

TROOPS OUT

Vol. 6, No. 3, Dec. '82/Jan. '83 **Paper of the Troops Out Movement 20p**

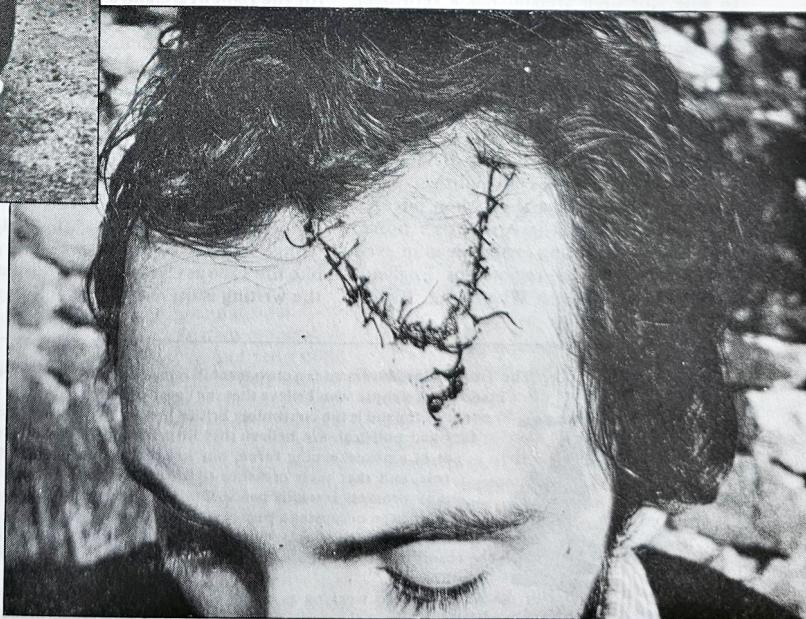


Above: Funeral of Paul Whitters, 15 years old, shot in Derry.
Right: Head wound caused by plastic bullet. (Photos: Network)

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**PLASTIC
BULLETS
KILL AND
MAIM
BAN THEM
NOW**



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



ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS—WHAT NEXT

The new Assembly elected in October was designed as a governing body for 'both communities', the Unionist or Protestant community and the nationalist or Catholic community. But all the nationalist representatives are boycotting the Assembly on the grounds that it offers them nothing towards their goal of a united Ireland. All the same, Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior stated that, boycott or no, there would be 'no return to majority rule' (Unionist rule).

Hold on, what was that — isn't majority rule what democracy is all about? How come it is a dirty word in Northern Ireland politics?

The answer is simple: majority rule existed in Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1972. It deliberately and consciously excluded Catholics from all power, in government, civil service and local government. It deliberately and consciously discriminated against Catholics as regards jobs and housing, consigning them to live in poverty or emigrate. The blatant injustice of it all led to the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties, as a result of which Britain has been unable to maintain the 6 Counties of Northern Ireland except by force of arms.

The British State does not demand that its satellites and colonies run their affairs with justice, but it does demand that they manage peace and quiet. In this the Unionists have failed them!

The irony is that the 'legitimacy' of British rule in Northern Ireland is enshrined by this self-same majority. The Government of Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 states that Northern Ireland is a part of the UK and shall not cease to be such without the consent of the majority. So in other words, the majority that is deemed unfit to rule Northern Ireland has a veto over any change to Northern Ireland's constitutional position.

The other props on which British rule relies are also taking a hammering. The labour movement in Northern Ireland which has served to keep the working class in its place — ie. deeply divided and at the bottom — has no political party worthy of votes at a time when poverty and unemployment are at crisis point, way beyond anything experienced in even the most deprived regions of England, Scotland or Wales. When the British

Government treats people with such inhumanity it must expect disaffection, and not just disaffection from particular policies or parties but disaffection from its right to govern.

The third prop is nationalist constitutional politics. In earlier years there might just have been an argument for playing along with the Northern Ireland State and trying to get representation for the nationalists' interests in whatever Northern Ireland government existed (although even this is doubtful). But the last few years of poverty and plastic bullets, prisons and abuses of the legal system and above all the ten hunger strike deaths last year show the utter futility of this game. People voted in the Assembly elections and over one-third of the nationalist people — or 10% of the whole population — voted for Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein won five seats — with more experience of the Proportional Representation system they would have won more, as the Alliance Party got the same percentage of votes and won ten seats. Sinn Fein stood on a clear platform of opposition to the British Army and support for the armed resistance to it; boycott of the Assembly; an end to partition and the unemployment, poverty and poor housing that comes with it; and for the right of Ireland as a whole to decide its own future. James Prior immediately spurned his own democratic processes by refusing to invite Sinn Fein along with the other parties to talks about the Assembly.

There has been a clear and substantial vote against British rule. Britain must get out. The Unionist veto is exposed as a mockery. It must be revoked. When the front page of the *Daily Mirror* precisely echoes the arguments of 'extremist' 'fringe' 'idealist' withdrawal movements like the Troops Out Movement, then surely the writing is on the wall for all to see.



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 ten 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 ways 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

**DAILY
Mirror**

Monday November 1, 1982

MIRROR COMMENT

**HOW
MUCH
LONGER?**

CONTRIBUTED: What the Mirror said on August 14, 1972

Another thirteen wasted years in Northern Ireland

**ULSTER:
Bring home the troops**

CONTRIBUTED: What the Mirror said on August 14, 1972

An awful toll of human sacrifice

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED SINCE 1969

900,000

TROOPS OUT is produced by an editorial collective drawn from TOM branches in London. Contributions are welcome (although we can't guarantee to publish everything that comes in).

Copy for the next issue must be sent to arrive not later than 19th January.

Subscriptions: Britain and Ireland: £4 yearly (10 issues); Europe, £5; USA and Australia, 27.

Make cheques payable to Troops Out (Literature Committee). Send to Box 10, 2a St. Paul Rd, London N.1.

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.

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To: P.O. Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

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 £7.50 which includes a subscription to *Troops Out*.

Elections In The South Once Again

It is no coincidence that a few weeks after the Assembly Elections in the North, there is a General Election in the South. The Irish Republic — more correctly called the 26 Counties because a divided nation is not yet a true Republic — is deeply affected by events in the 6 Counties. The South's instability is shown by the fact that this is the third General Election since June 1981.

There are two issues on which Irish Governments come and go, and both are the result of partition — the economy and the struggle for a united Ireland.

The present election was brought about when Haughey's Fianna Fail government attempted to push through massive government spending cuts and wage freezes. The last General Election in February 1982 also came about when FitzGerald's Fine Gael government (in a coalition with the Labour Party) attempted to push through a tough budget which included taxes on children's clothes and shoes and taxes on supplementary benefits. Ireland has a higher foreign debt than Poland, and like Poland it is therefore tied by purse-strings to its powerful neighbour. In Ireland's case this could hardly be otherwise since its past colonial status crippled its industrial development and the partition of Ireland took from it its one industrial base around Belfast.

