

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

**TROOPS OUT
NOW**

**SELF
DETERMINATION
FOR THE
IRISH PEOPLE
AS A WHOLE**



Paper of the Troops Out Movement 30p

Vol. 11, No. 2, November 1987



Patrick Joseph Hill



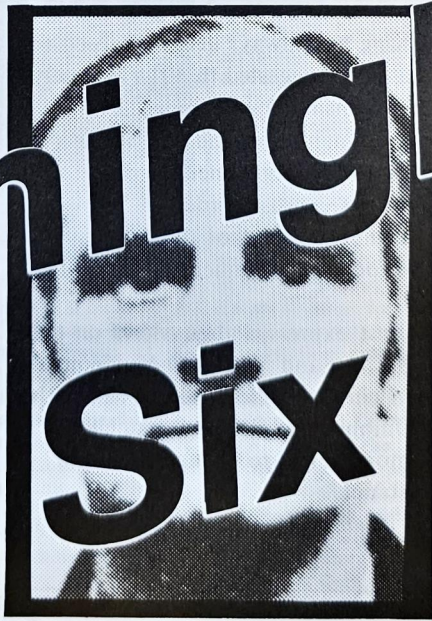
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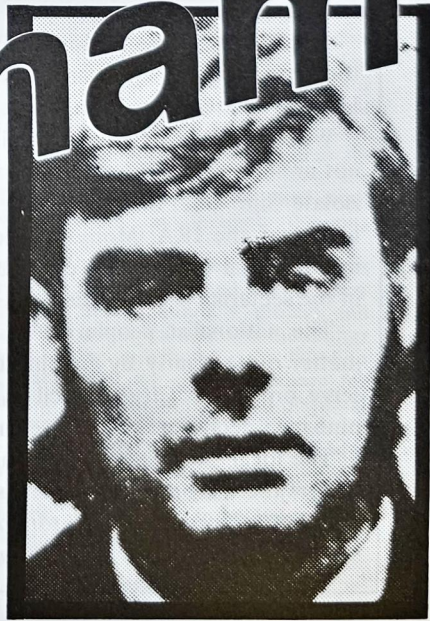
Robert Gerard Hunter



Noel Richard McKenny



Hugh Callaghan



William Power

**Justice
for the
Birmingham
Six**



EDITORIAL

British pressure increases

When N Ireland Secretary, Tom King, warned Dublin of the "very serious implications" for Anglo-Irish relations if Dublin does not introduce the Extradition Act on December 1st he was being somewhat less than honest. Britain doesn't give a damn about Anglo-Irish relations. The government's only concern is to maintain British rule in Ireland.

Britain has used the Anglo-Irish Agreement to encourage the nationalist population in the Six Counties into believing that meaningful reforms are just around the corner. Even this pretence has now gone. King's harsh words were followed by Thatcher's remarks on the issue of Diplock Court reform — "The future of courts in Northern Ireland is a matter for the UK Government and is not a bargaining counter."

Having played along with the Anglo-Irish Agreement for two years the government now displays a total disregard for Anglo-Irish relations. The government is well aware of popular opposition to the Extradition Act in the Twenty Six Counties. Yet it does not appear willing to even allow Dublin a face saving compromise of delaying the legislation.

The British government has been similarly bloody-minded in declaring its intention to force councillors in the Six Counties to take an oath condemning violence. Both the Dublin government and the Social Democratic and Labour Party are opposed to this measure. The only political force in Ireland to have welcomed the move is the Unionist camp, and they are complaining that the 'anti-violence oath' doesn't go far enough.

According to the national press King has always been opposed to the introduction of such an oath. It has been suggested that the intensely Loyalist Thatcherite, John Stanley, is responsible for the move.

What the national press, political commentators and politicians are not announcing is the failure of the Anglo-Irish Agreement to politically isolate Sinn Fein and the failure of increased cross-border co-operation to defeat the IRA. Moreover, despite the existence of the Agreement, international opinion has continued to focus on the inherent inequalities in the sectarian Six Counties statelet.

The nationalist people of West Belfast expressed their views on the matter quite clearly by electing Fra McCann and Mairtin O Muilleoir to serve on Belfast City Council as Sinn Fein Councillors. Sinn Fein, with nine members, is now the largest non-Unionist party on the Council.

The local election result just adds more weight to the age old adage — 'Where there is oppression there is resistance.'

For an account of the history of the disenfranchisement of nationalists in the Six Counties see pages 6 and 7.

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).

Copy should reach us by 18th November for the December/January issue.

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**PO Box 353
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Frank Millar, off to London television.

Rats leave a sinking ship

Two resignations have recently startled the Unionist parties from their torpor, and could be the first sign of a realignment of these parties.

On 11th September, Frank Millar declared his resignation as chief executive of the Official Unionist Party. He plans to leave Ireland and take up a job working in television in London. Still only in his early 30s Millar was the rising star of the OUP. Then, even more dramatically, the news of Peter Robinson's resignation as deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party was leaked to the press in early October. As Paisley's right hand man for several years, Robinson was seen as his natural successor and his resignation was said to be a considerable blow to the old bigot.

The link between these resignations is that the two men were, along with Harold McCusker, the co-authors of the Unionist Task Force Report produced earlier this year. This was no revolutionary document, but did suggest some strategies towards extracting Unionism from the hole it has dug itself into over opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Moreover, it indicated support in the right circumstance for 'responsibility-sharing' in any future devolved government.

This report has been totally ignored by the two party leaders, Paisley and Molyneux, who are presently engaged in their 'talks about talks' with NI



Peter Robinson, waiting in the wings.

Secretary Tom King. But short of the unlikely event of the scrapping of the Anglo-Irish Agreement it is hard to see what these talks can gain them. Meanwhile their unimaginative leadership faces mounting opposition within the Unionist parties. Millar may have gone to London, but Robinson is still very much waiting in the wings.

Nuclear energy fall out

What do radiation and the British government have in common? — Neither recognises Irish sovereignty.

Widespread public opposition to nuclear power in Ireland has so far been successful in stopping putative plans for the development of a nuclear power programme in the 26 counties. So there is anger at Britain's decision to build more nuclear power plants, and at its continuing use of the Irish Sea as a dumping ground for its nuclear waste.

Fresh outrage and ministerial protests have greeted the announcement of a planned new reactor at Trawsfynydd in North Wales along with the proposal to bury highly radioactive waste under the Irish Sea less than 100 miles from the Irish coast.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

The plan to build a new PWR type reactor at Trawsfynydd, next to the existing ageing and accident prone Magnox reactor was criticised by both Ray Burke, Fianna Fail's Minister for Energy, and Dick Spring, leader of the Labour Party, who said that if the plans went ahead it would have to be regarded by Ireland 'as a hostile act'.

There are already 11 nuclear power stations on Britain's west coast, situated largely in 'wilderness' areas. Very often the closest large conurbations are across the Irish Sea on the east coast of Ireland — far closer to Dublin than to London!

The announcement of the planned new reactor comes around the same time as an EEC conference on health and safety in the nuclear age was told that a nuclear accident in Britain could kill 40,000 people in Ireland and wipe out half of its agriculture for five years. Fresh disclosures on the levels of radiation released by the 1957 fire at Sellafield, the world's most serious nuclear accident until Chernobyl, have been making the news and recent evidence suggests the high incidence of Downs Syndrome babies on Ireland's east coast, particularly around Dundalk, is directly attributable to that accident.

Research in this country has shown 'significant' clusters of leukaemia and cancer around nuclear power stations and the Dublin Government has launched an inquiry into cancer deaths, particularly in the north-east, over the last fifteen years. Headed by the Minister for Health it should report soon.

NUCLEAR WASTE

On September 16th Ray Burke met with Cecil Parkinson, the newly rehabilitated Minister of Energy, to protest at the plans for the new North Wales N-Plant and to push Fianna Fail's long standing demand for the closure of Sellafield/Windscale.

On the eve of the meeting British Nuclear Fuels Limited tactfully announced its plans to bury high level nuclear waste in caverns beneath the Irish Sea! The Central Electricity Generating Board have been pumping liquid nuclear waste into the Irish Sea for years with the result that international experts have branded it the most radioactive stretch of water in the world.

There is understandable anxiety too, in Ireland, over Britain's increasingly pressing need to de-commission its ageing Magnox reactors and radioactive Nuclear submarines. The British government does not seem to have a clear plan about how this will be done or where the resulting waste will be dumped. The fear is that the Irish Sea will be used once again as Britain's dumping ground.

The meeting of ministers was 'frank and open'. Ray Burke lodged a protest and issued a strong statement after the meeting. Yet he failed to gain any concessions save for an invitation to visit Sellafield to see the place for himself.

The state of Anglo-Irish relations being what they are the British seem set to ignore all protest from Ireland and carry on using the Irish Sea as its private dumping ground for nuclear waste.

