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CIVIL RIGHTS

THE NEW WHITELAW PRINCIPLE

Mr. William Whitelaw continues to attempt to stand morality on its head. For Mr. Whitelaw two wrongs do make a right. For almost twenty days he has been attempting to foist on the people of Northern Ireland his equation on peace, democracy and progress.

The conditions for the release of all the internees is the ending of the bombing. Bombing is wrong. The bombing campaign has been one of the most criminal, and unresponsible campaigns ever undertaken. It has caused many civilian deaths, numerous casualties and has been universally condemned. Civil Rights have continuously condemned bombing while striving to give the correct political leadership to a people despairing in the face of enormous tyranny.

Internment of legally innocent men is wrong. The nearly 800 men held in Long Kesh are as innocent and as guilty as any other 800 members of the community. Nevertheless Mr. Whitelaw has clearly intimated that they are to be used as political hostages in an act of bartering.

Mr. Faulkner, while in office, dressed the bargain in tones of righteousness and attempted to justify internment on grounds of security. With much less a face of virtue Mr. Whitelaw has reduced the issue to the level of a blackmarket hagggle: "You stop the bombing and I'll release the Internees"—the implication being that all the men in the Concentration Camps have been or are likely to be engaged in bombing and violence.

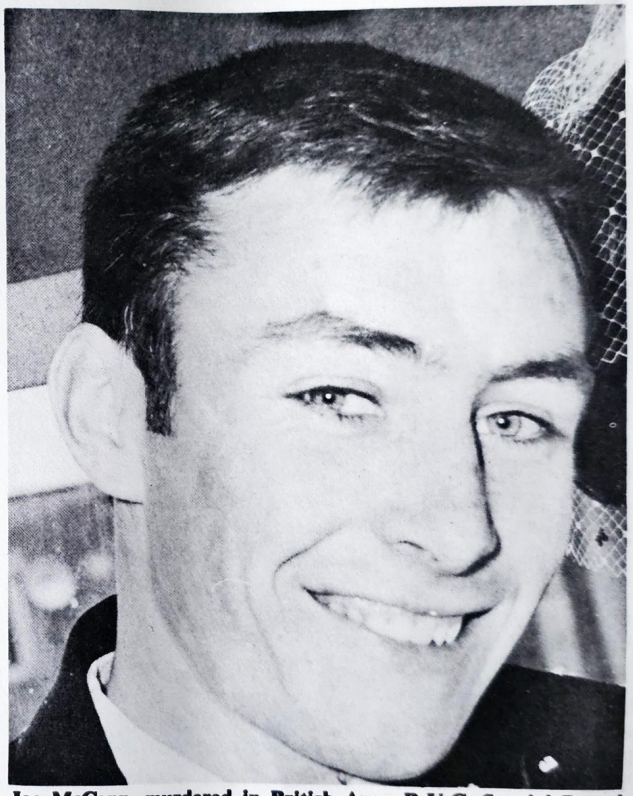
The principle is clear. Two wrongs make a right. Mr. Whitelaw has taken over lock, stock and barrel the legislative apparatus of Unionism. People were led to believe that he had simply taken this over to dismantle it. Now we know that he is a repair man in disguise.

We tell Mr Whitelaw that two wrongs never make a civil right and never will. And, as always since the commencement of this struggle we demand our civil rights.

CRA Member Shot Dead

An active member of the Downpatrick Civil Rights Association, Patrick Joseph Magee, was killed by British Army rifle fire as he and a companion sought shelter in St. Comgall's School near Divis Flats. The gates of this school were damaged by a British Army Saracen and removed some weeks ago.

Despite the usual labelling of people shot dead by the British Army as "snipers", "bombers", "wanted list gunmen", it is obvious that Mr. Magee was the victim of "Para" training which induces soldiers to fire at anything moving within gunsight. Mr. Magee was shot on the school steps, in clear view, and obviously unarmed.



Joe McCann, murdered in British Army-R.U.C. Special Branch ambush.

Story, Page Two.

"Prosecute," Say NICRA

The Civil Rights Association have called on the new Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr. Barry Shaw, to take action against the Paratroopers and the R.U.C. Special Branch men responsible for McCann's death.

