phoblacht's* legendary cartoonist

BY ROBBIE SMYTH



*An Phoblacht* readers still remember Cormac cartoons. They often have favourites and, like me, you probably cut a few out of the paper over the years, as that week's work was so funny or searingly cutting that you couldn't let it go. His cartoons featured weekly in *An Phoblacht* for nearly 30 years.

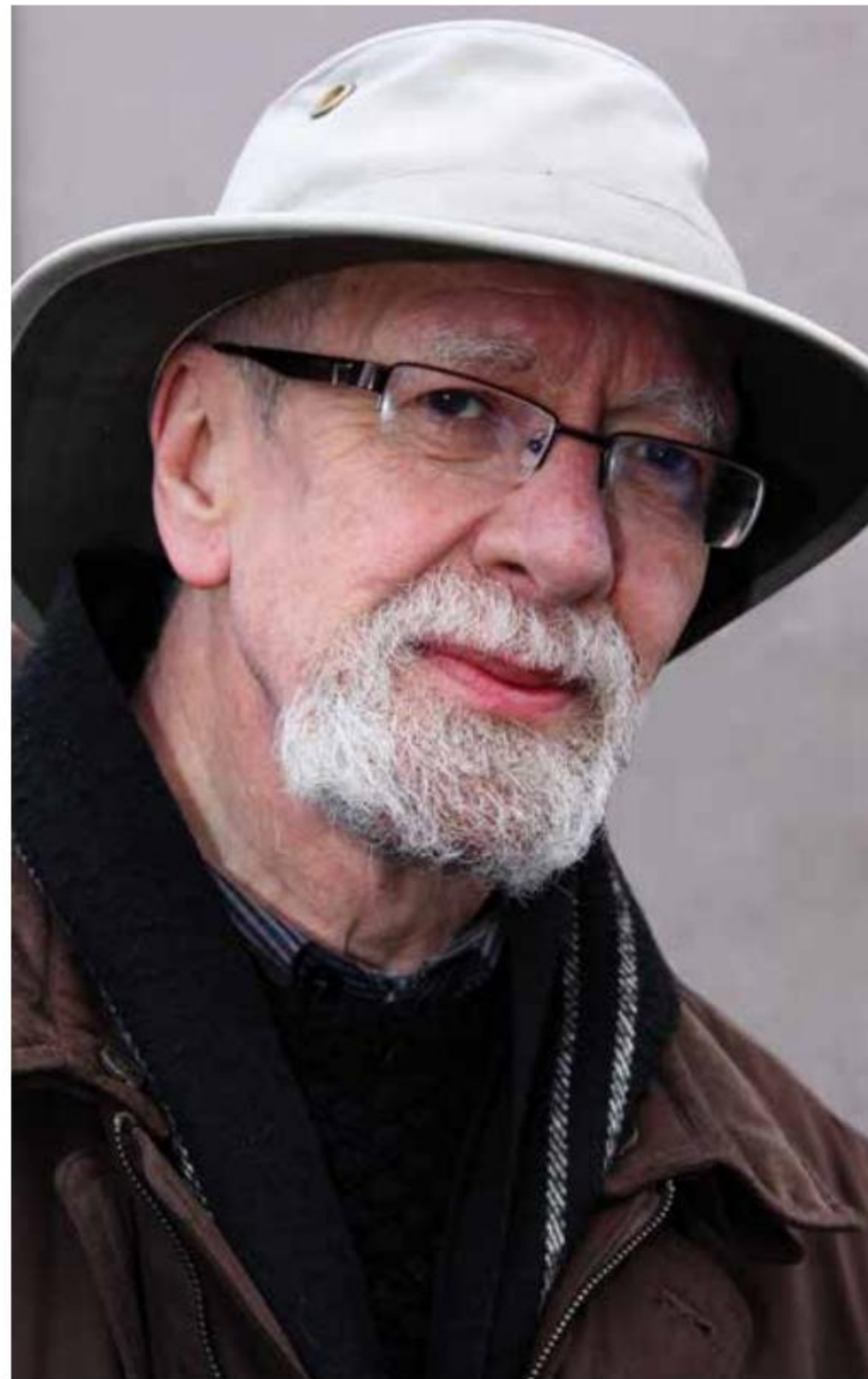
As one of the writers there, I, like many others, endured all too regular reader taunts that Cormac was the only reason that they bought the paper, other than to read the "war news". We knew this. We knew what a gem Cormac's work was.

