

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND



TROOPS OUT NOW

SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE

Paper of the Troops Out Movement 30p

Vol. 10, No. 7, May 1987

RUC attack
Funerals

Labour Party
Pact with
Unionists?

THESE PAPERS

JOE ASHTON
February 25, 1985
DAILY STAR,
Monday,
WCA, this morning on the
front page with front page
headlines about the
RUC, and the
IRA.

**INSULT
IRISH
PEOPLE**

**STANDARD
SUNDAY EXPRESS**

**THE
SUN**

DON'T BUY THEM

Adams
at Oxford
Union;
Political
violence

Reviews; Letters



EDITORIAL

A principled policy?

Fifteen years ago we saw Merlyn Rees literally pounding on the gates of Long Kesh. He declared that when Labour got into power he would open those gates, release the internees, and introduce civil rights to N. Ireland irrespective of Unionist opposition.

Rees did become Secretary of State and has long since gone. However the gates of Long Kesh remain closed. They have been added to with the gates of Maghaberry and Magilligan. Two thousand people have died since in the continuing war. Thousands of men and women have spent the best years of their youth in prison. And the catalogue of oppression goes on and on – shoot-to-kill, strip searching, plastic bullets, imprisonment without proper trial, etc, etc.

The recently published Labour Party policy on N. Ireland, calls for the long term re-unification of Ireland and the introduction of civil rights in the meantime. Stuart Bell, tipped as the Secretary of State for N. Ireland if Labour forms the next Government, is at the same time advocating an 'understanding' with the Unionist parties.

In recent years Labour Party conferences have called for important reforms. Now all this is to be thrown away in the name of expediency. An 'understanding' with the Unionists means in reality an increase in repression for the Nationalist community. It is dishonest to say that a government will bring in certain reforms if it is dependent for support on Unionists who are implacably opposed to those reforms. It is like some party in South Africa saying they are going to get rid of apartheid, and at the same time trying to gain the support of Botha's regime.

What short memories Neil Kinnock and his cronies have. The last Labour government increased the number of seats available to the Unionists in Westminster in exchange for their support. The Unionists were much encouraged with the reign of terror inflicted on the Nationalist community under Roy Mason. One of the worst aspects of this was the system of beating confessions out of prisoners in the police cells. As a result, the two Nationalist MPs withdrew their support from Labour and the government subsequently fell in a vote of confidence. Eight years of Thatcherism have followed.

Irish people and supporters are now caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. They do not want another term under Thatcher, but neither do they want a re-run of the Roy Mason era under the Labour Party. The only way they can use their vote is by withholding it. Traditionally it is a vote which would go to Labour.

The only principled and practical policy for any future government is to withdraw from the six north-eastern counties of Ireland. Principled because it is a pre-requisite to allowing Irish people to determine their own future, and practical because it is only under such conditions that building a peaceful future in Ireland can begin.

Troops Out Movement

The Troops Out Movement is a movement in England, Scotland and Wales made up of people who believe that the cause of the 'troubles' in the north of Ireland is the continuing British presence there, both military and political. We believe that British troops are in Ireland not as a peacekeeping force, but in order to maintain British rule, and that their presence is the most serious obstacle to any progress towards peace. Ever since 1969 the troops have been occupying a part of Ireland, coercing and oppressing the nationalist people, maintaining the division of Ireland and ensuring that its people cannot unite to determine their own future.

We have been working as an organisation for immediate British withdrawal since the early 1970s. We have a number of branches in England, Scotland and Wales. These branches, working locally in whatever ways circumstances allow, are the backbone of the TOM. Membership or affiliation is open to any individual or group supporting our demands:

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

Troops Out Paper

Troops Out is produced by a collective drawn from branches of the Troops Out Movement in London.

Readers' views, articles and letters are always welcome (although we can't guarantee to publish everything that comes in).

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The EEC and the Irish Republic

Defending neutrality

A plan to strengthen the EEC as a political unit has been blocked, at least temporarily, by the courts of the Irish Republic.

The plan is known as the Single European Act (SEA). It would have permitted decisions in the Council of Ministers to be made by a majority; at present a unanimous decision is needed. It would also have harmonised laws in economic, regional, social, environmental and technological areas, and would have made EEC laws part of the domestic law of each member state. Thirdly, it would have initiated EEC co-ordination on foreign policy.

As Ireland is the only neutral member of the EEC, this last point aroused concern. Supporters of neutrality argued that it would implicate the Republic in NATO and Cold War politics. The SEA tried to make a distinction between

'political and economic' aspects of security and 'military' aspects, but few were fooled by such hair-splitting.

Last year the SEA passed through the parliaments of the EEC states (in Denmark the socialists objected and a referendum was called, which passed it) — including that of the Irish Republic. It was all due to be ratified at the beginning of 1987. Then a consultant economist called Raymond Crotty went to court and was granted an injunction to stop Ireland's ratification. He argued that the SEA was unconstitutional. The court agreed. The Government appealed, and the case went through the various layers of the legal system until it

reached the icing of the Supreme Court.

On 9th April the Supreme Court ruled that the SEA could not be ratified without first holding a referendum. It means that the SEA is blocked for the whole EEC. If the referendum decides in favour, then the EEC can implement it. But if the referendum decides against, then either the SEA will have to be renegotiated, or Ireland will have to withdraw from the EEC.

COURT RULING

The judges' ruling was that 'European Political Cooperation' (the part about foreign policy) means that each member state would be 'bound to inform and consult its fellow members; refrain from deciding on a final position as to an issue of foreign policy without prior consultations... A purely

national approach to foreign policy was incompatible with accession to the Single European Act.'

Of course, such inroads into national sovereignty would be true for all the EEC states. Britain could not go to war on the 'Argies' — or maybe the 'Japs'? — without checking things out with Brussels or Strasbourg. Yet probably most people in Britain have not even heard of the Single European Act.

The difference in public response was explained by Raymond Crotty himself when asked why he had brought the court case:

'Apart from Luxembourg, Greece and Ireland, the other nine countries are the imperial powers of the world. We are the only colony of those powers — it's completely incongruous for us to be in close association with them.'

UNEMPLOYMENT

Government figures show that the total registered unemployed number around 130,000, nearly 20% of the working population in N. Ireland. The jobless are concentrated in Strabane, where 39% of the working population are on the dole. Cookstown (37%), Newry (33%), Dungannon (31%), Magherafelt (30%) and Derry (29%).

The official figures paint (Greater) Belfast as relatively healthy, with only 19% registered as seeking employment. But the political divide among the jobless is starker in Belfast, with some nationalist areas having up to 80% male unemployment. On average, nationalist unemployment is between two and three times higher than unionist unemployment.

Nearly 20 years ago the Civil Rights Movement's demands included equality of opportunity to employment. The latest official figures show clearly that the situation remains just as it was then.



Magilligan Prison, Co. Derry, has recently been the scene of both republican and loyalist protests, demanding an end to desegregation. Photo: AP/RN

Living under occupation

Life under the British Army means constant humiliations, which do not figure in the news but cause newsworthy pain to those at the receiving end.

For example, the football pitch of Crossmaglen Rangers has been occupied for fifteen years by the British Army. They use it for helicopters and have refused to hand it back despite constant appeals.

There is an element of malice in the Army's seizure of the pitch: to make life hard for the people of Crossmaglen (a small town in South Armagh that has never taken kindly to the British presence); and to undermine Irish culture. For Crossmaglen Rangers are a Celtic football team.

This year's conference of the Gaelic Athletic Association showed strong support for Ireland's culture and defence against British aggression.

A motion from County Fermanagh condemning strip searches of women prisoners was passed unanimously. A

motion from County Tyrone was also passed unanimously: it protested at the denial of basic rights to Irish men and women in British jails — rights which included the right to use the Irish language, the right to play Gaelic games and traditional musical instruments, and the right to read Irish language books, newspapers and magazines.

Another instance of British Army harassment occurred in the town of Roslea in County Fermanagh. The joint Army/RUC base has recently been enlarged and now pokes into people's living rooms. One family, who own a £70,000 house thus affected, have had to move out and find rented accommodation across the border in Co. Monaghan for their own safety and peace of mind. The owner commented, *'There was no alternative but to move out after the Army extended their base to our yard — all privacy was lost and a look-out post was erected just behind the house.'*

Funerals attacked by RUC

"To defile the sanctity of a funeral is in my view to plumb the depths of depravity, and to reach a new low even by the men of violence"

Nicholas Scott

The RUC began in earnest their policy of interfering with republican funerals in the summer of 1981. Groups of heavily armed police and soldiers would force their presence on most of the forty or so republican funerals since then. No respect was to be given to the grieving relatives in the attempt to deny nationalist people their right to dignity even in death.

Angered by the one hundred thousand mourners who attended the funeral of Bobby Sands, the RUC threatened to disrupt the funeral of Francis Hughes, the second prisoner to die on hunger-strike. His dying wish was that the people on the Falls Road should be allowed to pay their respects. But the RUC forced the hearse to take a different route, threatening the family that the body would be forcibly taken from them and removed to his home town of Bellaghy if they didn't comply.

