

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND



Paper of the Troops Out Movement 30p

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Unionism on the rampage

As an industrial stoppage, the 3rd March protest had mixed results. The main industrial plants such as Harland & Wolff and Shorts shut down almost completely. Crucially, the central electricity station at Ballylumford was affected: power cuts during the day brought work to a halt even where sufficient numbers of the workforce had turned up.

Many smaller factories were operational, and many shops opened. About half the schools were open and all the banks. About 90% of civil servants went to work.

If the protest had been simply a one-day strike, it would appear that it was a display of muscle, but one nevertheless which the British Government and the media could safely ignore.

In fact it was something other than a strike. Here are just a few examples of what was happening across the North on 3rd March.

- The M1 Motorway was shut down in the morning because oil and nails had been strewn across it.

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LABOUR, LIBERAL, SDP POLICIES

EASTER RISING REMEMBERED

SELLAFIELD – EFFECT ON IRELAND

ARMAGH DELEGATION – INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Shankhill Road (Photo: Pacemaker)



COMMENT

British Manipulation

Most people in Britain find the position of Ireland's unionists extraordinary. They are a community prepared to mount campaigns of mass civil disobedience against the state's laws: a community willing to engage in violent confrontation with the state's security forces. Yet they are also a community that professes extreme loyalty and allegiance to the very same state.

This illogical position is a direct result of a history of British manipulation in order to maintain control in Ireland.

Since the creation of the N Ireland statelet in 1921, Britain relied solely on the unionist community, through the instrument of the Unionist one-party state, to maintain partition. The exercise of unchallenged political power and dispensation of jobs and housing enjoyed by the unionist leadership to the benefit of the loyalist community, contained the situation for nearly fifty years. But it was an unjust society, the product of the besieged outlook of a colony.

The revolt of the nationalist community since 1969 has proved this solution no longer workable. Britain had therefore to look for other ways to stabilise partition and since the unionists were resistant to change of any sort, they were forced to turn to the Irish Republic for assistance. The result is the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The unionists, bred to see Dublin and the Republic as the enemy, see the Agreement as betrayal, and their opposition to it is total. Yet they are themselves riven by splits and doubts. Some of their leaders have sensed the futility of continued opposition to the Agreement without presenting a viable alternative. Meanwhile many loyalists, especially among the working class, see futility in continued *political* opposition and taken to the streets. The violence and intimidation that was so widespread during the strike on 3rd March was almost certainly only a foretaste of what is to come.

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- In Lurgan, 250 women workers were besieged in a clothing factory by a mob stoning the building. When they tried to leave they were attacked and their RUC escort fled, so they had to retreat back into the building. Two of the workers were injured and hospitalised. Late in the afternoon a larger RUC unit arrived and they managed to escape. The mob then burnt down the factory.

"When I refused to accept a leaflet or listen to what the protesters were saying, they kicked the car door, threw stones at the car and shouted abuse."

Clergyman

- Some towns — Portadown, Coleraine, Kilkeel, for example — were effectively sealed off all day by loyalist road barriers. The 'pickets' consisted of masked men in paramilitary clothing. It was a frightening experience for nationalist (and non-loyalist) people trapped inside.
- In Kilkeel there was serious rioting with cars destroyed and a builder's workshop burnt down. At one of the barriers an RUC reservist stood by while his two sons organised the barricades! There was also rioting in Derry and Belfast. Many towns reported gangs of youths threatening shopkeepers if they didn't close.
- Along the Crumlin Road in Belfast, a man going to work had his car petrol bombed and was seriously injured.

Some of the violence had a sectarian object. In Portadown, a unionist crowd tried to attack the nationalist area of Obins Drive. They were held off by local people. The New Lodge area in Belfast had local people patrolling all night around the outskirts. The Ardyone, in North Belfast, was besieged all day: homes were attacked and sniper fire was directed into Ardyone in the nationalist area of Short Strand, a UDR patrol stopped all traffic entering and leaving.

The loyalist areas of Shankhill and Newtownards of Road erupted at nightfall with riots, looting and burning barricades. Snipers opened fire at the RUC, who also came under attack from petrol bombs. This violence spread north across Belfast during the night.

"The windows of five buses were smashed. They're actually boarding buses with guns now. The worst thing about it is that the police are watching."

Ulsterbus union official, Derry

An editorial in the *Andersonstown News* commented, "The stark reality is, that if the same type of protest had been engaged in by Nationalists and on a similar scale, then we reckon that at least 4 nationalists would now be dead, either by plastic bullets or some equally barbaric type of 'law enforcement' weapon. Unfortunately this is what equality before the law means in this colonial backwater."

The 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. For over 15 years 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 circumstances allow, are the backbone of the TOM. Membership, or affiliation is open to any individual or group supporting the demands:

TROOPS OUT NOW

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE

TROOPS OUT

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 remains of the clothing factory in Lurgan
(photo: AP/RN)

Who was behind the strike

The unionist camp was fairly well united in support of the 3rd March strike. It was a joint tactic worked out by the politicians, the rank and file Orange Order and the paramilitaries. They are not so well united in their long term goals and strategies, and this has caused some wavering before and after the day of protest.

The two parties — the Official Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party — have a united front against the Agreement. Their parliamentary representatives have a half-hearted boycott of Westminster, except for Enoch Powell who takes his seat as usual, but they continue negotiations with the British Government. Just before the strike, the two unionist leaders met with Thatcher and King and came away from the meeting apparently content with a vague offer of further consultations. On their return to Belfast they did a quick about-turn back to the militant unionism of the strike call.

After the strike, the Official Unionist leader, James Molyneaux, declared that he would not support another strike because of the violence. The Official Unionist General Secretary, Frank Millar, warned against a drift to civil war (14th March) and stressed the necessity for a 'full and proper accommodation of the minority community'.

Their 'soft' unionism is a minority position, constantly on the defensive from Paisleyite populism ('Well done, the Prods!'). Both parties are involved in the Ulster Clubs, set

up after the re-routing of some loyalist parades last year. Membership of the Ulster Clubs also includes the Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Volunteer Force, both armed organisations. The Ulster Clubs are openly sectarian and openly violent. Their spokesperson Alan Wright (not to be confused with Alan Wright of the RUC Police Federation) talks about 'resurrecting the loyalist identity in the province. By this I mean taking on Irish nationalists in every aspect of life — in employment, housing etc.' (Fortnight magazine, No.233). He talks about resisting the 'powers of Dublin and Rome' and the need for a Carsonite 'people's army to make this country totally ungovernable.'

The two strands of unionism — populism and the business/farming class accommodated to British capital — have a long but uneasy alliance in the North. At every point of crisis — civil rights pressure in 1969, the fall of Stormont in 1972, the Sunningdale Agreement and Ulster Workers Council strike in 1974 — the populist element has won out and the politicians who 'went soft' fell from power.

primary consideration was to prevent an escalation which would play into the hands of the paramilitaries, argued Sir John.

"Look at the RUC. They get out of their vans. They chat to those characters. They get back into their vans, they drive through the barricades and it closes behind them. It's disgusting."

A Ballymena resident stopped at a barrier of farm vehicles

Hermon's second excuse — rather in contradiction to his first — was that certain politicians had aroused false expectations that roads would be kept open and people would be allowed to go to work if they wished. Hermon's implication was that such law enforcement was never on the cards — in other words, there had of necessity to be some collusion with the protesters' illegality.

(For good measure, Hermon threw in a third excuse — that the IRA were waiting to exploit the situation, so there was an extra need to prevent escalation!)

Sir John Hermon's remarks are in line with British policy which, recognising that there was bound to be a unionist reaction against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, is directed at ensuring there is never a clear target for that reaction. Hence the decision not to use British troops even though it was well known in advance — planned in advance, according to Hermon — that the RUC would not do a Wapping against the unionist 'strikers' and 'picketers'.

The RUC — front line or pig in the middle?

The Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir John Hermon, was interviewed on an RTE TV Programme in March. He was asked to account for his force's behaviour during the 3rd March protest, and he gave two excuses.

The first was that the RUC had been led to believe by the organisers that it was going to be a peaceful 12-hour protest. When it developed into a 24-hour protest with a 'sinister paramilitary involvement', they did not have the strength of numbers to deal with it. Their

Appeal to RUC loyalty

The RUC, in their role as loyal upholders of British rule against the rebellious Irish, was addressed in a large advertisement in the Belfast paper, the *Newsletter*. It took the form of a letter signed by Unionist leaders Ian Paisley and James Molyneaux, arguing that the Anglo-Irish Agreement gives the Irish Republic an 'equal say' regarding the work of the Chief Constable:

"This radically alters the role of the RUC who are employed and who took an oath to 'truly serve' our sovereign.

"Now you are being asked to serve a second master — the Government of an Irish Republic which spawned the Provisional IRA and which still harbours the murderers of so many of your gallant colleagues — and all of this within the framework of a code of conduct to be dictated by Dublin."

The letter ends:

"Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you face up to the challenge posed by the Anglo-Irish deal. We are confident that you will make it plain through your professional organisation that you will not yield to pressure to do other than that which you have pledged to do."

Councils' defiance Waiting for Liverpool

The unionist campaign to make the North 'ungovernable' has slowly been gathering momentum despite a British strategy of defusing it.