Another aspect of partition and past colonialisation is that in Ireland class politics have been stunted. With the exception of the Coalition Government 1948-51, no government in Ireland has paid more than lip-service to the interests of the working class. The Labour

Party has never been significant, unlike most other European countries which have quite powerful Labour or social-democratic parties. The political space such parties occupy elsewhere does not exist in Ireland because the national question is still not resolved. The small Workers Party (ex-Official Sinn Fein), which has been gradually increasing its representation in the Dail (Parliament), tries to cope with this problem by saying, let's leave partition as it is and keep 'two nations' in Ireland, and build up capitalism in the South so that later it can be overthrown by socialism! Sinn Fein has decided not to contest this election.

On the subject of partition and the war in the North, the two main parties have in common an apparent impotence to intervene in any useful way. Ironically the existence of the two parties stems from different tactics adopted at the end of the War of Independence but both have as their declared aim the ultimate re-unification of Ireland. You'd never guess it from their actual practice. During the hunger strike of 1981, Haughey made noises but did nothing, and fell from power. FitzGerald replaced him and refused even to meet hunger strikers'

relatives or the MP Owen Carron.

Fianna Fail has the reputation of holding a harder line on partition — in recent months it has condemned partition as a failure, condemned the new Assembly and asserted the right of the Irish Government "to influence developments in Northern Ireland and pursue its own separate enlightened policy on international issues." It did refuse to go along with Britain over the Malvinas/Falklands war, but as regards the North — nothing.

Fine Gael's approach is different but no more effective. Last year when in power FitzGerald announced a 'Constitutional Crusade' to win a united Ireland by consent. This would involve taking out from the constitution the specifically Catholic doctrines like the ban on divorce — and renouncing the Republic's claim to the whole territory of Ireland. It was an attempt to appease the Unionists. But even in his own terms he backed down: Fine Gael supports the present Constitutional Amendment to enshrine the rights of the unborn foetus in the Constitution (but make abortion a crime not just in law but a crime against the Constitution) — which is about as Catholic as you could get.

Between the pair of them, the Dail is not the place to look for progress or defence of the people being shot by plastic bullets in the North.

Back To Work In The Prisons

On November 2nd a historic six year struggle ended, when republican prisoners in the H Blocks and Armagh jail ended their 'no work' protest.

The struggle started in 1976 when political status was removed by the British Government: political status recognised their position as prisoners of war and allowed them to organise themselves under the recognised leadership of their own commanding officers. Newly convicted prisoners without status refused to wear the prison uniform of criminals and had only a blanket to wear. Both men and women (who kept the right to wear their own clothes) refused to do the prison work of criminals and were locked in their cells for 23 hours a day.

They suffered a great deal of harassment and daily beatings from the prison warders, so in 1978 the men refused to leave their cells and this led to three horrific unbearable years of the 'dirt protest': they could not wash and were denied slop-out facilities and so they had to smear their excreta on the cell walls because there was no other way of disposing of it.

In February 1980 the women in Armagh were attacked by male warders

brought in from the H Blocks, and they too went on a dirt protest.

In September 1980 seven men started a hunger strike as the last resort, with five simple and just demands — no prison work, no prison uniform, free association, restored remission, and parcels, letters and visits. They were joined by three women in December, and as one prisoner neared death just before Christmas the Government agreed to new guidelines and negotiations with the men's commanding officer, Bobby Sands.

But as soon as the international spotlight was off them, the British reneged. A second hunger strike began and ten young men died during 1981. Their agony finally won the bulk of the prisoners' demands, apart from the issue of prison work. The struggle also saw Bobby Sands and then his election agent Owen Carron elected as Westminster MPs, and the hunger striker Kieran Doherty and prisoner Paddy Agnew elected as TDs in the Parliament of Southern Ireland. It saw the biggest mass protests in Ireland since the war began, and the most widespread support all around the world.

The prisoners' demands were about prison conditions but the long struggle always had a wider meaning. The prisoners were the frontline of the

Government's 'criminalisation' campaign.

This criminalisation campaign — introduced by the Labour Government in 1975 — was an attempt to present the war as a problem of a few individuals engaged in terrorism and gangsterism. Thus the Government could reassure the British people and their American and European allies that the presence of the British Army and a paramilitary police force and the use of plastic and live bullets against a civilian population were justified in the name of law and order. But the first intended victims of this campaign were also the main force to smash it: the strength and endurance of the prisoners, the elections and the massive support on the streets served precisely to uncover what criminalisation aimed to cover up — that the struggle in the North had political ends directed to the ending of all British rule in Ireland and that it was supported by a huge proportion of the Irish people.

The hunger strike's outcome within the prisons was not a clear-cut victory, and so 145 men and 19 women had continued the no work protest. Now the success of Sinn Fein in the Assembly elections has put the final nail in the coffin of criminalisation, and in the new phase that now begins the prisoners' part in the overall struggle will be different and, hopefully, less agonising than the last six years.

THE TRUTH ABOUT "TIT FOR TAT" KILLINGS

In the last month there has been a stark increase in the murders of unarmed nationalist civilians in the 6 Counties of Ireland. These sectarian murders have been misreported, as usual, by the media.

The misinformation began with the kidnapping of Joseph Donegan from West Belfast, by the loyalist paramilitary, and illegal, Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). The pretext for this kidnapping was to barter their victim for the UDR sergeant Thomas Cochrane, kidnapped earlier the same day in Co. Armagh. For the media, reeling in shock at the striking vote for Sinn Fein in the Assembly elections (see editorial) these two kidnappings, subsequently labelled "tit for tat sectarian murders", were a useful diversion from the serious challenge to British rule the election results implied. In general too, the media goes in for the careless use of the phrase "sectarian murder" to misrepresent Britain's war in Ireland as a religious war between protestant and catholic.

Sectarian murder, the killing of someone solely on the grounds of their religious beliefs is not practised by the republican groups in Ireland. Their considered legitimate enemy targets are the Security Forces. The Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) is a regiment of the British Army, locally recruited (mostly from the loyalist B Specials when they were disbanded in December 1969). Its soldiers are often the "eyes and ears" of the British Army, feared by many nationalist people as their sectarian attitudes are given power and legitimacy by their guns and uniforms. It's the only

regiment of the Army to have some part-time members. Thomas Cochrane was kidnapped for "questioning about serious crimes against the nationalist people" as a UDR soldier, not as a protestant man on his way to his civilian job.

The possibility of loyalist sectarian attacks, often horribly brutal and inflicted at random on the first nationalist victim they can get, is a well-known fear of many nationalist people, especially those living in or near loyalist areas. A spate of such attacks occur when the loyalists find their position threatened.