PLASTIC BULLETS

Joe McDonnell was the fifth prisoner to die on hunger-strike in 1981. Large crowds were still attending the funerals of the hunger-strikers, despite the near siege-like situation in areas such as West Belfast. As the coffin was carried towards the cemetery, the RUC charged into the procession to try to get the uniforms for the firing party.

The second half of the procession, which had become split off, tried to catch up with the first, their hands raised

above their heads, the RUC and Army opened up with round after round of plastic bullets. Thousands ran for the meagre cover of suburban gardens. Questioned on television the following day RUC Chief Constable Jack Hermon said anyone on the streets in such a manner was supporting terrorists and therefore liable to come under fire from the 'security forces'.

MUTILATION

Further hunger-striker funerals were interfered with, but the RUC did not stop there. The body of the hunger-striker, Patsy O'Hara was mutilated while in RUC custody, the nose broken in two places and cigarette burns put underneath the left eye. In October of that year Marine Commandos entered Milltown cemetery in Belfast and smashed the grave-stones of Kieran Doherty and Kevin Lynch.

Some republican funerals have not been interfered with

by the RUC. Such widespread outrage was expressed at the murders of Eugene Thomas, Gervaise Kerr and Sean Burns, victims of the shoot-to-kill policy, that the RUC decided to stay at a distance from their funerals. But others bore the full brunt of the RUC harassment.

INTIMIDATION

In December 1984 as the coffin of Antoine MacGiolla Bridge was carried out of his home a large force of police rushed forward. Mourners were hauled aside, punched, and kicked as the RUC attempted to tear the tricolour from the coffin. There were further clashes as the RUC tried to take up positions on either side of the cortege. Landrovers then forced their way into the procession, ramming the family car in an attempt to get behind the hearse. The heavy RUC presence continued during the service in the church and graveyard, continuously intimi-

Photo: AP/RN



RUC members prevent mourners from approaching Volunteer Marley's hearse. The Marley family later delayed the funeral for the second day running.



Photo: AP/RN

After failing to take control, armed and riot-clad British Army and RUC personnel lead Volunteer Marley's funeral procession.

dating mourners.

The amount of harassment has increased in recent years and now all republican funerals have to cope with a large presence of heavily armed RUC and soldiers.

ABUSE

Last September an IRA member was shot dead in Andersons town, West Belfast. There was particular anger locally because he had been shot in the back with his hands clearly raised above his head. As soon as his remains were brought to his home in Cavanmore Gardens landrovers blocked off each end of the street. Neighbours and friends coming to pay their respects were detained, questioned and body-searched. All night RUC vehicles drove up and down the street honking their horns, with their occupants shouting abuse at the house.

The following day the area

was saturated with heavily armed soldiers and RUC. Snipers lay in the gardens and hedges. Two soldiers lay on the roof of the porch next door, their rifles pointed at people coming in and out of the house. As the cortege moved off landrovers tried to hem in the mourners in the narrow street, nearly knocking over a number of people. The RUC and Army continued to harass the funeral as it moved into wider streets, and a huge force was already in the graveyard by the time the funeral arrived. But as had become customary by now the people ignored their presence and buried Jim McKernan in dignity.

FUNERAL STOPPED

When Lawrence Marley's Coffin was brought out of the house on the morning of April 6th this year the awaiting mourners were again surrounded by a huge number of heavily armed

RUC. The RUC rushed forward in an attempt to gain control of the coffin and the immediate area surrounding it. Mourners were batoned and kicked. The family was forced to return to the house. The following morning the family again tried to conduct the funeral. As the coffin was brought out the RUC repeated their tactics of the day before. The crowd resisted them and batons flew. Lawrence Marley's widow Kate and their younger children were in tears as the coffin was tossed in the air. They were forced to return again to the house. There were by now three hundred police in the small street. Dozens and dozens of RUC landrovers blocked off the exits. Army snipers lay on surrounding roof tops.

The following day the funeral was finally allowed to move off. The RUC were obviously under orders to hold back. The South African scenes

on the television screens the evening before caused considerable embarrassment to the Government. However, there was still a huge presence surrounding the cortege and the mourners following in cars and taxis were stopped and prevented from completing the funeral route. In a simple ceremony at Milltown Cemetery, Lawrence Marley was finally buried in dignity.

Lawrence Marley's funeral was in the end the largest funeral since the hunger-strike. People in their thousands came on the streets to show their disgust at the conduct of the RUC and Army. The men of violence with their batons, guns, and armoured cars sought to impose their rule by defiling the sanctity of Lawrence Marley's funeral. The people of West Belfast told Mr Scott that he should listen to his own words and order his bully-boys back.

BRITISH EMPIRE:

Adams speaks at Oxford Union

After hearing Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams speak, a majority of those present at the Oxford Union debate on March 5th decided not to vote for the motion "IRA violence is not justified and can never lead to a political solution in Ireland". Against the age-old rhetoric that IRA violence is "wrong because we say so", Adams spoke of imperialism, freedom struggles in British colonies around the world and painted a picture of a hypothetical partitioned England.

For those who weren't there, which includes Paul Wilkinson, self-styled 'expert on terrorism' from Aberdeen University who declined an opportunity to demonstrate his expertise, *Troops Out* here reproduces extracts of Adams' speech.

"Violence" is an awkward word, especially when it is important to be precise about the language we use. Violence has many manifestations: the violence of imprisonment, the violence of institutionalised discrimination, the violence of deprivation, dispossession and state repression. It is strange that only the IRA is described by such a word. The British? They are merely involved in 'peace-keeping'. This abuse of language is nothing new. The IRA is always the 'terrorist', while the occupying army is merely the 'security forces'. The British soldiers 'kill', the IRA Volunteers 'murder'.

MORALITY

Morality is a further important ingredient in denying the right of a people to freedom or recourse to armed struggle as a means of resistance. Only it is not morality at all, it is merely a political code disguised as a moral code. If violence is wrong morally then all violence is wrong. Yet in reality it is the violence of the oppressed which is wrong, not the violence of the oppressor.

During this century Reagan, Thatcher and their predecessors have killed 60 million people in wars caused by imperialism. 110 million have been crippled, tens of millions have died from disease, 11 million have been murdered in gas chambers, shot or hanged. At least 3 million have been slaughtered by napalm bombings. Aggression is a way of life for imperialism. And so it is in Ireland where, as in other colonial situations, those wishing to oppose imperialism have little choice but to use force. Those who use force to put us down, or who ignore this dimension of violence, tell us that a legitimate army like the IRA is not justified in using force, unless of course it's the ANC or any other liberation movement — as long as it's far away.

PARTITION

I ask you to imagine that a foreign power had succeeded in occupying this country in the last war. That this power secured, through a system of patronage and privilege, the support of a section of your

fellow citizens. Imagine that they partitioned this country and claimed ownership and sovereignty over that part of this land on the pretext that a majority in the partitioned area wished it so. Would disloyal citizens entrapped within the partitioned area or other patriots outside that area be morally justified in using force to rectify that situation? Of course they would. And so it is in my country.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM

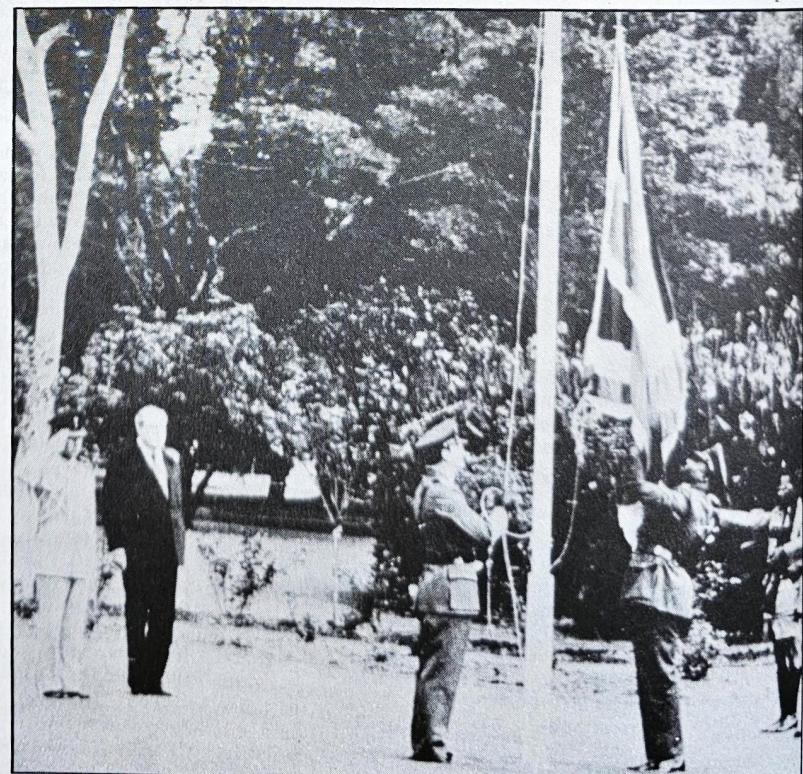
When we look at the 'history of British colonialism, from the invention of the concentration camp, to the massacre in India, to the Hola prison deaths in Kenya, to the indictment on torture charges before the European Court, to Bloody Sunday in Ireland, and when we note

British withdrawal from the majority of her overseas possessions, then we realise that tonight's motion should more accurately read: "That British violence is not justified and can never lead to a satisfactory political solution in Ireland".