As well as the 3rd March strike, the fight is being waged in the local Council chambers. The 18 unionist-controlled Councils failed to strike a rate in early February. The High Court extended the deadline to 26th February — again the Councils voted to suspend business. Again the deadline was extended, to 8th March.

On 10th March the House of Commons approved an

Order to suspend the Councils and appoint commissioners. The defaulting councillors then face surcharges, court costs and possible imprisonment, which would also debar them from local government for five years. However, martyrdom has been delayed: the British Government, although it gave itself those powers, has chosen not to exercise them straight away. For the moment the Department of the Environment is going to set the rates.

Local Councils in the North have far fewer powers than Councils in England, Scotland and Wales. But the unionist

disruption of Council business has already affected community and advice groups such as the Citizens' Advice Bureaux, whose funding expires on 31st March. Council employees also face the possibility of no wage cheques after that date.

The unionist campaign, which is directed solely against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, comes just at a time when spending cuts in education, health and housing are due to hit the North. On top of that, Fowler's new social services structures will begin to be introduced next year. Among the North's population of 1½ million are 200,000 pensioners, 120,000 or more on unemployment benefit, 180,000 on supplementary benefit and 190,000 in receipt of housing benefit.

The Councils do not have

direct powers in any of these areas but as elected representatives councillors could have been an effective part of a popular resistance. The role they have chosen to play instead is an indicator of how far British rule has destroyed democracy in the North.

More troops

The British Army's presence in the North of Ireland now stands at about 10,200 soldiers, the highest for over a decade. The latest boost came in the form of an extra 550 soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the Royal Green Jackets. The army stated the men were needed to guard police stations and support the RUC in the border areas.

'Terrorism' Pact changes little

its provisions is likely to be presented to the Dail (Irish parliament) in the autumn.

Ireland, together with Malta, was the only country not to sign the original agreement adopted by 15 countries of the Council of Europe in 1977. At the time Ireland claimed that one of the provisions of the convention — requiring extradition for political offences — was repugnant to the constitution. Since that time the Supreme Court in Dublin has redefined the nature of political offences thus making Mr Dukes' words somewhat empty. In short, this pact will make little change to the Republic's present policy on extradition.

In two cases last year, involving Dominic McGlinchey and Seamus Shannon, the Supreme Court ruled that if an offence was 'heinous' enough it

Article 1 of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism ratified by Britain in 1978 lists a number of serious offences which for the purposes of extradition shall not be regarded as political offences between contracting states. These include kidnapping, an attack against the life, physical integrity or liberty of internationally protected persons and any offence involving the use of a bomb, grenade,

rocket, automatic firearm or letter or parcel bomb. However under Article 5 a contracting state need not comply with an extradition request if it has substantial grounds for believing that the request has been made for the purpose of prosecuting or punishing a person on account of their race, religion, nationality or political opinion, or that that person's position may be prejudiced for any of these reasons.

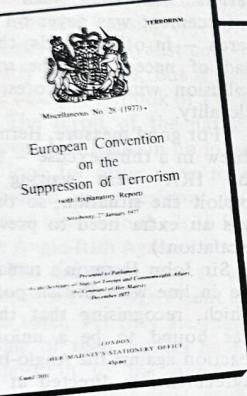
could not be interpreted as political. Both men, facing murder charges, were duly extradited to the North of Ireland. When they eventually came to court the evidence was so thin that the respective judges had little alternative but to throw the cases out and acquit both men.

A more recent case involving Robert Russell, who escaped from Long Kesh in 1983, has shown another twist in the definition of an extraditable offence. On February 14th this year Justice O'Hanlon, sitting in Dublin's High Court, dismissed Russell's claim that an extradition order to the North of Ireland be quashed. O'Hanlon concluded that although Russell's offences were undoubtedly politically motivated, the organisation which he supported aimed not just to bring an end to British rule but also to subvert the constitution

and the organs of state established by the constitution. Russell is appealing to the Supreme Court.

The outcome for one other person looks equally bleak. John O'Reilly has been held in Portlaoise Prison since November last year awaiting the outcome of an extradition request by the RUC to answer charges based on statements made by 'supergrass' Harry Kirkpatrick. Peter Barry, the Irish Republic's Foreign Minister, and representative to the Anglo-Irish Accord, has repeatedly condemned the use of 'supergrasses' in the North yet the Minister of Justice has given the go-ahead for the extradition process to proceed.

But the recent arrest and release fiasco of Evelyn Glenholmes in a Dublin court and shop suggests that Britain is desperate to force the issue of extradition.



The European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, which aims to eliminate political motivation as a barrier to extradition for serious offences, has been signed by the Irish Republic's Minister of Justice, Mr Dukes. He said, 'Our courts will now have a very clear basis on which they can decide, case by case, whether extradition is an appropriate response or not.' Detailed legislation to ratify the convention and implement

Political case in Holland

International attention focussed on the Irish struggle when two alleged IRA men appeared before a Dutch court to fight against their extradition by the British government.

Brendan McFarlane and Gerry Kelly who were arrested in January following an arms cache discovered in an Amsterdam flat, were defended in court by Sean MacBride and Fr Des Wilson.

Sean MacBride and Fr Des Wilson outlined the clear political

nature of the events which had resulted in the extradition hearing. MacBride told the court, 'Nothing short of violence has had any effect on British policy. But this is a rule which is nearly general in any struggle between a colony and a colonial power.'

Judgement on the extradition warrant will be delivered on March 25th. However, the legal process could take at least a year because appeals can be taken up to the Supreme Court.



Photo: Geraldine Norby/Camerawork

International Women's Day in Ireland

Armagh Delegation

Since 1979, International Women's Day has seen a picket of Armagh Prison. For six years this picket has been supported by women coming from England, Scotland and Wales. Below, one of the delegates on this year's delegation describes the situation and struggles of nationalist women in the North of Ireland.

This year's delegation to the North of Ireland was organised by the Women and Ireland Network. The Network decided to limit numbers from the South of England so that more women from Scotland and the North of England could take part. The English groups, organised by Sheffield and Brighton, went to Belfast, while the Scottish group went to Derry. They met up in Belfast on Sunday's march against strip searches.

The Sunday march had been organised because no one could be sure when the authorities would move the women in Armagh to the new Maghaberry prison. As it was, the picket went ahead successfully on Saturday 8th March outside Armagh.

Saturday morning in Belfast was spent in workshops which dealt with women in

Sinn Fein, the Falls Road Women's Centre, plastic bullets and youth and Irish prisoners. In outlining these workshops I shall broaden the discussion with information gained at other times during the delegation.

BROADENING THE CAMPAIGN

At the last Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (conference), a motion was passed for women's right to choose regarding abortion. Sinn Fein is the only party in Ireland to have passed such a motion (remember that the Six Counties are exempt from the abortion law here). In N Ireland it was as a women's rights issue that the case was argued, whereas Sinn Fein women from Dublin pointed out that due to the anti-abortion amendment to the Constitution they had to argue for

abortion in terms of medical need. Although Sinn Fein have made this important step, feelings were expressed that there was a need for the party to broaden its campaign in the fields of nurseries, childcare and hospital cuts.

The Government has withdrawn support from various nurseries and women's health projects — using the justification that such projects are a front for 'terrorist' organisations. For example, Conway Street Mill lost the funding for one of its ACE workers.

THREATENED ON MANY FRONTS

Women throughout Sinn Fein are organising around issues they believe to be important, such as those mentioned above. However, it was also clear over the weekend that the threat of increased loyalist violence and the certain knowledge that the RUC will offer no protection, means that priorities for

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Armagh Delegation

Photo: Helen Dady



action must be carefully chosen. Added to this recent heightening of tension is, of course, the ongoing struggle against British occupation with its constant repression and violence.

Women in the more isolated nationalist areas, such as Short Strand, feel themselves to be under seige. There is a lot of tension and fear about possible loyalist violence over Easter.

An example of the kind of harassment resulting from loyalist action is shown by events on Twinbrook estate, on the edge of West Belfast. Here there was a five hour power cut during the 3rd March strike. The street lights on Twinbrook are on a timer and so now, because the authorities have neglected to readjust the timer, the estate is plunged into darkness for five hours during the night - leaving people vulnerable to attack as well as having to cope with basic domestic difficulties.

There is most definitely a Government policy to move nationalists out of the more isolated areas to concentrate them into one containable area, that is, West Belfast. The Army is directly involved in town planning to make this area easy to seal off. The Scottish delegation in Derry had a workshop about this issue.

New roads have been built which allow Army saracens to cut off West Belfast. Any new housing is in the form of cul de sacs which can be blocked by a saracen. Also, the Royal Victoria Hospital in W Belfast is to be closed, leaving the City Hospital which is in a loyalist area. If and

SELLAFIELD - Britain's pollution Ireland's problem

In the late 1970s the Irish Government floated the idea of building a nuclear power station to satisfy projected energy needs. Opposition was swift and vigorous. In 1978 the proposed site at Carnsore Point, Co. Wexford, was occupied and a major music festival held there. The following year an even larger festival took place with the country's top artists playing free. Carnsore Point had become the most obvious manifestation of country wide opposition to nuclear power and the Government quietly shelved the idea.

