

TROOPS OUT



OF IRELAND

Vol. 12 No.9
July 1989

50P

Twenty

Demonstrate

bloody

August 12th

years

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 peace keeping force, but in order to maintain British rule, and that their presence is the most serious obstacle to any progress towards peace. Ever since 1969 the troops have been occupying a part of Ireland, coercing and oppressing the nationalist people, maintaining the division of Ireland and ensuring that its people cannot unite to determine their own future.

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

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

APPEAL

The Troops Out Movement has been campaigning for the withdrawal of troops for almost as long as they have been deployed in the six counties. In this twentieth year of troops on the streets we need support more than ever in order to fight for Troops Out Now and Self - Determination for Irish People as a Whole. Please send a donation to support our Year of Action to the address below.

JOINING TROOPS OUT

If you would like to join the Troops Out Movement in campaigning for a British withdrawal from Ireland you can do so in a number of ways.

- ★ Join a local branch and get involved in activities in your area.
- ★ Become a national member of Troops Out and we will keep you posted of developments, send you our discussion bulletins and inform you about national events. You will also automatically get a sub to 'Troops Out'.
- ★ If there is no local branch near you we can help you form one. We can provide videos, speakers, leaflets and advice about booking rooms etc.

National membership is £12 (includes sub to paper) Unwaged £8

'TROOPS OUT' SUBSCRIPTION



Why worry where your next copy of Troops Out is coming from when you can have it delivered to your door. A Troops Out subscription will ensure that every month you receive the news and analysis of Britain's war in Ireland.

If you know anyone who is having difficulty getting a copy of Troops Out why not suggest they take a subscription as well.

The rate for 10 issues is £7. If you would like to further support the struggle against misinformation on Ireland you can take out a 'supporters subscription' at a rate of £10 £15 or £20.

**TROOPS OUT
OF IRELAND**

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Donations: ☐ Membership: £12 ☐ £8 ☐

Paper subscription: £7 ☐ £10 ☐ £15 ☐ £20 ☐

SEND DETAILS AND PAYMENTS TO:

TOM: PO BOX 353, LONDON NW5 4NH

Page 2 Troops Out, July 1989

Contents

Army assaults	4
Goldmining	5
Gerry Kelly	6
Womens' News	7
Emergency legislation	8
Elections	9
Gaelic revival	10
Hunger Strikes	12
Leeds meeting	15
Time To Go show	16
Brent bans Sinn Fein	16
Namibia	17
Letters	18
One day at a time	19

Troops Out is now available on tape for people with sight disabilities. For further details write to P.O. Box 817, Camp Hill, Birmingham B11 4AF. or telephone: 021 773 8683/021 551 3166

Troops Out Paper

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

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

All correspondence for Troops Out (the paper) and for the Troops Out Movement should be sent to:
PO Box 353
London, NW5 4NH

Copy for the August/September issue should reach us no later than Monday 24th July.

Typeset by UNIDELL LTD. (TU) 01-241 2259
printed by BLACKROSE PRESS 01-251 3043

TROOPS OUT

OF IRELAND



August demonstration

Twenty years after the reoccupation of Ireland by the British Army, the Irish people despite facing pogroms, assassination squads and massacres at the hands of the British State, refuse to abandon their struggle for self-determination. They are a risen people, they know that they are right and they know they will win.

Yet, the British State attempts a 'military' solution to a political problem. Only freedom from British Imperialism will end the war. Until the British State is forced to accept this the Irish people will continue to need the support of democrats in Britain.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the reoccupation, the British Labour and withdrawal movement will demonstrate on August 12th around the slogan of "British Withdrawal from Ireland-Time To Go".

The Troops Out Movement will be mobilising support for the March around the slogan of Self-Determination for the Irish people as a whole and call for withdrawal of British Troops.

This is the message of solidarity we will be taking to the people of Belfast on the annual Troops Out delegation in August. It will be supported by the Anti Imperialist organizations who attend the delegation and by those who demonstrate in London.

In recognising the principle of self-determination the Troops Out Movement does not seek to impose the form of British withdrawal from Ireland or to interfere by creating residual structures in Ireland itself to 'facilitate' withdrawal. This is a matter for the Irish people to decide.

Paratroop thugs

A 29 year old West Belfast man claims he was attacked by two members of a para foot patrol on 9th May and later had his life threatened by another British soldier.

Edward Jervis was on his way home at 12.30 am when he was set upon by a number of paratroopers on the Springfield Road. *"One of them grabbed me by the lapels and said to me, 'What about Derry?'. I thought he was talking about the football team and said it was nice to see it. He started to punch me about the face. My mouth began to bleed profusely. I grabbed onto his flak jacket and I heard another guy behind shouting for him to pull me into the entry. Then I felt another blow to my arms. I began screaming until two local men came to the scene. They shouted at the soldiers to leave me alone. They dropped me like a hot potato and ran."*

The two men, who both live near Mr Jervis, carried him home semi-conscious and called an ambulance. Mr Jervis was taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital. The RUC at Springfield told him over the phone that they couldn't come down to take his statement. An angry Mr Jervis signed himself out against doctor's orders and made his way to Springfield Road barracks, where he made a complaint.

The following night Mr Jervis was stopped by a patrol in the same area. *"One of them asked me if I was making a complaint against one of his colleagues. He said if I did, I wouldn't be able to stand up to tell the tale. Then he told me to get offside or get four in the head. This was a different regiment from the one that assaulted me. I've worked as a nurse at Musgrave Park for eleven years and I haven't had so much as a parking ticket, now all this happens in the space of two days."*

(Info from Andersonstown News)

Royal Anglian Regiment on the rampage

A series of incidents in the last month have indicated that the Royal Anglian Regiment is determined to finish its tour of duty in the north of Ireland with plenty of blood on its hands.

Most of the attacks have occurred in and around the Regiment's operational area of West Belfast.

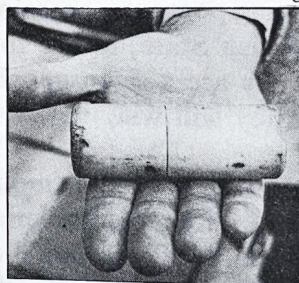
In one incident a woman, hearing that her son was being beaten, approached a group of soldiers who promptly fired a plastic bullet gun at her from a distance of only 3 yards. The bullet hit her in the chest and resulted in several days in hospital with severe bruising. She was told she was lucky to be alive. Her son and three other people were also injured by rifle butts and plastic bullets. All required hospital treatment and stitches to their hands and faces.

In another incident a young engineer leaving his workplace was set upon by soldiers from the Anglian Regiment when he objected to having his car searched without witnesses present. His injuries included a suspected fractured skull and hand, gashes to the head and extensive bruising to the whole body - caused mainly by rifle butts.

Scarred for life

Perhaps the most serious assault

concerned a young 19 year old West Belfast man, Patrick Docherty. He was walking to the local Chinese take-away when a passing patrol of the Anglians fired plastic bullet guns at point blank range. Patrick was hit in the face, suffering horrific injuries. The bullet broke his lower jaw bone in two, smashed his cheek bone and knocked out nine teeth. The wound required 70 stitches and will leave scars for life. Patrick's mother said of the incident *"It's all very hard to take. He's a very quiet boy and he doesn't get into any trouble. It makes me angry that a boy can't even walk a couple of yards round the corner without something*



Plastic bullets for UDR

Twenty years of British troops in Ireland have done nothing but perpetuate the conflict and confirm the strength of resistance. Some take this as proof that Britain should get out, but British occupiers in the meantime seem to favour a different 'solution', if not a novel one: increased repression. This year has seen a policy of increased attacks on the nationalist community with, for instance, the greater use of blanket house raids. Now it has been announced that the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) are to be issued with plastic bullets. Training of UDR soldiers in their use has already begun, and it is expected that they will be given the bullets when their training is complete.

So far, only the British Army and RUC have had plastic bullets. The UDR are not deployed in nationalist urban heartlands, and do not take part in 'riot control',

which is dealt with jointly by the RUC and British Army. The UDR are a direct descendant of the notorious B-Specials: of their 6,500 soldiers, only 3,000 are full-time. If we take into account that it is also the most sectarian of all three armed forces, recruiting almost exclusively from the loyalist population, this makes it basically an anti-Catholic militia for part-time enthusiasts. It has been called "ill-disciplined", and this roughly translates as "habitually carrying out vicious and sectarian attacks on nationalists".

Since their introduction in 1973, plastic bullets have killed 16 people, of whom six were school children. They are not supposed to be fired at the head or chest, but in practice they are, and in the hands of a sectarian militia like the UDR they will obviously become yet another lethal weapon, one which can be used more

terrible like this happening."

When Patrick Docherty was released from hospital he went to make a formal complaint at the RUC barracks. He was arrested and held for 23 hours before being released with the threat of being charged with fraud and attempted kidnapping of a British soldier.

In a separate incident, two soldiers from the Royal Anglian Regiment have been charged with hijacking a car near their base. Both soldiers were in civilian clothes at the time and were armed. Local people are suspicious and fearful of the motive for the armed hijack, given their recent experiences of the Royal Anglians.