In March 1972, British government proposals for the control of the 6 Counties were put to Brian Faulkner, the premier of the unionist government at Stormont. Unionists and the Orange Order could not agree with the transfer of responsibility for 'law and order' to Westminster, the Cabinet resigned and direct rule from Westminster was imposed. From April to August of that year there were 85 murders of ordinary nationalist people. There have been other spates since, and now in 1982, when the results of the Assembly elections showed that there is no return to the Stormont the loyalists hoped for, the backlash has started again.

Peter Corrigan, a republican supporter and election worker was gunned down on his way to sign on in Armagh. A man escaped from a murder attack in Larne with a severed hand.

A few exceptions that the IRA have made to their policy of 'legitimate targets', is in the wake of such sectarian attacks on Catholic people, and with the express idea of putting a stop to it. On November

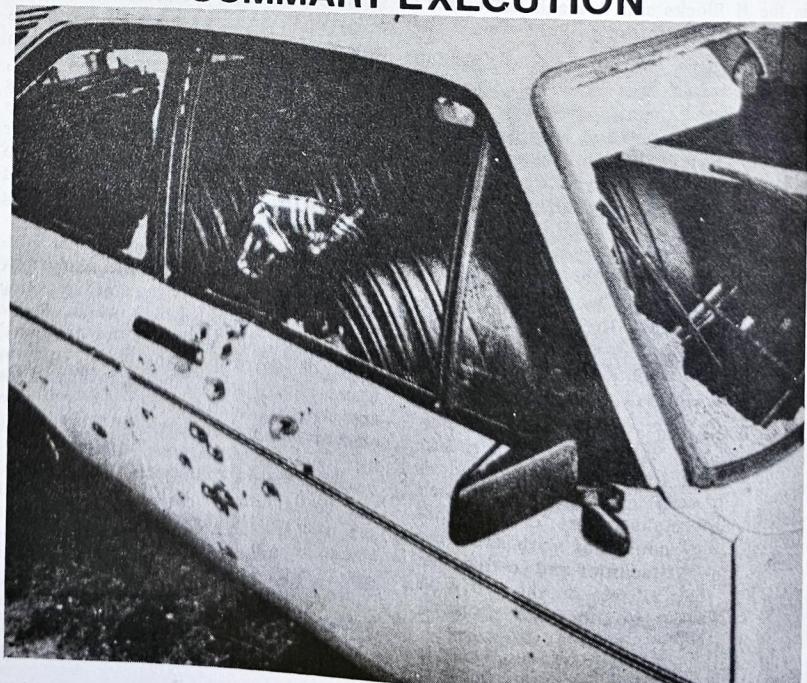
16th they shot dead Lennie Murphy, the so-called "Master Butcher" and prominent UVF assassin, stating "The IRA takes this opportunity to restate its policy of non-sectarian attacks, while retaining its right to take unequivocal action against those who direct or motivate sectarian slaughter against the national population."

Lennie Murphy began his gruesome career in 1972 and became the leader of a loyalist gang that carried out such bestial killings they were nicknamed the Shankill Butchers, who when finally caught received 2,000 years imprisonment in all for 45 murders. Lennie was charged for possessing weapons and got 12 years. With 50% remission he was released from the H-Blocks in August this year. It is thought that he arranged or executed the murder of Joseph Donegan, first of the latest victims. The house where Joseph was kept, where his false teeth and bloodstains were found, was owned till just 2 days before, by Lennie Murphy, and although the RUC arrested him, he was later released without charge.

The IRA has put an ending to this murderer's career in the hope of halting the escalation of sectarian attacks on catholics.

Sadly, a few days later, the body of Michael Fay, a 25 year old Catholic, was found in the boot of a car in Belfast. He had been shot by a loyalist gang calling itself The Protestant Action Force, a cover name for the Ulster Volunteer Force.

SUMMARY EXECUTION



On 11th November, the Royal Ulster Constabulary shot dead three unarmed IRA Volunteers at a road-block near Lurgan.

An RUC statement claimed that the car in which they were travelling had failed to stop at the roadblock and they were therefore forced to fire on it. The BBC News that night showed the bullet-riddled car with more than 20 bullet holes in the driver's door. If the car had gone through the roadblock, presumably at high speed, how is it that not only is the driver's door riddled with bullet holes, but that also there is *only one bullet hole* in the rear of the car, where the majority of the fire would have been aimed had the car been fired at from behind, as the RUC's statement leads us to believe.

The evidence points to a classic ambush situation, and it is no coincidence that three RUC men were killed by an IRA landmine the week before.

Postscript: In the same area one young man was shot dead and another seriously wounded by the RUC on November 24th. The police later claimed that the men had guns but no shots were fired at the RUC. Is summary execution now official RUC policy?

The Writings on the wall...

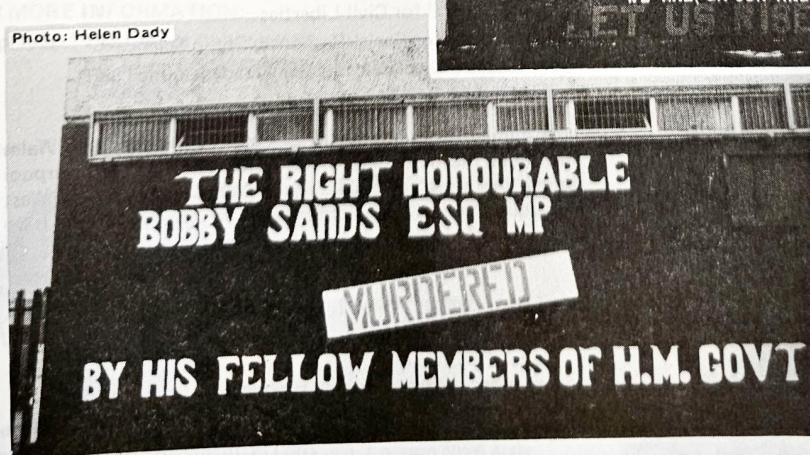
**YOUTH
MAKE IT
PLAIN**



THE TOWN

As I walk through the town
I'm looking around,
I see people both happy, yet scared
but the look in their eyes,
I can never despise
Because I know deep down that they cared
For they live in a town
that has been broken down
with years of hardship and crying
where the young they grow old
for their youth has been sold
and the legacy left them is dying

Go home to your bed
and lay down your head
and forget all the trouble and sorrow
the life on the dole is killing your soul
and seems that there'll be no tomorrow
The old town by night
is a wonderful sight
if only the peace could be lasting
but as the dawn breaks,
a whole city shakes
to the sound of another shot blasting.



With a nod of the head
you can tell what's being said
its a greeting both hearty and true
But inside theres a pain
caused by the disdain
of forces watching over you
so get on with your life
learn to live with the strife
remember theres a future in toil
for the city is grand
just like your fair land
and your hearts are as big as the Foyle.

BY WILLIE SHOVELIN
A young man who was doing a survey on un-
employment in Derry and hung himself a short
time after writing this poem.

BAN PLASTIC



Patrick Callaghan, age 21, lost an eye and received a broken nose and dislocated jaw from a plastic bullet.

GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA CLAIMS THAT PLASTIC BULLETS ARE FAIRLY HARMLESS RIOT-CONTROL WEAPONS

- **They are not harmless, they are lethal.**

Fourteen people have been killed by plastic and rubber bullets, seven of them children. Plastic bullets are as heavy as cricket balls but harder, they are 3½" x 1½" and leave the gun at over 160mph.

As well as causing death, plastic bullets have inflicted horrific injuries including blindness, brain damage and paralysis. 12 year old Paul Carr was shot in the face: the plastic bullet tore off part of his nose, shattered his palate and forced his teeth down into his mouth.

- **They are not used just as riot-control weapons.**

Many of the dead and injured had not been involved in rioting but were just going about their business, looking out of their windows, or children playing in the street or running errands.

The very use of plastic bullets has led to rioting in protest against their use. Bishop Daly has said, "Plastic bullets are responsible for more riots than they have quelled."

- **They are not "minimum force" weapons.**

During the riots — which are usually what we would consider standard street protests that come under attack by the British

Army or armed police force — plastic bullets are far more powerful than the situation warrants. *"The penalty for unlawful assembly or for stone throwing is not summary death"* (Association for Legal Justice).

There are many proven cases where plastic bullets have been fired at close range, where there has been no threat to the security forces, where they are fired at small children and where they are aimed at the head. All these are breaches of the regulations governing the use of plastic bullets.

- **The Army and police seem to have total immunity.**

Not one soldier or policeman has been prosecuted by the State for using plastic bullets to cause death or injuries. The Director of Public Prosecutions, despite heavy criticisms, has failed time and again to press charges against soldiers in cases where there has been a clear breach of the Army's own regulations.

Complaints to the local police station have been dealt with in a negligent manner. The majority have not been followed up. The complainants have been told that they will be charged with rioting!

Killing and maiming children will not solve the problems that cause the war in Northern Ireland. PLASTIC BULLETS ARE LETHAL WEAPONS AND ARE ONE OF THE REPRESSIVE MEASURES USED TO TRY TO SUPPRESS OPPOSITION FROM THAT SECTION OF THE IRISH PEOPLE WHO OPPOSE THE BRITISH PRESENCE IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

MANY ORGANISATIONS HAVE CALLED FOR PLASTIC BULLETS TO BE BANNED.

So far the British Government has coldly ignored them. They include:

The European Parliament (which voted by 110 to 43 for a ban, with only British Tories and Northern Irish Unionists against)

Labour Party (at its conference in October 1982)

Young Liberals

American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

National Council for Civil Liberties

British Society for Social Responsibility in Science

York Trades Council, Nottingham Trades Council and

Birmingham Trades Council

A number of police forces in England, Scotland and Wales now stock plastic bullets — and some were fired in Liverpool during the riots in 1981. The Police Committees of West Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Merseyside have all stopped their police forces using plastic bullets.

WILL YOU HELP TO GET THESE WEAPONS BANNED?

- Write to your MP, local council and police committee.
- Raise the question in your trade union, trades council or any other organisation you support.
- Make use of the petition being circulated by the Troops Out Movement.

BULLETS

How many times have you heard it claimed by successive British Governments that the 'security forces' in Ireland are only trying to maintain law and order in difficult circumstances? (And how many times over the last couple of years have you heard the echo from the Concannons of the Labour Party?) How far this claim is from the truth is revealed in a pamphlet recently published by the National Council for Civil Liberties, entitled *'Death On The Streets Of Derry'*.

The pamphlet examines the death of three young Derry City men at the hands of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British Army. Lord Tony Gifford Q.C., the author, was asked by the NCCL to conduct an investigation into the deaths of Paul Whitters (15 years), shot in the head by a plastic bullet, and James Brown (18 years) and Gary English (19 years) who were run over and killed by a British Army landrover. He interviewed numerous eyewitnesses to both incidents and visited their locations.

Paul Whitters was shot in the Catholic/nationalist Bogside area of Derry by an RUC policeman, and died ten days later (such a delay is not uncommon and helps mask the deadliness of plastic bullets). From the interviews he conducted, Tony Gifford makes a number of significant points:

'Firstly, the police could easily have arrested Paul, who was on his own, with help a long way off. Secondly, no shout or warning was given. Thirdly, the police made no attempt to size up the situation, but shot immediately. Fourthly, the shot was head high and, it would seem, aimed. Fifthly, the range was very close, at the most ten yards.'

He concludes that,

'Firing in those circumstances with a weapon that is known to be highly lethal at that range was an act of murder for which I can see no possible defence.'

Seventeen months after the murder, no inquest has been held into Paul Whitters' death and no member of the RUC has been prosecuted. What would you feel about the 'forces of law and order' had Paul Whitters been a relative, friend or acquaintance of yours?

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Pamphlets: "They Shoot Children" 50p plus postage
"An Irish Tragedy — Britain's Disgrace" 30p plus postage
(Produced by Information on Ireland)

Badges: 20p plus postage (or 15p each for orders of 10 or more)



Petition Forms
All from Troops Out Movement, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH

Ten days after this incident, in the same city, James Brown and Gary English were run over and killed by a British Army landrover. Eyewitnesses including a journalist working for the BBC describe in the pamphlet how they saw two landrovers travelling at 50-60 m.p.h. deliberately drive into a crowd of fleeing people, hurling two of them into the air. They then state that after stopping one of the vehicles reversed back over the body of Gary English. Several of the eyewitnesses made a full statement to the RUC immediately after the event. Yet the RUC subsequently referred to the incident as a 'road traffic accident' and instead of being charged with murder, the army driver was charged with causing death by reckless driving. Lord Gifford then details the way in which at the trial the police prosecution case was conducted half-heartedly, and how the judge made biased and misleading statements to the jury in his summing up. The defendants (the driver's commanding officer had been charged with aiding and abetting) were acquitted by a majority verdict.

Both these incidents are a direct result of British rule in Ireland, and as such should not be seen in isolation. Paul Whitters died at the hands of a police force whose members, as supporters of British rule, have a vested interest in keeping discontented nationalist people off the streets. If the police had just 'been doing their job', he would have been arrested, not killed. His murderer, and the murderers of James Brown and Gary English, went unpunished because of a legal system whose primary purpose is not the dispensing of justice, but the maintenance of British rule.

True justice, for all the people of the North of Ireland, will only come when that rule is ended, its corrupt legal system dismantled and the RUC disbanded. Until then it's 'business as usual', with murder committed under the guise of 'keeping the peace'.

'Death on the Streets of Derry' NCCL pamphlet 70p + 20p postage from 21 Tabard St, London S.E.1.



Break the Silence End the Terror

There are many ways of silencing people. In 1972 British soldiers fired at a demonstration in Derry demanding civil rights and the ending of internment, leaving fourteen dead. Last year the thousands of nationalist people in Northern Ireland who came onto the streets to support the hunger strikers learnt that they could not even attend funerals without the risk of being killed or injured by plastic bullets.