But the existence and conduct of nuclear processing at Sellafield (formerly Windscale) in Cumbria has meant that Ireland has been far from free from the effects of nuclear power.

Building on Sellafield's first two nuclear reactors began in 1947, thus providing the material to explode Britain's first nuclear bomb in 1955. Since then the complex has expanded to include a nuclear power generator and reprocessing plants taking waste from nuclear power stations in Japan, Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain. The Government has always portrayed Sellafield as a civilian plant but there are four military reactors in the present complex. Sellafield is becoming more dependent on its military operations: it produces plutonium for US nuclear weapons in exchange for enriched uranium, a fuel for nuclear reactors.

CYNICAL DISREGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE

Poor management has meant that there have been three hundred accidents at the plant since it opened, each one described as 'minor', 'under control' or 'within safety limits'.

The most serious accident occurred in 1957 when fire broke out in a plutonium production reactor. Up to 20,000 curies of radiation were released into the atmosphere (compared to 100 curies in the accident which closed down the plant on Four Mile Island, New Jersey). The plant management gave their usual bland assurances that there was no danger, though milk production in the immediate vicinity was stopped for a number of years. Thirty three deaths and two hundred and forty seven cases of thyroid cancer have now been attri-

buted to that fire. These figures may only be the tip of the iceberg. There was a strong east wind blowing at the time of the fire and a few days later radiation levels in Dublin had risen sixteen times.

Two Irish doctors, Patricia Sheehan and Irene Hillary, are presently investigating cases in Dundalk concerning six women who gave birth to Downs Syndrome babies. All, from a class of 11 at school, had been in the dormitory together at the time of the fire.

CONTAMINATION OF THE IRISH SEA

However it is not just the accidents which give cause for concern. Every day one to two million gallons of water containing nuclear waste are pumped into the Irish Sea. 95% of world wide nuclear waste discharged into the sea is pumped into the Irish Sea. The principle nuclear element in this waste is plutonium 239. One thousandth of a gram would kill if inhaled. There is about one quarter of a ton in the Irish Sea. Another element is Caesium 137. Levels of this substance are three times the levels of Bikini Atoll, the islands in the Pacific evacuated because of the effects of US nuclear experiments in the area.

The Sellafield management initially believed that the plutonium would

when W Belfast is sealed off, there would be no access to medical facilities.

FALLS ROAD CENTRE

During the workshop on the Falls Road Women's Centre, women talked about the worry of increased harassment of their teenage children by the RUC and Army. Both the women and their children were being more regularly picked up for questioning in the hopes that they could be 'persuaded' to inform on other members of their families.

On the subject of the Centre itself, there is a great need to get new premises or repair the present one, which is in a very bad state. The Centre wants to extend its work to set up support groups around specific issues. Information is provided about housing, welfare rights etc. Work is also being done on the problems of an absence of sheltered housing and inadequate refuge facilities.

In the Irish prisoners workshop, information was provided about conditions in all prisons holding republican prisoners. There was a report of the Stop the Strip Searches Campaign during which it was revealed that a woman of 16 had an epileptic fit during a strip search yet the strip search still continued.

Concern was expressed about the move of women prisoners to Maghaberry Prison both by relatives and by women in Armagh when they were visited on Saturday. Maghaberry, like Long Kesh, is in a loyalist country area. It is bigger than Armagh so it will be possible to isolate



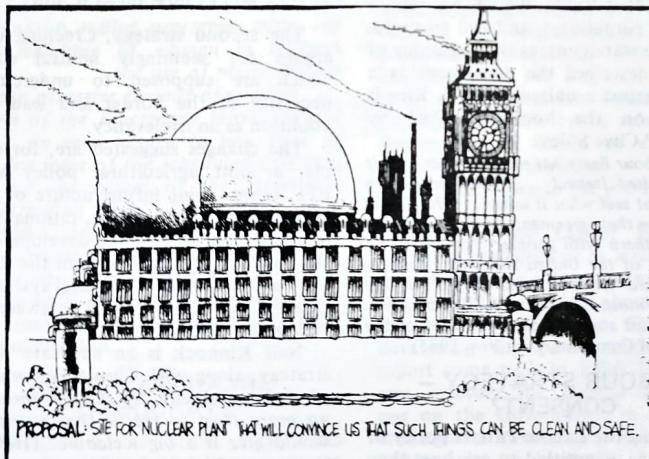
Photo: Helen Dady

the women from each other. This is exacerbated by the fact that the cells are soundproofed.

Women in Armagh are at present very worried about Patricia Moore who has been on remand since October. Patricia is very ill and on Friday 7th March she was taken to Musgrave Hospital. Told she was going to be examined, she was in fact operated on. She was returned to Armagh

the same day, and was strip searched on reception. She is not receiving proper medical care, so please write on her behalf to the Northern Ireland Office, Home Office, MPs etc.

Overall women who participated on this year's delegation felt very positive about the experience. Contact was made on many levels and much was learned and shared.



Cryptic comment from the Irish Times

sink to the bottom of the sea and remain there. This doesn't happen. Radioactive material follows the currents northwards past the Irish coast and traces have been found in the Hebrides. It also gets washed up on the shore, contaminates dust particles and gets blown inland. It travels across the Irish Sea at 40 mph rather than the 4 mph originally predicted. If dumping stopped now it would take two million years for the Irish Sea to return to pre Windscale cleanliness.

The full effects on Irish people are hard to assess. The effects of radiation can take up to twenty years to show themselves. The facilities to do a full

assessment are not really available and there is considerable resentment that an already over-stretched health service should have to fund research on the effects of another country's nuclear discharge. But doctors in Cos. Down and Antrim have pointed to a large increase in leukaemia cases. Dr Mary Grehan has done research which shows a rate of stillbirths in her general practice south of Dundalk twice the national average. "I have one family alone where each one of three sisters has had a stillbirth and in that family there doesn't appear to be any reason for it."

As a result of a First Tuesday tele-

vision programme in 1983 the British Government was forced to set up an inquiry under Dr Douglas Black. The Black report refuted the central argument that the high incidence of leukemia in the Sellafield area was due to radiation from the plant or its waste. "To attribute the additional deaths from leukemia to radiation would require discharges at least forty times greater than reported." In February of this year a former Sellafield research scientist Derek Jakeman disclosed that 20 kg of radioactive material had been discharged in 1957, fifty times the 400 grams British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL) had told the Black inquiry. Mr Jakeman had left Sellafield because of fears for his family's safety. BNFL apologised for the error in their figures.

Determined to keep the military capacity of Sellafield, the Government continues to give full support to BNFL. Work is proceeding on a new £25 billion plant THORP within Sellafield which will make the complex the largest processing plant in the world. Replying to fears expressed by the Irish government Thatcher has described the safety record of Sellafield as 'excellent'.

A song written by Jim Page for the 1979 Carnsore Point festival has since been made famous by Christy Moore and Moving Hearts. The last two lines go

To listen to them talk about how it hasn't happened yet
Like playing Hiroshima Nagasaki Russian roulette.

What hope from the B

When the Anglo-Irish Agreement was debated in the House of Commons last November it was endorsed by an overwhelming 473 to 47. The vast majority of opposition MPs voted in its favour. Since the Agreement, parliamentary interest in Ireland has greatly increased. Below *Troops Out* assesses the impact of the Agreement on the main opposition parties.

Throughout most of the period since 1969, the main British parliamentary parties shared a common policy on Ireland. They have been united in their support for the British 'peacekeeping' Army and in their opposition to any movement towards a united Ireland.

The Labour and Conservative parties, in and out of office, practised a 'bipartisan' policy based on the 1973 Northern Ireland Constitution Act which states that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and shall not cease to be so without the consent of the majority of the North's population. It is not surprising that the Labour Party stood by this Conservative Act, since it is only an amendment of the Labour Government's 1949 Act (which referred to the consent of the parliament of Northern Ireland, abolished in 1972).

But in 1981, the Labour Party adopted a policy in support of the ultimate reunification of Ireland with the consent of the North's majority, and this is its policy today.

In 1983, the Liberal Party Conference passed a motion calling for a united Ireland (with no 'consent' clause). This came from pressure from the National League of Young Liberals. However, in 1984 the Liberals set up a joint working party with the Social Democratic Party to work out an alliance policy on Ireland. The group was heavily weighted in a pro-Unionist direction and it came out last year with the Donaldson Report, accepted at both parties' conferences last year.

The Donaldson Report proposes as the long term solution not a united Ireland but a confederation of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. For the medium term it recommends the continued partition of Ireland with devolved government for the North and a range of civil liberties reforms. In addition it proposes a British-Irish Parliamentary Council with consultative powers as an expression of the Irish dimension to please the nationalists.

This was the state of play among the opposition parties when the Anglo-Irish Agreement was presented to Parliament last November.

SOVEREIGNTY SCRUTINISED

It would appear to us – and this was reflected in the huge majority voting in favour of it – that the Anglo-Irish Agreement is a return to bipartisanship. And this time it is the Conservatives swinging in behind Labour and Alliance policies.

On the main issue of sovereignty, the Agreement marks a shift of Tory ideology towards Labour's position.