British Bulldogs

The escalation of brutality seems to be part of a pattern whereby visiting British regiments vie with each other for notoriety. As their 'tour' comes to an end this macabre 'game' intensifies as each regiment tries to leave a bloodier 'mark on Belfast'. It is sickening that while public opinion in Britain is whipped into a lather about dogs biting babies the carnage wreaked by British soldiers on the ordinary people of West Belfast goes unnoticed.

frequently and less controversially than lead bullets, but to similar effect.

In some ways this seems like just another detail in the military escalation in the Six Counties, yet another round in the cynical attempt to reduce 'violence', i.e. the war, to 'acceptable levels'. But it must also be seen in the context of the increasing military saturation of rural nationalist areas such as South Armagh. It may also indicate a planned change of strategy, although the army has claimed that the operational role of the regiment will remain the same. Since the British Army is reported to be facing a manpower crisis, the UDR may well be scheduled for an extended role, at least as an emergency back-up force for the flagging Brits, and possibly as a reassertion of the largely failed Ulsterisation policy.

Going for gold - at any price

Have you heard about the Irish gold mines? It might sound like the begining of a racist joke, but the prospect of mineral mining on the west coast of Ireland has a bitter punch-line for people in Mayo and Connemara.

The invitation for foreign capital to enter the Irish economy after the 2nd World War led to some development of the national mining industry. Discoveries of lead, copper and zinc deposits laid low the myth that Ireland was devoid of mineral resources. In 1970, extraction began at Navan of one of the largest lead deposits in Europe. Economic crisis ripped through the mining industry in the seventies and communities were left to pick up the pieces in many areas as the mining companies took the money and ran.

Recent rises in the price of gold on the international market have brought them back in force to the west of Ireland in search of the fast punt.

No protection

The enviromental pressure group, Mining Awareness, says that 19 companies hold prospecting licences in the Westport area of Mayo alone. They range from Feltrim mining, directed by Taoiseach's (Prime Minister) son Conor Haughey, to the multi-national Rio Tinto Finance and Exploration. Existing Irish law offers little protection to local Irish communities from impacts of mining. Local planning authorities cannot be forced to insist on an enviromental impact assessment.

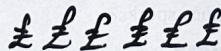
The concentration of gold within the deposits is thought to be low and there is no safe or clean way for getting at it. Both open cast and tunnel mining involve heavy plant machinery and create heaps of crushed ore, noise and dust.

It is very likely that the leaching of residual deposits of base metal from the ore will involve the use of cyanide. At a recent meeting in Dublin, the Chairman of one of the interested companies in Mayo, Burmin Exploration, justified the potential use of the chemical by saying that such processes are already safely located in areas of outstanding natural beauty on the continent.

This company has already left scars across the sides of Croagh Patrick mountain in its exploration activity. It has also managed to poison the local water supply with diesel and silt before an ounce of gold has been mined.

Pollution

Modern mining processes leave 'trailings' which constitute the slurry remains. Such residual muck is retained in large settlement 'ponds' for disposal. At Tynagh mines where silver, zinc, lead and copper have been extracted for relatively short periods, the tailings were disposed in huge ponds created within 15ft high ditches. The residue has directly resulted in the death of farm animals and wildlife. Two thousand acres of land surrounding the mines have now been polluted to some extent by wind blown dust from the tailings. Tynagh mines owners, The Irish Base Metals Company have refused to sign any deed committing them to the restoration of land in the area.



The spectre of cyanide is the most feared consequence of the extraction process. But residual tailings in South Africa and Zimbabwe have been found to contain arsenic and lead while uranium, cadmium and asbestos are substances which could find a way into local water courses.

The areas on the west of

Ireland where exploration licences have been granted are heavily dependent on agriculture, mariculture and tourism for individual livelihoods. While Irelands politicians chase their tails, the possibility of poisoned farmlands, lethal drinking water, rubble filled landscapes and rivers teeming with dead fish has not settled well with local people. Over 3000 attended a recent meeting in Westport addressed by David Bellamy, where evocations of the spirit of the Land League days were common.

Historical legacy

The Irish economist, Raymond Crotty, consistently argues that the workings of the Republics economy are rooted in the history of English colonialism. The economy exists to serve and benefit individualistic interests established under colonialism which operate without reference to the benefit of local society. As in all post-colonial societies the economy attracts 'dirty' industries, heavily linked to the operation of multi-national subsidiaries. Such industries are capital intensive and generate few jobs.

Klondyke fever in the west of Ireland would seem to fit Crotty's description. In Mayo, Burmin expect to create up to 50 jobs while the mining site is being developed. But they fail to say what will become of these people once the mine is in operation and machinery takes over, or in the event of falling gold prices. The whole ugly business is being opposed by local people in an area where the enviroment is their greatest natural resource.

Bob Hillside

Far right, far out

DUP spokesman Rev. William Beatie, a candidate in the Durmurray Cross ward, has called for curfews in areas such as Poleglass and Twinbrook, large nationalist estates in Belfast. The Lisburn councillor, well known for his opposition to the Poleglass estate, insisted, "nothing else short of the elimination of the IRA will suffice".

He said, "Curfews in terrorist areas, identity cards and a sophisticated border operation, all of these additional measures must be backed up by capital punishment and tougher sentences, including seletive internment of the godfathers of terror. Those known terrorists must be watched and monitored and then ambushed with deadly effect. We need more dead terrorists, not more dead victims of terrorism."

Council or Circus?

Former city councillor and SDLP candidate in the Lower Falls area of Belfast, Mary Muldoon, has hit out at the "arrogance and antics" of the present Belfast City Council.

She said, "People in every part of the city feel let down and cheated by the shabby little circus act that has been going on in the city hall for the past four years. Voters have a right to expect that the councillors they elect will actually get together to do some work on their behalf, rather than posturing and point-scoring."

THE CHAIRMAN OF VERMIN MINING ISSUES A STATEMENT



Gold mining will bring wealth to people in the West of Ireland



Jobs will be created in ..err.. hospitals...and err stone sculpture



And after mining ceases the land will become a conservation area!

'Crime' watch

Two men have been convicted in Belfast of the murder of two British soldiers at a republican funeral on March 18th 1988. Alex Murphy (31) and Harry Maguire (29) were sentenced to life, and judge Hatton recommended that both serve at least 25 years.

There can be no doubt that this is a show trial, a piece of propaganda for the home front and intimidation for Irish nationalists. The trial of these first two defendants lasted 32 days and cost the British state £2 million. The court was kitted out with sophisticated video and TV equipment, and the prosecution case consisted of the selective showing of film and video stills and photographs. These included an unauthenticated French video showing a man alleged to be Maguire in a taxi supposedly bringing the soldiers to the place where they were shot.

Both the prosecution and the judge admitted that the "damning photographic evidence" was of indistinct quality. Nevertheless, in their determination to punish Irish people for daring to act in their collective defence, their lack of evidence was the last thing to deter the British from handing out massive sentences.

29 nationalists are to be charged in all, the next five of whom have just begun their trials. One of them, John Lennon (63), suffered a heart attack after the first day, but unlike celebrity Ken Dodd, he is being allowed no respite.

Prisoners birthdays

Please remember to send birthday greetings to Irish prisoners in English jails. Let them know they are not forgotten and make sure you use the number.

Prisoners Birthdays

17th July
BRIAN KEENAN B26380
HMP Leicester, Walford Rd,
Leicester LE2 7AJ

23rd July
THOMAS QUIGLEY B69204
HMP Parkhurst, Newport,
Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX

12th August
PAUL KAVANAGH L31888
HMP Full Sutton, York YO4 1PS

Page 6 Troops Out, July 1989

POW released

The release of Gerry Kelly from Long Kesh last month was an acute political embarrassment for the British Government.

Kelly was serving a long sentence for IRA activities when he escaped from the H-Blocks in the mass breakout of 1983. He was eventually arrested in Holland and, after a protracted legal battle, extradited back to the north of Ireland.

The deal struck with the authorities in Holland received

little public attention at the time. The British state was keen simply to trumpet another IRA capture. In fact the Dutch authorities would only allow his return to stand trial for an alleged offence committed during the actual escape. They recognised his previous record to be politically motivated, and were refusing to return him unless these 'offences' were effectively wiped off the record.

Kelly's subsequent trial in

the north of Ireland resulted in a sentence of 5 years. The 50% remission earned by prisoners in the north at the time of his sentence (it has since been reduced to 33%) led to his release on June 2nd.

The predictable 'media-outrage' that greeted his release served to obscure the fact that another foreign state had openly challenged the British version of events in Ireland and recognised the political struggle of the IRA.

International News

Another case of 'Time To Go'

On March 19th '89, I was one of the 4,500 women who, with white flags and banners proclaiming "we come in peace", set out to cross the illegal 'Green Line' which has divided Cyprus and it's people since the Turkish invasion of 1974.

The event, named 'Women Walk Home' was not a demonstration 'against the north' as reported in The Guardian on Monday March 20th, but against the occupation and partition of Cyprus by Turkish troops.

In many countries it was given top billing on television news programmes; in Cyprus the media was unanimously wholehearted in it's support of 'the walk'; in Britain it scarcely got a mention, apart from in the previously mentioned 'Eyewitness' account, where Leslie Plommer described it as a "blow for peace".