Extradition headache

When the British government entered into the Anglo-Irish Agreement with the Dublin government it declared its intention to introduce reforms in the Six Counties. As with many British initiatives in Ireland the move was dictated by political expediency. The British government had to respond to the developing threat of Irish Republicanism in an all-Ireland context.

As with all measures of political expediency, unforeseen consequences of the Anglo-Irish Agreement have arisen. First we had the Unionist Parties' alienation from Westminster. Then, about a year ago, the issue of non-jury Diplock Courts raised its head.

A year ago many people outside of Ireland did not consider the injustices of non-jury courts as a major issue. That position has now changed. Sections of the British press have run many articles on Diplock Courts and international opinion has been reminded of the Six Counties' judicial idiosyncracies. When N Ireland Secretary, Tom King, visited the USA in September he was quizzed by Congressman Joseph Kennedy, among others, on Diplock Courts.

EXTRADITION

The British government was quite willing to play along with the charade of a 'dialogue' with Dublin. The false impression of a working Anglo-Irish Agreement was cleverly portrayed. But, then along came the extradition issue. It was suggested that the Fianna Fail government in Dublin intended to use ratification of the European Convention on Extradition as a lever to persuade the British government to introduce Diplock Court reform.

By this stage the British government's patience with the game was wearing thin. The British government has declared it is not going to reform Diplock Courts and it is demanding that the Dublin government introduces the Extradition Act on December 1st.

FRAME-UPS

But, people have a habit of getting in politicians' way. Not only have people in Ireland taken notice of what has been taking place in the Anglo-Irish Agreement, they have definite views on the issues raised. People are not happy with Diplock Courts and nor are they happy with extradition.

The experiences of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguire Family are proof enough of the fact that Irish people do not get fair trials in Britain.

Irish Agreement and British intransigence on reforms have served to focus interest on the extradition question. Needless to say Sinn Fein has played a significant part in opposing extradition.

Prior to King's outburst following the Anglo-Irish Agreement intergovernmental conference on 21st October, when he warned of the "very serious implications" for Anglo-Irish

increasingly willing to declare their opposition.

PRESSURE POLITICS

Pressure is clearly mounting within the Twenty Six Counties on the Dublin government to wrest some concessions from Britain. On the other hand, the British government is applying pressure on Dublin to back off. Something has to give. But, whatever the outcome the British government is increasingly finding itself in a no-win situation. Either the Fianna Fail government will take a stand against Britain on the issue, or British intransigence will be blamed for Dublin's introduction of the Extradition Act. Likewise Sinn Fein is in a no-lose situation. It is the only all-Ireland political party to have been consistently opposed to extradition.

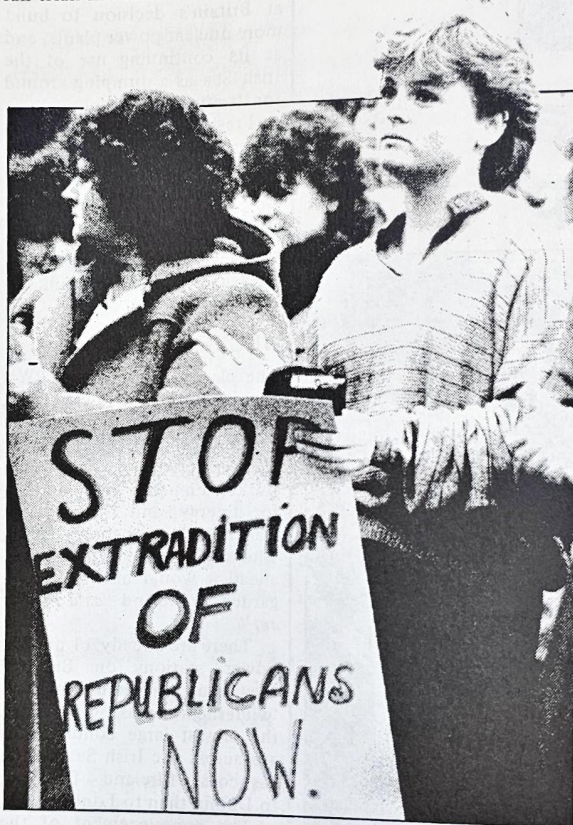
The irony of it all is that by entering into sham talks on minor reforms in the first place the British government is now playing a major part in mobilising public opinion in the Twenty Six Counties.

BIRMINGHAM SIX

There is another option available to the British government which we shouldn't rule out, however unlikely it may appear. If this months Court of Appeal finds in favour of the Birmingham Six their 13 year imprisonment could be excused as an aberration in British justice with the courts now making good their original mistake. This would enable Fianna Fail to pass the Extradition Act without loss of face.

However, the implications for the British state if it is to admit such a gross miscarriage of justice are immense. Any decision to release the Birmingham Six cannot be accredited to British justice. If the Birmingham Six do win their Appeal it would be an indication of just how much the British government has embroiled itself in the Anglo-Irish Agreement 'game'.

Of major concern to the British government must be the prospect of the Anti-Extradition Campaign mobilising vast numbers of people in the Twenty Six Counties with Sinn Fein establishing itself as a major political force in the south in much the same way as the National H-Block/Armagh Campaign launched Sinn Fein onto the electoral scene in the Six Counties in the early 1980s.



Although the southern population has very little influence over the affairs of the British state in the Six Counties, or in Britain itself, they are in a position to influence the Dublin government. Hence a mounting campaign against extradition in the Twenty Six Counties.

ANTI-EXTRADITION CAMPAIGN

Opposition to extradition in the Twenty Six Counties is not the result of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Nor is it a consequence of the British government's refusal to implement reforms in the Six Counties. But, the publicity given to the Anglo-

relations if Dublin doesn't introduce the new legislation on extradition by December 1st, it was felt by many that the Fianna Fail government intended to postpone the Extradition Act.

Despite this belief the campaign against extradition has steadily grown over the last couple of months. To date 15 local authorities have declared their opposition to extradition along with many Trades Councils, Trade Unions, and prominent individuals. Of major concern to Fianna Fail Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, is the fact that many party members are opposed to extradition and are



When the finger points

The 1987 Amnesty International Report has just been published and it continues to reflect the abuses inflicted on the Irish people by the British State. Under the heading 'United Kingdom' eight issues are held to be of concern to Amnesty International, of these no less than six relate to the struggle in Ireland, while another concerns a Kashmiri leader arrested under the PTA.

• Amnesty has written to the Government over its "failure to deal adequately with issues raised by a series of incidents since 1982 in which unarmed individuals were shot dead by the Security Forces."

Amnesty has reiterated its claim that an independent judicial inquiry is needed, particularly noting the controversy surrounding the removal of

John Stalker from the Police inquiry.

• Diplock Courts and the Supergrass trials have also been monitored by Amnesty and the report notes poor standards of evidence and the practice of giving 'immunity' to key witnesses (Supergrasses).

• Reports of violence and ill-treatment of inmates at Crumlin Road and Magilligan Prison,

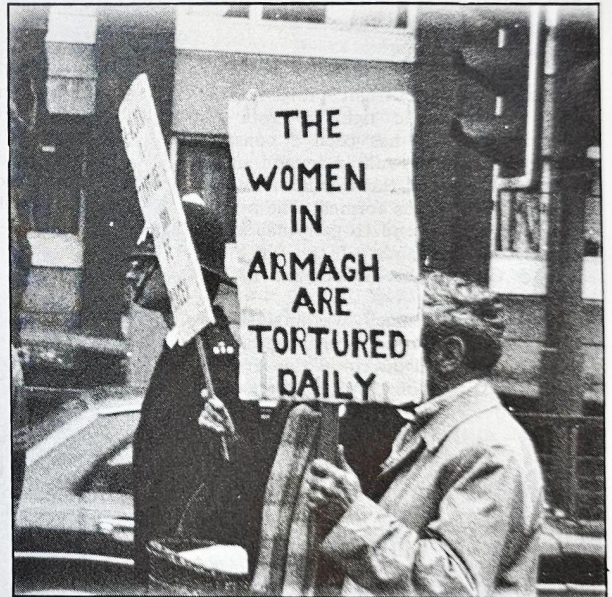
as well as of suspects in Gough Barracks and Castlereagh are being investigated.

• Strip searching of women prisoners in Armagh Prison over a number of years is also considered, with Amnesty stating it "believes that Strip-Searching constitutes ill-treatment when it is carried out with the deliberate intention of humiliating or degrading prisoners." In November 1986 the organisation again wrote to the Government to say its concern had not been alleviated and to urge the Government to reconsider its policy on Strip-Searching.

• Amnesty also took up the case of Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson and wrote to the Home Secretary about their ordeal while on remand.

• Amnesty has requested the Government to review the convictions of the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four, drawing attention to the allegations of brutality that led to the 'confessions' and that a "considerable new volume of evidence and information has come to light".