The NICRA statement points out that the shooting raises questions as to the credibility of the statements of Mr. William Whitelaw. "In a speech to the Tory women of Lancashire Mr. Whitelaw said that he would not submit to the pressures being put on him to place even greater reliance on military repression to impose a solution on the people of Northern Ireland. Yet the very next day his troops, in collaboration with the R.U.C. Special Branch shot down in cold blood a man whom they could quite easily have arrested had they wanted to do so".

Concluding, the statement reads: "If Mr. Whitelaw's speech of last week is not simply to be regarded as the usual Tory hypocrisy he will ensure that the men responsible for Joseph McCann's death are brought to justice for this cold blooded murder."

WHITELAW OR TAYLOR LAW?

The Sunday Times, a newspaper normally suspicious of British Army or R.U.C. news releases, carried a police statement relating to the death of Joseph McCann: "A man shot in the Markets Area of Belfast in a battle between troops and gunmen was dead on arrival at hospital"

The truth of the incident was that there was no gun battle . . . no gunmen . . . and an unarmed civilian was shot dead in an ambush laid on by Special Branch men and elements of the Parachute Regiment.

The growing number of incidents in which known militant Republicans have (while unarmed) been shot dead by British Army marksmen indicates an approved policy of murder according to the dictat of the special Branch. Who decides whether a militant republican is taken prisoner or killed in a mythical gunbattle? Harry Taylor? General Tuzo? or some faceless bureaucrat poring over the rubbish garnered from police touts?

In Belfast the deaths of Daniel O'Neill and McDaid certainly fall into the same category as that of Joseph McCann . . . surmise in Derry indicates the possibility that the deaths of Cusack and Beattie were cases of 'Mistaken identity' and fall into the same category of trial by Special Branch.

The Law is certainly in grace disrepute when death sentences are meted out at the whim of discredited sectarian policemen . . . or the minor figures of British Army Intelligence.

The Sunday Times "Insight" team should look at police reports on similar 'gunbattles' and compare them with the reports of reliable eye witnesses.

The violent reaction to the death of Joseph McCann may have been expected by his executioners and the possibility must arise that this incident is linked to the other sectarian provocations on the same date in which one youth died, a child and another man were wounded.

There are elements in the Police and British Army with a vested political interest in the continuance of sectarian division and the speedy ending of the Political Initiative, 'Civil Rights' has voiced concern that those elements in the police and Army tied to the discredited militarist policy of Faulkner remain in positions of trust and advice. **We reiterate that there is a requirement on policy grounds that these elements be removed to positions where they cannot effect events by actions such as occured in Belfast last weekend.**

Mr. Whitelaw's commitment to uphold all the elements in the police force is suicidal in respect to any hopes he may have of retaining credibility with a community which utterly distrusts (with good reason) the R.U.C. and the blatantly political role it has always played in Northern Ireland.

The deaths of many British soldiers can be directly attributed to the senseless activity of those very police and military elements praised by Mr. Whitelaw. The Supremo should realise that he is not dealing with a simple Law and Order issue . . . indeed the most lawless elements in our society are those who possess the power of life and death contained in the Yellow Card and the people who gave them that power are elements that society can well do without.



Children point to the bullet riddled wall in Hamilton Street where Joe McCann died.

THE MARKETS

The Markets area of Belfast is a maze of narrow streets. It is also one of the most closely knit communities in Belfast, a place where people share their sorrows and their misfortunes. The shooting of Joseph McCann, who was married into one of the best known families in the area was a tragedy not simply for his close relatives but for everyone who lived there.

Over the last few weeks the Markets has had its share of misfortune. The Regiment controlling the Markets is the Royal Horse Artillery which has not done very much to endear itself to the residents. With just a fortnight to go before it pulls out the Artillery have decided that they don't have to worry unduly about their local image. They have told the people that they will repeat the Gloucester's exploits in the Lower Falls in their area in the Markets.