Cormac was in the same league as the *Guardian's* Steve Bell, Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury* or Art Spiegelman in the *New Yorker*. His work and artistic ability lifted us and the paper week in, week out. We wanted to be better to match the irrepressible imagination and ability that Cormac effortlessly demonstrated.

Cormac was in fact Brian Moore, a singing, song-writing folk

artist with his own band, the People of No Property. He wrote, songs, plays, and even put together a monologue celebrating Christy Moore called 'Paddy on the Road'.

In Brian's *An Phoblacht* obituary, Peadar Whelan captured the scale of Moore's song writing talent. He wrote that Brian was "a writer of brilliant political songs and a singer



of the highest quality. In the best traditions of Pete Seeger or Bob Dylan, the Moore pen produced protest songs that inspired, raised awareness and, of course, poked fun at the political establishment".

During his lifetime, there were three Cormac books printed, beginning in 1982 with 'Cormac Strikes Back', 'the Comic Book of M15', and finally the 'Peace Process according to Cormac'. There should have been more.

Brian also created his own short publication called 'Resistance Comics' in the 1970s and, under the name Kormski, collaborated in the Dog Collars strip published in *Fortnight* during the 1980s. His work was also published during the 1970s and '80s in the British periodicals *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Action*.

Speaking after Brian's death in 2011, former Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams said that, "His weekly contribution to the paper touched on the big issues of the time; the war, repression, sectarianism, collusion, and much more. His cartoons lampooned







# Invisible Women

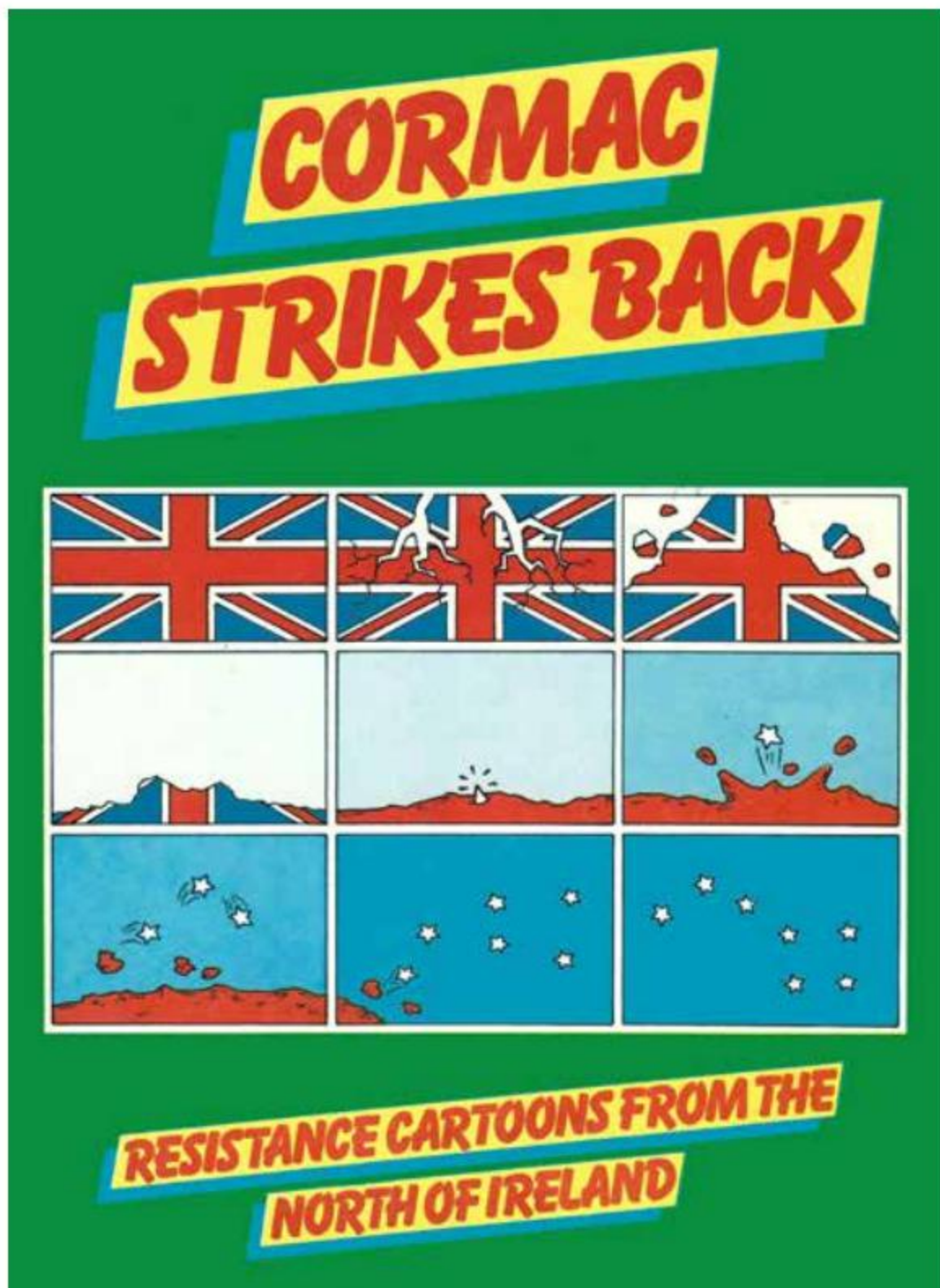
(BY BRIAN MOORE)