Amnesty International is not in the business of drawing political conclusions from its findings. However what has emerged from successive Reports is that there is a systematic pattern of abuse being practised on Irish people. Amnesty is an internationally respected organisation whose findings will continue to embarrass the government and deflate its arrogant claim to lecture the world on civil liberties.



Report condemns discrimination

A government sponsored investigation into employment trends in the Six Counties between 1971 and 1985 has just published its findings. The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights commissioned the survey undertaken by the Policy Studies Institute.

The report found that only a 'very small minority' of employers have meaningful equal opportunities policies

and that employment discrimination against the catholic population is as bad today as it was 15 years ago, ie catholic men are 2.5 times as likely to be unemployed as protestants.

This is all old hat to regular readers of *Troops Out*. But the report could cause further embarrassment to the British government as it makes over 100 recommendations for a change in the situation.

IRELAND: CAUSE OF LABOUR?

A conference for trade unionists on

28 November 1987

The Camden Centre

Bidborough Street

London NW1

(opp St Pancras Station)

For delegates pack and further information, contact 'Ireland: The Cause of Labour?'

BM Box 5335, London WC1N 3XX

Patterns of Discrimination

Politics

In the last two issues under *Patterns of Discrimination* we looked at discrimination in employment and the fightback against it, principally around the MacBride Principles. (Both issues available at 30p each inc. postage). We saw how discrimination in employment opportunities is an integral part of the Northern Ireland state. But there are two other forms of discrimination which have been actively pursued by the British government in the past few years.

Central to the government's unspoken strategy in the Anglo-Irish Agreement is the development of a strong Catholic middle class who would see their interests as the same as the British government. This new middle class would be crucial in undermining the large and radicalised nationalist working class population. To this end the government has been trying to undermine the popular appeal of Sinn Fein and develop support for the SDLP. Communities which vote for Sinn Fein face direct discrimination. Their right to vote for whom they wish is continually challenged, and attempts by these communities to build their own cultural and educational infrastructure is under attack from the N. Ireland office.

VOTING

Undermining or outright prevention of peoples democratic right to vote for whom they wish has been a constant feature of Britain's rule in Ireland and is a basic element of the Northern Ireland statelet since it was formed. One person one vote and an end to gerrymandering were prime demands of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement in the late sixties.

Unionist supremacy was maintained by a combination of repressive legislation, armed might, and discrimination against nationalists in voting. This discrimination took two forms. There was a restricted franchise of rate payers and their spouses which discriminated against poor/non-houseowners, of which nationalists were disproportionately numbered. Unionist chief whip Major Curran put it plainly in 1946 when he said *"The best way to prevent the overthrow of the government by the people who had no stake in the country and had not the welfare of the people of Ulster at heart was to disenfranchise them."*

The other form was gerrymandering the electoral boundaries. Electoral boundaries were drawn so that nationalist votes were concentrated in a few areas and Unionist votes were always just sufficient to win a majority in the other areas. This meant that the Unionist vote was maximised and the Nationalist vote minimised.

BOBBY SANDS

As the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement showed to the world the discrimination in voting rights, the British government became increasingly embarrassed. In 1969 reforms were pushed through of the boundaries and the franchise was extended to include nearly all adults.

However, the election of Bobby Sands as M.P. for Fermanagh/South Tyrone in 1981 shocked the government and again they looked at methods of manipulating voting rights. The result was a Bill rushed through parliament preventing anyone who had been in prison within the preceding five years from standing for election.

SINN FEIN COUNCILLORS

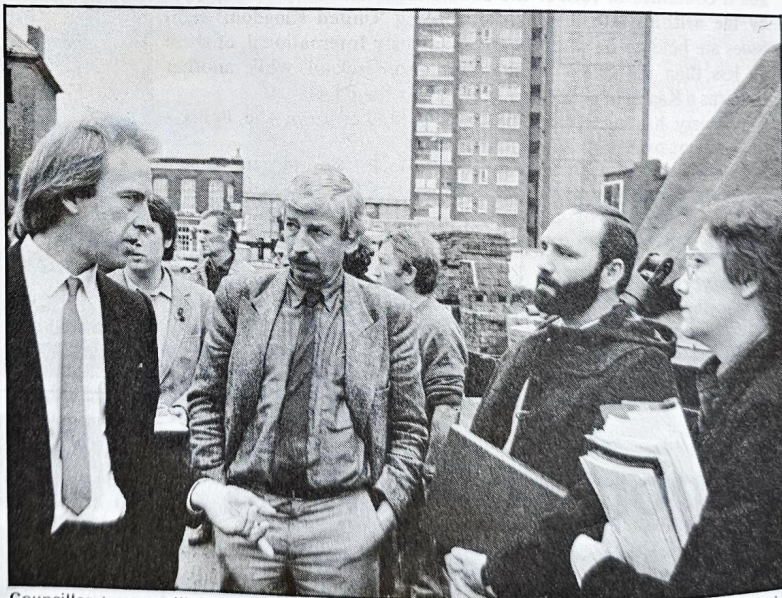
As Sinn Fein increasingly participated in elections and were increasingly successful the government introduced new identification laws aimed at making it more difficult for unemployed and poor people to vote. These people were a strong base of

support for Sinn Fein. Ministers then refused to have any dealings with Sinn Fein elected representatives.

All contact between civil servants, local government officers and Sinn Fein representatives is closely monitored. Officers dealing with business raised by Sinn Fein members have to report it to Stormont Castle. In direct contrast to their willingness to interfere with councils in Britain for political reasons, the government has refused to intervene in any of the councils in Northern Ireland where Unionist councillors have refused to work with Sinn Fein in the council chamber, and have attempted to prevent Sinn Fein councillors from representing their constituents.

SINN FEIN BAR

Now the Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King has announced a new attempt to try to prevent Sinn Fein from standing in elections. Candidates in local elections will have to *"declare and undertake if elected they will neither support nor assist the activities of any organisation proscribed in Northern Ireland."* When 100,000 people voted for Gerry Adams and the Sinn Fein Councillors they were quite clear of their support for the IRA. This is another attempt to disenfranchise that electorate.



Councillor to councillor: Sinn Fein's elected representatives were welcomed by some councils in England (above, Hackney) last year.

The clearest example of Gerymandering at work was Derry City. In 1966 the adult population was 30,376 – 20,102 Catholics and 10,274 Protestants – yet the Corporation was still Unionist controlled. First the restricted franchise substantially reduced changes, the city was divided into three wards as follows:

South Ward
11,185 voters
10,047 Catholics
1,138 Protestants
8 [Nationalist] Councillors

North Ward
6,476 voters
2,530 Catholics
3,946 Protestants
8 [Unionist] Councillors

Waterside Ward
5,549 voters
1,852 Catholics
3,697 Protestants
4 [Unionist] Councillors

and communities under attack

Wary of the international reaction if they were seen to be disbaring successful Sinn Fein candidates the government is thinking of making this a civil rather than criminal [in legal terms] matter. This means that it would be down to opposition councillors rather than the government to take legal action to have them disbarred if they refuse to make this declaration. It shows the cowardice of the government in not just refusing to accept the will of the electorate but also showing an unwillingness to do the dirty work of disbarring themselves.

The government is also clearly considering banning Sinn Fein outright. But again, because of how this might appear internationally, it would much prefer to prevent them from standing in elections by a less direct method. Twenty years after the foundation of the civil rights movement electoral gerrymandering is still being practiced by the British government.

over the past few years. Funds have been withdrawn and everything possible has been done to undermine their continued existence. In this the government has been ably assisted by the SDLP who are angered by their independence and refusal to tie themselves to any particular political party.

The SDLP, in the person of Brian Feeney, last year called on the British government to close down various west Belfast community groups because they were 'siphoning funds to the IRA.' No evidence was produced nor were any particular groups named. These statements gave support and encouragement to the British government's political vetting of community groups, and also set up all community workers in West Belfast as targets for assassination.

Withholding of funds from community projects was initially based around refusing ACE funding. ACE [Action for Community Employment] is one of the temporary employment schemes introduced by the British government to artificially keep the unemployment numbers down. About half its annual cost of £24 million comes from the European Social Fund. While most community centres are opposed to the scheme on the basis that the wages are low and it is only a sop to the unemployment figures, the reality is it is the only form of funding available and in order to install staff ACE funds have to be utilised.

Seven groups have had their grants withdrawn on the basis that they "have links with paramilitary groups." No evidence has ever been produced to support these allegations. The groups include the Shantallow Community Centre in Derry, Dove House in Derry, the Mhic Airt nursery school in the Short Strand, the Irish language daily, Lá, a creche based in Conway Mill, and most recently the Twinbrook Tenants and Community Association ((TTCA). Below we look at some of the schemes which have lost their funding.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

The 1980s saw an upsurge of community groups in Nationalist areas in Northern Ireland, particularly in urban areas like Belfast and Derry. These groups cover a wide range, from educational groups to tenants associations to womens centres to cultural groups. They are the product of the various communities developing structures to meet their own needs. They are all based in long neglected working class areas and as a result have very independent policies. This does not tie in at all with the government's policy of developing a compliant catholic middle class and isolating and weakening radical working class communities.