In England there have been eighteen people falsely convicted and imprisoned for 'IRA offences' or 'conspiracies'. Forensic tests which helped convict them have been proven to be unreliable, yet none has been released.

All of these things were done not to punish people for wrongdoing but to silence certain political views. The Prevention of Terrorism Act is another link in the chain. Over five and a half thousand arrests have been made under the Act but less than one hundred people have been charged — let alone convicted — under it. Even this startling fact is only the tip of the iceberg when the real uses and effects of the PTA are considered.

It creates an atmosphere in which anyone Irish or anyone who believes that Ireland should be free from British rule is automatically regarded with suspicion. Every Irish person is the possible object of surveillance or worse. Low level intelligence gathering, for example in the bedsitters of West London or by plain clothes police at Irish centres, is so common that it is hardly ever commented on. Irish trade union activists have been branded by arrest under the PTA, so effectively destroying their particular struggle — be it for unionisation, better conditions etc — and also making it more difficult for Irish people to be elected to positions of trust by their fellow workers.

Remembering the 'If you hear an Irish accent, be suspicious' broadcasts of two Christmases ago, we can see how the PTA couples neatly with anti-Irish racism to create an atmosphere in which people in Britain are taught to fear and despise the Irish.

Fear and contempt are of course two great barriers to learning. What the British might learn from the Irish is simply the knowledge that both islands would be better off if British rule in Ireland was ended.

It is British rule in Ireland that is the root cause of all the repression, and it is true that the repression will continue until that rule is ended once and for all. Nonetheless, the removal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act from the Statute books (it is a 'temporary' Act and has to be renewed each year) would lift an important barrier to political expression and change.

Last year 53 Labour MPs voted against the Act when it came up for renewal. The Labour Party has a policy of opposition to the Act, but unless pressure is put on the MPs it is likely that many will just abstain, or not turn up for the vote. All MPs must be made to feel that the PTA is an important issue.



'I'm no bomber', Monaghan man says in suicide note

A Co. Monaghan man found hanged in his home in Newhampton took his own life because he feared he was suspected of being in the IRA, an inquest has been told.

Eugene Smith (38), who lived at Stride House in Northampton, had been interviewed by two detectives over his past and present lives but eliminated from their enquiries into this summer's bombings at Hyde Park and Regent's Park, London.

Later, however, he became afraid that people thought he was an IRA man and hanged himself in his bedroom with a

IRISH POST 27/11/82

clothes line. Writing scrawled on the wall included the words: 'I am no bomber, never have been, never could be', 'PC Charles Moffatt told the inquest.

The dead man's brother, Liam, said in evidence that his brother was a heavy drinker and had received psychiatric help after a previous threat to take his own life.

A verdict of suicide was recorded.

Neighbours say that Eugene Smith was a quiet and considerate man. He is survived by his brother, Liam, and by his mother and sister in Co. Monaghan.

The Troops Out Movement is launching a petition calling on MPs to vote against the PTA. It has already been signed by Lord Fenner Brockway, Joan Maynard MP, GLC leader Ken Livingstone, councillors Sally Gilbert and Maureen Colquhoun, Spare Rib magazine and *Outwrite* women's newspaper. Please collect signatures in your area and use the petition as a way of telling people about the PTA.

* Tom has also produced a colour poster/pamphlet giving information about the PTA and advice on what to do if harrassed by it. It is available from TOM, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH, price 40p + 20p postage.

* The Prevention of Terrorism Act is due to come up for renewal in Parliament in February. The Connolly Association has organised a lobby of Parliament on February 16th which TOM supports: Please be there if you can.

Racism Against Irish

This cartoon, published in the "Evening Standard" on October 29, was the subject of heated debate at a full GLC council meeting on 23 November. The Irish in Britain Representation Group made a formal complaint to the GLC's Ethnic Committee, criticising the cartoon's blatant racism.

As a result, the GLC has decided to ban advertising of Council matters in the paper, and the cartoon is being reported to the Attorney-General, the Press Council and the Commission for Racial Equality. This did not happen without vociferous Tory opposition, on the basis that such actions break

the principle of free speech. Free speech for whom, might you ask? Ken Livingstone replied: "I don't believe in free speech for racists". The Standard defended itself by saying that it was so concerned about the situation in "Ulster" and it was right and proper to shock its readers. Such concern is doubtless touching, but little will be achieved towards a peaceful solution by racist cartoons. In fact it is precisely just such a racist attitude on the part of the British which has contributed to the war in the North of Ireland.



GLASGOW CONFERENCE ON IRELAND

On the 13th of November, the Glasgow branch of the Labour Committee on Ireland hosted a dayschool, which was attended by people from all over Scotland.

Local MP Denis Canavan explained that he had ceased believing that Britain should make a phased withdrawal from Ireland and now felt that the British Government must name a withdrawal date and leave, lock stock and barrel on that date. Only this, he felt, could persuade the Loyalists to address themselves to a realistic political solution. He doubted if any ensuing 'blood-bath' could be worse than the current one.

Labour's record on Ireland is appalling, he said, and a recognition of past mistakes must be made. Today's Labour Party policy is unworkable. The fact that the six-county majority was gerrymandered into existence undercuts any claims by them to veto British withdrawal. The Labour Party must acknowledge that partition of Ireland was instituted by force and has been maintained by force and that there will be peace only when Britain withdraws completely.

Vince Mills of the LCI reported on Glasgow's recent delegation to the North of Ireland. The delegation has produced a pamphlet on its visit, including interviews with many different groups in the six-counties. (70p from Jim Kearns,

6 Moffatt Place, Blantyre, Glasgow. Cheques payable to LCI - Glasgow branch.)

A speaker from the Armagh Coordinating Committee pointed to the different development of the forces against women's oppression in a country which had been colonised and said that the repression against the six-county minority had been responsible for politicising women in great numbers. The struggle of women in Ireland would never mirror that of women in imperial countries and British feminists could best support the struggle of Irish women for their own liberation by ending the colonial relationship between Britain and Ireland.

Political Prisoners

The workshop on Political Prisoners felt that Scotland's tradition of John McLean and Connolly on Ireland needed reviving. It explored the possibility of adopting individual prisoners which is not the policy of the Republican movement, but which it felt was useful in monitoring visits, use of drugs, frame-ups etc. There had been efforts made in Glasgow to raise funds and lobby for education rights for prisoners. Lack of Labour Party policy with regard to prisoners was criticised. Why, it was asked, could Loyalists in England and British soldiers in the North of Ireland be transferred home to serve their sentence, while Republican prisoners in English jails were refused repatriation? Not far below the surface of the issue of Irish prisoners lay the ideology

of war by which Britain, despite denials, conducts its dealings with Ireland.