The singer sings a rebel song  
and everybody sings along.  
Just one thing I'll never understand:  
Every damn rebel seems to be a  
man.

For he sings of the Bold Fenian Men  
And the Boys of the Old Brigade.  
What about the women who stood  
there too  
"When history was made"?

Ireland, Mother Ireland, with your  
freedom loving sons,  
Did your daughters run and hide at  
the sound of guns?  
Or did they have some part in the  
fight  
And why does everybody try to keep  
them out of sight?

For they sing of the Men of the West  
And the Boys of Wexford too.  
Were there no women living round  
those parts:  
Tell me, what did they do?



the British Army and RUC, the British Government, and media. If he witnessed injustice, he turned his satirist's pen loose".

Notes by Cormac covered a range of topics; from the conflict, elections, political issues across Ireland, a never ending critique of the intricacies of British imperialism, and, every now and then, the writers and editors of *An Phoblacht*.

His socialist republican beliefs permeated the years of Cormac cartoons. Moore was relentless in deflating those who sought to marginalise the Belfast community he was part of and he provided stinging rebukes to those politicians who sought to explain away the causes of political conflict in Ireland.

Brian's cartoon world was a magical place, populated with crazy generals, biased media commentators, sectarian politicians, and luckless British soldiers, often accompanied by the calm reflection of a bystander taking all of this in. And, through humour, Brian raised issues about equality and gender rights that were only beginning to become part of public discourse at the time.

Cormac's universe was a surreal one, with eerie plants and array of creatures popping out of crevices and holes in the ground, all speaking truths about the reality of life in Ireland.

Two personal favourites of mine are firstly the colour cover of the 1982 'Cormac Strikes Back' book, where the Union Jack splinters, dissolves, and reforms as a Starry Plough flag. Then, there is a standalone frame of a guitarist sitting in front of a half empty glass, his head an open hemisphere, with a small man inside, wearing sunglasses and a flat cap, proclaiming that, "On a clear day, you can see the revolution from here".

In coming editions of *An Phoblacht*, we are going to republish some of the classic Cormac cartoons and so bring a new generation of activists to the magic of his work.



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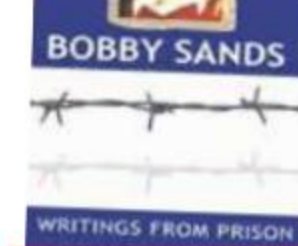
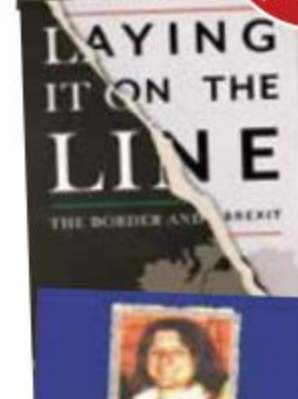
2021 is also the centenary of the most intense phase of the struggle for freedom when the Army of the Irish Republic fought British crown forces to a standstill and brought the British government to the negotiating table. Tragically the British government succeeded in dividing Ireland and in establishing two states on our island.

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