Ms Plommer was at Achna; I too was there, and can only agree with the Cypriot press when they called her account "prejudiced and negative". Her report talks about "angry counter-demonstrations by Turkish-Cypriot women". As an eyewitness myself I saw groups of Turkish-Cypriots, mainly men, who, for the most part, stood

watching us in silence. I saw three Turkish-Cypriot girls break through the line of soldiers to present flowers to an elderly Greek-Cypriot woman; I saw a Turkish-Cypriot man break away from his group to tell a Greek-Cypriot woman how he too had been dispossessed of his home by the Turkish troops; I saw another run forward to shake the hand of one of the women as she passed by. Are these the 'rival communities' of which Ms Plommer speaks?

Arrests

Turkish-Cypriot police were given the task of arresting some of the women while the troops stood back. Later, while waiting for further orders to release them, policewomen had long, friendly conversations with their captives, catching up on the news of old friends and families not seen since '74. One of the arrested women, Eleni Mollison, said to me, "We have been taught to fear and hate

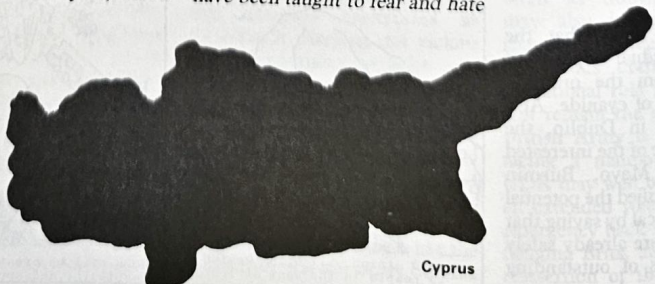
each other, but as soon as we get the chance to speak together, it becomes obvious that of course we can live in peace, if only given the chance".

"Only 200 foreign women arrived to join the march" says Ms Plommer. And here I would ask...why was Britain not represented by MP's and MEP's as were other countries? Is it not on our agenda? Has our apparent lack of interest something to do with NATO? With British Bases on Cyprus? With airstrips in the occupied North? The strategic position of Cyprus is of considerable importance; does it suit Britain to maintain the status quo?

Ms Plommer ends her article in The Guardian... "while such protests bill themselves as peaceful, they heighten the sort of tension which could beget real violence."

I end mine...When foreign troops are used to keep a country divided on the pretext that they are preventing 'rival communities' from tearing each other apart...When governments who are involved refuse to listen to the voices of the people...that is when patience could run out.

Maria Tolly



NEWS FROM WOMEN

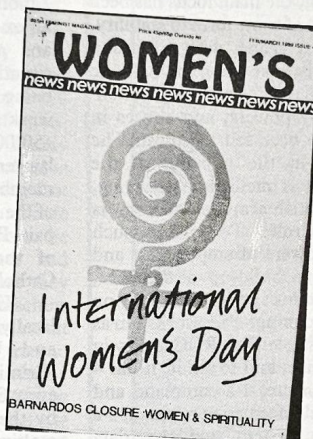
'Women's News' Magazine

Previous issues of *Troops Out* have emphasised the difficulties faced by women on both sides of the border in the reactionary states created by partition. As the Right flourishes throughout Europe, feminists in all countries are facing hard times and tightening belts in many ways. The following article describes the struggle for survival and continuing progress made by *Women's News*, Ireland's only feminist paper, which despite a lack of resources remains a publication to be envied by feminists anywhere.

Women's News is a feminist paper which is produced monthly in Belfast. The paper was founded in March, 1984 with a £50 grant from the Community Services department of the City Council, which covered the initial printing costs. Since then the paper has been self-financing, relying on sales and subscriptions for income, with the exception of several small one-off grants. All the women who, throughout the years, have worked on the paper have done so on a voluntary basis, and in five years that amounts to a lot of voluntary labour, time and energy, which is a measure of the importance women place on the production of *Women's News*.

The first issue of *Women's News* stated that "a small group of women decided to launch a paper for women which would publicise events, provide a space for views and opinions, and allow groups to let other women know what's happening.....to develop a forum for communication... so that a strong movement of women will be created". At this stage the policy of the paper was very open: "our only criteria for contributions is that they are written by women and that they do not contain anything which would be offensive to women".

This open editorial policy was called into question by readers in issue 4 of the paper, produced in Summer of 1984, with the publication of two and a half pages of letters from readers referring to five different articles which women had felt were not in line with the proposed policy. The collective disagreed with the criticisms, but to allow contributors to respond we printed a statement in the same issue reiterating the open policy, but included a 'right to reply



clause'. Throughout the five years of *Women's News* history, the editorial policy of the paper has been called into question and debated many times. During the past year it was deemed necessary to clarify the policy to affirm to our readership that the collective is feminist in outlook and encourages contributions which complement that experience.

The kind of response which was stimulated in the first 4 issues of the paper is a continuing characteristic of *Women's News*. Issues frequently debated in the paper include the situation of women within the national liberation struggle, abortion, sexuality, the rights and wrongs of promoting women only events. All these topics and more have been openly discussed within the pages of *Women's News*.

For the first two years of publication, most of the work involved in producing *Women's News* was conducted in the front room of a collective member's house. Much to the delight of the collective in March 1986, Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust awarded *Women's News* a start-

up grant to establish a permanent office and resource centre for the paper's production. Our premises in Donegall Street became the "co-ordinating centre" for the collective and allowed much more flexibility for the expansion of *Women's News* activities.

Within a few months the office had been established as a major contact centre for women throughout Belfast and is now internationally known. A small grant enabled the collective to establish a lending library and resource centre which is continually expanding.

Having the office facilities has contributed to the developing role of *Women's News* within the women's movement in Ireland. The collective has been responsible for facilitating and co-ordinating the Belfast International Women's Day Planning Committee which organises a wide range of women only events in March. We have initiated several exchange visits from our present subscribers, not to mention the continuing commitment from the women who produce the paper. So if you

and skill sharing weekends with women in the twenty six countries, promoted women's live entertainment and sponsored women only events in Belfast.

Women's News continues to operate on a shoe string budget but manages to remain viable by organising fund raising events such as discos, pub quizzes, parties and in one instance a sponsored cycle to Dublin and back! This extra revenue has allowed the recent purchase of a computer, tape recorder and an answering machine - basically the bare necessities required to produce a paper!

This is a bad time for women's publications and publishers. Women's alternative media is under attack and subjected to pressures which are a direct result of a general wave of conservatism and repressive backlash throughout Europe. The survival of *Women's News* is dependent on an increasing readership and continued support feel like offering your support why not send off for a subscription now? Details below.

Please make cheques payable to: *Women's News* and send to: *Women's News*, 185 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1.

RATES:	N. IRELAND/BRITAIN	EIRE/EUROPE	OVERSEAS
LOW/UNWAGED	£6.00	£7.00	
ORDINARY	£8.00	£9.00	£15.00
WOMEN'S GROUPS			
SUPPORTING SUB	£10.00	£12.00	
INSTITUTIONS	£20.00	£22.00	£25.00

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....



Twenty years of 'emergency'

Colin O'Brien looks at how the legal apparatus of the Six Counties has been drawn into the containment of the political conflict.

The article is based on a chapter by Paddy Hillyard in *'Justice Under Fire'* published by Pluto Press. In the book leading radical lawyers and academics explore the political consequences of the administration of justice in the six counties.

Ireland's history, through 800 years of British Imperialism, has seen various forms of emergency legislation used repeatedly by the British State and very serious abuses in the operation of this emergency legislation. This is particularly true of the last 20 years in the 6 counties when armed resistance to the British presence re-emerged, creating an increase in politically inspired violent acts, which resulted in the introduction of new strategies and emergency laws to cope with the situation. The overall effect of all the emergency legislation, from internment without trial, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), the Emergency Powers Act (EPA), no-jury Diplock courts, and supergrass convictions has been to attempt to de-politicise the political nature of the armed opposition to British rule, to make it a 'law and order' issue. It is under these circumstances that the process of 'Ulsterisation', 'Normalisation' and 'Criminalisation', which have had very serious social and political effects, were introduced in the 6 counties.

The RUC computer has 5 times the capacity of the Metropolitan Police system for a population 1/5 of the size.

Emergency legislation is introduced in an effort to 'improve' the administration of justice, to uphold the rule of law. But the law, especially in the 6 counties, is inseparable from profound political divisions. Who benefits from solving the political deadlock? One thing is certain, the British State and the supporters of Unionism have made no attempt to solve it as they have their own interests at heart. They get around addressing the political problems of a section of the population, by making the whole issue a 'law and order' one.

The 6 county State is no more than a garrison state. The imposition of 'law and order' has meant substantial military force, in terms of sheer numbers and the policies adopted. The law in the 6 counties is characterised by the extent of the use of force to maintain order, and the maintenance of law and order, 'at all costs' says that there must be something fundamentally wrong with that State. In the period from 1969-89 the security forces have consisted of between 28,000 to 33,000 members, about 80% being in a full-time capacity. At the outbreak of the present troubles the RUC numbered 11,600 of whom

only 25% were full time. The total number of RUC, UDR and British army means that in the 6 counties for every 69 people there is a full-time member of the security forces. The day-to-day effects of this number of armed troops and police on the streets, mostly in the Catholic areas, is enormous.