Conservative policy was always to uphold the British or UK identity of the North of Ireland. Labour policy post-1981 was supposedly to encourage a change of attitude in the North so that the majority would consent to a united Ireland. Both positions fall within the terms of the 1949 and 1973 Constitution Acts – it is a question of interpretation. The interpretation posed by the Anglo-Irish Agreement is an equal balance: yes, the North of Ireland will remain within the UK as long as the majority wish it; but yes, the British Government will legislate accordingly if that majority changes its mind.

It is an interpretation that sits uneasily on the Tory benches, with their historic allegiance to Unionism. Tom King, the Northern Ireland Secretary, seems particularly unhappy with it. In December he stated that there would no united Ireland 'in perpetuity', and had to apologise for the statement; at the beginning of March he described the Agreement as 'a bulwark against a united Ireland'. King is wriggling on the hook described by Labour MP Clive Soley:

'The Labour Party has made it clear that it wants a united Ireland... The Conservative Party has not said what it wants... He [James Prior] knows that agreements of this nature say to the Northern Irish people, 'You are not a normal part of the United Kingdom.' There is only one end to that road. He knows that better than most. Somebody in the Conservative Party must start saying that and recognise it.' (House of Commons, 26th Nov. 1985)

LABOUR STRATEGY – CONSENT?

Regarding the Labour Party's policy of consent, one is entitled to ask how they propose to win that consent, and whether the Agreement advances or retards the possibility. Only a convincing strategy would make their policy any different from upholding the status quo of partition.

There seem to be three tentative strategies for winning consent emerging from the Labour Party. They could be called The Search for the Middle Ground, Creeping Unity, and Reconciliation.

The Search for the Middle Ground is based on the unstated argument that the problem is caused by two extremes warring in the North – loyalism and republicanism. The strategy aims to marginalise these extremes by encouraging a rational, moderate middle ground of political

forces. In particular, a socialist camp within the unionist population.

An article in *Labour Weekly* (24th Jan 1986) went searching for this middle ground. It came up with the mayor of Belfast, John Carson; the minute Progressive Unionist Party (spokesperson: 'If I lived anywhere else I would be a leading member of the Labour Party'); and ex-UVF gunman Gusty Spence!

If anything, the Anglo-Irish Agreement has diminished this already insignificant middle ground in the upsurge of loyalist militancy. Socialist shop stewards have been pushed out of office or driven into silence. The Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has become deeply unpopular because of its stated opposition to the loyalist strike of 3rd March. The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland is nowhere.

UNITY WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING

The second strategy, Creeping Unity, argues for seemingly neutral changes which are supposed to undercut the necessity of the border and lead to its abolition as an irrelevancy.

The changes suggested are, for example, a joint agricultural policy within EEC terms, joint infrastructure of transport and communications, rationalisation of the electricity grid and development of the North's gas supplies from the Republic, harmonisation of the legal system and cross-border cooperation between the two police forces.

Neil Kinnock is an advocate of this strategy, along with Clive Soley who said of the Agreement, 'If the agreement did no more than to realise that potential, I would give it a big welcome.' (House of Commons, 26th Nov 1985)

The Anglo-Irish Agreement (articles 9 and 10) does offer such developments, but so far from winning consent they are bitterly opposed by the unionists.

BUILDING BRIDGES

The third possible strategy, Reconciliation, has been argued by front bench

HORSE

Although the next General Election might be a hung parliament, with no party having an overall majority, the *Daily Telegraph* (3rd March), Neil Kinnock's party – the Scottish Nationalist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party – The pact with them would seek them at least to

If this is true, one wonders what Kinnock is

British opposition?

out strategies

spokesperson Peter Archer. The two communities in the North, the argument goes, must be brought together in a spirit of reconciliation as an interim step; then there would be a recognition of converging interests within the context of the North which would break the unionists' umbilical cord to Britain.

Archer sees much in the Anglo-Irish Agreement that contributes towards such a strategy. The Agreement's balance on the issue of sovereignty 'commits no one to renounce his or her views. It asks no one to resile from any cherished aspiration'. The Agreement also offers 'improved security' which should help to win over the unionists. Reconciliation also demands improved economic conditions, and the Intergovernmental Conference is intended to provide this. Next, the Agreement offers improved civil rights, another prerequisite for reconciliation: "We want to see on the agenda of the Intergovernmental Conference discussions on ending supergrass trials, the strip searching of women in Armagh Prison . . . , the use of plastic bullets and the excessive periods of remand . . . reform of the Emergency Provisions Act . . . an early return to jury trial, at least for some of the scheduled offences, and for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act." (Quotations from *Fortnight* magazine, No. 231) Finally, the Agreement's offer of devolved rule with some, as yet unworked out, power for the nationalist parties would provide the forum for the Labour Party's spirit of reconciliation.

LIBERALS & SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

The Liberal and Social Democratic Parties also recognise in the Agreement much that is an embodiment of their own policies.

The Liberal position is that the ties of population, history and culture between Ireland and Britain are such that the national question would best be settled by confederation between the two nations. The Anglo-Irish Agreement does

not propose confederation (which is totally unacceptable to the Irish side), but its terms do accommodate Liberal thinking. In particular, they and the SDP are pressing for an 'internal settlement' for the North. In a recent speech, MP Stephen Ross outlined this:

"I soon came to appreciate what a major breakthrough Sunningdale was, and what a tragedy that the power sharing executive collapsed under pressure of the Ulster workers strike led by Paisley"

"We therefore believe that a scheme of partnership in Government which allows both communities to participate in the affairs of Northern Ireland is the only way in which practical effect can be given to the principle that the identities of both communities are to be respected equally."

(Liverpool, 14th Feb)

The Alliance parties are also keen for the speedy establishment of the proposed Anglo-Irish parliamentary tier. Shirley Williams, speaking in Dublin, saw this as an avenue for the Unionists to explore their 'Britishness and Irishness'.

WHAT HOPES FROM FUTURE BRITISH GOVERNMENTS?

Those who, like the Troops Out Movement, see the only lasting solution in a British withdrawal and Irish self-determination, cannot accept the Alliance concept of confederation. Given the economic stranglehold Britain already exercises over the Republic of Ireland, such a confederation would not be a uniting of equals but a relationship of domination. It would be a step away from self-determination — in fact it would be a return to the pre-1921 'British Isles'.

What of the Labour Party? Their tentative strategies, or at least the second two, have some value; a joint committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party and the National Executive Committee is developing the policy and is due to report some time in 1986. In particular, any pressure the Labour Party could put on the Government in the area of civil rights is more than welcome.

However, as strategies for a future government, they fail to convince — with or without the Agreement. And given Labour's record when in office (Roy Mason was the most hated and most repressive N. Ireland Secretary to date), those who support a united Ireland and British withdrawal are entitled to ask for a convincing strategy.

Talk of consent is about the consent of the unionists. Yet their historical and economic role within Ireland is that of a beleaguered cross-class mainly industrial minority that is unable to accept compromise without its whole rationale for separateness collapsing. Unionist intransigence is not due to their leaders being nasty characters, but to their political dependence on the British state.

A few examples: they have withheld their consent to a gas pipeline from the Republic's Kinsale field, even though this has meant the collapse of the gas industry in the North. Increased prosperity might be welcome, but not with 'Dublin strings' attached and not across the board — under pressure from the unionists the Poleglass estate was cut by half because it was to house mainly the nationalist overspill from West Belfast. Nor even would 'increased security' (like the revival of shoot-to-kill incidents) be welcome if it is Dublin influenced:

"Having served in the security forces for about 17 years, I am not allowed to know anything about security or involve myself in it, but another Government (i.e. the Republic's) are to have that right."

(former UDR officer and present Unionist MP Ken Maginnis, House of Commons, 26th Nov 1985)

In the light of this intransigence, there is but one viable approach to 'consent' and yet, ironically, it is the aspect of the Agreement most heavily criticised by Labour exponents of the consent argument (and Liberals). This is the very British notion of consent which is nine parts stick and one small nibble of the carrot. It is the present Conservative tactic of keeping the unionists out of the negotiations, facing them down, forcing them to 'surrender' and negotiate on new terms.

What it has resulted in so far is the almost unprecedented step of Unionist politicians approaching Dublin for a way back in. As one commentator put it:

"For some time now Unionist political leaders have been sending out increasingly desperate, albeit heavily coded, distress signals for help"

"When pressed, rather incredulously by this journalist to explain whether he [Molyneaux, leader of the Official Unionists] was now asking Dr Fitzgerald to make their case with the British Prime Minister where they themselves had failed, Mr Molyneaux replied that he thought Dr Fitzgerald understood Northern Ireland better than Mrs Thatcher and would have a better grasp of the dangers of the present situation."

(Mary Holland, *Irish Times*, March 5th)

Two other areas of opposition policies which are highly significant will be considered in future issues of *Troops Out*.

These are, firstly, the policy of devolution — a N. Ireland parliament dealing with the North's internal affairs but still under British sovereignty.

Secondly, there is the question of US aid, which is part of the Agreement's package. \$250 million over five years was agreed by the Reagan administration at the end of February. So far it is only the left Labour Campaign group of MPs — Tony Benn in particular — who have seen in this a serious threat to Irish sovereignty.