Despite protests from the area they have kept it in darkness by breaking all the street lights. On top of that while the troops always seem very ready to break into the little houses in the early hours of the morning to take the menfolk away to Holywood Palace, they have not been so much in evidence to provide protection against the mysterious cars which roam around the fringes of the Markets firing into it. For example, they were nowhere to be seen on Easter Monday night when young Eileen Morris and her boy firend were shot at. Nor were they anywhere to be found when young Jim McStravick was shot in the head about two months ago.

But they were very much in evidence when they were arresting young Jim McCormick from Stanfield Street, taking him away from his three children and leaving them without any parents.

Hardship is not new to the Markets and it will go on until the people there, in common with all the people of the Six Counties, win their Civil rights.

Bogside and Creggan Beware!

Ominous and sinister are the pressures mounting on the British Army to move in strength on the Bogside and Creggan. The discredited Faulkner seeks to gain sectarian support by urging an attack on Free Derry.

Sections of the British Press prepare public opinion for desperate measures. Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party urge all peaceful people to leave the area so that the British Army can "liquidate" the "enemy". The use of Vanguard language indicates a united build-up to demand more blood on the altar of Unionist appeasement.

The action of the Special Branch and the provocation of undercover British Army elements in Belfast despite the disavowal of Whitelaw do not give much grounds for hope on the "initiative" front.

The Supremo has given "firm" directions that "terrorists" should be pursued. He has reaffirmed support for the police, presumably including the Special Branch. The people of Derry should be aware of the dangers of a softening up process and maintain vigilance.

A CONFIDENCE TRICK

Over the years the people of Northern Ireland have developed a deep understanding of the direct cause of violence on the streets. One, take a regiment about to leave the North; two, take an irresponsible group of officers who start some local aggro so that the replacement troops walk into a ready made riot situation. To complete the mix have an irresponsible Command Staff demoralised by involvement in torture, the murder of civilians, association with a politically involved Special Branch, responsible for a policy which has incurred the odium of their political masters.

How to extricate themselves from this debacle?

The method is well known to people who have spent the past two years analysing riot situations—the known response of the local civilian population to the killing of unarmed men. They are experts on aggro.

One, kill an unarmed man; send your disguised gunsquads around to create the impression of sectarian shootings . . . inform your political master that events now prove your policies to have been correct . . . what is needed is more of the same policy of repression.

If Mr. Whitelaw is not aware of the implications of the events of 15th, 16th, 17th April then he is a political innocent abroad; if Mr. Whitelaw is fully aware of what is being done in his name then the political initiative is a fraud and a confidence trick intended to divert world opinion from the shabby truth about British policy in Northern Ireland.

MARCHING ALONG

Selective prosecutions continue. Unionist Party appointees in the Enniskillen Courts have vented their spleen on Bernadette Devlin and others. All queries about Vanguard marchers meet with silence from the Unionist appointed R.U.C. Chiefs.

SYMPATHY

The Civil Rights Association extends deepest sympathy to the wife and family of Joe McCann, to the family and relatives of Sean McConville shot dead on the same day: to the families and relatives of the three people killed at Divis Street and to all those wounded by gunfire in the days following the death of Joseph McCann.

We join with our colleagues in Downpatrick Civil Rights Association in extending deepest sympathy to the family of Patrick Magee.

Dungannon Conference

A Civil Disobedience Co-ordinating Conference at Dungannon on Sunday, 16th April, reaffirmed the aims of the civil disobedience campaign as being the unconditional release of all internees, the withdrawal of troops to barracks, the ending of repressive legislation, the implementing of a bill of rights.