Colonial experience

In terms of policing, the main focus has been on the maintenance of some form of stability, rather than policing crime, with the group that is 'guilty' of disorder being the Catholic community. It is on this 'suspect population' that the emergency powers, and abuses in these powers, have been felt the most. The primary element in the policing of the Catholic community is intelligence gathering, a technique the British army learnt from its colonial policing role. To gather such information the powers of stop, arrest and search are used to build-up a database, initially on a card index system, but lately on very sophisticated computer networks, on as many people as possible. The RUC is now in charge of intelligence, and to aid it, it has 4 computer based systems; 1-a command and control; 2-a criminal information retrieval; 3-a criminal statistics system and 4-a data reference centre, all of which can be cross referenced and immediately available to all of the RUC's 38 sub-divisions at the touch of a button. In terms of capacity, the Command and control section, alone, has 5 times the capacity of the one for the Metropolitan Police, which policies a population 5 times that of the 6 counties. As well as policing by intelligence gathering, other elements are used such as planning. Housing estates and road systems are all now designed in order to aid in the policing of particular areas.

On the question of the legitimacy of stop, search and arrest, this has another aspect apart from gathering information. It is to constantly and systematically harass the suspect population, to frighten them and hopefully (for the forces of the state) to stop them getting involved in any reaction to the British presence. The same goes for house searches. Figures are now available which show the numerical effect is the likelihood of harassment, of such policies. In the period 1975-86 under section 14 of the EPA there were 30,444 arrests by the army, and in the period 1978-86 the RUC made 13,835 arrests under section 11 and 13 of the EPA. The total for the period 1971-86, allowing for double counting results in a total of 50,000 arrests, just under the emergency laws. In terms of target population, the RUC see the Catholic,

male group, 16-44 years old as the major suspects. Thus from the figures 25% of all this group have been arrested. In terms of house searches, in the period 1971-86 a total of 338,803 house searches were conducted, with 170,000 houses) this means that each house has been searched twice in 15 years.

A major irregularity in the make-up of the legal system which leads to a lack of faith by Catholics, is in the class and political make-up of the system in the 6 counties. The law reproduces an enhanced Unionist majority and hence its interests. For example 15 out of 20 High Court Judges appointed since the independent Northern Ireland courts were introduced, have links with the Unionist party. The same is the case with the County Court appointments with 14 of 23 linked. Among the 12 resident magistrates there are an ex-Unionist MP, an ex-Unionist Senator and a defeated Unionist candidate. The situation in the RUC is worse with only 5% being of Catholic origin. Also payments for work in the courts are high e.g. more than £50,000 for a judge, £100,000 for criminal lawyers and an excess of £15,000 for full-time members of the RUC. So the characteristics of the legal profession of predominantly well-paid Protestants, contrast with the majority of the defendants ie poor, unemployed Catholics.

'Ulsterisation', the policy of making the locally based security forces such as the RUC and UDR responsible for security; 'Criminalisation', changing the emphasis away from the political nature of the 'crime' by the abolition of special category status, making hitherto political crimes now criminal; and 'Normalisation' whereby the policies of law such as the PTA and EPA become mainstream legislation; are all used to cover up the fact that life in the 6 counties is far from normal. Also by allowing a single judge to decide a 'criminals' future further de-politicises the individual. The effect of these strategies is to hoodwink the public into thinking that something is being done and that the situation will improve when the policies take effect.

For every 69 people there is a full-time member of the security forces.

This begs an answer to the question, do the emergency powers create more political violence? The powers have certainly not stopped it, as the armed struggle has continued since these powers have been introduced. Policies such as internment without trial consolidated support for the IRA and in terms of political support, the Hunger Strikes for the re-introduction of special category status for political crimes, created mass support and led to electoral success. The policies are not primarily aimed at political violence, they are an attempt to stop any questioning, to intimidate the voices of

law

disapproval and to contain the discontent to nationalist circles.

Abuse policy

In his article Paddy Hillyard discusses the prospects for change. He concedes that some abuses are about over-zealous individuals in the security forces but asserts that the abuses are generally a deliberate policy measure made in the highest ranks of Government and army and police. Parliament has got all-party support for these emergency measures and laws, and has to take the responsibility for institutionalising undemocratic processes and for the abuse of basic human rights in the 6 counties. All the so called safeguards set in the system, such as the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Northern Ireland Police Authority, have all failed to stop the abuses. But why? They are all weak and useless, because they are meant to be, they are a measure to quieten liberal opposition leaving only those directly affected by the abuses and their supporters. The failure of non-governmental organisations, which Paddy Hillyard discusses, such as the legal profession has not done anything, the reason being that it has a vested interest in the situation. There is money to be made and reputations to be won. The Catholic community has had limited impact. Why? This is because they are up against the whole propaganda machine of the state; deaths by plastic bullets result from protesting and strip searching tries to intimidate women from political activity.

Hillyard goes on to discuss what can be done about the abuses. He does say that the British strategy is built on the cultivation of an unequal balance of forces, weighted against the Catholic community and that as long as Northern Ireland remains on the political backburner, the British Government doesn't have to do anything except cover up the abuses and put the blame elsewhere. It is a sure fact that nothing will change if a Labour Government is elected as they have administered the control of the 6 counties from 1969-70 and from 1974-79 and have horrendous record on the human rights abuses.

The effects of emergency legislation, changes in laws, and new measures all have social and political effect which are recognised and accepted by the state. They know exactly what they are doing, they have learnt from the 6 counties and put their knowledge to their use in putting down the miners, harassment of women at Greenham, increasing the powers of the police under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and The Public Order Act, bringing in laws to make strikes nearly impossible. The state now uses the criminal law and the agencies of law and order to deal with dissent.

Thus it can be seen that the only thing to do is to expose the state for what it is, a body that uses its power to put ordinary people down. Its abuses in the 6 counties provide a long, damning list, one which is even now being added to.

Belfast Comment

Democracy is a wonderful thing it is true. But you know what they say about too much of a good thing! In the context of our partitioned/gerrymandered island we have been having more than our share of democracy (well of elections anyway) recently. In May we had local government elections in the north. In June, along with the rest of Europe, EEC elections were held both north and south. June also presented us with a general election in the south and with elections to Udras na Gaelteacht in the Gaelteacht areas. Democracy can be very tiring at times!

Elections, particularly in the north of Ireland, are said to be very devious affairs. But recently they have had an amazingly unifying effect, among certain sections anyway. All sections of the establishment, British and Irish, Unionist and (constitutional) Nationalists, Churches, media, RUC and British army, all united in an attempt to minimise the Sinn Fein vote. This time was no different.

In the north Sinn Fein workers were beaten up by the British Army, attacked and shot at by loyalists and treated with blatant hostility by many media hacks. In the south the media all but ignored Sinn Fein. The ban on broadcasting under section 31 of the broadcasting act was still enforced during the election campaign so that Sinn Fein candidates unable to put their views directly to the electorate were put at a serious disadvantage compared to other parties. At the same time blatantly scurrilous and unfounded accusations leveled against them by other parties could not be answered.

At the end of the day however Sinn Fein managed to increase or hold its vote in the key areas that it targeted; in west Belfast Sinn Fein saw a 6.4% rise in their share of the poll in the local government elections and in the same election they outpolled every other party, except the Official Unionists, in the unionist stronghold of Belfast. In Cavan-Monaghan and Dublin Central the Sinn Fein percentage increased in the general election, and there were smaller increases in several other of the constituencies.

In addition several other candidates standing on a broadly republican platform put in very plausible showings, notably Father Patrick Ryan who polled over 30,000 votes in Munster in the EEC election.

All that having been said however, it has to be acknowledged that overall in these elections there was a drop in the total number of votes cast for Sinn Fein. Also, in the south there was a significant increase in votes for the 'left', in the guise of the Labour Party, the Workers Party and the Greens. What then do these results represent for Sinn Fein and for the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland generally?

One thing is sure - those in the establishment parties and the media who have been crowing about the decline of the Sinn Fein vote would do well to exercise some caution in their words. The fact is that in the north, in a period of relative quiet in terms of mass involvement in struggle, almost 10% of those voting in the EEC election were prepared to vote for a programme of radical, socialist policies plus the overthrow of the state itself, by armed force if necessary. Equally in Dublin, far removed from the grim reality of the day to day struggle to survive the repression of the British Army and RUC on the streets of West Belfast or Derry, more than 11,500 people were prepared to vote for the same radical programme. Clearly for the establishment north and south there is little grounds for complacency.

Sinn Fein are not the only group that did not do as well as it would have liked in these contests. Fianna Fail, who had been running a minority government in Dublin for the last 2 years, called elections in an attempt to get themselves an overall majority. They failed to do so, losing several seats in the process. They found to their cost that the programme of cuts in health, in education, the massive levels of unemployment and emmigration, extradition of republicans into the north, and a whole series of similar repressive policies which they had implemented, with the support of the other major right wing parties, in the Dublin parliament, had lost them the support they needed to achieve a majority.

The discontent was largely channelled into votes for the Workers Party and the Labour Party. However, given the notoriously proimperialist positions of both these groups, neither of them will be able to pose any solutions to the problems besetting the working class in Ireland, since the majority of these problems arise ultimately from the exploitation of the country by outside imperialist interests. This situation of governmental instability coupled with large levels of discontent in the population could lay the basis for the building of a strong broadbased anti-imperialist movement which will begin tackling the problems, and the cause of the problems affecting the people of Ireland north and south. Sinn Fein obviously has a major and central part to play in that process, and the direction which the organisation has been moving in recent years will hopefully, in the near future, place it in the position to play that role.