TRADING? long way off, some people are taking no chances. In the Liberal-SDP alliance there is a likelihood of a small majority. According to Nicholas Comfort of the Welsh Plaid Cymru. And the Unionist parties are considering a pact with some of the smaller parties offering them in return?

The Easter Rising - 70

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Easter Rising, which is seen as the first blow for Ireland's present struggle for independence. Here LIZ CURTIS explains the background to the Rising and its long term results.

The Easter Rising on Monday 24 April 1916 was the spark which led to the guerrilla war of 1919-21 and Britain's partial retreat from Ireland.

The Rising was preceded by decades of agitation in the Westminster parliament, where Ireland was then represented, and by a widespread cultural revival, involving the rediscovery of the Gaelic language, culture and sports. Alongside such open mobilisation there survived the core of an underground armed organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). The Easter Rising was also preceded by a militant campaign for women's suffrage, and by an upsurge in working class struggle, peaking first in the 1907 Belfast dock strike and then in the great Dublin lock-out of 1913-14.

Within the broad nationalist movement there were different, though overlapping, points of view. There were differences between Home Rulers, separatists and republicans, between capitalists, radicals and socialists, and between advocates of the defensive or offensive use of force.

It was the collapse of the constitutional nationalists into the arms of the British empire at the start of World War I that brought the divisions in the nationalist camp into the open and set the scene for the Rising.

HOME RULE

Home Rule had been on the British parliamentary agenda since 1886. It meant a form of limited independence or devolution, giving Ireland its own

parliament but leaving the British parliament in control of Ireland's finance, foreign affairs and defence. This was acceptable to the Irish Parliamentary Party, which reflected the interests of Dublin capitalists, but was opposed by the Unionists, based among the industrialists of the northeast of Ireland, who feared any weakening of the link with empire.

The Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893 were unsuccessful, but the third Bill, put forward by the Liberal government in 1912, was passed. But the House of Lords exercised their power of veto, delaying it till 1914. In the meantime the Unionists, backed by the Conservatives and by British army officers, mobilised in large numbers against the Bill, and formed an army, the 100,000 strong Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).

The British government responded to the pressure, and proposed the temporary partition of Ireland. The Irish Parliamentary Party's leader, John Redmond, agreed to this, though the Unionist leader Carson rejected it. Then on 4 August 1914 Britain entered World War I. On 18 September the Home Rule Bill became law, but with two provisos: that it would not come into force till a year after the war had ended, and then only after parliament had had the opportunity to amend it to make special arrangements for 'Ulster'.

John Redmond not only agreed to these proposals, but also pledged Ireland's unconditional support for Britain in the war, and urged Irish nationalists to

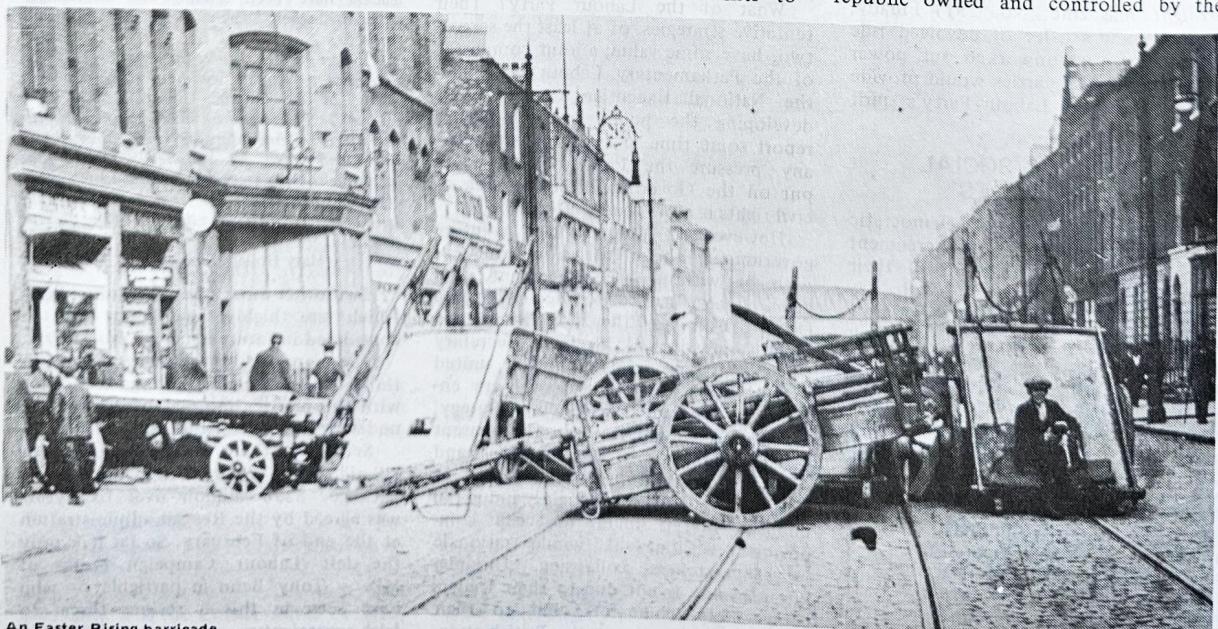
defend the British empire. His stance led to a split in the Irish Volunteers, the recently formed nationalist force. Most of the 180,000 members followed Redmond. The 11,000 who remained in the Irish Volunteers were unofficially controlled by the secret IRB.

The IRB leaders planned a rising, and joined with James Connolly, leader of the 300-strong Irish Citizen Army, formed during the Dublin lockout as a workers' defence force. They believed they should seize their chance while the forces of the British empire were engaged in war elsewhere. In April 1916 they announced a series of manoeuvres to take place over Easter. But Eoin MacNeill, titular head of the Volunteers and a conservative nationalist, heard of this, and promptly countermanded the order. As a result, most of the Volunteers outside Dublin did not join the Rising.

FOR AN INDEPENDENT IRELAND

The few thousand men and women, boys and girls, who rose that Easter Monday represented the revolutionary core of a much wider nationalist movement. They included Patrick Pearse, Gaelic revivalist and separatist; Tom Clarke, 59 years old, who had been arrested in 1883 and served 15 years in prison in England for his Fenian activities; and the socialist republicans James Connolly and Constance Markievicz. Outside Dublin the country was mostly quiet: one exception was Co. Galway, where the young radical Liam Mellows raised a force of 600.

As the proclamation read by Patrick Pearse from outside the General Post Office stated, they believed Ireland should be a completely independent republic owned and controlled by



An Easter Rising barricade

years remembered

people of Ireland. Religious and civil liberty, equal rights and opportunities would be guaranteed to all, 'the happiness and prosperity' of all would be pursued, and all men and women would have the vote.

The rebels held out against the fierce British artillery bombardment and assaults by thousands of troops for six days. On the Saturday, surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered, they surrendered. The official figures listed 300 dead (of whom 180 were civilians and rebels) and 997 wounded. The centre of Dublin was in ruins.

VICIOUS REACTION

The British and Unionist press and politicians predictably vilified the Rising. They were joined by a unanimous chorus of condemnation from all the 'respectable' forces in Irish life. John Redmond, Irish Parliamentary Party leader, called the rebels 'wicked and insane'. The Dublin Chamber of Commerce, employers' organisations and the Archbishop of Cashel joined in. The *Irish Independent*, voice of the Dublin capitalists, carried vicious editorials. Its owner was William Martin Murphy, international investor and transport owner, who had led the employers' war on the workers in the Dublin lockout two years earlier. In scarcely veiled terms, his paper urged the

authorities to execute James Connolly.

As for the ordinary people of Dublin, it is hard to know what they thought. The writer James Stephens, who walked round Dublin during the Rising, noted, 'It is considered now [a day or two afterwards] that Dublin was entirely against the Volunteers but on the day of which I write no such certainty could be put forward.'

The ruthless British response to the Rising, organised by Major-General Sir John Maxwell, began to turn the tide of feeling in Ireland towards the rebels. Some 3,500 people were initially arrested. Ninety, including all the leaders, were sentenced to death by secret court martial. Day by day, from 3 to 12 May, came the news of the executions. In all, fifteen were shot; one of the last was James Connolly, who was very ill with an infection from his wounds. He was carried to the jail yard on a stretcher, then tied to a chair and shot. Even people who had opposed the Rising were horrified.

Constance Markievicz was among those who were condemned, but she was reprieved, to her anger, because she was a woman. She went on, while in Holloway prison, to become the first woman elected to the Westminster parliament, although, as an abstention-



Constance Markievicz

ist, she never took her seat.

The fruits of the Rising soon showed, as nationalists of all persuasions, including the middle class, deserted the Irish Parliamentary Party and swung over to the separatists of Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein had not in fact been involved in the Rising, but was blamed for it and hence reaped the benefits. In December 1918 the party won 73 out of the 105 parliamentary seats in Ireland, and the scene was set for the guerrilla war of 1919-21, which led to partition and the unfinished business of today.

