

FREE IRELAND

NEWSPAPER OF THE ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE 5p

THE WHITE PAPER ILLUSIONS ON OFFER

by Eammon McCann

the Tories believed firmly, on the basis of advice from the Army, that this would be achieved within the year and that by March '73 they would be in a position to formulate clearly their blueprint for the Irish future. A glance at the statements of Cabinet Ministers and high-ranking Army officers a year ago, will confirm just how confident they were at that point. But the IRA has not been defeated, despite the cacophonous chorus of condemnation from Tories Orange, Green and pastel-pink, Church "dignitaries" and gaggles of "peace-women". And because the IRA has not been defeated, Whitelaw now finds it impossible to produce an unambiguous plan.

AFTER THE ELECTIONS

For example; it is not at all clear what powers the "Assembly" will have. The Tories say they will decide after

the election, when they see who, in the light of a continued IRA campaign, has been elected. If the Assembly comprises people unwilling, for whatever reason, to go along with Tory intentions, it will simply be abolished in March '74 and "old-style" direct rule resumed.

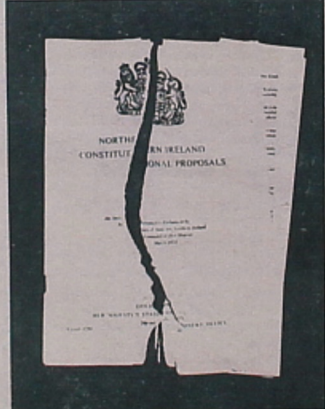
HOLDING THE FORT

The "Irish Dimension" has neither length, breadth nor height and there is no firm commitment even to a "Council of Ireland" which could chat about the Tourist trade (R.I.P.).

In fact, the more one stares at the White Paper, the more it dissolves into nothingness. It is a holding operation to keep the situation in check until the IRA is finally dealt with. Until then internment will continue under the Diplock proposals, and so will harassment of Catholic areas. In the South, the Cosgrave regime will use all means available, including its whole naval might, to smash Republican intransigence.

In this situation, the role of the AIL is clear. It is to continue to mobilise in solidarity with those fighting Imperialism and to combat at every level any illusions sown by the White Paper.

It is vital that all those who claim to oppose British Imperialism in Ireland, re-double, or resume, their activity within the AIL, and ensure that there is no consensus in Britain for the Tories' proposals.



Command 5259- File under irrelevant.

Coventry Police Raid

Over 200 people demonstrated outside Coventry Magistrates Court, in a picket organised by Coventry AIL, cheered six Irish defendants as they entered the Court, under heavy police guard, to answer conspiracy charges.

The six were arrested after police swooped on the homes of Irishmen and British socialists in the early hours of the morning. The raids were carried out by Special Branch men, including members of the RUC Special Branch operating in Coventry, and groups of police commandos.

PART OF A PATTERN

Altogether about eighty homes were raided, thirty seven in the Coventry district alone. The only link between the people raided was their connection with relief organisations working around the Irish question. The raids are similar to the ones which took place last year after the Aldershot bomb explosions, when Republicans and members of the International Socialists and the IMG were among those singled out for this particular kind of police attention.

Authors' books, personal belongings and documents were seized. These latest raids are part of a pattern of police repression which has steadily mounted over the last year. Organisations on the British Left and Irish exile organisations are increasingly coming under police harassment.

UNITED ACTION AGAINST THE RAIDS

Over 800 people filled Conway Hall in London recently in a meeting organised by British revolutionary Socialist organisations - the IS, IMG and SLL - to protest against the last wave of political repression.

This is, we hope, only the first such response of the Irish in British Labour Movement to the latest waves of raids and arrests. It shows what can be done if we build principled united action against the attacks on democratic rights and basic human freedoms, which are being whittled away under the Tory Government.

Support the Belfast 10

A picket of more than fifty people took place outside Brixton prison on the first of what is planned to be a regular Saturday afternoon picket, to draw attention to the plight of the ten people arrested at gunpoint from a Belfast bound plane at Heathrow Airport.

Bernadette Devlin, Vanessa Redgrave and Edda O'Brien have so far stood up and offered to go bail for the Belfast Ten - who are still incarcerated in prison. Future action to highlight the deprivation of basic legal rights for the Ten is planned and a defence committee has been set up. (See back page).

Whitelaw's White Paper is totally unacceptable to Socialists and Republicans. It is totally unacceptable because it represents an attempt, not to move away from British exploitive rule of Ireland, but to re-structure that rule, to bring it up to date and thereby to perpetuate it. The vagueness of sections of the Paper, which all commentators have recognised and commented on, means merely that the Tories are not certain in their own minds how best to go about this, nor are they confident that they can carry it off. With good reason.

SINGLE OBJECTIVE

The White Paper makes no basic change in British policy. Through O'Neill's "reform-package" of November '68, the Chichester-Clark/Wilson "Downing Street declaration" of August 1969 etc., British imperialism has been pursuing a single objective - it has been trying, insofar as it is possible, to disentangle itself from the semi-redundant Orange apparatus and to give the Catholic middle class a chance of executive power - and to do this without weakening its own grip on Ireland.