The armed struggle in the six counties stems directly from the disastrous history of British involvement. The North now represents the shrinking foothold of British imperialism. The North is not a democratic entity, it never was and never will be. It is inherently unstable and is being maintained on a life-support unit of British might. The military spill-over has also affected the British public in terms of not just IRA activity but of the stockpiling of plastic bullets for use here, the perfecting of population-control techniques, and the corruption within the police force which saw a conspiracy against John Stalker over his thoroughness at investigating RUC/MI5 murders and conspiracy to murder.

SELF-DETERMINATION

The motion before us tells us that IRA resistance will never lead to a satisfactory solution in Ireland — a most arrogant assumption. Of course that depends upon what is meant by a satisfactory political solution. Most thinking people and all democrats will concede that such a solution would involve conditions upon



The last flag-down of the Union Jack as Britain withdraws from Rhodesia (named after colonial magnate Cecil Rhodes MP). Looking on (left) are Prince Charles and Lord Soames.

The Final Chapter

which a peaceful, united and just society would be established by the people who live in Ireland, by the Irish people. A matter for the Irish people — not the business of the British government.

British involvement in Ireland has never led to a satisfactory political solution for the people of Ireland. Logic dictates that the removal of the British involvement is a prerequisite for a satisfactory political solution. The IRA's energies are geared towards removal of that presence and the history of British colonialism shows that they will be successful. The British Government will be forced, as it has been elsewhere, to withdraw from Ireland. Within the new situation created by this democratic measure it would then be a matter of business-like negotiations between representatives of all the Irish people to set the constitutional, economic, social and political arrangements for a new Irish state.

THE VOTE

I ask you to consider the arguments with care and not simply accept the arrogant, ignorant and one-sided view of the war in Ireland. Abstain during the vote if you feel rejecting the motion means supporting the IRA.

Almost half present did abstain — 348 voted for the motion, 47 rejected it and 305 abstained. The President of the Oxford Union, commenting on the abstentions, said "the members obviously feel it is a more complex issue than the national press makes out".

How 'Terrorists' become 'Statesmen'

During the decline of the British Empire, many have undergone the remarkable transformation from maligned terrorist to respected elder statesman. It would seem not only that violence is often the sole recourse of the oppressed but also that Britain will later willingly support those who have practised it, the more so if they are amenable to western interests once they have gained power.

YISHTAK SHAMIR, the present Prime Minister of Israel, and MENACHIM BEGIN, a recent predecessor, were both members of the Stern Gang, a guerrilla group fighting for a Jewish homeland in Palestine in the 1940s. They attacked both the British occupying forces and Palestinian civilians with equal ruthlessness. In one incident, 250 civilians were killed at the massacre of Deir Yassin. Today Shamir leads the West's primary ally in the Middle East, and is treated as a respected leader. He is still a terrorist, but now it is 'state sponsored' and therefore acceptable.

JOMO KENYATTA was imprisoned

for long periods for his role in the Land and Freedom Army during Kenya's struggle for independence. After independence however he was soon a great friend of Britain, especially for his role in keeping Kenya a bastion of western interests in eastern Africa.

ROBERT MUGABE, as leader of the ZANU during the long fight against the racist Rhodesian regime, was portrayed as a Marxist ogre, bent on turning the country into a dictatorship by the most violent means. Initial peace overtures sought to exclude him in favour of more moderate leaders such as Bishop Muzorewa. However, when it emerged that he was not going to destroy the white settlers' economic wealth and that he would respect the terms of the Lancaster House agreement, he too has become an acceptable figure to our rulers.

There are many other cases. It is not how you fight, but whether you win and what you do then, that counts to those who hypocritically condemn violence in Ireland.

Callaghan: MI5's choice for PM?

Former Army intelligence officer, Colin Wallace (see *TO* vol.10, no.6), based at Lisburn in the mid-1970s, provided more information to the *Guardian* early in April on the activities of the army's psychological-operations division in 1974.

The *Guardian's* main concern is that 1974 saw certain individuals subjected to a smear campaign based on information given by MI5 to Army intelligence. Propaganda describing Labour MPs as Communists, with forged documents purportedly written by Labour politicians, were meant to find their way into the hands of the international journalist community in Belfast.

1974 was an important year in British politics. There was

the so-called 'Who governs Britain?' General Election in February, with the National Union of Mineworkers bringing down Edward Heath's Conservative Government. And then, in October, Harold Wilson was to call another General Election to gain a mandate for the Social Contract with the TUC.

More significantly, in the British occupied six counties of Ireland the outgoing Conservative Administration's Sunningdale Agreement was finally buried by the Ulster Workers Council's Strike. Sunningdale was the British Government's 'constitutional' counter-offensive to the successes of the IRA. The strength of the UWC strike caused some confusion among Labour politicians. Prime Minister Wilson described the loyalist strike

leaders as 'thugs and bullies who spend their lives sponging on Westminster and British Democracy.'

The British Army was not confused. There were suggestions at the time that the Labour Government called on the army to end the strike but the Army refused.

The British secret service and army were not impressed with the efforts of politicians in Britain and the six counties. Their willingness to co-operate with the likes of Airey Neave and right wing politicians, and their willingness to obstruct the policies of those they considered ready to "dismantle the United Kingdom" demonstrate a total disregard of the democratic process. Moreover, such activities were a direct intervention by the secret services and Army in that process.

The fact that James Callaghan was described by Army intelligence as "a good choice [as leader] because of his role as [former] Police Federation representative" (*Guardian*, 4th April) may have had no influence on his succession as Prime Minister in 1976.

Many questions remain to be answered. Didn't Wilson retire in 1976 complaining that 10 Downing Street was bugged? . . . Didn't Callaghan order an investigation into the allegations finding that there were "no bugs"? . . . Weren't Wilson's fears dismissed as the paranoic tendencies of an elderly gentleman? Small wonder that the present Government is fighting a rearguard legal battle in the Australian courts in its attempt to halt the publication of the memoirs of retired secret agent Peter Wright.

RACISM IN

Anti-Irish racism within Britain's media has gone hand in hand with Britain's occupation of Ireland. Barely a week goes by without some form of anti-Irish joke or article that is derogatory towards Irish people appearing on our TV screens or in our newspapers.

It is clear that this form of racism has gone some way towards that occupation and the repression encountered by Irish people in the six counties being accepted by the British public, who might not be so forthcoming in their support or so apathetic about that occupation if all the 'facts' were to be known.

The racism that appears with such regularity in the British media network is only part of the whole war propaganda machine that has been evident over the last 18 years, and for several hundred years before that. Anti-Irish racism is a close relation of the censorship, misinformation and lies that have appeared concerning the struggle of Nationalists in Ireland.

Anti-Irish racism along with laws such as the PTA also serve as a method of silencing Irish voices from within Britain. This style of reporting and misrepresentation is not unique to the Irish struggle or to the Irish community. We only have to look at the way Argentinians were portrayed during the Falklands war or the way that Black people were portrayed during the recent Broadwater Farm show trials to see the similar racist stance taken by virtually all the media networks.

Light entertainment shown on television and the national tabloid 'dailies' have been the usual outlet for the most offensive types of anti-Irish racism.

The following is an account of the action taken by a member of the Irish in Britain Representation Group in complaining to the BBC, the *Sun* newspaper and to the Press Council about anti-Irish jokes and articles respectively.

The IBRG have been a major influence in efforts to stamp out anti-Irish racism and along with other groups they have taken up the role of informing the public about the nature of that racism and also in promoting a more positive image of the Irish community in Britain.

THE BBC

A letter was sent to the BBC last May complaining of the anti-Irish jokes that appeared in the Kenny Everett show in May 1986. The BBC's programme correspondence section replied and said: 'It is an essential part of humour to make jokes at the expense of minority groups - the Irish, Jews, Scots, Asians and many others.' The letter carried on to argue that such jokes are: 'Affectionate and free from malice.'

What such a reply ignores is that Irish people in Britain and members of other communities that suffer from this 'essential part of humour' fail to find the jokes funny. Perhaps this is because members of these so called 'minority groups' understand the nature and history behind such racist humour. Certainly many Irish people recognise that anti-Irish jokes inflame popular prejudice against them and feed on the concept carefully nurtured by the government and the media that the current war is due to Irish stupidness or bloodymindedness.

Pat Reynolds of the IBRG rightly wrote off to the Director-General of the BBC complaining that such a reply to an allegation of racism was totally unsatisfactory. He received a reply from R. Dunn (senior assistant, secretariat) of the BBC stating that the BBC can 'Give no assurance that innocent jokes against minority groups will ever be banned, simply because they are part of society and of human nature which the BBC cannot help reflecting.' Such an answer clearly shows the true nature of the BBC. The reply claims that the BBC are merely passive reflectors of society and of human nature. Such a claim totally excludes them from any responsibility for influencing viewers and society as a whole. Does the BBC's determination not to ban anti-Irish jokes mean that they refuse to censor other material that is 'part of our society'? No, of course not. One only has to look at the growing list of programmes that have been banned or censored because they are about the war in Ireland or about Irish Republican viewpoints. The BBC's policy not to act against anti-Irish humour is part of the same policy which bans and censors anything to do with Irish Nationalism.