NEWS AROUND BRITAIN

Maire O'Shea —

The lessons after 13 months of hell

Troops Out last month covered the trial involving Maire O'Shea and others at the Manchester Crown Court. While Maire and Peadar Brazil were acquitted, Peter Jordan received a savage 14 years for conspiring to cause explosions and Billy Grimes a 10-year sentence for possession of gelignite and a detonator. The fifth person, Peter Lynch, although found guilty of failing to disclose information under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, walked free having served his sentence while on remand.

That the trial was a political one is without doubt. Maire was in the dock for her political views. Her acquittal after 13 months of hell is largely attributable to the work done by herself and the Maire O'Shea Support Committee. The lessons learnt from the campaign are of value to us all.

FIGHT BACK

The reaction must be im-

mediate. The attitude of 'there's no smoke without fire' must not be allowed to prevail. Maire's immediate response to her house being raided by the police was to begin a campaign of protest in the press, to politicians and against the police.

CAMPAIGN GROUP

Establish a campaign group immediately and win credible support. The Support Committee and Associated Staffs for a United Ireland (a pressure group within ASTMS, Maire's union) set about winning support from people who had never previously spoken about Ireland. As the campaign progressed this became impressive — 3 national unions (ASTMS, COHSE, NUPE), 35 MPs, 25 MEPs, 12 trades councils, National Labour Women's Conference, numerous Black and Irish organisations, health and psychiatric groups. The list is both impressive and unprecedented for someone

charged with conspiracy to cause explosions.

OPENING THE MINDS

To show there was nothing sinister about Maire, a personal profile as well as a political profile accompanied every public statement. Maire's pioneering work in medicine and support for other progressive causes counteracts the media's love of the sinister. The political issues can then be discussed with more receptive minds.

DEMANDS

The demands were deliberately limited to two main slogans: 'Maire is innocent' and 'Drop the Charges'. This was an attempt to reach the uninitiated who would be more receptive to a single issue, clearly stated, rather than general anti-state slogans.

LEGAL DEFENCE

Get the best. Most solicitors believe in keeping politics out



of the law. In a politically motivated trial the political aspects have to be met head on. An ASTMS observer at the trial said the jury must be the best educated 12 people on the history and politics of Ireland. Maire's solicitor Gareth Pearce and barrister Mike Mansfield used every legal submission to make that possible. In addition to Maire expounding her views, defence witnesses included members of the Troops Out Movement, specialists in police harassment of Irish people and anti-Irish bias in the media.

Perhaps the most significant part of the whole campaign is that it has exposed the Terror Act for what it really is — an act of intimidation. It has opened up the debate on N. Ireland in areas where the silence has been deafening. It has given us all an opportunity to build the discussion and movement for British withdrawal from Ireland.

Members of UVF jailed

Two members of a Scottish unit of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Robert Walker and Kenneth Edgar, were jailed for 8 years after being found guilty of conspiring to further the aims of the UVF and possessing unlawfully, firearms, ammunition, explosives and CS gas grenades with a view to endanger life. The trial which ended in Glasgow's High Court on March 13th saw seven others on similar charges walk free.

Police stated that they found sticks of dynamite hidden under a sofa and a revolver in a child's toy box in the home of Edgar. In Walker's house they found hundreds of rounds of ammunition, shot gun cartridges, a silencer and an infantry training manual. UVF regalia was littered over the house. 9mm bullets were found during a search of another defendant's home.

Much of the activities of this UVF unit were revealed in court by former member William Hardie. Hardie who stated he had been recruited into the UVF some two years previously while attending an Orange Lodge meeting in

Glasgow, admitted that he had 'bought his freedom' in return for supplying the police with information on his associates. He had become involved in ferrying arms and ammunition to N. Ireland. Parades, demonstrations and, on one occasion, initiation in the Apprentice Boys of Derry provided him with the excuse to travel.

He described how he had been detailed to throw a CS gas canister at a Republican rally due to be held in Glasgow. The rally was cancelled but he later collected a bag thought to contain a rifle. 'We planned taking a trip to Royston Road to hit someone'. On another occasion he went with others into the country and used a tree with 'IRA' carved on it and an oil drum for firing practice.

It was alleged that another of those accused, Henry Sutton, a colour sergeant in the Territorial Army, had taken sticks of dynamite during an army exercise. Other members of his TA unit refuted the allegation. Although the jury found him not guilty he was given a 'ticking off' for possessing a CS gas canister.

TRADE UNION NEWS

ASTMS

Progress in the medical staff union ASTMS: the Associated Staffs for a United Ireland (a pressure group within ASTMS) are preparing for a major push at this year's annual conference to get their union to agree at last to talk openly about Ireland.

The Preliminary conference Agenda shows one division (region) and 14 branches have submitted resolutions on lines suggested by ASUI. They call on the NEC to "encourage divisions and branches to obtain information regarding the situation in Ireland" and to promote open discussion and education on Irish issues throughout the union.

COHSE

Another health workers' union, COHSE, already has an established policy of opposition to strip searches. Trade unions, however, do not always act on their policies.

For a change we hear that the national executive of COHSE wrote in March to the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, emphasising COHSE's opposition to the Armagh strip searches and calling for an immediate end to the practice.

This move followed its decision to endorse a resolution condemning Armagh

strip searches as "totally inhumane, degrading and a breach of human rights." The resolution goes on: "We believe the strip searches to be physically and mentally dangerous for the women's health. . . . We therefore strongly advise COHSE members not to participate in strip searches." It also agreed to publicise COHSE opposition to strip searches.

This move resulted from a resolution passed to regional council by Hillingdon 618 branch, an affiliate of the Troops Out Movement.

NATFHE

Teachers in higher education: the Manchester branch of NATFHE has just affiliated to TOM. It adopted a policy condemning Britain's presence in Ireland, partition and the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The policy states: "The British presence is the root cause of the political problems of the 6 Counties, and the precondition of any resolution of these problems is the complete withdrawal of Britain from Ireland."

The resolution goes on to demand an end to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the use of plastic bullets, Diplock courts, the supergrass system, strip searches and detention of Irish prisoners of war in Britain's jails. It calls on the NEC to recognise Ireland's right to self determination.

NUM

The Leicestershire 'Dirty Thirty' - NUM miners who became rightly celebrated for staying out all the way through the miners' strike in an area which didn't strike - has formed the Leicester Miners Forum.

Several of the Dirty Thirty are in Leicester TOM, and their Forum has already held a discussion on Ireland.

Some of them are expected to attend the day school on Ireland held on 22nd March by Leicester Labour Party. This day school, in which local TOM Members played a leading part, involved not only a Sinn Fein councillor and two Leicester parliamentary candidates, but also many local trade unionists.



Prisoners' Birthdays

Please send cards and letters to these prisoners on their birthdays. Many of them spend long periods in solitary confinement. Don't forget the number.

EDDIE BUTLER 338637
HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport,
Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX.

April 17th

PATRICK HACKETT 342603
HM Prison Parkhurst, as above,

April 28th

EDDIE BYRNE 873453
HM Prison Long Lartin, South
Littleton, Evesham, Worcs. WR11
5TZ

May 2nd

JOE O'CONNELL 338635
HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester
LE2 7AJ

May 15th

And remand prisoner,

MARTINA ANDERSON D25134
HM Prison Brixton, PO Box 369,
Jebb Avenue, London SW2 5XF

April 16th

"I knew that my colleagues living in London could not depend on the media for background information, as they might for international affairs, and in particular, I did not want them to think that because Ulster was near it was somehow British."

Merlyn Rees (former Labour N. Ireland Secretary) in his book, *A Personal Perspective*, Methuen.

"Do not expect every time the Conference meets it will produce another goodie for the nationalists from the bag."

Peter Barry (Republic's foreign minister) on the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. *Another goodie?*

"Any statement of British policy for Northern Ireland which does not conclude by quantifying itself in terms of Troops Out! should be discarded."

Sir Andrew Gilchrist, former British ambassador to Dublin, in St Patrick's day article in the *Guardian*.

An English civil servant in the 16th century, writing gloomily about the state of Ireland, found support for his pessimism in a proverb:

"It is a proverb of old date that the Pride of France, the Treason of England, and the War of Ireland shall never end. Which proverb, touching the War of Ireland, is like always to continue, without God set it in men's breasts to find some new remedy that never was found before."

"I ask a lot of questions when I'm out. I'm inquisitive, call it nosy if you like. I like to get knowledge of the area. I stop a lot of youths and ask them their names and addresses, where they're from and where they're going to, try to get a conversation going. Harassment's the last thing on my mind!"

Royal Ulster Constabulary member in Derry, interviewed in the *Derry Journal* Dec 20th 1985.

Brixton Prison protest



Photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format

The 24 hour International Women's Day picket of Brixton Prison was attended by more than fifty women calling for an end to the strip-searching of the two republican remand prisoners, Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer.

The protest, organised by the Irish Prisoners Appeal, began at 8pm on Friday,

March 11th, and was supported by the Coventry Women and Ireland Group, the Troops Out Movement, London Irish Women and the Irish Solidarity Movement.

Throughout the picket, the women distributed information on the prison's degrading practices; and in groups all round the prison, they sang

out their support for Ella and Martina.

A High Court Appeal against the use of strip-searches will be heard on 6-8 May; and solicitor Mike Fisher says that if this is unsuccessful he will bring the case before the European Commission for Human Rights.