The Workshop on Women and Repression

Beginning with James Connolly's comments, the workshop on Women and Repression traced the way in which women are sandwiched between the reactionary attitudes of the hangovers of peasant society and the needs of British Imperialism in Ireland. Questions of women's rights had been squashed in the 26 Counties as one government after another, since Partition has relied on repression to silence anti-partitionists. Catholicism's doctrine of keeping women 'in the home', has been used unashamedly in the interests of the political parties. Likewise, the 'Protestant state' in the six-counties has resisted the extension of any British reforms which would have eased the lives of women. With British Army presence, repression features in every aspect of life.

Pull out the troops, says a mother

The mother of killed bandsman Larry Mitchell has urged Britain to pull its troops out of Ulster.

Larry, 19, was one of the victims of an IRA bomb in Regent's Park, London.

His mother, Sheila, said at her home in Brentford, Middlesex: "As many people as possible must keep on to Mrs Thatcher to pull the boys out."

She said that the Irish should be left alone to deal with their own problem.

HOSTAGES IN ENGLISH JAILS

Persistent ill-treatment during almost ten years in British prisons is blamed for the health breakdown of a County Tyrone man, whose entire right side has been paralysed by a stroke.

Dungannon-born Sean Campbell returned to Ireland early this year after his release from a British prison, and he is now confined to hospital where he is being treated for paralysis caused by a severe stroke.

38-year old Campbell was the last of the Luton three to be released from prison after serving all but a few months of a ten-year sentence for 'conspiracy to rob persons unknown'. He lost almost two years remission in the Albany prison incident of 1976 in which he sustained a broken jaw, broken ribs and fractures of a leg, arm and fingers.

The National Association of Probation Officers have decided to take up the case for the repatriation of Irish prisoners in English jails. This is based on a paper by a Belfast probation officer, called 'The Case For Transfer', which argues for it on humanitarian grounds.

Once again, a Republican prisoner in an English jail is being discriminated against. Gerry McLaughlin is a Republican prisoner in Maidstone jail, due for release in November 1983. His application to Kent University as an extra-mural student has been rejected by the Vice Chancellor.

Kent University Student's Union strongly suspect that Gerry's Republican beliefs have been used against him. The students there voted by 450-50 for the acceptance of Gerry as a student, which is in accordance with the University Charter. This states that no student shall be barred

on the basis of their religious or political beliefs. As the President of the Union pointed out, another Maidstone prisoner, serving a life sentence for double murder was accepted, so why not McLaughlin? The Vice Chancellor has argued that there is only one year left on his sentence, so he would not be able to finish the course. The Students Union feel that this is a matter for Gerry to decide upon, which is obviously also the view of the Open University, who have accepted his application. A strong campaign has been launched at Kent, to make sure such discrimination does not succeed.

PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS

Please send cards to these prisoners who endure horrific conditions in English jails – often in isolation – so that they know they are not forgotten. Remember to use the number.

JAMES BENNETT
464989 HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight 4th Dec.

LIAM BAKER
464984 HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd., Market Harborough, Leics. LE16 7RP 6th Dec.

HUGH DOHERTY
338636 HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight 7th Dec.

NOEL GIBSON
879225 HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, London W12 0AE 11th Dec.

WILLIAM McLARON

119082 HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 5TZ 13th Dec.

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG

119085 HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight 26th Dec.

JAMES MURPHY

340235 HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 5TZ 8th Jan.

EDDIE O'NEILL

135722 HM Prison Hull, Hedon Rd., Hull, Yorkshire HU9 5LS 15th Jan.

JOE DUFFY

507952 HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight 19th Jan.

SHANE O'DOHERTY

336143 HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd., Market Harborough, Leics. LE16 9RP 25th Jan.

REVIEWS



Cormac Strikes Back: Resistance

Cartoons from the North of Ireland

Published by Information On Ireland, £2.50. In this excellent volume of Cormac's cartoons will be found the full range of his talents. His comic-strip, which appears weekly in *An Phoblacht*/Republican News, is both political and humorous. As a Belfast Republican himself, he conveys the ironies of the British occupation, as well as uncovering the truth behind British media myths. His flair for creating

different characters; some weird, some instantly recognisable, and their energetic commentaries give his cartoons timeless quality. The book itself covers such topics as the Labour party, the Peace People, the Catholic hierarchy, as well as the more obvious aspects of life in the North of Ireland. Information on Ireland have done a great job: from the stunning cover to the informative historical notes accompanying some of the cartoons. Be amused and enlightened all at once – buy it!

running in tandem on the principle channels, Robert Kee's *Television History* and Thames TV's *The Troubles*. Silence has been replaced by a growing willingness to turn the TV cameras on to Ireland. *Harry's Game*, shown for three nights at peak hours on ITV, is another marker in this direction.

In most successful cinema films set against a Northern Ireland background, such as *The Long Good Friday* or more recently *Angel*, 'the troubles' provide a violent context, but one without any political meaning. In both those films IRA violence intertwines inseparably with gang violence and by implication is equated with it. *Harry's Game*, a tight and racy thriller, at least did not do that. The IRA were clearly fighting the British Government and the Army, and both the IRA leaders and the British Prime Minister who ordered Harry on to his special mission know that military actions serve political purposes. Yet once the framework for the action has been established the politics fade from view and we are left with a gripping duel of wits between Army agent Harry and an IRA 'gunman'. The crux of the drama is personalised – the politics fade away. Once Harry is on the trail of Billy Downs the whys and wherefores become incidental. What more would one expect in a thriller?

Beyond that the message of the programmes was highly conventional – the IRA is run by Godfathers: their violence intimidates and uses everyone, including their own members. The British military machine is incompetent and arrogant at its upper-class top, and unhappy and occasionally brutal at its lower-class bottom. Both soldiers and terrorists are locked in a circle of violence, and in the end it destroys both Harry and Billy. But what does this circle of violence arise from? Why do the people of Ardoyne hate the soldiers so much? Why are so many of these Irish people 'terrorists'? In this type of TV drama these thoughts are irrelevant. TV 'cops and robbers' or 'soldiers and terrorists' are a TV convention, a convention that maintains and asks us to identify with the status quo. They don't provoke the viewer to question the underlying logic of the situations. Put Belfast into this framework and it's safely defused and depoliticised. *Harry's Game* shows that the formula works. We can expect more action adventures with a Northern Ireland background on our TV sets in the coming years.

ST, Cambridge TOM



Frightened For My Life

by Geoff Coggan and Martin Walker, Fontana £1.95

Support for the demand of Irish prisoners in English jails to be allowed to serve their sentences in Ireland has come in an important new book written by two members of PROP, the national prisoners' movement.

Among the calls made in the book is for 'The local or at any rate regional placing of prisoners so as to facilitate family links; i.e. an end to the inhumane imprisonment of Irish prisoners in English jails and of the regular use of distant allocations as a means of putting pressure on prisoners and their families.'