As Gerry Adams said after the recent elections, "reports of the electoral demise of Sinn Fein are somewhat premature".

Fergus O'Hare

Culture, nationalism and

Last month *Troops Out* examined the Labour movement in Ireland at the turn of the century. In this issue Mike Belbin examines the interplay of the movements for Irish cultural revival and the forces pushing for national independence.

The terrain of ideologies... is the terrain on which determinate social groups become conscious of their own social being, their own strength, their own tasks, their own becoming." Antonio Gramsci

"Did that play of mine send out
Certain men the English shot?"

Asked the poet Yeats after the 1916 Irish Rising. Did the rediscovery and remaking of an Irish culture help towards the taking up of arms for national separation in 1916?

This period saw the maturing of Irish national identity through various attempts at defining an Irishness in opposition to Britishness. In this period groups from different classes, within a nationalist movement, developed often opposed visions of a culture free from Imperialism. And in the process contributed to the eventual struggle for Independence.

When Parnell died in 1891 he left two legacies - a divided and thereby useless Parliamentary Party and a rising self-confidence in many classes of Irish society. Parnell, from the Unionist landlord class (the Anglo-Irish), had dared to call himself the 'leader of the Irish nation'. But what was Irish? The Irish (or Gaelic) language - object of centuries of state repression - was confined to a few impoverished areas. The Anglo-Irish, ancestors of Norman and Cromwellian conquest, defined themselves culturally as English. They lived a life of country houses and town society in Dublin and London. Acting as sheriffs and judges this class was cut off from the majority of the Irish people. With the depression of the 1870s, the guerrilla movements on the Land issue and the steady conversion of successive British Governments to expropriation of this sector, the gentry found themselves increasingly marginalised. Culturally however they still held themselves aloof from the degraded masses.

Cuchulain

It was a Church of Ireland rector's son and Trinity College scholar Standish O'Grady who from 1870 set out to discover the 'other' culture... In this he was carrying on the early-19th century romantic interest in folklore and ancient peoples. After learning that Ireland had a culture going back to 500 A.D. he began to search for and find manuscript versions of oral Sagas. These he narrated in a two volume *History of Ireland* (1878 and 1880). One saga would be particularly inspiring to many who came after - the Red Branch or Ulster cycle which Cuchulain. Cuchulain was a hero, stranded between human excellence and divine power: gifted, moody, sometimes ridiculous, ready

to defend the charioteers and poets of Ulster against their Connacht enemies. "I am the darling of the host and multitude," sang Cuchulain, "so that I fight for the honour of them all."

O'Grady was once described as a 'Fenian unionist', he opposed an Ireland ruled by the bourgeoisie and dreamed of a unity between squire and peasant against capitalist civilisation. A politics Yeats would take up later in his "dream of the noble and the beggarman". The other scholar to have considerable effect was Douglas Hyde. Also the son of a Rector, he had been educated at home as a boy and came into contact with native Irish speakers and heard their stories. Later, he brought out English translations of Irish poetry and songs in *The Love Songs of Connacht* in 1893. These provided the way for many non-Irish speakers into the ancient poetry.

Meanwhile in 1884 a small group of men had met in the Tipperary town of Thurles and founded the Gaelic Athletic Association to promote Irish sports such as hurling. Competitions were organised on a county basis and the police began to include consistent reports on the GAA in their secret society files. Seeing English games as "effeminate follies" (so wrote Archbishop Croke their first patron), it was however the GAA who revived the sense of a colourful national culture in the rural areas.

Gaelic League

So it was that by 1893 much good work had been done in rediscovering pre-Conquest Irish culture. But antiquarianism was one thing, making an Irish culture in the present another (and surely that would involve politics). In 1893 a Catholic civil servant Eoin MacNeill published 'A plea and a plan for the extension of the movement to preserve and spread the Irish Language'. Soon after, MacNeill, Douglas Hyde and others met together and formed The Gaelic League to promote the Irish language. There had been language societies before but none as successful as this. By 1897 there were 43 branches and by 1904 this had grown to 600. The League held ceilidhs (dances) which both men and women could attend, a practice condemned by the Catholic Church and more conservative nationalists. Hyde was president of the League until 1915 and under him the League was 'non-political', but many of the next generation such as Padaric Pearse, would be inspired and fortified by its promotion of Irish culture.

One republican who thought that what Ireland needed was a contemporary literature

was John O'Leary, a doctor arrested for sedition in 1865 and returned from Paris exile in 1885. In Dublin he met 20 year-old William Butler Yeats, son of a distinguished and bohemian Anglo-Irish portrait painter. Yeats was already part of a generation linking London, Dublin and Paris (such as Oscar Wilde), who rejected the grim puritan Victorianism of the Empire and sought an alternative in art and non-Western religion. It was as a poet that Yeats was invited to one of O'Leary's evening teas attended by revolutionaries and young writers. Yeats was captivated by O'Leary's life and they became friends. O'Leary would discuss writers and artists and refer offhandedly to his 8 years imprisonment. He told Yeats "My religion is the old Persian one - to pull the bow and tell the truth." O'Leary was also on the Supreme Council of the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and soon enrolled Yeats as a member. Yeats was introduced by O'Leary to poetry translated from the Irish and the young man's work soon began to use a different metre from his earlier Wordsworthian models. O'Leary had no truck with indifferent art just because it was nationalist and in Yeats he thought he'd found the great poet of the coming revolution.

National theatre

Yeats wanted to write a modern drama from the old sagas, but an Irish drama would require an Irish theatre and it was only when Yeats met Lady Augusta Gregory in 1896 that this began to be a possibility. In the end Gregory organised a funding appeal from her friends and they set up the Irish Literary Theatre.

Their first production was Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* at the Ancient Concert Halls, Dublin, in May 1899. The play dealt with a time of famine in Ireland when the Countess agrees to sell her soul to redeem the people from demons. When this was presented it was attacked, especially by the bourgeois press in Dublin, for being 'anti-Catholic'. It was also disliked by George Moore for being amateur and too 'folky'. Divisions were already appearing in the movement for national rejuvenation. For it was in 1899 that a separate Catholic bourgeois nationalism got into its stride. In that year Arthur Griffith started the *United Irishmen* paper to promote Irish capitalist self-sufficiency (*Sinn Féin*).

In 1900 and 1901 campaigns were started against alcohol as one sign of pernicious English influence. This tendency (Catholic at its deepest) would find itself in conflict with all kinds of other nationalists as the century wore on.

In 1902 Yeats wrote *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (the play referred to in the poem) for his friend Maud Gonne, republican activist and British colonel's daughter. The play combined poetry and peasant speech and tells of events surrounding the French

independence 1890-1916

Women unloading guns on the Asgard, the ship which smuggled arms into Howth for the Irish Volunteers in July 1914.



landings in May 1789 when wedding preparations are interrupted by the appearance of an old woman (the 'Sean Bhean Bhocht' - an image of the suffering colony). The bridegroom leaves to fight so that the woman will be made young again. It was staged by Inghinidhe na hEireann, a women's cultural group under the direction of W.G. Fay of the small touring company, the Irish National Theatre Company. In 1903 this Company merged with Yeats's group to form the Irish National Theatre Society.

There was yet another Ireland, developing within older organisation or forming new ones (such as ITGWU and later the Irish Volunteers), who wanted to press on from a cultural nationalism to independence. Such was Padaric Pearse, member of the Gaelic League and founder of an Irish school, St Enda's. Pearse had written two pageants about Cuchulain in 1909 and 1913, as well as a play, *The Singer* in which a MacDara goes out alone to fight the Sassenach - "One man can free a people" he claims, "as one Man redeemed the world." This was Pearse's hope - a pagan fortitude and christian endurance. In November 1913 Pearse denounced the Gaelic League - "It was not the Messiah...the people itself will perhaps be its own Messiah."

Irish Volunteers

In 1912 the process began that many had been looking for, including the IRB recently rejuvenated by younger activists from Belfast. In April the Liberal British Government held the first reading of a Home Rule Bill - a limited regional parliament for Ireland. At once there was opposition from Tory and Unionist forces and the Ulster Volunteers were formed in the North to challenge the Bill with a veto of arms. And it was in the Gaelic League paper *An Claidheamh Solus* that a

reply from the nationalists came.

Eoin MacNeill, now a Chair in Early Irish History and supporter of the Parliamentary Party led by John Redmond, wrote *'The North Began'* calling for nationalists to emulate the Orange forces in order to save Home Rule. "The British Army cannot now be used to prevent the enrollment, drilling and reviewing of Volunteer's in Ireland." IRB members contacted MacNeill and a large meeting was organised for 25 November at the Rotunda Rink, Dublin. There, three to four thousand were enrolled in the new Irish Volunteers. A women's auxiliary, Cumann Na mBan, was formed which would put constant pressure on the Volunteers who, except for Padaric Pearse, did not think women should bear arms or be given the vote. Though there was some military training, especially in Belfast, many women left the Cumann to join the Citizen Army which practised equality. The CA had been formed during the Murphy Lockout of 1913 to defend the workers against police and armed scabs. It had been the initiative of James Connolly, Marxist writer and trades unionist. Connolly however saw no contradiction in fighting for independence (as the British Empire went to war with Germany) this might ignite a conflagration far beyond Ireland, perhaps leading to a workers' Europe.