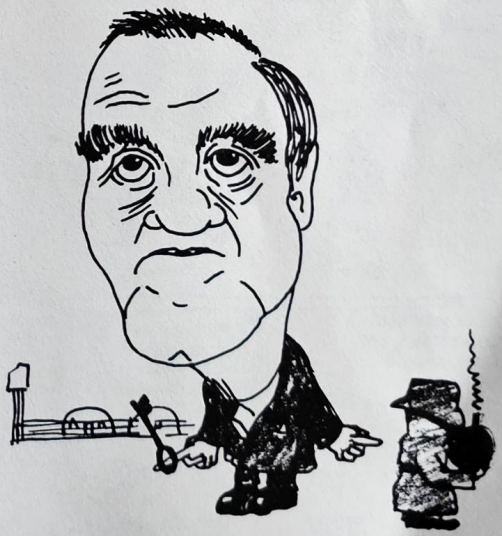
Discussion on the tactics of the campaign reaffirmed the paramount importance of the question of democratic rights which will be the keystone of Civil Rights efforts despite the confusion arising from apparent escalation of demands in some quarters. The social action report outlined the work being done to combat the worst effects of the Special Powers Act for the recovery of debt. Branches and committees were urged to organise special one day conferences or teach-ins at which the central group could instruct local people in rates procedure, debt recovery procedure and the social services payments affected by the debt recovery act.

A successful one day conference to try out the feasibility of this method of disseminating information was recently held in Warrenpoint. The executive sub-committee dealing with the campaign will collate information at central office, add to the information leaflets now available from Marquis Street and seek a wide distribution through Branches and committees.

The CIVIL RIGHTS news Bulletin can be developed as the link between the Rent and Rates striker, the local organisation, and the developments in the wider field of Civil Rights activity.

Downpatrick C.R.A. held a successful anti-internment Rally on Sunday 16th, April. Several executive speakers were on the platform as were two recently released internees.

The release of all internees remains the key issue uniting all elements in the Civil Disobedience Campaign and is rightly regarded by the people as a touchstone to judge the sincerity of Westminster initiatives.



"I'LL KEEP THOSE CHAPS INSIDE FOR DOING NOTHING, UNTIL THESE CHAPS OUTSIDE BEHAVE THEMSELVES — THAT'S FAIR, ISN'T IT?"

A Plain Clothes Plot

A report carried by the "Irish News" on April 17 alleges that men wounded by shooting from a passing car were in fact shot by plain clothes elements of the British Army.

C.R.A. and other agencies have been aware for some time that British Army "intelligence" has been operating in an illegal manner from unmarked vans, cars, etc. CIVIL RIGHTS has reported the kidnapping activities of these armed "civilians". A few weeks ago CIVIL RIGHTS observed the possibility that Britain would not be adverse to the promotion of sectarian strife in the North . . . which would allow them to pose to the world as a peace force keeping the fractious natives apart.

There are sections of the British Army and the associated Special Branch police with a confirmed interest in the promotion of violence. The activities of the Gloucester Regiment last week certainly were known and approved by higher officers: a few soldiers can obviously get out of hand but to suggest that a few hundred can carry out provocations without the order and consent of their commanders is to strain the intelligence of any ordinary person.

If Mr. Whitelaw is not to incur the odium of responsibility for these blatantly illegal activities he must tackle the job of removing these provocateur organisations from Northern Ireland.

Ballymurphy Provocation

On Tuesday, April 11, five young residents of Ballymurphy were hauled off by troops to the Henry Taggart Memorial Army post. Kept from 11.00 p.m. to 4 a.m. they were subjected to various torture procedures and brutality.

The only discernible reason for this British Army terrorism was that the troops involved were shortly departing from Northern Ireland and wanted to leave their mark on Ballymurphy.

This incident is in line with the behaviour of the Gloucesters on the Lower Falls and would indicate officers involvement in a deliberate policy of provocation. Local C.R.A. sources are considering legal action in the case.

ON PAROLE?

Several recently released internees are being visited by local British Army personnel daily . . . "just to see if you are there" is the reported Army quote. We wonder if this form of intimidation is the "authorised" version or merely the twisted whim of some local branchman.

Internees are by definition innocent men not subject to the rules of the probation service . . . why this continued provocative behaviour of MR. WHITELAW'S Army against men he has himself decided, on the evidence seen by none but he . . . are to be released.

Men remanded by the Courts and granted bail remain in detention; showing the contempt of the legal process held by the bully boys of the Special Branch. Men found innocent in open court after due legal process continue to languish in the cages of Long Kesh Concentration Camp. WHICH is it to be MR. WHITELAW rule of law or rule by gun and Special Branch?



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