POLITICAL VETTING

Community groups have been under sustained attack by the British government

fied now for the safety of those children travelling to school."

TTCA

Last August the Department of Economic Development withdrew six ACE funded schemes from the TTCA. The TTCA is known as one of the most active and successful of community groups in Northern Ireland. It has vigorously promoted the needs of Twinbrook, and has strong links with the Housing Executive, the DHSS, the DOE, and the Probation Service. It runs an advice centre and a project for young offenders under the auspices of the probation service. It also plays an active part in umbrella groups such as the Falls Community Council. The DED again claimed it had links with paramilitary groups. TTCA had ACE funding since 1982.

CONWAY EDUCATION CENTRE [CEC]

This August the Belfast Education and Library Board informed CEC that they were withdrawing funding of nine part time tutors as long as the centre is based in Conway Mill [see *Troops Out* October issue]. No explanation was given, but a quick look at the courses involved gives an indication. They are obviously the abc of terrorism—history, maths, English language and English literature, philosophy and political studies, and English A Level. The centre has a very good academic record despite lack of funding. West Belfast has no further education centre and travelling out of the area after six is difficult and dangerous.

CONWAY MILL EDUCATION FUND

Urgent donations are needed to safeguard the future of the Conway Mill Education Centre (see article in this issue for details).
Send your donations to:
Royal Bank of Scotland, Islington Branch
Sorting code 16-00-58
Account no. 12584768
Or direct to:
Conway Mill Education Fund
Box 50, 136 Kingsland High Street,
London E8

The withdrawal of funds from these community schemes is an attempt to punish them for the politics of the communities in which they operate. It is an attempt to make those communities feel helpless without the support of the British government. It is political vetting and political discrimination in the long tradition of discrimination practiced on the nationalist population in the six counties of Northern Ireland. Despite all the protestations of the government it is clear discrimination is as rampant as ever in Northern Ireland. It is a fundamental part of that statelet and until the dismantling of that state is undertaken discrimination will remain.



Naiscoil Mhic Airt.

MHIC AIRT NURSERY

The school is an Irish language nursery based in the Mhic Airt community centre in the Short Strand. It has 16 children with a number of older children who were bussed to another Irish language school. The school receives money from the charity Children in Need and featured in a television appeal three days before its money was withdrawn last November. No British official has ever attended the school to inspect it. As one angry parent pointed out in response to the government's allegations: 'We're talking about three year old children learning Irish.'

Short Strand is a nationalist enclave surrounded by loyalist areas and has suffered numerous sectarian attacks. One parent summed up the feelings of many. 'I'm really angry that they should put my children in danger. I'm really terri-

Pages from history:

The 23rd November, 1987, will be the 120th anniversary of the execution of the Manchester Martyrs—William Philip Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien. On Sunday 22nd November the annual Manchester Martyrs Commemoration will take place (see back page for details). Here Graham Smith takes a brief look at the events of 120 years ago.

On St Patrick's Day, March 17th, 1858, the Irish Republican Brotherhood was formed in Dublin. Popularly known as the Fenians, after the legendary Fianna warriors of pre-Christian Ireland, the IRB was a secret organisation dedicated to the overthrow of British rule.

The Fenians based their politics on the thinking of James Fintan Lalor, the Young Irelander who stressed the link between the peasants' struggles for land reform and the nationalist aspirations of the Irish people.

Throughout the nineteenth century the land question dominated Irish politics alongside the national question. The land question's importance was on two fronts. Firstly, the peasants' struggles against the landed aristocracy for land reform. And secondly, the mass emigration of Irish peasants who were forced to look beyond Ireland's shores for work. The vast majority of Irish emigrants came to Britain or went to North America.

The result of this displacement of Ireland's population was that the struggle for independence in the 1860's was not simply focused on events in Ireland. The Irish in Britain and North America also played a central part.

IRELAND AND BRITAIN

Returning from a visit to Ireland in the spring of 1856 Frederick Engels remarked *"Ireland can be regarded as the first English colony, and as one which because of its proximity, is still ruled directly in the old way. Here it can be clearly seen that the so-called liberty of the English citizens is based on the oppression of the colonies. In no other country have I seen so many gendarmes. . . developed to the highest perfection here among the constabulary, who are armed with carbines, bayonets and handcuffs."*

However, it was in England itself where the British Establishment carried out acts of revenge against Irish people for daring to oppose British rule in Ireland. It was in this period of history that Britain developed an armoury of anti-Irish racism, trial by media, show trials, revenge executions and the holding of Irish prisoners as political hostages. Every act of repression was met with resistance, with the Irish in Britain managing to take with them some sections of the British working class.

MANCHESTER 1867

On the 11th September, 1867, the Fenian leader, Thomas Kelly, and his aide, Timothy Deasy, were arrested in Manchester. At the time the Fenians were re-organising after a series of major setbacks. Kelly had recently assumed the

leadership of the movement, taking over from James Stephens a founder member of the IRB.

In this period over a tenth of Manchester's population was Irish. Local Fenians quickly decided that Kelly and Deasy had to be rescued. A plan was devised which depended on the utmost secrecy and non-violence.

On Wednesday, 18th September, Kelly

and Deasy were being transported to Bellevue Gaol along with three other prisoners. As the van proceeded along Hyde Road it was ambushed by the rescue party. The door of the van was locked and attempts to break it open proved futile. An attempt was also made to break in through the roof but was also unsuccessful. So a pistol shot was fired at the lock in order to gain access. At this same moment the one police officer in the van, Sergeant Brett, was standing by the door and was fatally wounded. One of the prisoners in the van then handed the keys through the ventilation louvre and Kelly and Deasy made good their escape.

In the ensuing melee three men, Edward O'Meagher Condon, William Philip Allen and Michael Larkin, were captured. Michael O'Brien covered the retreat and was also arrested. Kelly and Deasy were never recaptured.



'Punch' cartoon condemning the Fenian Movement and British trade unionists.

the Fenian Martyrs

BACKLASH

The successful rescue was a severe blow to the prestige of the British government. The state's response was immediate. Irish homes were raided by the police. Within days some 50 people had been arrested.

The authorities wanted their pound of flesh, and they wanted it quick. On the 27th September 28 men faced committal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

The trial was held by a hastily convened 'Special Commission' with the Attorney General prosecuting. There were many calls for a delay so that the defendants could prepare their defence. However, the five main defendants, Allen, Larkin, O'Brien, Condon, and a Royal Marine by the name of Thomas Maguire, had already been tried and found guilty by the media.

Large crowds assembled outside the court. A military force of nearly 2,000 with armed police guarded the court and accompanied the prison van.

SHOW TRIAL

The trial lasted for sixteen days. The jury returned a guilty verdict against the five men for murder, and seven other men were found guilty of riot and assault. The latter were sentenced to prison while Allen, Larkin, O'Brien, Condon and Maguire were sentenced to death by public execution.

Throughout the trial there were many discrepancies in the prosecution's evidence. It was claimed that William Allen had fired the shot aiming directly at Sgt Brett, although several witnesses testified that the shot had been deliberately fired at the door lock. Allen stated he was not responsible for the fatal shot, a claim backed up by many witnesses who said another man was involved who was not among the defendants.

Whether Sgt Brett had been deliberately killed or not made no difference to the prosecution, they simply wanted convictions. So desperate were they that Thomas Maguire was convicted despite the fact he was nowhere near the rescue. Many witnesses stated they had seen him throwing stones up to the 'ubiquitous' Allen, who was attempting to break in through the van roof. Yet witnesses testifying on Maguire's behalf said he was some two miles from the Hyde Road at the time.

The journalists reporting the trial were convinced of Maguire's innocence and petitioned the Home Secretary for a pardon. It was not long before the Home Secretary agreed to their demand.

OPPOSITION

So many witnesses had identified Maguire as being present that the whole of the prosecution's case was clearly a fabrication based on the willingness of witnesses to commit perjury. Anti-Irish racism clearly played a part in the desire of the state, the press and much of the English public, to seek vengeance.



WILLIAM PHILIP ALLEN



MICHAEL O'BRIEN (GOULD)



MICHAEL LARKIN

The Manchester Martyrs

Speculation in the press concentrated on the twin issues of the accidental nature of the killing and the fact that this was a political issue. Many believed the death sentences would be commuted.

Meanwhile many demonstrations were held in support of the condemned men. Support for the Fenians increased dramatically in Ireland and among the Irish in Britain. On 17th November a rally of some 4,000 was held in support of Irish independence in Clerkenwell Green, London. The following day a deputation went to the Home Secretary on behalf of the men. There were regular rallies in Clerkenwell, between 20,000 and 25,000 demonstrated on the 21st November. Across four continents there were demonstrations in support of the four - Ireland, America, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

The radical press in Britain called for the release of the men saying the root of Irish injustice was British rule in Ireland. The International Working Men's Association passed resolutions in favour of the men and campaigned for their release.