However if they were going to fight for anything, the Irish Volunteers needed arms. Again the Ulster Volunteers showed the way, by landing a cargo of guns on the north-east coast in April 1914. A similar plan was concocted by two Anglo-Irish Home Rule supporters - Roger Casement and Alice Stopford Green. Green raised the money in London from liberal friends and arms were then bought from Germany and transported by tug to the Belgium coast. There they were collected by two yachts, one owned by

Ersine Childers the spy novelist and a convinced Home Ruler since 1908. One set of arms landed safely at county Wicklow and the other sailed as an act of defiance into Dublin bay where Volunteers unloaded and marched off. However on the march back they were intercepted by the Kings Own Scottish Borderers. During argument between Volunteer leaders and the soldiers many of the guns slipped away. Then on the way back to barracks along Bachelor's Walk the troops were baited by a crowd and the soldiers opened fire, killing 3 and wounding 38.

By June 1914 Redmond was calling for Party control over the Volunteers - he wanted 25 of his followers added to the Volunteers' Provisional Committee. MacNeill stalled, he did not want a split with the more advanced nationalists. The IRB too wanted to avoid a disastrous split. But after an angry discussion within the Volunteers, Redmond's ultimatum was accepted. Then in September 1914 Redmond called for the Volunteers to go "wherever the firing line extends" (i.e. to the trenches for Britain). 11,000 Volunteers split and kept the name Irish Volunteers under a General Council with MacNeill as Chief of Staff and Padaric Pearse (also an IRB member) as Director of Military Operations.

With the suspension of home rule during the War, MacNeill thought that the Volunteers should wait for the Armistice and then become a pressure group. Meanwhile the War had brought hardship to Ireland - food prices rose, the slums festered and the threat of conscription hung over the colony.

The Rising

On 16 January 1916 the IRB, Pearse, Connolly and others agreed to spring the insurrection at Easter - the time to go out and fight the Sassenach had come. Though MacNeill managed on the Sunday to cancel the manoeuvres which were the cover for the Rising, the grey green uniforms of the Volunteers and the dark green of the CA were seen out on the Monday. "From the moment the first shot is fired" Connolly told a meeting at Liberty Hall, "there will no longer be Volunteers or Citizen Army but only the Army of the Irish Republic."

Pearse stepped out in front of the Dublin General Post Office to read the Proclamation of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic: "In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood... We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland... The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens..."

If only for a moment, many aspirations of the past three decades - for nationhood, equality, independence - seemed to fuse.

Mike Belbin

The masses that took to the

Last month we described the personal sacrifice of the hunger strikers. In this issue, Mary Pearson analyses the political gains of the hunger strikes.

The Irish Hunger Strike of 1981 when ten men in the H Blocks of Long Kesh died, is seen by many as the turning point in the British people's awareness of the situation in Ireland.

	age	days in hunger strike
Bobby Sands	27	66
Francis Hughes	25	59
Raymond McCreesh	24	61
Patsy O'Hara	24	61
Joe McDonnell	30	61
Martin Hurson	26	44
Kevin Lynch	25	71
Kieran Doherty	25	73
Thomas McElwee	23	62
Mickey Devine	27	60

These men failed to achieve the 5 demands they went on hunger strike for; but their strength, determination and selfless adherence to principle exposed the hypocrisy and cruel brutality of the British Government. They ensured that the whole world knew that the Government would rather let men die than let them wear their own clothes. The right to their own clothes and their other demands, are just basic prisoners rights in many other countries. The tragic irony is that four of the five demands have gradually been implemented in the H Blocks since their deaths. Internationally people were horrified at the treatment of Bobby Sands and his comrades, newspaper headlines being evidence of that.

"One can only be impressed by the power of the passion, rage, love and suffering expressed in this long, patient, meticulous exercise in slow death."

La Repubblica (Italy)

"Is London ready to watch a repeat of the events that followed the death of Ireland's most famous hunger striker, Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence McSweney, which is to say open civil war."

Le Monde (France)

"Mrs Thatcher allowed a member of the House of Commons, a colleague, in fact, to die of starvation. Never has such an incident occurred in a civilised country."

Hindustani Times.

The Sunday Times, on the 31.5.81 published a survey on foreign newspapers headed *"Is Britain Losing the Propaganda War."* In it, Keith Richardson, chief European correspondent was quoted - *"General European impression ranges from Thatcher pig-headed obstinacy, through*

scandalous mis government to outright genocide....it could not be worse." The article concluded:-

"World opinion has begun to shift from the British Government in favour of the IRA. The image of the gunman has actually improved and general opinion is emerging that the time has come for Mrs. Thatcher to begin negotiations with Dublin leading to eventual union with the south."

Some say the death of ten men was too high a price to pay to change world opinion. The men gave their lives in the struggle for Irish freedom. In doing so, they not only influenced world opinion but re-stated to their own people the barbaric nature of British rule in Ireland. They inspired thousands to take to political struggle. The impact continues today in the developing support for Sinn Fein. Britain again has to clamp down on human rights. Thatcher criticises the lack of free speech in Poland and the Soviet Union and then bans Sinn Fein from our airwaves. Many still say ten lives was too high a price for a nation to become inspired. Only Irish people can determine the conclusion of that debate.

"Things will never be quite the same in this country again. I know the people in power are trying very hard to stay there. Bobby Sands' diaries are trying to show us the way. I think he was saying that only when you let go of everything do you face up to this reality - a rebirth.I think that's what he died for.I know I owe a tremendous lot to the people who died."

Derry woman interviewed in TROOPS OUT, March 1982.

Relatives Action Committees

The world wide impact of the Hungerstrike was possible because of the tremendous support in Ireland. The foundations for this support were laid by the Relatives Action Committees (RACs) formed after political status was withdrawn from the prisoners and the Blanket Protest started in 1976. They campaigned for the return of political status and organised on prison welfare issues. The committees were formed by mainly women relatives in local area. The women had very little experience of organisation or public speaking but by 1977 had developed a network of RACs throughout the North of Ireland. They went from "house- wife" to "international campaigner" overnight. They protested all over Ireland and in cities in Europe and America.

The grey blankets they wore, symbolic of the only clothing possessed by their loved ones, became an emotive image. Anyone who listened to the women was impressed by their commitment to the prisoners. they did not speak the language of political propaganda,

but every day language straight from the heart.

The RACs gradually opened out, men joined and other members of the communities who had no one in jail. They recognised the urgent need to get broader support. The Blanket & Dirty protests were causing great concern for the prisoners' health. *"The medical administration in the H Blocks is a complete farce. There is one doctor for over 300 men, in these conditions totally inadequate. Most of the men are now subject to headaches, sores and skin rashes. Worms are common. Fever is rampant. The situation is now desperate."* Smuggled prisoners letter from the H Blocks.

National Campaign

The major initiative to widen support came in Belfast on 21 October 1979. The RACs recognised the need for a National mass movement if there was to be any change inside the prisons. A conference was called attended by 500 people from all over Ireland. People of varying political persuasions were there, all agreeing to sink their differences to campaign for political status. A National Smash H Block Campaign was launched with representatives of RACs, Sinn Fein, Irish Republican Socialist Party, Peoples Democracy, The Association for Legal Justice, solicitors who worked in the Diplock Courts and other individuals active in civil rights work. The Social & Democratic Labour Party were not involved. One of the first jobs of the new committee was to lobby the SDLP conference in November. The committee pledged itself to work to mobilise the as yet passive support they knew existed in the 26 countries and outside the main nationalist areas. The mobilisation of several thousand in Belfast on New Years Day 1980 was the start of that pledge.

There followed non-stop organisation alongside the debate about what were the most appropriate tactics. By mid 1980 it had been agreed to campaign on the five demands. This would enable people who had political differences with the prisoners to support them. The 5 demands were: 1) No Prison clothes; 2) No Prison work; 3) Freedom of association; 4) The right to organise their own education and recreation, weekly visits, to write and receive a letter a week, to receive one parcel; 5) Full remission.

First Hunger Strike

It proved to be a succesful approach. By the start of the first hunger strike (involving six men and later three women) support was impressive. Even on the first day there were protests around the world. In Ireland itself people united around the prisoners demands in a way not seen for years. The eve of the Hunger strike saw a massive demonstration in Belfast. On November 22 in Dublin, a march that even police estimates put at

streets are our real guarantors



20,000, took two hours to cross O'Connell Bridge. Arguably more significant were the strikes which took place: October 27, construction workers in Belfast and Derry; November 12, Dockers (ITGWU) in Belfast. Derry city was brought virtually to a standstill on November 13th by industrial action and 10,000 on the streets. The National H Block campaign called a day of industrial action and there were strikes in most towns, right across the job spectrum. This level of activity could not be ignored.

Pickets took place of British Establishments in Europe, America, New Zealand and Australia. New York dockers threatened to boycott British goods. Five American state assemblies passed resolutions which were handed in to the United Nations and the American T.U.C. wrote to all international trade union bodies. M.P.s in Denmark and the Basque Country sent petitions of protest to the British Government.