In reaction to this second letter from the BBC, the IBRG issued a press statement demanding BBC action on racism.

'The IBRG condemns the racism of the BBC. We find their attitude and position on racist humour offensive and shocking. It is not an essential part of humour to make jokes at the expense of minority groups, but part and parcel of an ideology which allows racism to grow within British society. Racist jokes are never innocent, they are meant to hurt and humiliate. The BBC patronising of minority groups is offensive. They tell us what we should accept as humour. Their view is subjective, wrong and racist. The

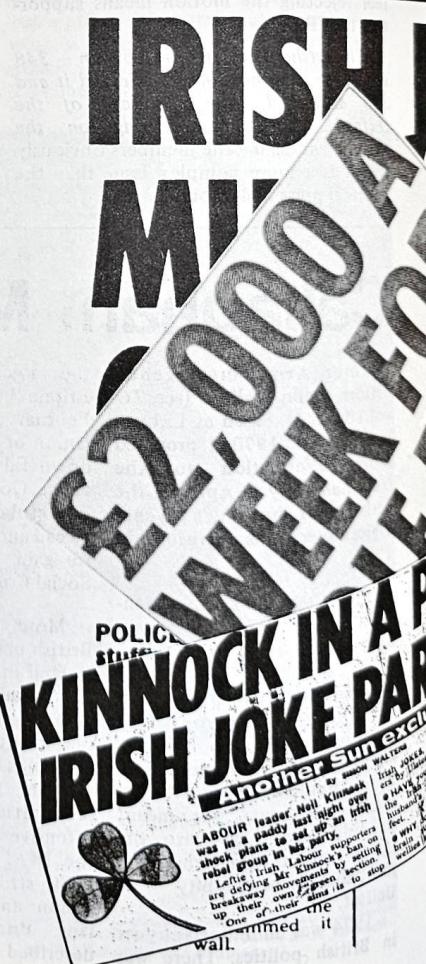
portrayal of minority groups in racist stereotypes is harmful and evil.'

The IBRG calls on all ethnic minority communities to demand that the BBC commit themselves to ending racism within their programming, and to a positive and fair portrayal of all communities.'

THE SUN NEWSPAPER

On October 23rd 1986 the *Sun* newspaper printed an article on its front page entitled '£2,000 a week for dole dad'. The article took great pleasure in emphasising that the family in question were Irish and that they were supposedly 'milking' the social services for everything that they could get. The article was extremely derogatory towards the family and, by unnecessarily stating their nationality, to Irish people as a whole.

Pat Reynolds of the IBRG immediately wrote to the *Sun* newspaper to complain



THE MEDIA

of the blatant anti-Irish racism within the article. The reply he received back from K. Donlan, managing editor of the *Sun* serves as another perfect example why the *Sun* newspaper should be boycotted by the whole of the Irish community in Britain. The newspaper totally rejected P. Reynolds' claim of racism and went on to express: *'We believe in the best possible relations between the Irish and the British. The best possible contribution to that would be an end to the Fenian activities that sicken all decent people in Britain and Ireland.'*

Pat Reynolds immediately wrote to the Press Council complaining about the *Sun*'s reply to his complaint and about the article in question. In the letter addressed to the Press Council he said: *'I enclose the letter I received from the Sun. I find the letter offensive - the term "Fenian" is a derogatory term for Irish Catholics. Further I do not see what*

relevance "Fenian activities" is to my complaint.'

He carried on to argue that in the *Sun* article they *'introduced a person's race and ethnic background where it was not relevant and where it was prejudicial to the Irish community. Given the Irish community's position in the housing market where they are disadvantaged as badly as the Black community, the singling out of this Irish person is likely to stir up anti-Irish feelings and encourage discrimination against Irish people.'*

The Press Council wrote back to Pat Reynolds in January of this year stating that they had decided that his complaint was unjustified and therefore no action was to be taken against the *Sun* newspaper.

THE PRESS COUNCIL

On studying the Press Council's history since it was established in 1953 it is hardly surprising that it came to such a decision. Britain is one of the few western states that does not have laws protecting a citizen's right to reply. When newspapers behave unethically the only redress is through a complaint to the Press Council. The Press Council, however, deserves to be recognised as being an institution that has virtually been designed to protect the newspaper industry from legislation which would otherwise curb its freedom and its powers. Indeed it seems to be a bit strange that an organisation such as the Press Council, which is virtually the only recognised institution that people can complain to about newspapers, is actually funded, by and large, by press proprietors who pay several hundred thousand pounds a year to the Press Council.

They do this because they are investing in an organisation whose very existence offers a form of insurance against the advent of laws that would prohibit and restrict the excesses of press power. In other words, whilst the Press Council is in existence the British Government is quite happy to let them supposedly deal with the misgivings of the British press instead of bringing in laws that would actually go some ways towards curbing press power.

The Press Council (as their failure to uphold P. Reynolds' complaint against a blatant piece of anti-Irish racism so clearly shows) is totally ineffectual in its attempts to limit press power. Indeed had they decided to agree with Pat Reynolds' complaint, such a decision would probably have meant little to the *Sun*. To be castigated by the Press Council means nothing to most editors or owners. They often act with indifference, hostility or total contempt to adverse adjudications. Most editors will publish Press Council

judgements although usually without prominence. Rarely is publication attended by apology, editorial soul searching or follow-up features. The reputation of the Press Council is such that in 1980 the National Union of Journalists (hardly the most radical of unions) withdrew entirely from contributing funds and members to the Press Council; in doing so it declared the Council to be *"wholly ineffective"* and *"incapable of reform"*.

The IBRG on receiving note of the Council's decision instantly issued a press statement condemning the standards of the Press Council and challenging the Press Council to indicate what criteria they use in deciding such cases. The release indicated that although the Press Council *has* ruled against newspapers for unnecessarily mentioning a person's colour or race, they are highly selective in their judgements involving Irish complaints. The statement condemned the *Sun* newspaper and called on the Irish in Britain, people in Ireland, trade unionists, advertisers and newsagents to boycott the newspaper and other papers which have similar racist policies.

The IBRG also accused the Press Council of bias and prejudice against Irish complaints. In the light of the Council's decision on the *Sun's* blatant anti-Irish article, such an accusation seems totally justified.

CONCLUSION

The IBRG are to be commended in their fight against anti-Irish racism. Although their complaints were not upheld in the above cases, they have been successful, for by complaining to the BBC, the *Sun* and the press council and the subsequent replies received, the IBRG have exposed the true nature of those organisations can on occasion produce results and stir reporters, editors and producers into action.

Liz Curtis of the London based Information on Ireland Group sums up the main objectives of such action: *'The main function of protests, if made publicly, is probably to develop among viewers (and readers) a collective 'crap-detector', so that we are better able to assess the information we receive and to some extent immunise ourselves against its habitual biases.'*

Developing an awareness of the shortcomings of the media does not itself fill the gaps in the coverage. For that, it is necessary to turn to alternative sources of information. In the case of Ireland there are plenty: newspapers, magazines from a variety of perspectives, publications from concerned organisations in Britain, as well as videos and films.'

Aengus MacNeil



Labour seeks Unionist pact?

'For thirteen years I have found the Labour Party and individual members of the Labour party far more politicians of principle than I ever found any individual in the Conservative Party or the Conservative Party itself... I think I would prefer to judge people by their actions than by their words. And you know the remarkable thing is, if you judge the Labour party by their words you would consider them anti-Ulster, anti-Unionist. Judge them by their actions and a slightly different picture starts to emerge.' Unionist MP Harold McCusker speaking on Channel 4's *A week in politics*, 20th February 1987.

The Labour Party released their policy document on Northern Ireland in early April. It re-affirmed support for a united Ireland sometime in the future and is a slight improvement on their previous policy statement. While it still speaks of no unity without the consent of the Unionists it also states that Unionists will not be allowed to veto any measures designed towards re-unification. The document had been leaked a few weeks previously in a speech by Clive Soley, former spokesperson on N. Ireland, when he also said that a future Labour government would restore (sic) civil rights to N. Ireland.

This contrasted sharply with a speech prepared by Stuart Bell, junior spokesperson on N. Ireland, in late March. Outlining how the Labour Party might gain the support of the Unionists in the next government he suggested a "package of measures" ranging from the restoration of local government to a review of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Restoration of local government would give councils control over housing and education, which the Unionists had been clamouring for since the abolition of Stormont in 1972.

He also suggested that a grand committee for Northern Ireland would be set up for MPs in the House of Commons. This would increase the influence of Unionist MPs in Parliament. For this package Bell said "we would fully expect the Unionists to support Labour on a Queen's speech if there was to be a hung parliament and return us to the House of Commons".

The following day Peter Archer, Bell's senior, said this did not represent Labour Party policy and he was just tossing about a few ideas for discus-

sion. Bell said he was advocating them. Later after vociferous criticism from the Irish community, as well as Irish activists and supporters within the Labour party, Peter Archer said that Labour would definitely not do a deal with the Unionists. Bell then said he had been misunderstood.