The weekly pickets of Brixton Prison will continue

until 3rd May, every Saturday 11.30pm-1.30pm.

The Irish Prisoners Appeal have compiled a dossier of news cuttings and information on the campaign, and these are available from

The Irish Prisoners Appeal
c/o Lambeth IBRG
245a Coldharbour Lane
London SW9 8RR
Tel: 274 7700 ext. 36

St Patrick's Day action

London



About 60 people, representing a wide range of Irish organisations, took part in a protest outside the Hilton Hotel, London on Monday 17th March.

They were protesting against

Photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format
the Irish Club's invitation to Tom King, the N. Ireland Secretary, to speak at their St. Patrick's Day celebration held in the hotel. The Irish Club sees itself appealing to upper and middle class Irish people living in England.

Glasgow

1,300 people crammed into Govan Town Hall, Glasgow, on Saturday, 15th March, to hear Ardoyne Sinn Fein councillor Gerry McGuigan address a St Patrick's Day meeting.

There was also a march called by the Republican Bands Alliance (Scotland). This attracted 14 flute and accordion bands. The march welcomed the guest appearance of the Spirit of Freedom band from Portadown.

Leeds

Monday 17 March - St Patrick's Day - was marked in Leeds by a lunchtime picket of the city's Army Recruitment office on Wellington Street - calling for the withdrawal of British forces from the North of Ireland.

The protest was called by Leeds Troops Out Movement.

Three times in recent months extra British troops have been sent into N Ireland - 550 at the end of December 1985, another 500 in February 1986 and a battalion on

13th March. This increase of British troops is the first since the 1981 hunger strikes.

Increasing the number of British troops in N Ireland cannot bring peace there. For a decade and a half, over 30,000 heavily-armed members of Britain's 'security forces' (Army, RUC and UDR) have failed to bring peace to the Six counties of N. Ireland - in fact they have made matters worse, kept the war going, and prolonged Ireland's agony.

Your Letters

Economics and unification

Friends,

It was with the utmost interest I read the feature article on the economic pressures on the Republic of Ireland, and the possible consequent difficulties in uniting Ireland even if the Imperial occupier was willing to leave. It is an issue which has been avoided for much too long by those arguing for a United Ireland. The article was well researched and provocative.

However, I do feel that we were left a bit up in the air at the end of it. A journal like yours should have come up with some outline at least, possibly in a follow up article, of how those arguing for withdrawal would see these obstacles being overcome. I look forward to the next issue.

In solidarity,
Fiach McHugh.

We welcome contributions and feedback from readers. Please send your letters to this address:

Troops Out, c/o Box 10, 2a St Paul's Road, London N1.

REVIEWS

MERCIER & PRESS

An End to Silence

BY DES WILSON



AN END TO SILENCE

Des Wilson, Mercier Press £5.95.

"The British government has oppressed and degraded our people, set them at each other's throats, offered the Protestants of Northern Ireland small gifts and the Catholics kicks, but by doing these things controlled them both. It has been an unjust regime and if it ceased to be so it

would cease to rule." This is the view of Fr. Des Wilson in his book *An End to Silence*.

He was a curate in West Belfast from 1966-75, and resigned from his position over a disagreement with the church about the use of its resources in the Northern Ireland situation. He founded an adult education centre, independent of church and political parties, within his local community where he still works.

This compelling book is written by a pacifist who has seen all suggestions of peace in N. Ireland destroyed by governments – not by paramilitaries. His statements are clear, born out of personal experience and events, and will undoubtedly upset many leading figures in both political and religious bodies.

His own experience of arrest by the army and his subsequent case against them in 1980, which he lost, brings this response: 'In N. Ireland a citizen can be arrested and held in custody because military or police want this to be done for their own reasons.'

The conclusion she draws from this is, to put it mildly, surprising. Noting that "there is Unionist opposition to a united Ireland", which she describes as a "major problem", "yet the Six Counties are not the thriving economic paradise they seemed to be in 1918." I am not sure whether she intended irony, for when unemployment figures, as one indicator of economic development, are compared with those of the UK a picture of an economic wasteland in the Six Counties emerges.

	N.I.	G.B.
1918:	22.9%	14.1%
1926:	24.3%	15.3%
1934:	23.9%	16.6%
1938:	28.0%	12.0%

At present, while we await further input from US multinationals (shades of de Lorean!) the only growth industries in the Six Counties are the police and prison service.

Irish socialists are only too well aware of the dimensions of the task which the last phase of Anglo/Irish economic policies confront us with. Nor, may I suggest, are we incapable of developing social and political strategies to meet the challenge.

But we know that no development can take place until British troops are out of our country. And we hold it as the prime responsibility of British socialists to achieve this. As 1,000 additional British soldiers arrived in the Six Counties within the last two weeks, there is obviously no room for complacent projections of economic paradises, north or south of the border. Yours sincerely,

Maeve Wilkins, London N10.

Ann Devlin

Dear Sir/Madam,

I recently went to see the film *Ann Devlin*. My main feeling afterwards was that as many people as possible should be encouraged to see it. It is rare that a film which stands on its own also has so many parallels with modern history. In particular, the experiences Ann Devlin had to endure in Dublin's jails could not but remind you of what the women prisoners in Armagh and Brixton jails have to endure. See it and encourage your local cinema/film society to show it.

Best wishes,
Bert Shersby,
North London.

were prepared to go in order to collect intelligence and how far clergymen in the army were prepared to go to help them.'

His comment on the morality of taking up arms against British rule are revealing. 'It is illogical to condemn those who resort to arms against a government which cannot or will not solve the problems of injustice and yet insists upon keeping intact the structures of government which caused the injustices in the first place.'

The writer's unerring logic and clarity of thought bring the reader back time and again to the root cause of the conflict in N. Ireland – Britain's presence. He does not admit to holding the key to a solution but he identifies many of the barriers in its way. 'Disbandment of the Republican military movement does not solve the problem; removal of the British government makes a solution possible.'

Bob Chatwin

An End To Silence is available from The Troops Out Movement, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH. Include 40p for postage.

19th The Republic's premier Garrett FitzGerald meets Thatcher in London and announces Republic's intention to sign the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (see article) — the Convention is signed on 24th Feb. He also presses for progress on devolved government for the North and for reforms in the UDR and RUC, and expresses his concern about Sellafield.

20th Trial opens in Glasgow of nine men charged under PTA and conspiracy law in connection with the loyalist UVF. They face a total of 80 charges; two of the defendants are members of the Paras Territorial Army.

20th Debate in European Parliament on radioactive discharges and accidents at Sellafield. Four motions are passed: for emissions to be reduced; to prohibit discharges into the Irish Sea until safety standards are met; for Britain to take necessary steps to prevent emissions; and for the suspension of all operations at Sellafield until the Government enquiry is completed.

21st Trial opens in Dublin of Dominic McGlinchey on firearms charges resulting from an alleged shoot-out at the time of his arrest in 1984.

21st Extra British troops sent to North in preparation for loyalist strike.

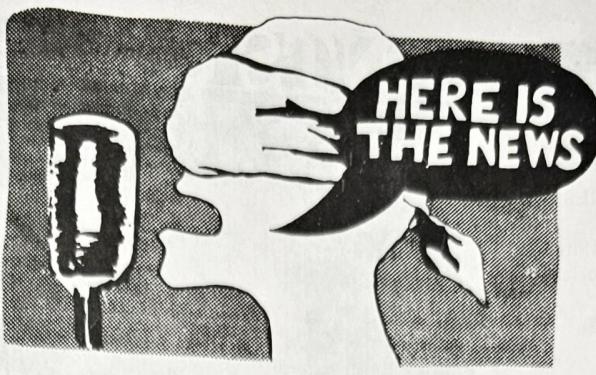
ICTU Women's Conference passes motion condemning strip searches (which is already policy) plus amendment putting the motion into a 'campaign for peace' and calling for all organisations 'to end their campaigns of terror and violence'.

22nd IRA volunteer Tony Gough is shot dead by British soldiers in Derry. He and another man were intercepted by a foot patrol as they withdrew after sniping at an Army/RUC fort.

23rd IRA landmine injures RUC foot patrol in Armagh.

In Portlaoise Prison, IRSP prisoners break down cell doors and escalate dirty protest against visiting restrictions and deteriorating educational and recreational facilities. The restrictions follow an attempted break-out by IRA prisoners last November.

25th Meeting in London between Mrs Thatcher and unionist leaders



Paisley and Molyneaux. They want the Anglo-Irish Agreement shelved for three months and immediate progress on devolution. The British side offers: to defer next meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference, due in Feb; to consider 'new arrangements' for unionist consultations; progress on devolution; and more talks with the Unionist Parties. Paisley and Molyneaux initially respond positively to the meeting, but on their return to Belfast they swing back again behind the loyalist strike.

Bail refused to Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson in London. They will now go to High Court to claim unlawful assault by excessive strip searches.

Senior police chiefs from North and Republic meet in Belfast to discuss 'security' cooperation — one of a series set up by the Agreement.

Release from custody without charge of Barney McLarnon, one of the two men arrested when British soldiers shot dead Francis Bradley on 18th Feb (the other man was released earlier): at the time the RUC claimed that all three were 'gunmen'.