In Britain itself, where raising Irish issues is recognised as difficult, "*in the belly of the beast*", support was significant from the start. The Troops Out Movement and others developed H Block/Armagh Hungerstrike groups in most areas of England, Scotland and Wales. Press conferences were held, torchlight processions, pickets of Downing St. etc. Token fasts were held, one which started on Friday 7th November and ended on Remembrance Sunday involved 200 people including Lord Gifford, Alan Sapper and Gordon McClennan. A March of 4,000 was held in London.

The grass roots support from individuals was not reflected at an official level with the exception of Plaid Cymru in Wales and the Scottish TUC. Joan Maynard M.P., Ken

Livingstone and Steve Bundred were Labour Party noteables who gave support, most others who normally supported withdrawal were not explicit about the Hunger Strike.

On December 18th the prisoners called off the hungerstrike believing their demands had been agreed to. In a statement IRA commanding officer declared "*Republican prisoners will not be wearing any form of prison uniform and will not participate in any form of prison work. The speed at which the phasing out of the blanket protest proceeds is entirely dependent on the sincerity and upon the manner in which the British Government implement their proposals....For our part, we know that the masses who took to the streets are our real guarantors.*"

Bobby Sands

This extensive support was to be maintained and phenomenally increased when the Government reneged on their agreement and the second Hunger Strike started. It was started by Bobby Sands on March 1st 1981 and opened one of the most traumatic periods in the struggle for Irish Freedom.

March 9th was Bobby's 27th birthday and the day that Bernadette McAliskey returned as press officer for the H Block Committee, only 2 months after being shot by loyalists and being very close to death. The British Government seems oblivious to these signals that the Irish people will always come back in their fight against injustice and repression.

"*I think your analysis of the Brit. mentality is about as close as anyone can come i.e. their stupidity is unbelievable. I still don't think that they have learned that oppression breeds resistance and further oppression*

further resistance!! As for their arrogance -I never saw the likes of it...I'd have to go a long way to meet persons of a similar "superior" nature."

Letter from Brendan McFarlane IRA OC to Gerry Adams 29.4.81

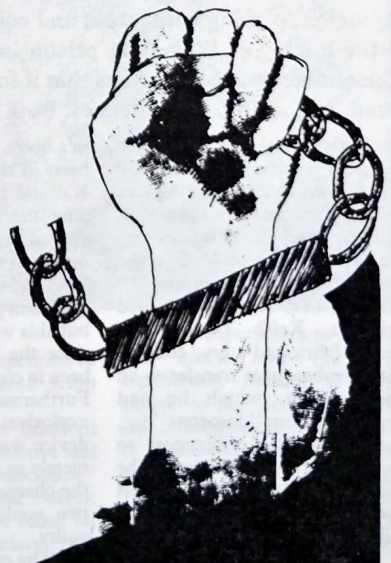
The Irish peoples involvement in this Hunger Strike took on a new dimension. They were hurt and angry at the government's betrayal of the prisoners. A prisoners mother in Derry said, "*There was a change of direction because in the first Hunger Strike there was a kind of detachment -sit downs and protests. When they came out for Bobby Sands there was a terrible sense of anger lacking in the first hunger-strike. There was immediately the possibility of violent reaction.*"

"Troops Out" Interview March 1982. This certainly devolved as the men died.

To the outside world the most significant statement of support was the election of Bobby Sands as Westminster MP for Fermanagh/Sth Tyrone with 30,492 votes (10,000 more than Thatcher got in Finchley). This was in spite of a constant barrage from British politicians, Tory & Labour, that "*a vote for Sands is a vote for violence*". A vote for Sands was a vote against the violence of the British establishment, infact.

The electoral success greatly strengthened the campaign but Thatcher contemptuously ignored the wishes of the Irish people. Don Concannon of the Labour Party's visit to Bobby Sands only days before (May 1, International Workers' Day) was incredible. He visited just to say he agreed with the government. Some Labour politicians complained about this but to most people it represented a united front of Tory & Labour against Irish aspirations. It rubbed

continued ➡



salt in the wounds & Bobby Sands tragically died on May 5, 1981.

The death outraged the Irish people & horrified the rest of the world. Bobby Sands' funeral procession of a hundred thousand people made Thatcher's allegation that "This man is a common criminal" and "These people have no support" ring very hollow.

It is important to note the role of the British media and how it was 'hand in glove' with the government. The government had tried to ignore the Hunger Strike. They offered no regular statements to the House of Commons, nor did the opposition demand them. Quite the reverse. "Parliament should in no way assist the IRA in its efforts. We shall not therefore be pushing the Secretary of State to make statements."

Don Concannon, Irish Times, 4/3/81.

The media had only paid scant attention to Bobby Sands, but when he was elected to Westminster he could no longer be ignored. The world's press invaded Belfast as his death neared. There were at least 400 reporters and 300 photographers to cover his funeral. International criticism has been noted at the beginning of this article; in sharp contrast the British media, almost unanimously, supported the government. "IRA propaganda" became the catchphrase to explain away extensive sympathy for the Hunger strikers.

"They duped 30,000 voters in Fermanagh... They duped thousands to stage violent protests on the streets of Ulster. And if and when Sands dies they will dupe many thousands to step up the bloodshed."

Daily Star leader, 29/4/81.

"Any Catholic would have won and the myth of Fermanagh must not be allowed to gain any credibility."

The Times, 6/5/81.

BBC News and Current Affairs minutes for the 6 May, quoted in the Irish Times on 10/10/81, showed the BBC chiefs' deliberate attempts to discredit the Hunger Strike. "It was agreed that the combination of 'Bobby' Sands and a smiling photograph gave a misleading impression of a convicted felon. Mr Woon (TV news editor) said that Television News had tried very hard to get another photograph of him out of the Northern Ireland Office but had consistently failed."

Support in Britain

Despite the attitudes of the government and the media there was significant support for the hunger strikers in Britain. The H Block/Armagh Committees set up in the first Hunger Strike were well prepared for the second. In every major city protests were held - marches, petitioning, pickets, lobbies, occupations etc. A book could be written on these events. We have lessons to learn from the way people of different political persuasions were able to work together on the five demands. We must also mention the movement in the Labour Party. Despite the official position as expressed by Concannon (or because of it!), 27 Labour MPs signed a Commons motion calling for the government to negotiate with the hunger

strikers. The Labour Committee on Ireland was very active locally and called the demonstration in Mansfield (Concannon's constituency) on July 4. Many councillors supported the activities, as did many trade union branches and Trades Councils. Five Trades Councils sent delegates to the Day of Action in Derry on 15 April. The black communities also expressed their sympathy, based on their own experience of British occupation.

Changing Attitudes

British people are brought up to believe in democracy, freedom of speech and respect for human rights. During the two hunger strikes these principles were flouted by those in power. A lot of incidents made people ask questions about the hypocrisy of the government and media collaboration. Bobby Sands electoral success and popular support for all the hunger strikers gave the lie to British propaganda. There was no spontaneous call for British withdrawal but minds were opened and questions began to be asked about British involvement in Ireland, changing the atmosphere in which we have to campaign.

Despite all the British efforts to denigrate the hunger strikers "The name of Bobby Sands is many times better known than that of any Irish person that ever lived. What's more, everybody that knows his name knows what he died for." Frank Dolan, Irish Post.

Mary Pearson

News around Britain

Prisoners framed

Two Irish Republican prisoners, Natalino Vello and Noel Gibson, who are already serving 15 years and life respectively, appeared in Durham Crown Court on 11th May and succeeded in overturning an attempted frame-up.

They faced three charges of conspiring to cause an explosion, placing with intent and causing an explosion in the library at Wakefield prison in September 1987. The charges were so serious that if found guilty the two faced long additional sentences. Both pleaded not guilty.

Both Nat and Noel are Category A prisoners, and their trial was set in an atmosphere of dramatic security arrangements, with the usual aim of influencing the jury against them. Much of the prosecution case rested on the evidence of a former Wakefield prisoner, Keith Taylor. His clearly fabricated story, coupled with a subsequent transfer to an open prison, which he had apparently been "desperate" for, and his sudden willingness to testify against the two when he had previously refused, suggest that the paid perjurer system is still being used.

Noel was accused of placing an explosive in the library hidden

in a book, although he had never been in the library. Searches of Nat and Noel's cells before and after the device was found had yielded nothing to link them to the device. It was then suggested that Noel had passed the book to Nat, who then placed it in the library, but this was patently ridiculous, since the two could never have been in contact with one another. Furthermore, the Home Office explosives expert stated that the device was not an explosive but merely an incendiary, so that even the charge itself was wrong. The two could only be found not guilty.

The case was clearly a frame-up from start to finish, carried

through despite blatantly inadequate evidence. It is yet another example of the absolute lack of rights of all prisoners, and of the particular malice shown towards Republicans. It had taken almost two years to come to trial, and although they were acquitted, it can hardly be said to have been unsuccessful. Noel had already

been shunted between different prisons, had family visits cancelled and spent ten months in solitary for a crime he could not have committed.

For further information contact:

Irish Republican POW Campaign (Britain), PO Box 540, Sparkhill, Birmingham B11 4AU.



Durham 'H' Wing Condemned

An independent inquiry into the controversial top security women's prison, the 'H' Wing in Durham, has condemned both the regime and conditions as "chilling".