THE MANCHESTER MARTYRS

On 22nd November the commutation of Edward O'Meagher Condon's death sentence was announced. Condon was an Irish-American holding American citizenship. The government was worried about upsetting American sentiment.

On Saturday 23rd November 1867, William Philip Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien were executed on a gallows constructed against an outer wall of Strangeways Gaol, Manchester.

The British state had got its revenge. But the feelings aroused by the Manchester Martyrs had increased the threat of insurrection in Ireland. The British had to act quickly. And, on the 27th November Ricard O'Sullivan Burke, in charge of Fenian operations in Britain, was arrested.

MICHAEL BARRATT

Another rescue attempt was to be made using gunpowder to blow a hole in the

wall of Clerkenwell Gaol, where O'Sullivan Burke was being held. The attempt went tragically wrong with the explosion causing the deaths of six local people.

On Monday 20th April 1868, another Fenian show trial commenced, this time at the Old Bailey. Of the five men and one woman on trial for murder only Michael Barratt was found guilty. At the time of the explosion Barratt had been in Glasgow. But, with the collapse of the prosecution's case against the other five, Barratt was to pay the supreme penalty for his unashamed Irish Republicanism.

On the 26th May 1868, Michael Barratt was the last person to be publicly executed in England.

Comparing 1867 with 1987 we find there has been very little change in Britain concerning the treatment of Irish people. Today framed prisoners, the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguire family, have spent long periods in gaol. Even this difference would revert back to the situation of over a century ago if the rabid right in the Tory Party finally succeed in restoring the death penalty.

The other similarity between the present and the times of the Fenians is the treatment of Irish political prisoners. We haven't delved into the issue of the Fenian prisoners here, but suffice to say they were kept as political hostages under the most brutal conditions. In a period of two years seven Fenians died, four committed suicide and four were driven insane. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, imprisoned in 1865, spent 123 days on bread and water, 231 days on a punishment diet in a darkened cell, 28 days in a blacked out cell, and 34 days with his hands manacled behind his back forcing him to eat from the floor on his knees.

Mass demonstrations were held calling for an amnesty for the Fenian prisoners. 100,000 marched in London on the 24th October 1869 under the slogan 'Justice for Ireland'. The International Working Men's Association had been involved in organising the rally which drew widespread support from the British working class.

Birmingham Six 13 years appealing for justice

On Monday 2nd November the Court of Appeal hearing for the Birmingham Six is to commence. The six Irish men – John Walker, Paddy Hill, Dick McKenny, Hugh Callaghan, Bill Power and Gerry Hunter – have reached a crucial stage in their campaign for justice after having spent 13 years in gaol for the Birmingham bombings; an event with which they had no connection whatsoever.

As reported in last month's issue of *Troops Out* the police have been busily preparing for the hearing by making sure the truth continues to be covered up.

GUILDFORD FOUR

On the 19th October Home Secretary Douglas Hurd informed a delegation of Irish TDs that the whole case against the Guildford Four is to be examined. It was originally suggested that the police investigation would only apply to Paul Hill as new alibi evidence has been presented on his behalf.

Hurd is now stating that the claim by IRA volunteers convicted following the Balcombe Street siege in 1976 that they were responsible for the Guildford bombs should have been heard by the Court of Appeal in 1980. On that occasion Law Lords Denning and Scarman refused to consider the men's acceptance of responsibility.

MAGUIRE FAMILY

However, Hurd is standing firm on the government's decision not to re-open the case against the Maguire family unless new scientific evidence is forthcoming.

POLITICKING

Whatever members of the British government might say to official delegations the fact remains that any decision on the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four or the Maguire family will be determined by political judgements. We can be sure any ideals of 'Justice' will play a minimal part in the findings of the Birmingham Six's Appeal.

Meanwhile it is business as usual for the courts. On Tuesday October 27th Gilbert McNamee was sentenced to 25

years imprisonment as an 'IRA Master Bombmaker' despite his unequivocal condemnation of the IRA from the dock. The jury took just five hours to come to their unanimous decision after a trial in which the state made every effort to portray McNamee as a dangerous and singularly important criminal.



Maggie McKenny, daughter of Richard McKenny, speaks at a public meeting in Birmingham. Seated are Geraldine Egan, President of Birmingham Trades Council, and Fr. Joe Taaffe, Irish Welfare Chaplain.

The Troops Out Movement wishes Paddy Hill, Dick McKenny, John Walker, Hugh Callaghan, Bill Power and Gerry Hunter every success for their Court of Appeal.

Anti-Fascist action in London



The Troops Out Movement was well represented at the recent anti-racist demonstration in London. Members from Camden, East London, South London and Leicester branches were among the 500 people who marched from Islington to the Prince of Wales pub in the neighbouring Kings Cross Area.

The pub is frequented by one to two hundred fascists every week-end, some coming

from as far away as Italy. Ian Stewart, leader of the neo-fascist band *White Noise* and who himself has done twelve months for beating up a black man, is a regular drinker.

At a rally outside the pub Unmesh Desai of Anti-Fascist Action, the organisers of the demonstration, criticised the Police who say that the pub is 'not a problem' and for showing little concern for the

increasing number of racist attacks in the Kings Cross Area.

A letter of protest was handed in to the publican Sam Murray. Local MP Jeremy Corbyn, who has a good record of opposition to racism, was present to support the demonstration.

Three days after the demonstration the home of a Camden TOM member had 'UFF' daubed on their front door.

Broadwater Farm Uprising

Rally calls for continued resistance

'Greetings! Welcome and greetings to the Tottenham Massive, the Brixton Massive, the Toxteth Massive and the Bristol Massive!' It's Saturday 4 October and the march from Broadwater Farm, 13 miles away in North London, has just arrived in Hyde Park.

The demonstration was called to commemorate the events of two years ago and to protest at the more recent events surrounding the trials of those arrested after the rising. Over 3,000 people participated in the march as it wound its way through the streets of London to Downing Street and

beyond. It was a significant achievement on the part of the organisers to rally support from the length and breadth of the country. Community groups, political organisations and a sprinkling of Trade Union branches were present with a substantial section of the march being made up of

Irish solidarity organisations — pride of place going to a Republican band from Glasgow.

At the rally speakers from the ANC and the Namibia Support Committee drew links with the struggle in Southern Africa, while Dolly Kiffen from the Broadwater Farm Youth Association demanded a full public enquiry into the trials.

Other speakers reminded us of the events that precipitated the rising — the police raid on the house of Cynthia Jarrett

that ended with her death. Linda Bellos endorsed the Campaign for Civil Rights, remarking that such a campaign was well overdue. Sharon Raghip — whose husband Engin, is serving life for the murder of PC Blakelock — gave a heartfelt plea to continue our work after the demonstration. The Sinn Féin speaker reminded the crowd of the parallels to be found in the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland. Here we print that speech.

'The Road to Liberation'

I must begin by expressing my deep appreciation to the people of Broadwater Farm for giving me, a representative of the risen people of the occupied Six Counties in Ireland, the opportunity of addressing you, two years after the historic uprising in Broadwater Farm.

On the 6th October 1985 you demonstrated to Maggie Thatcher, Kenneth Newman and his band of racist bully boys, and to racists the length and breadth of Britain that, although you have little choice but to live in these cheap, ugly concrete jungles set aside for you by the ruling class, you certainly do not intend to be cowed down nor driven into obscurity by them.

Concrete jungles

Like the oppressed people of the Divis flats complex in West Belfast and of the Rossville Flats Complex in the Bogside, these environmental monstrosities can be utilised to actually resist naked oppression and terror. Initially these massive complexes were built to house huge numbers of poor people who didn't have jobs and who the ruling class knew would probably never have a job. They built them to contain potentially troublesome or embarrassing sections of society in as little space as possible so they would be unseen and unheard.

Now, some thirty years after, the same ruling class have realised the potential these slums have of becoming bullet marks against capitalism and

the oppression inherent in capitalism.

In Derry, where I come from, and in Belfast, these complexes are in the process of being knocked down. While this can be claimed as a victory for working class militancy on the issue we must be mindful of why and why now are they being knocked down. We must remember that the Rossville Flats were the setting for what is maybe the greatest street battle ever fought in British Irish history. The RUC couldn't invade Derry as the flats were in the way — and the risen people lived in the flats. So they tumble the flats. It all makes a frightening amount of sense when looked at in this light.

Criminalisation

I have already mentioned arch enemy of the working class; Kenneth Newman. Before Newman came to London, in the years between 1976 and '79 the RUC, of which Newman was Chief Constable, initiated a campaign which was to leave hundreds of young men and women in prison for many many years. Beatings, mental and physical torture were used to extract confessions from terrified innocent teenagers,

many of whom still languish in Long Kesh. Friends of mine serving sentences of 20 years to life are still incarcerated even though their guiltlessness is a well known fact within the RUC itself. Needless to say Newman was subsequently knighted for his services to the crown and given what was thought to be a comparatively 'cushy number' — cushy that is until the people of Broadwater Farm told him where to get off.