26th Labour Party Divorce Bill in the Dail (Republic's parliament) is voted out by 54 to 33. FitzGerald is committed to talks with church leaders and is expected to bring forward a government Bill later in the year, covering a wider range of marriage law.

27th Unemployment figures for the North show an increase of 1,100 over the previous month, or 8,500 over last year (seasonally adjusted). The official total is 22%.

28th British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd visits Handsworth to tell the local people that the police should have plastic bullets — the

alternative being to bring in the Army to fire live rounds.

MARCH

3rd LOYALIST STRIKE. Serious violence — attacks on people and shops, rioting, snipers open fire on RUC in Belfast. Hundreds of complaints that the RUC failed to dismantle barricades or prevent intimidation. An IDB selective survey showed an approximate 30% attendance at workplaces.

5th

Announcement of US aid package, part of the Anglo-Irish Agreement: \$250 million over five years. The first year's instalment is \$20 million as a direct grant and \$30 million in loans. 1/4 of it will go to North, 1/4 to border areas of Republic. The House of Representatives approves the package on 11th March, but there is expected to be opposition to it in the Senate because there is no anti-discrimination clause attached to the aid. It also looks like the package will be linked to the new extradition treaty which is stalled in the Senate.

7th

Unemployment figures for the Republic show a fall in the unemployed of 1,849 — or 200, seasonally adjusted.

Supergrass Angela Whoriskey from Derry is sentenced to life imprisonment on 39 charges, including murder.

The Councils of Monaghan, Newry & Mourne, Louth and Down call for the immediate closure of Sellafield.

10th

British Government announces that three nuclear bunkers are to be built in N. Ireland at a cost of £7.8 million; the sites are not disclosed.

Tom King admits there are difficulties in seeking EEC aid for the Anglo-Irish Agreement because the British side would have to match pound for pound whatever the EEC agrees for the North.

Protestors against strip searches occupy Fine Gael headquarters in Dublin.

11th

Fourth meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference at Stormont. They discussed cross-border 'security'; education, health and housing; and making the RUC more acceptable to nationalists through 'community relations' training etc. The only reform Peter Barry could report was the increasing use of RUC escorts for UDR patrols. The British are stalling on repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act, with not even a decision expected before the autumn. Unionists demonstrate outside Stormont with three Assembly representa-

tives arrested (they are released after three hours).

House of Commons passes an Order to suspend the unionist-controlled Councils which have refused to strike a rate; the Order also enables commissioners to be appointed, although it was not decided to go ahead on this.

Dominic McGlinchey is found guilty of shooting at a garda and of possessing a firearm: he is sentenced to ten years.

Extradition hearing held in Amsterdam against Brendan McFarlane and Gerard Kelly, who escaped from Long Kesh in 1983 and were arrested in Holland in January. Sean MacBride and Fr Des Wilson appear as witnesses to explain the nature of partition and British rule, as evidence of the political motivation of the defendants. The court is due to give its judgement on 25th March.

12th

House of Commons Environmental Committee issues its report on Sellafield, acknowledging that the Irish Sea is the most contaminated sea in the world.

Clerical staff at Stormont start clearing out their offices, an indication of the likely closure of the N. Ireland Assembly.

13th

More British troops sent to the North — a battalion of Royal Green Jackets brings the total of extra troops this year to 1,150.

The N. Ireland Assembly decides to suspend its scrutinising function and to discharge its devolution committee. It votes to set up a Victimisation in Employment committee to investigate discrimination by employers "against those who seek to exercise the democratic right of demonstrating their political opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement."

A Belfast woman, Evelyn Glenholmes is held on extradition warrants in Dublin related to bombing charges in England. A conditional order for habeas corpus is overturned the next day.

In the Glasgow UVF trial, two of the defendants are jailed for 8 years, the others are freed.

Ken Livingstone is to be interviewed by police for taking part in an illegal march — the Bloody Sunday march in Derry on 26th Jan. This was illegal in the sense that notification had not been lodged with the RUC.

14th

Unionist politicians announce plan to put up their own candidates in English and Scottish constituencies at the next general election. They are targeting sitting Tory MPs who voted for the Agreement in areas with a sizeable unionist electorate, eg around Glasgow and Liverpool.

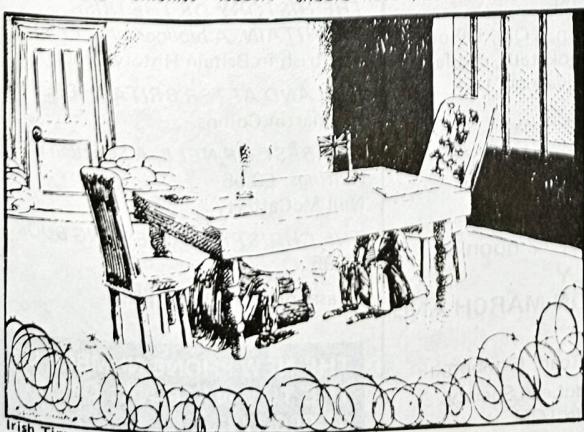
Cardinal Tomas O Fiach appeals for the ending of strip searches when the women prisoners are moved from Armagh to the new prison of Maghaberry. The move is due on 19th March; the new prison cost £33 million.

16th

25 year old Catholic John O'Neill is beaten to death, his body found near the unionist Tinedale estate in N. Belfast. It is believed that this horrific murder was a sectarian assassination carried out by the UDA or UVF.

17th

Unionist candidate, Boyd Black, is to stand in the Fulham by-election on an anti-Tory, anti-Agreement platform.



Irish Times view of Intergovernmental Conference

COMING EVENTS & RESOURCES

BIRMINGHAM

IRISH NEWS - BRITISH STORIES; A SERIES OF VIDEO SHOWS

'Green Flutes' (about a Glasgow flute band) and 'Irish News: British Stories' (media treatment of the war).

7.30pm, Trade Union Resource Centre, 7 Frederick St, Hockley (Bus, 96)

on April 7th

or

1.00pm, Unemployed Centre, 448 Stratford Rd, Sparkhill (Buses 24, 31, 32, 90, 92)

on April 8th

Organised by Birmingham TOM

Saturday 12th April, 7pm

SONGS OF STRUGGLE

An evening of slides, songs and sound recordings. Featuring Banner Theatre Song Group and Women's Group, Baba Bakhtaura (punjabi folk singer), Kendall Smith (dub poet) and Keresley Pit Women's Song Group.

New Inns Pub, 42 Holyhead Rd, Handsworth Birmingham Trades Council Miners' Support Group in support of Handsworth Defence Campaign

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	
Birmingham	Tyneside
Brighton	York
Bristol	LONDON AREA
Cambridge	Camden
Colchester	East London
Coventry	Haringey
Leeds	Islington
Leicester	Lambeth
Manchester	West London
Merseyside	SCOTLAND
Northampton	Aberdeen
Norwich	Edinburgh
Nottingham	Glasgow
Oxford	WALES
St. Albans	Cardiff
Sheffield	Swansea

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*.



Photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format

Support the Brixton pickets!

LONDON

Saturday mornings, throughout April

11.30-1.30

BRIXTON PRISON PICKETS

The Irish Prisoners Appeal, the support group for Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer, has called these pickets to highlight the degrading practice of strip searching.

All welcome. Bring banners and placards against the strip searches.

Assemble at the corner of Jebb Avenue and Brixton Hill, London SW9.

Friday April 4th, 12-7pm

Saturday April 5th, 10am-7pm

SCRIF-CELT

Annual Celtic language book fair. It is supported by 70 Celtic language publishers covering the six Celtic languages - Irish, Manx, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Breton and Cornish.

Stalls plus poetry readings and lectures. London Welsh Centre,

157-163 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Admission £1 adults, 50p children.

Bar and buffet.

Organised by London branch of the Celtic league.

May 10th, 2.30pm

RALLY FOR BOBBY SANDS, JAMES CONNOLLY COMMEMORATION

Speakers from Sinn Fein, TOM, Labour Party, trade unions. Bookstalls, displays. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. 50p entrance.

Called by the Wolfe Tone Society.

EDINBURGH

Saturday, 17th May, 12 noon

JAMES CONNOLLY COMMEMORATION MARCH AND FOLK FESTIVAL

Assemble at Regents Road, Edinburgh. Called by the John MacLean Society, supported by Clydeside TOM.

LEEDS

Wed, April 23rd

8pm

Leeds TOM presents the Northern premiere of

PIGS

a new film by Cathal Black

Life on the fringes of society, set in present day Dublin. It centres on Jimmy, who is unemployed and in trouble with the local skinheads for being gay.

At the Trades Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 7.

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WHO OWNS YOU £3.95

ed. Carmell Jennings

AN END TO SILENCE £5.95

Des Wilson

ON THE EDGE. A study of poverty and longterm unemployment in Northern Ireland. £2.95

Eileen Evasion

THE HISTORY OF THE IRISH IN BRITAIN. A bibliography. £2.50

The Irish in Britain History Group

IRELAND AFTER BRITAIN. £3.95

ed. Martin Collins.

THE BEST OF NELL. A Selection of Writings. £3.95

Nell McCafferty

THE CHRISTY MOORE SONG BOOK.

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