But Stuart Bell has made the same speech before, and has not been reprimanded. It is quite clear that his views are held by many if not all of the Labour Party leadership. His views fit in historically with the actions of Labour governments in the past. A Labour government (with no need to curry favour to get minority support in Parliament) guaranteed the Union, giving Unionists a veto on the future of N. Ireland. Labour gave in to the Loyalists in 1974 by dropping the Sunningdale Agreement. Labour gave N. Ireland and therefore the Unionists more seats at Westminster in order to secure their support for the last minority Labour government. The three years when Roy Mason was Secretary of State for N. Ireland saw the most savage repression of the Nationalist community since 1969.

At best the Labour Party document on N. Ireland puts forward a policy of reforms. On the other hand its most vocal spokesperson on N. Ireland advocates working with Unionists, for the past 65 years the most ardent opposers of reform. Is there to be an 'understanding' with the Unionists? Under pressure Peter Archer says no. In early March Unionist MP Harold McCusker, commenting on who he might work with in a future parliament, mentioned that the Labour Party had contacted him about having talks. If there is not to be a pact, why was he asked?

PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT



While out one night at a disco in Kentish Town last November, Fachtá O Ceallaigh, was arrested and charged under the PTA for wearing a Republican lapel badge.

For "expressing in a passive way support for or membership of a proscribed organisation" O Ceallaigh was conditionally discharged for one year with £75 costs.

In the same borough, Camden Campaign Against the Prevention of Terrorism Act has

just issued a short leaflet providing information on the PTA. The leaflet gives a brief history of the Act, a statistical breakdown on its use — more than 150 people stopped each day in 1985 — and reasons for opposing the PTA.

If you wish to distribute the leaflet in your own area or receive more information on the group contact: Camden Campaign Against the PTA, c/o Camden Neighbourhood Centre, 12 Greenland Road, London NW1.

Leicester controversy

The annual Leicester May Day Festival appeared to be in jeopardy this year when the Labour Council wrote to the District Labour Party stating that prospective Parliamentary candidates would not share a platform with Gay or Sinn Féin speakers, and nor would the traditional venue, De Montfort Hall, be available free of charge.

The May Day Organising Committee, consisting of the Trades Council, City Labour Party, TOM members, Leicester Left Out gay group members and other delegates, refused to be bullied by such threats. The right-wing Labour Group retorted by writing to the Press threatening to ban the event from all Council property if Sinn Féin was to be invited.

This Labourite attempt at sabotage is because May Day Bank Holiday, May 4th, is only three days before the Local Elections. The opportunism of

some Labour Councillors is evident as they line up alongside the Kinnock regime in an unprincipled search for votes.

It is the same Labour Council which banned Leicester's Bloody Sunday march two years ago. Eight Councillors met the Sinn Féin Councillors in November 1986, but are in a minority in the Labour Group.

The Council's attempt to ban Sinn Féin has failed and prospective Parliamentary candidate for Nottingham East, Sharon Atkin, who is herself under attack by the right for her campaign for Labour Party Black Sections, is the key speaker.

Leicester TOM calls on all people opposed to the Labour Group's interference in the May Day Festival to write to Keith Vaz and Jim Marshall (prospective Parliamentary candidates) at Leicester Labour Party Headquarters, 169 Belgrave Gate, Leicester.

Strip search protest in Newport

Anti-strip search campaigners staged a vocal protest in the South Wales town of Newport on April 11.

The vocals were supplied by the Red Choir. As they sang, other protesters from Newport Troops Out Movement, Labour Committee on Ireland, South Wales Women Against Pit Closures and local student groups gave out leaflets and collected signatures for an anti-strip search petition.

"This strip search event has shown what can be achieved on the streets of Newport," said Mid-Glamorgan county councillor and Red Choir member Ray Davies.

The Red Choir (Cor Cochion Caer Dydd) has had ample experience lending its collective voice to street protest. It raised nearly £100,000 for the miners on the streets of Cardiff during the 1984/85 strike.

Women Against Pit Closures member Violet John said she had travelled all the way from Maesteg in West Wales to join the protest because as an Irish person she found the practice of strip-searching utterly deplorable: *"I thought the miners got a raw deal during the strike but in Ireland that type of treatment is an everyday occurrence."*

Organisers of the event said they were very pleased with the response from the public. They said they plan to hold another protest in Cardiff city centre soon to help build for the national demonstration against strip-searching on June 13th in Durham.



Photo: Newport TOM

Southwark Council leader meets Ella O'Dwyer

Anne Mathews, leader of Southwark Council in London, visited Ella O'Dwyer in Durham Prison on April 9th. She was fulfilling a pledge made while chair of the Women's Committee last year to visit Martina Anderson and Ella. At that time they were on remand in Brixton Prison, and being constantly strip-searched.

The Home Office took a year to pass Anne as a visitor, and then only for Ella. The visit lasted 1½ hours. Ella described in detail the punitive regime of up to six strip

searches a month, constant body searches, cell searches and cell changes, all of which take place in the most highly secure (and oppressive) prison for women in these islands.

Anne Mathews will be reporting back to the Southwark Women's Committee, and taking up suggestions from Ella and Martina and their supporters. One idea for the London area is to hold a meeting with all the boroughs and trades unions which have condemned strip searching; another is to facilitate research into the long-

term effects of this barbaric practice.

We urge all those who condemn strip searching to sponsor and come to the demonstration outside Durham's H Wing on June 13th (for details see back page).

For more information on the welfare and campaigning work on behalf of Irish republican prisoners, please contact: Irish Prisoners Appeal c/o Lambeth IBRG 245A Coldharbour Lane London SW9.

Birmingham 6 Appeal

The six men framed for the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974 have expressed anger that their Court of Appeal hearing won't be held until November. This is two years after the Home Secretary ordered a review of their case, the equivalent of a three-year sentence. It is likely that if the Court of Appeal grant a retrial it will take at least another year before it is heard.

The prisoners, who are together for the first time since they were convicted, are now making an application for bail.

They have also been visited by a group of Irish Parliamentarians representing all parties in the Dail. Their case and that of the other framed prisoners is very much a live issue in Ireland. The new Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, has, contrary to the previous government's policy, placed it on the agenda of the Anglo-Irish conference.

Despite the obvious progress made over the past two years in raising the whole issue of the framed prisoners it is imperative that the campaigns are not allowed to lapse, but are

actually increased and made even stronger. It may or may not be coincidence that the Court of Appeal hearing for the Birmingham Six is on the thirteenth anniversary of the bombings.

The address for the official Guildford Four Campaign is: BM Box 6944, London WC1N 3XX.

The address for the London Campaign Group for the Birmingham Six is c/o MATSA Office, 23 Compton Terrace, London N1.

Prisoners' Birthdays

Please send cards and letters to prisoners, especially on their birthdays. Let them know they are not forgotten. Don't forget to use the number.

JOE O'CONNELL 338635
HM Prison Gartree,
Market Harborough, Leicestershire,
LE16 7RP May 15th

PATRICK MAGEE B75881
HM Prison, Welford Road,
Leicester, LE2 7AJ May 29th



A positive step forward

Haringey Day School

"We in Britain are in no position to question how oppressed people decide to conduct their liberation struggles" said the Labour Party chairperson of Haringey Council. He was opening the Haringey Irish Working Party day school on 11th April.

When the Sinn Fein Councillors' Tour visited Haringey in North London last November, the Haringey Irish Working Party, consisting of Haringey TOM, IBRG, LCI and Labour Party Irish Section, made arrangements for their visit. The four groups decided to continue to work together, and on the 11th April held their first day school.

70 people attended what turned out to be a highly successful event. As people arrived the *We Ourselves Speak* video was showing. In the lunchbreak there was a chance

to see the *Strip Searches: Subjugation or Security?* video. There was also the *South Africa/Ireland: One Struggle* exhibition on display alongside the *Binlids and Barricades, Plastic Bullets and Show-Trials* exhibitions (all available from TOM, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH).

The theme of the morning session was British oppression in Ireland and against Irish people living in Britain. Pat Reynolds of the IBRG spoke on the history of discrimination and anti-Irish racism in Britain. Sinn Fein Councillor

and Fermanagh Council Chairperson Paul Corrigan outlined the history of the British occupation in Ireland and recent Sinn Fein advances in Fermanagh.

Four workshops on anti-racism / anti-imperialism, culture, women and trade unions were held in the afternoon. The workshops were arranged in a manner to stress that our work on Ireland relates to our own experiences here in Britain.

In the final session of the day Deputy Leader of Haringey Council, Steve King, paid tribute to the achievements of the Working Party. He stated that it is the responsibility of the groups involved to inform the Council of areas in which work needs to be done, and that the Council would act on

that advice. He also made a commitment for Haringey Council to sponsor a return visit to the six counties following last year's Sinn Fein Councillors' visit.

Paul Corrigan closed the day asserting that the Labour Party can no longer take Irish people's votes for granted — *"With a General Election imminent I urge you to marshall your forces now and ensure that the candidates seeking your vote will deliver on the issue of British withdrawal from Ireland."*

The Haringey Day School was a local event in every sense of the word. As such it was a significant step forward in the ongoing development of Irish work in Haringey.

Broadwater Farm Convictions

Photo: Sarah Booker

"You tell us of Nelson Mandela, that he should not be in prison, yet he has been incarcerated for 20 years and more. Then you imprison a man with no evidence to serve 30 years, and two others to life with just admissions, given during 'interrogation' by officers whose credibility was severely knocked by the trial judge." Stafford Scott, Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign.