O'Neill failed, and the Downing Street Declaration failed for two reasons. First, the British found it damnably difficult to wriggle out of the mesh of the Orange-Unionist complex which it had created and supported for generations. The second, linked, reason was that a large section of the Catholic working class reacted to events by demanding the end of British rule in Ireland and by giving support to organisations militarily trying to achieve that.

TORY BLUEPRINT

The basic British strategy for the past two years has been get rid of the second difficulty first. That is, to defeat the IRA. In March 1972, when the Bill to prorogue Stormont for one year was passed,

UDA Puts On A Respectable Front

The UDA has expelled 'hundreds' of its members in a major shake-up aimed at giving the Protestant paramilitary organisation a respectable front in advance of the local government and the new Northern Ireland Assembly elections in May and June.

UDA members who are being expelled have been accused of 'directing operations involving hold-ups of shops, house-breaking and vehicle hi-jacking and using the name of the organisation in free-lance criminal activities'.

The UVF has played a major role in this 'clean up'. The accused UDA members have been beaten up and exiled from their own areas. One leading UDA member in the Inner Council has been beaten up and accused of 'criminal activities' and barred from his home in the Shankill Road.

GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT WITH UDA

More than 1,000 vehicles have been hi-jacked in the Shankill Road area of West Belfast within a year.

There have been numerous robberies in Protestant areas - many of them unreported due to threats. Faced with growing disillusionment with the UDA, Charles Harding-Smith the Chairman who took over from Tommy Herron after his release from prison has ordered a 'clean-up' from top to bottom.

This attempt to put on a 'respectable' face is a sign of the growing splits within the Protestant extremist camp. The White Paper has thrown them into confusion and they are no longer sure of their support, they must get rid of 'unsavoury' elements within the UDA.

However, this clean-up is also an indication of the power struggle within the UDA and this is probably the real reason why certain previous prominent members have been forced to flee to England. An example of one such case was Dave Fogel.

If recent reports are any guide, a lot more will follow his example.

Macaskill, where are you?

Who exactly is this man Iain Macaskill? Under that byline, articles have consistently appeared in the 'Evening News', the feeble organ that supplies mindless fodder for the suburbs, which even by the standards of the general British press, are particularly vicious on Irish matters.

For instance, the April 10th edition prominently displayed the revelation that "London pub collections pay for Provos' war". This story centred around the delicate sensibilities of four English people who chose apparently to drink in a Hammermith pub, the Prince of Wales.

Minding their own business, they were approached, according to Mr. Macaskill, by three men who told them they were collecting for the Provisional IRA. Shock, horror, the gallant four were appalled and refused to donate.

The vicious twist in the story comes when the landlord is named, though he was allowed to deny knowledge of the collections. This is reminiscent of the approach taken early last year by English journalist James MacManus, then for the Daily Express (though now he is a favoured 'liberal' on the Guardian),

when he pilloried the landlord of the Albany pub near Great Portland Street.

Clann na hEireann had held a press conference there to explain their stand after the Aldershot explosion, and MacManus' subsequent malicious bile against the pub succeeded in having the landlord sacked within a week by owners Watney Mann.

However, back to Mr. Macaskill. To make the point, he wrote: "The four customers were adamant: 'The collections did take place'. And although they wish to remain anonymous at the moment, they are prepared to testify in court what they saw".

The week before, ace news-hound Macaskill decided that the letter bomb explosions in the Post Offices at Kilburn and Paddington were definitely IRA outrages, and wrote that Scotland Yard were acting on this assumption. The fact that Scotland Yard emphatically denied such a connection did not deter Macaskill from his important work.

So again, who are you, Mr. Macaskill? There are many of us who would warmly welcome the opportunity to meet you. David Mulcahy

GERMAN SOLIDARITY

After an initial period of confusion over the nature of the struggle in the North of Ireland the German Left is now beginning to realise its responsibilities in helping Irish revolutionaries to overcome their international isolation and counter the mystifications spread by British propaganda. News and analyses of the current situation in Ireland can frequently be found in the left wing press, and actions like the daubing of the British consulate in Hamburg with solidarity slogans on the first anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday' mark a definite step forward. The first step towards systematic Irish solidarity work was taken by groups with direct links with Irish revolutionaries: the German section of the Fourth International, Gruppe Internationaler Marxisten, which initiated a "Free Ireland Solidarity Committee", and the West German Agency of the Official Republican movement. The Free Ireland Solidarity committee organised a speaking tour of West German universities

with Bob Purdie of the AIL and representatives of PD and the Provisional Republican movement. The Officials were also invited. Hundreds of people turned up at every meeting. Branches of the committee were set up and a journal called "Freies Irland" launched which carried photos, news and analytical background material plus interviews with Republican leaders. Parallel to these activities, the West German agency of the Officials started publishing "IRA Info" and they also organised a speaking tour with Tony Heffernan of Sinn Féin.