Frightened For My Life looks in detail at the deaths of seven prisoners. Between 1969 and 1980, 258 prisoners died in England and Wales from either unnatural causes or suicide. That is 37% of all deaths in prison, and even this staggering percentage is increasing.

Two of the seven cases examined in the book are Irish prisoners.

SEAN O'CONAHL died in 1977 after having lung cancer for eighteen months which was only diagnosed during the last months of his life. He 'had found no one to give him attention, except the other prisoners. His medication had consisted of painkillers and ointment to rub on his chest. He had been coughing blood for that time.'

GUISSEPPE CONLON (aged 51) was ill with TB when, in 1974, he travelled from Belfast to London to help his son Gerard, who had been wrongfully arrested for IRA bombings in Guildford and Woolwich. Giuseppe stayed at the Maguires' house in London, but it was raided by police and Giuseppe was arrested along with the Maguires (all innocent). Giuseppe was sentenced to twelve years for possession of explosives.

Giuseppe Conlon died in January 1980 after suffering medical neglect, prison brutality, being forced to do heavy work in prison workshops even though his TB had made him unfit for work for ten years prior to his arrest, and being punished in cold strip cells.

He 'never pretended to be a Republican prisoner, but he knew from the beginning of his ordeal that he would be a victim of English racism. During his arrest, his trial and throughout his incarceration, he never stopped protesting his complete innocence of any involvement in Republican military operations in England.'

Frightened For My Life is a powerful indictment of the British prison system, a system which locks up more people than anywhere in western Europe, and where prisoners are subjected to brutality, negligence and secrecy. The authors say, 'There are three crucial elements to the exposure of abuses inside prisons: prisoners' collective action, the determination of the prisoner's family, and external community support.'

'Everything else – MPs' questions, legal or civil liberties intervention, the European Court of Human Rights, television documentaries – is peripheral and secondary. Constant burning pressure must be applied from elsewhere if any of these are to be stirred into effective action.'

That lesson, learnt by the authors in the context of English prisons, has also been well learnt and tested in the struggles of political prisoners in H Block and Armagh.

Harry's Game

(Yorkshire TV – adapted from the novel by Gerald Seymour)

As recently as 1977, the TV companies were afraid to touch the sensitive issue of Northern Ireland. In that year a *Play for Today* was withdrawn from screening because the last scene featured a family receiving the news that their son had been shot while serving in the Army in Belfast. It was poor taste, they said, to give fictional treatment to such an unhappy subject. Since then, things have changed. The first breakthrough came with *Spearhead*, tales of everyday life of 'our boys' on the streets of Northern Ireland. Then came other plays and,



HERE IS THE NEWS

OCTOBER

20th An attempted bomb attack on James Molyneaux, head of the Official Unionist fails when the bomb does not explode. On election day the INLA plant a bomb outside Belfast's City Hall, which is exploded elsewhere. There are several hoax bomb warnings in the city. In S. Armagh British soldiers harass voters travelling in Sinn Fein organised buses. The poll is about 65%.

21st Election results give Sinn Fein 5 seats, and over 10% of the votes. [see p. 2]



Gerry Adams, first candidate to be elected in West Belfast. (Photo: Joanne O'Brien)

In 26 Cos. Haughey and Fianna Fail introduce economic plan to eliminate a budget deficit of £1,000 million. This means huge job losses, pay rises limited to 5% and massive cuts in health and education services.

Haughey's government later falls, on a vote of no confidence in the plan.

22nd

UDR sergeant kidnapped by IRA. Joseph Donegan, a Belfast catholic subsequently kidnapped by UVF [see p. 4]. Weekend negotiations attempted by Sinn Fein to mediate an exchange of two. Joseph Donegan found beaten to death on Monday. The body of UDR sergeant found later in the week.

23rd

Complete election results in 6 Counties:— Official Unionists: 26; Democratic Unionist Party: 21; SDLP: 14; Alliance: 10; Sinn Fein: 5; Independents: 2. A shaken Prior says he will go ahead with the Assembly and refuses to meet Sinn Fein 'members'.

24th

RUC shoot out with Army in Belfast. Plain-clothes soldiers mistaken for "terrorists".

Prior's continued statements about "cross-community support" anger loyalists, and appeases the British Labour Party.

25th

Peter Corrigan, a lifelong republican supporter and activist, shot dead in Armagh City by a loyalist gang calling themselves Protestant Action Force.

27th

An IRA landmine explosion near Lurgan, Co. Armagh kills 3 of RUC patrol.

29th

Eamon Farrell, a 16 yr-old from Belfast, missing since Wednesday, feared abducted by loyalists. His mother desperately pleads to replace him. [He later is found safe in London] Nicky Kelly's (IRSP) appeal dismissed in Supreme Court, Dublin.



HERE IS THE NEWS

30th-31st

Sinn Fein Conference [Ard Fheis] takes place in Dublin. Conference affirms the legitimacy of the armed struggle to achieve national liberation. Decides in favour of a (re)united Ireland rather than any federated states' solution and discusses programme for united, and socialist, Ireland.

NOVEMBER

1st

Latest victim of the RUC's attempt to turn detainees into informers — Ray Quigley, arrested in Derry. His wife and family subsequently taken from home and kept incommunicado from rest of family.

3rd

A British soldier seriously wounded in IRA ambush in Crossmaglen. On 7th IRA engage Army and RUC in ½ hr battle there.

8th

A catholic minibus driver hijacked in his bus by loyalists in Shankhill area of Belfast. Manages to flee for his life. He had only been working for the Social Services for a few months.

9th

It is confirmed that the Moyard estate in Belfast, built for displaced catholic families, where a young child died from a gastro-enteritis virus a few weeks ago, and another contracted polio, has basic design faults in its sewerage system. Doctors and community workers in area call for its demolition.

RUC policeman, and a civilian woman passenger die in IRA ambush in Enniskillen.

11th

Prior's Assembly opens.

Sean Burns, Gervais McKerr and Eugene Toman shot dead in Lurgan by volleys of RUC bullets. They were all unarmed and the car was known by RUC. Police reports state they accelerated away from a checkpoint, witnesses refute this. It seems more likely they have been shot in revenge for deaths of 3 RUC police on Oct. 27th. Gerry Adams (Sinn Fein Assembly member) describes RUC involved as "terrorists legal-

ised to kill in defence of a foreign power in Ireland". The SDLP demand a public enquiry and suspension of RUC involved. [see p. 3]

14th

IRA say that 3 men shot dead by RUC were volunteers. Senator Mallon (SDLP) calls the RUC an "irreformable, partisan force".

16th

2 RUC reservists shot dead by INLA in Armagh. Patrick Murphy, a catholic shopkeeper in E. Belfast, shot dead by loyalists in his shop. Lennie Murphy, the "Shankhill Butcher", shot in Belfast.

Prior takes trip to States in attempt to prevent further support for the IRA in the country. Says he is shocked that 5 men, apparently set up by the CIA, have been acquitted of arms sales to IRA.