Plastic bullets

It is most interesting to note that during the Broadwater incident the police were issued with Plastic Bullets. Interesting because it was during Newman's reign in the Six Counties that these horrific weapons were first introduced. Since then over a dozen young people have perished after being struck with one. These things are lethal — it is a well established fact. Nevertheless they have been introduced here in Britain — this is so because you, like us, are of no consequence to the ruling class — you and I are viewed by them as sources of trouble, as erratic individuals.

Irish Republicanism

Republicans in Ireland are portrayed over here as sectarian bigots roaming the streets armed to the teeth and killing protestants at our whim. IRA

military actions are always excused as 'revenge' for this or for that. Those who portray us as such do not believe themselves that we are so — the fact is they want to believe, and they want others to believe, that we are all wild eyed lunatics of no principle or reason. The same way as they want to believe that the youth of Broadwater were all drug pushers intent on looting the area led by left wing agitators.

Liberation

The fact that Irish Republicans and Nationalists live in a state of constant repression, that whole areas live under the eye of surveillance cameras 24 hours a day, that jobless youth are harassed daily by an alien police force, and the grim fact that young men and women can be dragged off to prison or even face a state execution squad — is all ignored. That people actually have to live in conditions such as Belfast and Broadwater Farm is ignored.

In Ireland — justice can only come through organised armed action. In Britain freedom from racist oppression can only come from a united and organised working class — we shall support you in your struggles — but you must remember that the Irish people hold the key to freedom in Britain and that your fight does not end when racism is defeated.

This is where the road to liberation begins.

Repatriation for the Irish pr



On Saturday 19th September, the Irish Prisoners Support Group held a conference on The Repatriation of Irish Prisoners which was sponsored by the Irish in Britain Representative Group.

The conference was well attended and consisted of speakers and workshops. It was addressed by prisoners relatives, Gareth Pierce a solicitor, Harry Fletcher of the National Association of Probationary Officers (NAPO) and Gerry MacLochlain of the Wolfe Tone Society. All outlined the case for repatriation and dismissed the Home Office's case for keeping Irish

prisoners incarcerated in British gaols.

TRANSFERS

The Home Office claims that transfers would create public anxiety, would lead to the hero worship of returned prisoners, would increase the proportion of Category A prisoners in the North of Ireland, and that prisoners sentences would be shorter because there is a higher level of remission in the North of Ireland.

NAPO strongly disagrees with the Home Office's stand. They claim transfers would reduce public anxiety as the prisoners would be elsewhere. There are already 1,000 imprisoned for similar offences in the Six Counties, of these about 60 are Category A prisoners, and there remain hundreds of unused places in Maghaberry Prison. As prisoners are subjected to a Conditional Release Licence they have to appear before a board before being granted remission.

NAPO base their campaign on Rule 33 of Prisoners Rules and the spirit of European Repatriation.

PRISON RULES

Gareth Pierce spoke of the prison rule conditions which Irish prisoners are being systematically denied. Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, adopted by Britain, states that each person has a right to respect for their privacy, family life, home and correspondence. Article 14 states there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, nationality, religion, etc.

Article 8 also carries a rider on conditions about national security, on which the British government bases its denial of prisoners rights.

The government claims there is no right to transfer, but prisoners may be individually assessed. They also claimed that there was pressure on accommodation in the Six Counties. But, since the opening of Maghaberry they have had to change that argument and are once again playing fiddle to public opinion. The notion of public opinion is subjective and directly contravenes the notion of 'Human rights'.

RELATIVES

The Relatives Support Committee spoke of the hardship faced by prisoners and their families. Visiting is deliberately made difficult for relatives of prisoners. Few can afford regular visits to England, for those that do, they risk being arrested under the PTA.

Labour Conference fringe meeting

The largest fringe meeting at this years Labour Party conference was on Ireland. Organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland the meeting had a wide range of speakers including Ken Livingstone, Bernie Grant, the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six Campaigns, as well as Fred Holroyd a former member of army intelligence.

Since he was drummed out of the army because of disagreements with what it was doing in N Ireland Holroyd has given details of a number of operations in which the army carried out assassinations. In particular Holroyd has given details of how British agents crossed the border to assassinate Republicans in the south of Ireland. His revelations and others detailed by Ken Livingstone, about how the intelligence service intervened to prevent Tony Benn from gaining the leadership of the Labour Party, were the stuff to hit the headlines of the papers.

In time honoured fashion, however, the 'free and democratic' press decided to ignore Holroyd's allegations as did the Labour leadership.

The meeting was a great success and the 1800 people who attended, many of them new to Irish politics, were given plenty to think about. The meeting was followed with social featuring Billy Bragg and a number of Irish acts.

Ireland fared no better than any other topic at the Labour Party conference itself. The motions on the agenda concerning Ireland were around fighting discrimination at work in Northern Ireland. Even these were opposed by the leadership and as a result was defeated.

A positive sign was the number of Trade Unions who opposed the directions of the platform and voted for the motions. These unions included NUPE, NUR, ASLEF, COHSE, TASS and ACTT. It was a significant shift in the normal pattern of block voting and comes as a result of the serious work that has been done by withdrawal activists during the past four years.

PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS

Please send cards or letters to these prisoners. Let them know they are not forgotten. They are usually serving long sentences in very difficult conditions. Please don't forget to use the number.

PAUL NORNEY 86352
HM Prison Gartree, Leicester
Rd, Market Harborough, Leics.

November 11th

BRENDAN DOWD 758662
HM Prison Frankland,
Brasside, Co. Durham.

November 17th

ANDY MULRYAN 461576
HM Prison Long Lartin,
South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs.

November 18th

JAMES BENNETT 464989
HM Prison Long Lartin, as above.
December 4th

LIAM BAKER 464984
HM Prison Long Lartin, as above.
December 6th

HUGH DOHERTY 338636
HM Prison Long Lartin, as above.
December 7th

isoners

Once in England it is not uncommon to be followed by plain clothes police. For anyone travelling with children the strain is greater. If they are arrested there is the threat of children being taken into care. Those who do arrive have to calm tired and confused children. There will be problems with accommodation on top of helping children cope with the shock of seeing fathers or other relatives imprisoned. Often it will have been a year since the last time they visited. Relatives will also have to deal with the discrimination that Irish visitors invariably receive.

For elderly relatives it is often physically and financially impossible to make the visit. Many have to resign themselves to not knowing whether they will see their loved ones again. Families have a right to respect under International Law, yet England chooses to ignore International Law in relation to Ireland.

Keeping Irish prisoners in Britain is deliberately aimed at breaking up family life. Visits are obstructed by the 'ghosting' of prisoners. Ghosting is the common practice of moving prisoners without notifying their families. Consequently it is not unusual for relatives to turn up at one prison, only to be told that the person they have travelled to visit is at the other end of the country.

The Relatives Support Committee asked people to act now and put more pressure on the authorities here, they said the next step is to put pressure on the 26 Counties government to ratify the European Repatriation Act.

RESOLUTIONS

The conference ended with the following motion being passed unanimously:

This conference calls on the Irish government to ratify the Convention for the Repatriation of sentenced persons.

And:

That the British government adhere to its own prison policy and transfer Irish prisoners from the North of Ireland to prisons near their home.

For further details of the Campaign please contact: BCM IPSC, London WC1 3XX.

A prison education

Dear Troops Out

Many thanks for your letter and the accompanying *Troops Out* literature, all of which I found helpful and of great interest.

I think the first thing that impresses anyone when they meet Irish POWs is their stoic determination in refusing to accept the repressive will of the prison system — this being despite the very long periods already spent in incarceration, and the subsequent periods of punishment and isolation for turning their backs on the all too easy option of institutionalisation. Unfortunately a fair proportion of other long term prisoners prefer the soft option.

One particular POW who I discussed many of the issues surrounding Ireland's conflict with was with me at Manchester (at that time we were both on the Category 'A' and 'E' list). I learned a great deal in the seven weeks I was there: how a

country was being torn apart by the grasping hand of imperialism, how sectarianism was being allowed to flourish by the disbanding of the protestant B Specials and the same armed auxiliary force being given exactly the same powers under another title — UDR — to continue their arbitrary acts of discriminatory violence against the catholic Republican majority.

I'd obviously heard from media sources before I had entered prison and encountered the names of Bernadette Devlin, Gerry Adams and Bobby Sands, but it was only after being made aware of just what roles these people played in the conflict that I began to delve deeper into it all. With the studying and the endless questioning I became deeply sympathetic to the Republican cause, in both its military and political struggle for self determination and a United Ireland. Since being in my present

jail I have spent a great deal of time in discussion with one inmate who was one of the many British soldiers to resign from the forces over the Irish conflict, and in particular the B Specials/UDR issue of October '69.