These initiatives have done a lot to introduce the issue of Ireland into German politics, and there is certainly a basis for broad united front activities in support of the Irish struggle.

Copies of the "Freies Irland" journal and information about the work of the Solidarity Committee can be obtained from: Freies Irland c/o 6 Frankfurt, Leisnerstr. 14, West Germany.

H. Mintoff

JOHN MACLEAN COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

Dear Comrade Editor, November 30th this year (1973), will mark the 50th Anniversary of the death of John MacLean, the courageous and beloved revolutionary, who was at the centre of the struggles on "Red Clydeside", during and after the First World War. He died in 1923, his health broken by his experiences in prison and his intense political work. However, unless some steps are taken, this Anniversary will go almost unmarked. MacLean's contribution to the working class movement, and the political ideas for which he stood have been almost forgotten, he is at best remembered as an ikon, who epitomised the spirit of the Clyde, but whose role and ideas are neither discussed nor understood.

And yet MacLean has increasing relevance. A discussion of his contribution raises a number of vital questions. What can be learned from MacLean's fight for an anti-imperialist stance by the Labour movement during the World War? What was the influence of MacLean as a theoretician and Marxist teacher compared to that of the 'shop stewards' in the shipyards and factories, and how did he influence them? What can we learn from MacLean about the relationship between revolutionary intellectuals and the working class? Why did MacLean refuse to join the Communist Party of Great Britain? What was the detailed background to this important aspect of the history of the working class movement in Britain? Why did MacLean, almost alone, place the national struggle of Ireland between 1919 and 1921 at the centre of his propaganda and agitation? What lessons can we draw for the attitude of contemporary revolutionaries to the present round of struggle in Ireland? Why did MacLean call for a Worker's Republic of Scotland? Can a nationalist stance in Scotland and Wales be consistent with a socialist programme?

Let this year be "John MacLean Memorial Year". There should be a series of activities to commemorate his work, to promote the publication of his writings, and to promote the broadest possible discussion about the man and his ideas. The John MacLean Society in Scotland has decided to organise activities in MacLean's native country, and now a Commemoration Committee has been set up in London. A coloured poster has been provided, and a public meeting has been arranged for November 30th at the Conway Hall where Harry McShane has agreed to speak. We appeal to you to support the Committee, attend its meetings and help set in motion its activities.

The next meeting of the 'John MacLean Commemoration Committee' will take place at the 'General Picton' Public House, Caledonian Road, King's Cross, at 7.45 pm. on Monday 7th May. Yours fraternally, Alastair Renwick. 28 LAMMAS PARK ROAD LONDON W.5

IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS

Appeal for books and magazines to send to Internees in Ireland. Please send any spare books or papers (particularly political) or donations for same, to MIKE SCOTT, 16 WETHERBY Gdns, LONDON SW5.

I.S. IRISH FORUM

'THE PROTESTANT WORKING CLASS'

SPEAKER JEFF BELL In the ROEBUCK pub, Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (Warren Street Tube). FRIDAY APRIL 27th, 7.30pm.

PLEASE HELP TO MAKE THE INFORMATION ON LOCAL ACTIVITIES IN FREE IRELAND AS COMPLETE AS POSSIBLE. SEND ANY DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS INTO THE EDITOR AT 88 ROSEY ROAD LONDON N.15.

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For full addresses and further details, write to The Anti-Internment League, 88 Roslyn Road, London N 15

The following notes from some comrades in Oxford may help readers to arrange local mobilisations for the May 19 Conference:

- In Oxford they plan to:
 1. Set up an ad-hoc organising committee to draw in local Irish organisations - union leaders, trades council, Council of Action in an attempt to win delegates. Also local political organisations, student groups in both the University and Poly, tenants committees, womens groups etc.
 2. Arrange public meetings, plus leafleting, etc.
 3. Arrange model resolution to be put to as many organisations as possible, together with propaganda for the Conference.
 4. Arrange transport and accommodation for delegates.
 5. Press the need to continue the work after the Conference, within the framework of the AIL.

CENTRAL LONDON AIL

Regular fortnightly Forums and discussions on aspects of Irish history and the current struggle. Held at the General Picton Pub, Caledonian Road, London N1 (King's Cross Tube) on Fridays at 8pm.

APRIL 27th: Sean MacGama on Connolly's 'Labour in Irish History'.

MAY 11th: Panel of speakers on the role of the British Troops in Ireland.

MAY 25th: Peter Beresford-Ellis on the Irish Radical Tradition.

JOHN MACLEAN

Full Colour Poster at 30p each, including postage, or 10 for 12.25. Orders to ALASTAIR RENWICK, 28 LAMMAS PARK ROAD, EALING, LONDON W5.

STIRLING AIL

SCHOOL ON THE WHITE PAPER AND THE BRITISH ARMY To be held in Stirling University on Sunday May 6th MAIN SPEAKERS INVITED - Mike Farrell LD Belfast Eddie McWilliams Leeds IS Bob Purdie-Nat. Organiser AIL DETAILS from Stirling University AIL, c/o C.S.A. University of Stirling.