At a picket of Tottenham Police Station on Saturday 21st March, some 50 photographers were present. Two days after Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite had been sentenced they had come to witness a riot. The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign had said there would be no riot; and there was no riot. The media went away without their story.

Angry pickets, with a megaphone being passed round, used the station steps as a platform. The message was clear.

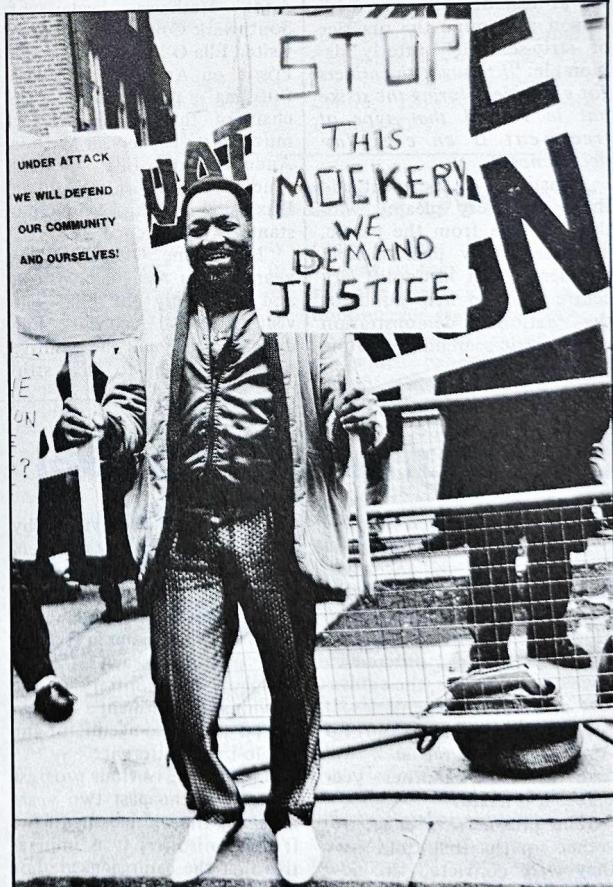
How can a policeman who caused Mrs Jarrett's death front of witnesses go free, and three men from the community receive massive prison sentences with no witnesses

or evidence? The police's own incompetence was the cause of PC Blakelock's death. The Birmingham six have spent 12 years in prison on the basis of forced confessions — Winston Silcott didn't even make a statement. The State has sought revenge; revenge is not justice.

The innocence of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the Maguire family and Judith Ward has never been in doubt. Nor can there be any doubt that Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite are now serving sentences for a death for which they are not responsible.

The State has always known this. Criminalisation does not differentiate between those who fight racism and those who struggle to survive racism. In the eyes of the State to be Black or Irish is to be guilty. Two mothers, Cherry Groce and Cynthia Jarrett, were assaulted by the police in their own homes. The State holds the Black Community of Broadwater Farm responsible for Blakelock's death.

The three men are lodging an appeal against their convictions.



Enough is enough

Dear *Troops Out*,

I am a senior citizen and feel I can now take a greater interest in the 'Irish question' and I should like to identify myself with your work.

Recently I had a letter of mine published in the *Daily Express*, although they did not include all I had to say! This is what I wrote:

Having read with interest your article on Northern Ireland in the Daily Express I am prompted to make the following observations. I've viewed this sad situation from this country and from Ireland itself and I feel sure the time has come to say enough is enough and return Ulster to the Irish nation.

In doing so we shall save many people, both ours and theirs, from bleeding to death in what we must surely admit by now to be a lost cause. Surely it is not beyond the ability of the Irish Government to solve their own problems and so leave us to try to solve the increasing number of problems that befall our own country.

As a taxpayer, I resent the fact that we, through our taxes, have to bolster the rule of British law in a country where it is largely resented. To my mind it would appear we have no more right to occupy part of a sovereign state than the Russians have the right to occupy Afghanistan. In all such cases the struggle of the indigenous population is legitimate.

With the enormous sums of money thus saved we could do much to improve the lot of our own people. If we know anything of Irish history we must realise that the Irish question will never be resolved otherwise, as all true Irish people will continue the struggle for as long as it takes until their country is free again.

England is England and Ireland is Ireland. We must respect the cultures of each and so give peace and prosperity a chance in both our lands. Can we blame the Irish for their struggle for freedom? Would we not do the same in this country if we were faced with the same situation?

Why in God's name can we not give this ongoing situation the priority it deserves? Let this be an election issue as it has been too long a burden to England and Ireland alike.

Alfred E. Scarff
Lowestoft

Ex-soldier speaks out

Dear *Troops Out*,

I've just got hold of your paper dated March 1987 and find it is an excellent paper. I've heard of TOM before but could not get any info about you. I was a soldier in the British Army from 1977 to 1981 and did nine months training for a four month tour of duty in Ireland during 1979/80. It was there that I began to ask questions about Ireland and the Army's role there. Of course I did not get the answers that fitted with my experiences. I bought myself out of the Army in 1981 for many reasons. One of course was my experience in Ireland.

So, I send you my subscription for the next 10 issues and look forward to April's issue.

I am now a member of the Socialist Workers Party, but I

would like to get more involved in anti-British involvement in Ireland. I must also say that I have two brothers still in the Army and we do not see eye to eye on this subject!

I have also done a filmed interview for Platform Films for their documentary on British Imperialism. They interviewed ex-soldiers like myself on how we have moved to the left politically. I don't know if or when this could be shown on TV. I can't see it being shown as it criticises the class system.

Many thanks
Duncan Melville

Abortion: everybody's concern

Dear *Troops Out*,

In her letter to *Troops Out*, April 1987, Helena Brown asks what abortion has to do with the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. I think we would all agree with her that the answer is: nothing whatsoever. But to suggest, as I think she does, that abortion is a British plot, is an insult to the intelligence of the very many Irish women who have made the decision to have one. However, I don't wish to discuss the background to Irish women and abortion here, rather I am concerned to look at why a journal such as *Troops Out* should carry material on the subject.

In *Troops Out* of October 1982, during the run-up to the abortion referendum, I wrote an article on behalf of the London Armagh Co-ordinating Committee, suggesting that it was important for anti-imperialists to take note that the national question in Ireland involves areas much wider than partition and military occupation; that it also includes areas bearing the heavy stamp of the colonial legacy, such as the near destruction of Irish culture and the close relationship between church and state. Without an understanding of the leading role religion has played in Irish struggle it would be difficult to make sense of the contortions being experienced, especially in the South, over the issues of female reproduction, sexuality, and the family.

It seemed important at the time of the abortion referendum, and I believe it still is, that *Troops Out* finds space to explore issues related to the national question. Not all readers have access to Irish newspapers and journals, and it certainly should not be left to the British

media to inform us on the very complex relationship between religion and sexuality in Ireland in a way that is always out of context and frequently racist.

Ann Rossiter
(East London)

Dear *Troops Out*,

I would like to make several points in reply to the letter printed last month from Helena Brown. She wrote condemning abortion and suggested that *Troops Out* should not carry information, as it did, on the recent closure of the two Dublin abortion referral agencies.

Abortion is an emotive issue in N. Ireland, as it is in most countries. It is not an easy step for any woman, but a desperate last choice. Who is Helena Brown to say that Irish women (or English/Spanish or whatever) should not have abortions? Or that Irish women turn to abortion because they have been influenced by Britain? How patronising, we make up our minds thank you.

On one point Helena Brown is correct – abortion has nothing to do with the withdrawal of British troops, but it has to do with self-determination. Take the anti-imperialist argument of a country's right to self-determination to the individual level – surely we should support an individual's right to control his/her own body. Does Ms Brown believe that women should be forced to go with unwanted pregnancies or that she can stop women becoming pregnant in the first place? Keep up the good reporting, *Troops Out*.

In sisterhood,
Bairbre Foreman (London)

Celtic Nationalism

A Chara,

It was as well to have Lesley McCarthy's corrective in your April edition of the earlier review of the (Welsh) *Boy Soldier* film. Although the Irish struggle against English colonialism has been the most evident, there has been a similar process suffered by the Scots and the Welsh as well as by England's oldest colony, Cornwall.

Presumably the Anglo-Irish Agreement could be found to be legally misnamed. In fact the title can be praised as being refreshingly honest. The concept of Great Britain and its various derivatives amount to a Newspeak device designed to keep England's neighbours in their colonial place.

That notorious Hampstead pseud, Michael Foot, eagerly arranged a deal with the Ulster Unionists by which his then master Callaghan's miserable government was extended a further week or so.

Foot's protege Kinnock has manifested decided indications of a likelihood that he will indulge in similar chicanery. He reached the summit of his rhetoric when he expressed himself as willing to die for his country. That country was not defined. Wales? The context suggested either Great Britain or possibly the entire United Kingdom.

Allowing for some honourable exceptions the overall inclination of the Labour Party has been to preserve the status quo. Once the "and Northern Ireland" tail is cut off, there seems to be a fear that Scotland and Wales will also want to hive off, so that their leftish weightings lost, what will remain but a solidly Tory Little England!