Here in Britain one only has to look as far back as the miners' strike and the draconian measures used by the state to quell their obdurate refusal to be cowed back to work. In the end it was for their families' sakes they had to return, but just how long would it have been before troops were called in if they had had the means to continue their legitimate action? I fervently believe that in the not too distant future both police and British troops will be used on our own doorstep, and unless we look at, and aid the Irish in their struggle to free them from British government repression, our turn will come soon enough.

Once again sincere thanks.

In Solidarity,
Richard Kaye
Wakefield Prison

We welcome contributions and feedback from our readers.
Please send your letters to this address:
Troops Out, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

Desperate isolation

Dear Troops Out,

Over the years the Thatcher government has become increasingly isolated in world affairs. It is isolated among Commonwealth states on the issue of sanctions against apartheid and isolated in Europe over the EEC budget.

Thatcherism's only ally is a doddering US president, soon to be replaced. The fragility of this alliance was recently demonstrated by N. Ireland Secretary, Tom King, having to go to the USA in an attempt to dissuade Americans from supporting the MacBride Principles for equal opportunities in the six counties.

In the not too distant future world diplomacy will bypass Britain's objections to international co-operation. Without an international reputation to protect the government will then throw all caution to the wind. Wave after wave of repression will be forced on all democratic forces opposed to the British government.

In domestic affairs another force has to be reckoned with. The economic power of the yuppies has to find some form of political expression. Just as their wealth is

founded on free market principles of dog eat dog their political power will depend on their ability to crush all opponents regardless of humanitarian concern.

The yuppie phenomenon is not dissimilar to the power of the petit bourgeoisie in Nazi Germany. Nor is the isolation of Britain dissimilar to the consequences of Britain, France and the United States' 'freezing out' of Germany after the 1914-19 Imperialist War. But here the comparisons end.

Whereas pre-Nazi Germany was a frustrated imperialist power with vast mineral and economic forces at its disposal, modern Britain is an imperialist power in decline, dependent on the rest of the world for mineral resources and economic wealth. Britain cannot survive international isolation.

Fascism can never succeed in Britain. It is the oppressed people of Britain who hold the key to Britain's long term future, with an influence far greater than their present numerical strength.

It is against this background that we, in Britain, should look at the recent decision by the N. Ireland Office to attempt to bar Sinn Fein

from playing a part in local government affairs. Such a policy is only remotely workable if backed up by repression of the nationalist community.

Increased repression has already forced its way onto the agenda in the six counties. In the form of military raids on people's homes and loyalist attacks on catholics there is a mounting offensive to beat republicanism into submission.

Here in Britain the continuing rightward trend displayed at the Tory Party conference gives encouragement to the far right. When Linda Bellos, Black Labour Party leader of Lambeth Council, warned of the prospect of gas chambers, all mainstream politicians conspired to keep these fears separate from the 'real issues' of national concern.

The struggle of the Republican Movement for an end to British rule in Ireland will continue on the onward march to Irish freedom. It is the responsibility of every progressive minded person in Britain to contribute to the growing unity of oppressed people in this country. The despair which many of us feel can only be overcome by our coming together and clearly demonstrating our willingness to participate in the world-wide anti-imperialist movement.

Vivien Graham,
London

REVIEWS

IF YOU DIDN'T LAUGH YOU'D CRY

Video
Local Ormeau Women

If you didn't laugh you'd cry is a documentary made by and about the women of the Lower Ormeau, a small nationalist area surrounded on three sides by protestant areas and on the fourth by the heavily polluted river, Lagan.

Totally refuting the notion of Irish women as victims it shows these women coming on to the streets, tackling the forces of the British Army with nothing to defend themselves in the face of tanks and guns.

Unlike the usual tendency of documentary programmes where the film makers/narration stands as an interpreter between those interviewed and the audience, other than tracing the history, the only time we are aware of the interviewer is when she asks 'Why do people laugh about such serious things?'

The response gives us the title of the film 'if you didn't laugh you'd cry'. The women's experiences stand on their own. Drawing us into their lives they give us a deep insight into their daily experience and struggle for survival in the face of the brutality of war. 'The first time, now that wasn't funny at all because that was the first time getting raided - the next time I was used to it.'

Stories fly around - about the soldier who threw down his gun in frustration because he couldn't cope with the women talking at him. The soldiers looking for a wanted man - 'he must have been a queer small man when they were putting their hands into boxing gloves looking for him - was it one of the wee folk they were looking for? At the same time, as you say, it wasn't funny that they came in and pulled all the clothes out of my house but when you thought back

on it - how stupid were they when they were looking for a man! Is it the English are stupid or are we! which way is it?'

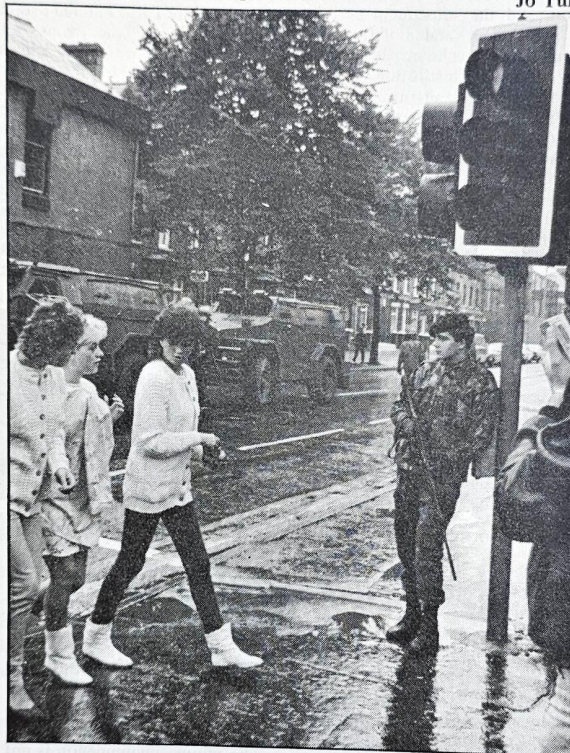
Humour is one of the few weapons that these women have to fight off the disruption of their daily lives by raids, arrests and harassment. Many things are not funny at all but this video would make you laugh and cry at the next moment - that's our privilege. What's glaringly obvious is that these women do not have a choice - they have to laugh and it is not with words alone.

Documentary footage shows a soldier attempting to stop a

demonstration of protesting women. The women literally push him backwards, gun and all, down the street by the force of their own bodies. This is immediately followed by a clip showing soldiers in all their gear beating women with batons.

The video juxtaposes the women's hilarity and triumph with the brutality they experience at the hands of the Crown Forces. It is an inspiring video and one which we have long awaited. Complimented by Sean O'Riada's haunting music it gives us an insight into Irish women's power and deep insistence to survive.

Jo Tully



BRITISH WITHDRAWAL IS A TRADE UNION ISSUE

N.C.U.I.

The Nalگو Campaign for a United Ireland (N.C.U.I.) has produced a small leaflet setting out a basic case for British withdrawal. The leaflet is titled *British Withdrawal is a Trade Union Issue* and the stated aim of the campaign is to 'promote and develop awareness of Britain's role in Ireland because of its implications for so many members of the British Trade Union movement.'

The Campaign would like to see British withdrawal taken up as the key issue. Although it is not opposed to campaigning on civil liberties the N.C.U.I. identifies 'Plastic Bullets, Strip Searching, Show Trials, Summary Executions and the whole paraphernalia of State coercion' as 'symptoms of a far deeper problem concerned with the nature of the Northern Ireland State itself.'

If you would like more information about the campaign and a copy of the leaflet, send a SAE c/o Islington Nalگو, Crompton Terrace, London N1. Affiliation costs £3 Individual, £5 Branch, £10 District.

A PRAYER FOR THE DYING

The catalogue of interference in films dealing with Britain's war in Ireland found another contender recently. *A Prayer for the Dying* is due to open the London Film Festival on 11 November, and both the director, Michael Hodges, and the lead actor, Mickey Rourke, are attempting to have their names removed from the credits.

The film apparently deals with a retired IRA volunteer coming back into active service for 'one last job'. Rourke says the film has been re-edited by the Samuel Goldwyn Company into 'a piece of schlock' resembling an Irish 'Rambo'. Both Hodges and Rourke claim they are angry that a man with inherited wealth should be exploiting the suffering of an oppressed people for financial advantage.

Rourke feels that he has unwittingly betrayed the people he met and talked to while researching the role in the north of Ireland. 'I feel very embarrassed about it, and there's nothing I can do. I feel I let down a lot of people that opened up to me in private.' Regular readers of *Troops Out*, and particularly those that have read Liz Curtis's book about the media and Ireland, will know that this is nothing new.

What is most disturbing, is that this censorship and manipulation is not brought to our attention by those concerned with the continuing erosion of civil liberties, but by those who are outraged that any film dealing with the IRA should open a Film Festival on Remembrance Day.