17th

IRA claim responsibility for assassination of Lennie Murphy who they state was responsible for the murders of over 20 innocent nationalists in Belfast, and a number of protestants.

Seamus Mallon [SDLP] sees Lord Gowrie over investigation into deaths of Burns, McKerr and Tonan in Lurgan. He disapproves of investigation being carried out by RUC whose members killed them.

20th

Michael Fay, a Belfast catholic found dead in boot of car in Belfast. Protestant Action Force claim his murder.

22nd-24th

A racist cartoon depicting Irish community as fiends in London Standard condemned by Irish Ambassador. GLC decides to stop advertising in paper until it apologises to the Irish community. Standard, not surprisingly, defends its racism. [see p. 8]

24th

Youth of 17 shot dead, and companion seriously wounded, by RUC near Lurgan. RUC claims they were both armed. Anger in community at the murder. Arms later produced by RUC are 60 years old and useless.

INLA aim car-bomb attack on Belfast judge Watts for his "gross unfair activities in his court". Bomb spotted before it explodes.

Election day in 26 Cos.



Anti-abortion demonstration at Fine Gael's conference — Ireland's new government under pressure. (Photo: Joanne O'Brien)

EVENTS & RESOURCES

"ONE YEAR TO 1984" RESISTING THE BRITISH STATE

CONFERENCE AT
Caxton House, St. John's Way,
London N19
10.00-5.30 Dec. 11th
£2.00 waged £1.00 unwaged
Organised by the Troops Out
Movement

This Conference will discuss the British colonial experience and the British occupation of the North of Ireland. The tactics of successive British Governments in oppressing colonial peoples will be compared with those against Black people, national minorities and Trade Unionists resident here. The day starts with a film on the Kenyan independence struggle, after which Mary Nelis (Derry Relatives Action Committee) and Darcus Howe (Race Today Collective) will speak. Workshops on the Law, Media, Technology of Repression and Ex-Soldiers will be followed by a plenary session. Speakers from Ireland, the Black Community and the Trade Union Movement will end the Conference. The Social in the evening features Steel and Skin, The Holloway All Stars, Sheona Yorke and Others, at the same venue.

MANCHESTER LABOUR MOVEMENT DELEGATE CONFERENCE TO BAN PLASTIC BULLETS

Sessions: What is a plastic bullet? How is it used? The Northern Ireland context. With speakers from Ireland and Britain. Bar, refreshments, creche and evening social.

Saturday 26th February, 11.00am.
UMIST, Barnes Wallis Building,
Sackville St, Manchester 1

For more details: Box 15,
164/6 Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN

LEEDS

Leeds TOM Public Meeting with a relative of a plastic bullet victim from Ireland

Wed 12th January 8pm Trades Club, Savile Mount, Leeds 7

Sat 29th January: Ireland on Video, all day TOM video show in Leeds. Followed in the evening by a social. For details write to Leeds TOM, Box 1969, 59 Cookridge St., Leeds 2.

DEMONSTRATION

The Troops Out Movement is initiating a march on May 7th 1983 calling for: Britain Out of Ireland, and Self-Determination for the Irish People as a Whole.

If you wish to support this demonstration or want details, contact the TOM, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH

SHEFFIELD IRISH HISTORY COURSE

Organised by Sheffield TOM
Starting on Tuesday January 18th and
every Tuesday until March 22nd
7.30pm, Room 3107,
Sheffield City Polytechnic, Pond Street.

LONDON LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT

Against renewal of the
Prevention of Terrorism Act
February 16th.
Organised by the Connolly Association
Contact PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH
for further details.

LONDON DISCO

In Aid of the Anti-Amendment
Campaign

THE BELL, PENTONVILLE RD, N1
SUNDAY 19th DEC., 8.00pm
Women only

LONDON EXHIBITION OF PHOTOS AND PAINTINGS

Including a wall mural in the gallery executed by Beechmount Youth — one of the most prolific of the groups producing hundreds of murals in republican areas in Northern Ireland. The idea started during the hunger strike and has continued, with murals often being sponsored by trade unions, prisoners' welfare, women's groups etc.

Plus a slide show of 80 murals. Writings of prisoners in Armagh and Long Kesh Jails on the toilet paper and cigarette paper on which they were smuggled out. And photographs, collages and paintings by Duncan Smith.

At the Pentonville Gallery
46 Amwell St, London EC1
Jan 13th-Feb 5th
Tues-Fri 2-6, Sat 11-2

NEW PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Solidarity with the Irish people in 1983: calendar by Leeds TOM. 50p each inc. postage, or 10 for £2.50 inc. postage.

Scenes from the War Zone: photo of Belfast mural in solidarity with the PLO. 40p each inc. postage or £2.15 for 10 inc. postage.

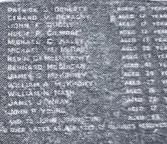
Both from Leeds TOM, Box 1969, 59 Cookridge St., Leeds 2.

Spirit of Freedom Christmas Cards, 10p each, 6 for 50p, 15 for £1.
From York TOM, Shelf 4, 73 Walmgate, York.

BLOODY SUNDAY

The murders of 14 unarmed demonstrators by the British Army in Derry 1972, will be commemorated on 30 January in Leeds. It is remembered annually as both an atrocity and a significant turning point in the recent history of the North of Ireland.

The notorious Parachute Regiment shot the fourteen civilians on what was one of many marches for civil rights in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Basic rights to housing, employment and voting had been denied to the catholic minority since the Partition of Ireland in 1921. By 1968, when the rest of Western Europe was enjoying a comparatively high standard of living, this discrimination could no longer be tolerated. However, no significant reforms were offered by the Loyalist Stormont government of the time; instead the RUC and Loyalist groups resisted the passage of these marches to the extent that street battles ensued. After the British troops were sent in to 'keep the Monument to those who were killed, erected in Derry 1974.



Nick Oakes

peace', draconian measures were introduced to prevent further protests by the catholic minority. It was against these measures — internment of hundreds without trial or charge and banning of all demonstrations — as well as for civil rights, that a demonstration was called on 30 January 1972 in Derry. It was into a crowd of demonstrators, who were fleeing from water cannons and CS gas, that the Parachute Regiment shot live rounds. As a result, fourteen people died. The resultant public uproar was quietened by a Government inquiry, under Lord Widgery, which itself attempted to cover-up the real story. The Army claimed that they had fired at snipers in the local flats; yet not one of the dead were carrying arms, and all witnesses denied having seen or heard guns other than those of the Army. Widgery remarked: "...firing bordered on the reckless", whilst contradicting himself by saying: "there was no general breakdown in discipline". The daily newspapers, selective as ever, claimed that Widgery had cleared the Army of blame, and no soldier was ever prosecuted. In fact, Colonel Wilford, who had commanded the Paras on that day, received an OBE for his work. It was left to Derry City Coroner, Mr. O'Neill to state the obvious horrific fact that it was "sheer unadulterated murder."