Mise le meas,
Pádraig Ó Crucháin
(Press Officer, London branch,
Celtic League)

REVIEWS



IRELAND'S BRITISH PROBLEM

Belfast Letters (1983-87)
Bill Rolston
Chartist Publications, 50p

Bill Rolston's eloquent hand has been evident in the columns of *Troops Out* for over a year. He lives in Belfast where his fingers have remained firmly on the pulse of changing events.

Since 1983 he has been writing a regular Belfast letter for the *Chartist*, a bi-monthly magazine produced by the Chartist Collective. Thirteen of these letters have now been published in a 20-page pamphlet.

Show trials, abortion, prisoners, Anglo-Irish Accord, economy, and unions are but some of the topics covered in this pamphlet. They are all written in relation to events topical at the time.

Rolston's style is clear and logical. His arguments reach the nub of the problem, laying open many of the misconceptions planted in people's minds.

In particular the letter "Is Belfast Normal?" brings home the reality of Belfast. Here he describes a conversation with an American journalist who is planning to write a book which will describe to the American public everyday life in Northern Ireland. One central part of this book was to emphasise the normality of life there. "True", comments Rolston, the days of daily car bombs in the downtown areas are past, it has been a long time since 5-hour-long gun battles took place in the streets between the British Army and the IRA. But, comments Rolston, this doesn't indicate a return to normality.

He lifts the curtain. "Propaganda on the part of the Northern Ireland Office involves two aspects: the attempt to suppress evidence of abnormality and the orchestration of normality. In NIO terms nothing in N. Ireland is what it appears". The abnormality of needing 27,500 people (RUC, UDR and British Army) armed to the teeth to control a population of 1.5 million, the treatment of prisoners and the use of strip-searching are not obvious to the casual observer.

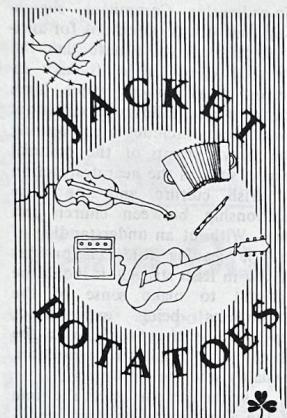
He concludes "Republicans can march and protest all they want, provided it is confined to their own areas by massive security operations, then the level of state violence is seen to be acceptable".

The pamphlet begins with his latest letter, "What Labour can do for Irish unity". It is a condemnation of the Labour Party's current policy of "Irish unity by consent" but goes on to outline some of the measures a future Labour Party should implement to show a genuine commitment to a United Ireland.

At 50p this publication is value for money. Don't be put off by letters going back to 1983, their messages are as true today as they were then.

Bob Chatwin

Available from Troops Out Movement, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.



JACKET POTATOES

I was just leaving the Vic when someone gave me a copy of *Jacket Potatoes*' new tape. I slipped it in the recorder as I was going to bed, thinking I would snooze off to the strains of a nice bit of music. Not a chance. The tape opens with a lovely rendition of *Back Home in Derry*. By the time it got to the reels and *Hey Ronnie Reagan*, my toes were positively tapping. The cat who likes to sleep at the bottom of the bed, looked up reproachfully. The next two tracks, especially the very moving version of *When Margaret was Eleven*, had me totally gripped, and I had to avoid the cat's look as I slipped out of bed to change the tape over.

Side two ensured sleep was a little way off yet. One of the nice things about this band is that they can do versions of songs like *El Salvador* which are very much their own and still retain all the feeling of the original. By the time it got to the *Song for Ella and Martina* the cat had a deep frown on its forehead and was looking at its watch. But it was the last track which did the damage. By now I was sat up in the bed. Did you ever hear a version of *Co. Cork* as good as that? I asked. The cat gave me a look that let you know its ears were

purely decorative and slunk off to find somewhere else to sleep. A good job anyway, as I ended up playing both sides again that evening.

You can catch Pete, Dan and Padraic who make up *Jacket Potatoes* playing various venues in London. But if you can't catch them live or want to hear them in your own flat, a copy of their new tape is a worthwhile investment. It can be obtained from the best outlets including *TOM*. The price is £5 including postage.

Philip an Codladh Beag

STRIP SEARCHING: SECURITY IN THE RAW

Open Space, BBC2, 13th April

"Every day in Britain thousands of people in prison, many of them on remand, are ordered to strip naked." This glib over-simplification set the tone for the BBC's somewhat dire attempt to look at strip-searching in its 'community programme' slot.

All the women interviewed who had undergone a strip-search talked of the humiliation, degradation, disgust, anger and hate at the way it had been carried out. One had been 14 and frightened at her first ordeal another older woman said visits to the doctor's were out nowadays because of nightmare flashbacks to prison.

The programme accepted strip-searching as a fait accompli within the prison system, and looked at how it was (theoretically) carried out. Recruits at a prison training college repeated parrot-fashion the dos and don'ts of a search. Cardinal rules include that the prisoner should not be strip-searched in front of another prisoner and should never be totally naked at any one time. Later in the programme Unionist MP Harold McCusker described how other prisoners watched him, and Clean Break Theatre's simulation of a search illustrated how indeed women are obliged to strip completely naked. Two rules so easily broken, why not the rest? A totally farcical sequence carried out in a men's prison (with trainee POs and camera crew looking on) had the prisoner being treated to please and thank you and put your socks on so you don't catch cold.

The most pertinent contributions came from republican ex-prisoner Patricia Moore; from a psychiatrist who described it as a "very effective and very calculated way of control... the products it yields in terms of security aspects are so slight, there must be other reasons"; and from Peter Timms, ex-governor of Maidstone prison, now a minister of the church, who stressed the psychologically damaging effect on anyone of their clothes being taken away from them in such a way.

Throughout, generalisations were made which went unchallenged, and nowhere was sufficient

stress placed on the fact that it is purely as a political weapon that its use is being increased. Apart from the Faslane nuclear base, no mention was made of its increasing use on protesters in such as the miners' strike, the South African embassy picket, etc.

Its use in the Six Counties was only a small part of the programme and Fr Joe McVeigh stressed the indignation of prisoners because of their catholic religious upbringing far more than he did the specifically political way it is being used against republicans.

Women in Prison were shown meeting with the Prison Officers Association in an attempt to discuss ways of rationalising the procedure, by introducing more privacy to decrease the humiliation and using nurses to carry out the searches. All this is of course at odds with strip-searches campaigns here and in Ireland who call for a categorical end to this degrading practice.

Helen Dady

For details of the campaign against strip-searching here and information about the national demonstration taking place in Durham on Saturday June 13 write to SSSC, 52 Featherstone St, London EC1.

LABOUR AND IRISH HISTORY

by James Connolly

Edited by

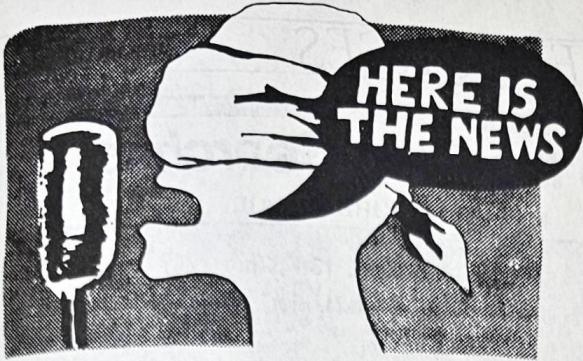
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James Connolly remains one of the most important figures in modern Irish history. His execution after the 1916 Easter Rising means he is a national hero to all the establishment parties, much as he would have detested what they stand for. His constant opposition to the 1914 war and his formation of the Irish Citizens' Army, the first armed workers' militia in the world, have also made him a hero to many different shades of revolutionary. He was a tireless activist, and his death a tragic, perhaps irreplaceable, loss to the Irish Labour Movement.

He was also a prolific writer, both as a theorist and a polemicist. *Labour and Irish History* is his most important book, collecting together many articles and pamphlets earlier published to produce a summary of his position. His basic tenet, that only the working classes have the power truly to break from British rule, remains true today. He opposes partition, rightly predicting that it would lead to a "carnival of reaction" on both sides of the border. This argument has also stood the test of time.

The book gives a summary of Irish history from this standpoint and is a fine starting point for socialists wishing better to understand Irish history and Connolly's ideas. This new edition also comes complete with an introduction telling you what the SWP think of his ideas too.

Ned Mallin



MARCH

13th

The IRA in South Down shoot dead a lorry driver as he delivers concrete blocks a few miles from Rostrevor. The IRA claim he was a UDR member. The RUC deny it.

N. Ireland secretary, Tom King, said that there had been two alleged incidents, in the last three months, in which Irish Air Corps helicopters crossed the border into N. Ireland. Both incidents have been denied by Irish authorities. In the same period, the Irish government has alleged that a total of 19 incidents occurred in which members of the N. Ireland security forces had crossed the border into the Republic. Five of these have been denied and two are still being investigated.

The IRA detonates a bomb at the gates to Roselawn cemetery, Belfast, an hour before RUC reserve constable Peter Nesbitt was buried there. Five policemen and a civilian treated in hospital for injuries and shock.

Mr. John Stalker, asked Channel 4 News if he had been obstructed in his enquiries into RUC alleged shoot-to-kill policy, said "there was much resentment, and information which I believed should have been given to me willingly and readily, was not given to me on the first time of asking or even on the second but then it would suddenly appear. It was like drawing teeth, it was a hard grind to get that which, I thought, should have been happily presented to me". He said he was "stunned and numbed" at the investigation into him: "I was stopped dead in my tracks".