The Propaganda War by Liz Curtis, published by Pluto Press is available from the *Troops Out* Movement office, price £5.95.

Earl Rod

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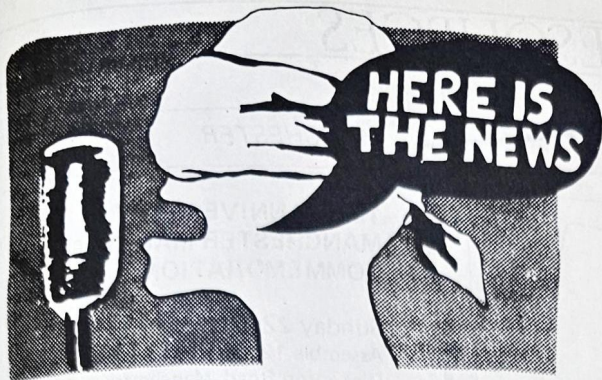
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SEPTEMBER

11th
Frank Millar, chief executive of the Official Unionist Party (OUP), announces his resignation from politics and says he is moving to London to work in television. Millar was the co-author of the Unionist Task Force report published in July and ignored by the Unionist party leaders.

12th
Thomas MacGiolla says that he will resign as leader of the Workers Party next April.

15th
NI Secretary Tom King launches new anti-discrimination guidelines for employers. Intended as an alternative to the MacBride Principles, the guidelines have no legislative force.

Movements of sheep are curbed by the British authorities in N. Ireland, because of radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl incident 16 months ago.

IRA Volunteers ambush a UDR soldier who escapes injury in Co Tyrone.

The INLA publicly disassociates itself from the 'Border Fox', a man said to be responsible for several armed robberies both sides of the border and for the attack on the family of Unionist MP Jim Nicholson earlier this year.

16th
British Liberal Party spokesperson on N. Ireland, David Alton, calls on the British Government to give financial support to integrated schools in N. Ireland.

17th
It transpires that the RUC recently issued a press briefing that was severely critical of the Garda (Irish police), describing them as lacking in expertise and ineffectual in the fight against terrorism. The Garda are not amused.

24th
The IRA kill Ian McKeown in Newry, Co Down. They later admit that this was a mistake, the intended target being a member of the security forces in a similar car. They offer their sympathy to the victim's family.

The RUC hold four men after a gun battle between the IRA and a UDR soldier in Cookstown, Co Tyrone.

26th
The Mayor of Boston, Ray Flynn, describes Tom King's new employ-

ment guidelines as 'inadequate and ineffective.' King is visiting the US to try and raise investment and counter the growing support for the MacBride principles.

Several thousand Orangemen commemorate with parades the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Ulster Covenant, drawn up by Edward Carson in opposition to Home Rule. The RUC is later criticised for allowing parades to pass close to Catholic districts.

27th
The annual conference of the Irish Labour Party ends in Cork. The party's left wing strengthen their position.

28th
Kevin MacNamara, shadow NI Secretary, reaffirms the British Labour Party's support for unity by consent and also their support for the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

70 families are evacuated overnight in Derry when police discover a 2000 lb bomb in a van. The IRA say the bomb was not primed and posed no danger to residents.

29th
Ian Paisley announces the setting up of the Ulster Council for Civil

Rights to examine complaints of religious discrimination in employment from Protestants.

30th

Independent Socialist TD (member of the Irish parliament) Tony Gregory is sent to prison for 1 month on charges relating to a street traders protest in Dublin in July 1985. He is released the next day.

OCTOBER

6th

Tommy Dickson, a prominent member of the UDA, is shot dead in north Belfast. It is thought he was the victim of an internal loyalist feud.

Des O'Malley, leader of the Irish Progressive Democrats party, warns that the failure to reform the Diplock courts in N. Ireland could lead to the end of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

7th

Peter Robinson confirms that he has resigned as deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party.

The Northern Ireland Abortion Law Reform Association says that it has had a great increase in the number of women from the Republic seeking abortion counselling since the Dublin High Court ruling earlier this year outlawing abortion referral services.

8th

The former British Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham, dismisses the need for any changes in the Diplock Court system. He describes the proposal for courts with three judges which is backed by the Irish Government, as 'a very bad, inferior, amateurish and incompetent system.' Hailsham is one of Thatcher's most influential legal advisors.

The latest EEC unemployment figures show the Republic of Ireland top of the list with a rate of 19.3%. The list does not include Spain, Greece or Portugal.

Ken Maginnis, Unionist MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, launches a fierce attack against those Unionists campaigning for the integration of N. Ireland and Britain.

Four INLA men are jailed in Paris after being found guilty of illegally transporting arms.

An inquiry is ordered in Dublin into the continued detention of Dominic McGlinchey.

9th

Francisco Notarantonio, a retired Belfast taxi driver, is killed in his bed by loyalist paramilitaries, who also attempt to kill his son before making their escape. Notarantonio had been interned in the 1970's but had not been active in the Republican Movement for many years.

11th

In a speech at Bodenstein, Taoiseach Charles Haughey makes it clear he is reluctant to let the Extradition Act pass unless some concessions are granted by the British.

12th

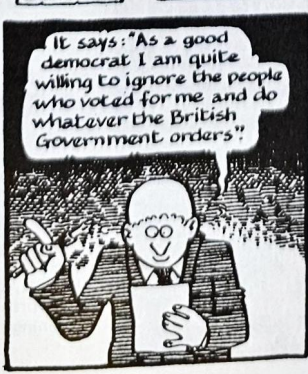
A NI Office discussion paper makes it clear the Government favours the option of making candidates sign an anti-violence declaration. This move is planned to attack Sinn Féin elected representatives. Sinn Féin immediately announce that they will seek a way around such a pledge.

13th

The Irish Government announce expenditure cuts of £485 million. They say the cuts, which will cost at least 8,000 state jobs, are essential because of the state's debt problems.

14th

A deputation from the Stop Strip Searching campaign meet Irish Government officials and later say they were given assurances that the issue had been and would continue to be raised at the intergovernmental meetings of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.



COMING EVENTS & RESOURCES

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THE CASE OF THE BIRMINGHAM 6



'The Home Secretary should certainly hold a retrial.'
Sir John Fawcett, Conservative MP for Harborough

Six Birmingham Irishmen have been in jail since 1974 for offences they did not commit. The suffering and future frustration they and their families have borne is incalculable. Unless massive public pressure is brought to bear they will spend the rest of their lives in prison.

Highly intelligent Paddy Hill, Gerry Blaney, Dick McIlveney, Bill Power and John Walker were arrested in November 1974 in the wake of outrage that followed the shooting of two police in Birmingham. Twenty-one people were killed in the bombings, and 142 were injured. But their being in prison, and the Labour government took the opportunity to rush through the Prevention of Terrorism Act which gave Home Secretary Roy Jenkins described as these men.

The six were long-time Birmingham residents, working class men with families. Five were arrested within hours of the bombing as they reached a flat for a short visit to Ireland. Fawcett, who has since been twice heavily criticised, suggested that two of them must have been the bombers. The men were roughly and repeatedly beaten by the police during two days of interrogation, and four of them signed false confessions. The confessions, which dated back to the 1970s, and did not match the evidence from the scene. The six were eventually convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The six men were victims of hysteria and ignorance, not requests of justice. They were convicted because they were Irish and in the wrong place at the wrong time. They and their families have consistently proclaimed their innocence. Please help to set them free!



POSTER-PAMPHLET

Explains the facts of the arrest, trial and conviction of 6 innocent men. Opens out to a colour poster.

One copy: 60p + 20p p&p
10 copies: £4 + 80p p&p

Produced by the Troops Out Movement, published by Information on Ireland. Available from TOM, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

MANCHESTER

120th ANNIVERSARY MANCHESTER MARTYRS COMMEMORATION

Sunday 22nd November
Assemble 12.30pm, Longsight Market, Dickenson Road, Manchester.

Organised by Manchester Martyrs Commemoration Committee, c/o Grass Roots Books, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1.

LONDON

CONFERENCE: WORKING TOGETHER TO END STRIP SEARCHING

Saturday 5th December

Lambeth Town Hall
Brixton Hill, London SW2 10am-5pm

Organised by the London Strategic Policy Committee and the Association of London Authorities

For registration and further information contact LSPU, Room 801, Middlesex House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SB

LONDON

BLOODY SUNDAY ANNUAL DEMONSTRATION

To be held in London
on Saturday January 30th

Organised by the Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland

For details write to TOM, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH. Or ring 01-609 1743

LONDON

PICKET: MEDIA DISTORTION, ANTI-IRISH RACISM

Picket of showing of 'Prayer for the Dying' on the opening night of the London Film Festival

Wednesday 11th November, 6:30pm

Empire, Leicester Square, London W1
For further information phone 01-703 1506 (evenings) or 01-692 5355 (daytime)