The leader of the INLA army faction, Gerard Steenson (24), and a friend, Anthony McCarthy, are shot dead in Belfast, allegedly by the INLA/GHQ faction who oppose the army directive that the INLA should be disbanded immediately.

16th

Charles Haughey assures President Reagan that the Fianna Fail Government is willing to accept and operate the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The Bishop of Down and Connor, Dr. Edward Daly claims that the RUC has undoubtedly made sincere efforts in many aspects of policing to act and to be seen to act as a professional body impartially serving both communities.

17th

N. Ireland Lord Chief Justice Lowry defends the conduct of courts in N. Ireland to the London Inns of Court. "This war is being waged by organisations which style themselves on armies and obscure military procedures. But it has not invaded the courts and would not be allowed to invade the courts.

The rule of law has prevailed and will continue to prevail there. We will accept but one standard of proof in criminal cases — namely, proof beyond reasonable doubt. This is a concept and difficult to describe. But it is easy for an honest man to recognise. It brings by criminal adjudication, whether by jury or by another tribunal, a certainty and finality which can be absent from civil proceedings. It is a statement of the obvious — that maintaining the rule of law means that deciding cases according to law, and the paramount law in criminal cases is that guilt cannot be established save by proof beyond reasonable doubt."

18th

Former UDR part-time member is jailed in Belfast for the manslaughter of a barman more than four years ago. Cyril Rainey (24) from Ballymena had pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of barman James Galway who was murdered in Sept. 1982 by Shankill butcher Lennie Murphy. Rainey was present when Galway was killed but did not know of the plan beforehand.

19th

DUP leader Rev. Ian Paisley calls on all Unionists to take militant action against the new Public Order Act. "This is not the day for the velvet tongue or the kid glove. It is a day for militant Unionism to assert itself and to show that the stuff of our forefathers still resides within their sons, and that they will give as good an account of themselves".

The number of people out of work in N. Ireland fell by 2,000 in February from January's figures. Department of Economic Development returns show the total registered unemployed as 129,224, just over 19% of the working population.

Part-time UDR man survives an

attempt by the IRA to kill him.

Kinowley joint RUC and British army base is badly damaged by two IRA mortar bombs.

21st

Alan Dukes succeeds Garret Fitzgerald as the sixth leader of Fine Gael.

22nd

Two INLA members, Emmanuel Gargon (25) in Belfast and Kevin Duffy (20) in Armagh, are killed in the continuing INLA feud.

Prominent IRA activist, Gerald Logue (26) dies when his gun accidentally goes off.

Former MI5 undercover agent

James Miller claims that British Intelligence helped promote the 1974 Ulster Workers strike which led to the collapse of the N. Ireland power-sharing executive. Miller said that he worked for MI5 in N. Ireland during the 1970s, during which time he infiltrated the UDA and became a UDA intelligence officer. He says that his MI5 controlling officers instructed him to use his position within the UDA to promote the idea of the strike and to help start a grassroots movement within the UDA of those members that supported a strike. He had been told by his superiors that the strike was part of a campaign to destabilise the government of Harold Wilson, a suspected Soviet agent. He says that he was forced to leave the North after the UDA accused him of being a spy.

Charles Haughey decides to reorganise and centralise within the Taoiseach's Department the co-ordination of Ireland's EEC policy, until now the job of the Department of Foreign affairs.

Fine Gael leader Alan Dukes warns Haughey that his party's support would be for the 1987 budget only, but that the support would not be forthcoming if the Anglo-Irish Agreement was not implemented.

23rd

Two RUC officers and a civilian are killed in a bomb and gun attack in the grounds of Magee College in Derry. The IRA claim responsibility.

24th

The IRA claim the car-bomb attack on the officer's club at the joint British Army and RAF headquarters in W. Germany. Thirty one people are injured.

26th

Bishop Edward Daly condemns the firing of shots over an IRA coffin in church grounds, announcing that

during future military funerals requiem mass will not be celebrated with the body of the dead person present.

An application from a Co. Down group who want to set up a local constituency association is rejected by the Conservative Party Central Office. Party Chair, Tebbit says that the Conservative Party is not prepared to extend its organisation to N. Ireland.

27th

UDR member from Strabane, Co. Tyrone, escapes injury when a bomb is spotted attached to the bottom of his car.

N. Ireland playwright, Frank McGuinness wins the tenth Christopher Ewart-Biggs memorial prize for his play *Observe the sons of Ulster marching towards the Somme*.

Orange Order leaders meet with Ian Paisley and James Molyneaux to discuss a protest planned for the 'day of defiance' which the Unionist leaders have called for April 11th.

30th

IRA missile attack at Belfast's Divis Flats on British Army landrover kills one soldier and injures another.

An embarrassed Labour Party leadership insists that there would be no deals with the Unionists in the event of the next general election producing a hung parliament and hastens to give reassurance that full support for the Anglo-Irish Agreement would continue and that the Party would not abandon its commitment to a united Ireland.

31st

An 18 year old youth from the Markets area of Belfast has the fingers on his left hand broken individually during what appears to be a Republican punishment.

The IRA explodes a car bomb outside Windsor Park football stadium shortly before the kick-off in the match between N. Ireland and England. A telephone warning is given and thousands of supporters on the way to the match are diverted by the RUC.

APRIL

2nd

Three hundred members of the Orange Order march illegally through Newtownards in the first loyalist protest against the new Public Order Act.

Two drivers with *An Phoblacht*, Sinn Fein's weekly newspaper are arrested at Swords in the Irish Republic and held for several hours under section 30 of the Offences against the State Act.



COMING EVENTS & RESOURCES

LONDON

IRISH WOMEN'S HISTORY

Is there a revisionist history of Irish women? Controversies concerning nationalism, religion and patriarchy. Speaker: Ann Rossiter of London Armagh Women's Group. Organized by Irish in Britain History Group.

Thursday 7th May, 7.30pm
Irish Centre, Murray Street, NW1

BENEFIT FOR THE GUILDFORD FOUR

Wolfe Tones

Thursday May 7th, 7.30pm
Tickets £6.00
Hackney Empire, Mare Street, London E8

COMMEMORATION DAY BOBBY SANDS, JAMES CONNOLLY

Speakers, Bookstalls, Exhibitions, Music, Drama, Videos, Food, Creche. Organized by Wolfe Tone Society
Entrance by programme, £1

Saturday 16th May, 1pm-5pm
The Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1

BENEFIT SOCIAL

After the Commemoration Day for Bobby Sands and James Connolly

Saturday 16th May, 8pm-late
Entrance £1 with programme, £3 on the door

Sir George Robey, Seven Sisters Road, N4
Nr Finsbury Park tube

NEW EXHIBITION

SOUTH AFRICA/IRELAND: ONE STRUGGLE

made by Camerawork Derry

Available for hire from the
Troops Out Movement,
PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH

Stop the Strip Searches!

MARCH TO DURHAM JAIL

SATURDAY JUNE 13th, 2pm

Assembly Point: University Students' Union, New Elvet, Durham

Speakers:

an ex-Armagh prisoner; a republican prisoner's relative;
CAMUR (Chilean Women's organisation), Iranian Women's Association;
the Women's Support Group (ex-Miners' Wives Group);

Speakers have also been invited from:

Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign; Tamil and South African organisations

Organised by:

Newcastle Women and Ireland, Leicester Women Against Strip Searches,
Stop the Strip Searches Campaign, London

Supported by:

Troops Out Movement, Irish Prisoners Appeal, Southall Black Sisters,
Women and Ireland Network, Labour Women for Ireland; and others

For further information, contact:

Stop the Strip Searches Campaign, 52-54 Featherstone Street, London EC1
or Troops Out Movement, 01-609 1743 between 1pm and 6pm weekdays

LONDON

CONTEMPORARY IRISH YOUTH EMIGRATION

Speaker: Seamus Taylor
Organized by
Irish in Britain Research Group

Monday 18th May, 5pm

Committee Room, Irish Study Centre,
North London Polytechnic,
Holloway Road, N7

IRISH WOMEN AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN

Speakers: Ann Rossiter, Marian Larragy
Organized by
Irish in Britain Research Group

Monday 15th June, 5pm

Committee Room, Irish Study Centre,
North London Polytechnic,
Holloway Road N7

BENEFIT

Don Carroll, Maria Tolly, Jacket Potatoes
Organized by National Demonstration
against Strip-Searching
Saturday 23rd May, 8-12pm
Chats Palace, Brooksbys Walk, E9

JOIN THE TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT

Below is a list of towns and districts in England, Scotland and Wales where we have TOM branches or contacts. If you want to join through a branch or as an individual, please fill in the coupon provided, and send it to PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

ENGLAND

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Northampton

Nottingham

Norwich

Redditch

Glasgow

Sheffield

Newport

Tyneside

York

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West London

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Northampton

Nottingham

Norwich

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Glasgow

Newport

I would like to join/be sent information about the Troops Out Movement.

Name

Address

Membership of a branch costs £6 (£2 unemployed) payable through the branch. Individual membership is £10 (£6 unemployed) which includes a subscription to *Troops Out*.