'H' Wing is the only maximum security prison for women in England, and is used for long term prisoners, including three Irish women, Martina Anderson, Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Shanahan, who are all serving 25 years sentences. The inquiry by Anthony Lester QC and Dr Pamela Taylor was carried out at the request of four organisations, Women in Prison, the Prison Reform Trust, the Howard League and the National Council for Civil Liberties.

The prison is condemned for a staggering list of reasons: "Many of the worst aspects of 'H' Wing derive from these simple facts: its geographical remoteness from the families and homes of the prisoners; its confined conditions; its inadequate facilities." The antiquated structure of the

building, which was formerly used as a special security and punishment block for male prisoners, makes for extremely cramped conditions and an almost complete lack of natural light. Women are subject to such physical indignities as the denial of privacy when using the toilets. These structural problems are exacerbated by a highly authoritarian regime. Punishments are frequently imposed for the most petty reasons; facilities for work and education are very limited, and the amount of time allowed for exercise is "manifestly insufficient". The report's statement that "we are not convinced that regular strip searches are necessary in 'H' Wing" clearly acknowledges what campaigners have long said, that the searches are not for security,

but a form of torture.

The inquiry finds that "Women on 'H' Wing are being treated less favourably [!] in important respects than they would be treated if they were male long sentence or Category A prisoners... and it is strongly arguable that this unequal treatment is unlawful."

The report's conclusion is that 'H' Wing should not remain open without "radical improvement". Given its findings of systematic mental and physical degradation to a worse degree even than other prisons in this country, it seems better to say that the place should be closed down immediately and for good.

The inquiry's report is available for £2.50 (incl. p+p) from Women in Prison, 25 Horsell Road, London N5 1YL.

NUJ challenge fails

The attempt by NUJ journalists to challenge the government's broadcasting censorship in the High Court has been rejected.

The basis of the NUJ's claim was firstly that the ban hindered broadcasters in their duty to report events in the North of Ireland fairly, and secondly that the ban was unlawful and in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, the three judges ruled against both claims, and actually asserted that the ban did not prevent impartial reporting!

The journalist said they were "disappointed but not surprised" and intended to appeal to the House of Lords and if necessary to Europe.

Guildford Four

The Guildford Four campaign are in need of money for the APPEAL which starts on 9th October and will go on for 6 weeks. Money is needed to have relatives over and all the

expenses being here will entail, also the campaign need money to help staff and run a Headquarters for the duration of the trial.

Donations to Guildford 4 campaign, PO Box 6944, London WC1N 3XX.

Justice and freedom meeting in Leeds

There is no difference between South Africa and the Six Counties of Northern Ireland other than geography. That's what black ex-soldier Wolde Selassie told a public meeting on links between the black and Irish struggles for "justice and freedom".

Wolde Selassie told the meeting at Leeds West Indian Centre that like many Afro-Caribbean youngsters, when he left school 20 years ago he made the "calculated mistake" of joining the British Army. Two and a half years later he found himself on the streets of Belfast.

After suffering racism within the Army, and observing the conflict in Ireland, Wolde decided: "If I was going to shoot anyone I was going to shoot the general or the captain." He left the army and today is a black activist and a member of the Troops Out Movement in Leicester.

The introduction of the PTA after the Birmingham pub bombings of 1974 halted all political developments within the Irish community in Britain, according to Dave Kernohan of the Irish in Britain Representation Group's Leeds branch. The hunger strike of 1981 broke that logjam,

and the IBRG now gives the Irish community an independent voice, he said.

After the Bangladeshi community, the Irish community suffer the worst housing in Britain - and the highest unemployment after the Afro-Caribbean population, said Dave Kernohan.

Janet Clarke from the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign in Tottenham compared the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act to "criminalise" Irish people with the way the Police and Criminal Evidence Act is used against the black community. Talking about the campaign to quash the murder convictions of Winston Silcott and the other members of the Tottenham Three jailed for the killing of PC Blakelock, Janet Clarke told the meeting: "The police, the courts, the press and the politicians all conspired to imprison these people, just as they did the Birmingham Six and the



Guildford Four."

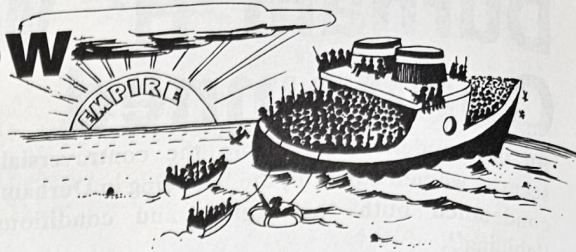
"But we are not in competition to see who suffers most from racism," he stressed.

Ali Hussein of the Bradford independent Black Collective said that in its attempt to "discipline" both the Irish and black communities, the state relied on the police and the judiciary. "On the question of power there are

only two experiences to look at - the black and the Irish experiences," he said. "It's all too simple to talk about repression and criminalisation, but it is out of that experience that we see methods of struggle developing."

The meeting was organised jointly by Leeds Irish in Britain Representation Group and Leeds Troops Out Movement.

Time To Go Show



The Time To Go Show was billed as a unique and mould breaking political event for the withdrawal movement. It sought to bring together a wide variety of political opinion under the common banner of 'Time to Go - Twenty wasted years'.

The mechanism for this was an attempt to shift the debate from the 'abstract' and 'principle' of 'should Britain leave' and 'Why' to 'How can Britain go'. The notional theme of the weekend centred on this question and it was perhaps the one least adequately answered. It is certainly a useful exercise to attempt to engage in the question of 'How', to articulate the practicalities and problems that surround British withdrawal. It is an arena that the withdrawal movement has neglected and *Time to Go* are to be congratulated for extending the agenda in this way. However it is unfortunate to report that the weekend failed to fulfill many of its aims.

There are perhaps several reasons for this, some avoidable some not. The attendance was on the low side, 700 odd rather than

over 1000 as expected. Being the same weekend as the Socialist Conference in Sheffield, and the Musicalist Conference in Glastonbury could have something to do with this. But any movement trying to widen its constituency that persists in demanding £12.50 from the unwaged for the privilege of being considered part of the mainstream is asking for trouble.

The question of 'How to go' - the central theme of the weekend - is intended to develop a 'convincing' strategy to present, not so much to the British public who hardly seem to care one way or another, but to a Labour administration in waiting. The notion that Britain cannot 'simply wash it's hands' of Ireland was seen as a key issue. It is how this idea interacts with the concept of self-determination for the Irish people as a whole that the

conference could have addressed more meaningfully, though it was the subject of some discussion.

It is unfortunately a discussion that remains plagued with British chauvinism. Many of the post debate discussions were dominated by the formal position of established political factions that often failed to move the discussion anywhere new, let alone into the 'mainstream'.

To establish a 'blueprint' for withdrawal, or a prescriptive policy for a new Ireland runs contrary to the idea that the people of Ireland are the ones best suited to organise their future. While many speakers formally distanced themselves from 'prescriptive' policies some such as Peter Hain (Lab.) insist that "it would be essential to encourage a strong decentralist thrust to the structure of (Irish) government", and Chris Bambery (SWP) felt able to

dismiss the legacy of anti-Irish racism - "the Irish in Britain have not been pogromised".

The *Time To Go Show* was a start in the process of re-addressing the question of Britain's involvement in Ireland. It is an opportunity afforded by the undefeated resistance of the nationalist community of the north of Ireland. For twenty years the British state has run riot in Ireland but the opposition is alive and kicking. It remains the dynamic behind withdrawal sentiment in this country. Our task is to build an equivalent that recognises the common interest of oppressed peoples, the power and influence of the British state and the interest ordinary people have in opposing British rule in Ireland. *Time To Go* have established important new ground in this process.

Brent Bans Sinn Fein

A rally for British Withdrawal to take place in Brent Town Hall on June 3 has been banned by Brent Council. The rally had been organized by the North west London Time to Go Committee and was to include Gerry Adams and Bernadette McAliskey (Devlin) as the main speakers.

The committee, who were informed of the banning by a local journalist and who one week later still have not been contacted by the Council, strongly dispute what they understand to be the council's three main objections to the rally; 1 That the purpose of the rally was not made clear on the booking forms. 2 The organizer's name was not on publicity material. 3 The rally would be divisive for the local community.

In answer to these objections the committee can supply a copy of the original booking form and initial letter to the town hall to prove the first charge is untrue. The committee also has the original publicity material with the name of the committee clearly

displayed. The third charge is obviously less tangible but the committee has directed the council's attention to the very substantial Irish population in Brent. It points out that the main purpose of the rally is to stimulate debate about the situation in the North of Ireland - a matter of great importance to all in the community.

It seems clear that the council's real objection is to the presence of Gerry Adams MP. On the 22 June, the council admitted in a press release that the rally was banned precisely for this reason. This cancellation follows a pattern - Sheffield, Newham, Southwark where Sinn Fein elected representatives have been prevented from speaking on council premises. It is a very serious development for democracy in this country when councils, and particularly Labour run councils try to ban a public meeting because an elected member of Parliament is to speak there. However, perhaps the most

sinister aspect of all of this is that the banning of the rally in Brent, unlike as happened in Sheffield, went ahead virtually without any press outcry.

While the committee is considering taking legal action against the Labour Council plus

seeking to draw together supportive labour councillors in London in order to protest against this effective ban on Sinn Fein, the rally has been rearranged and is now to take place in Conway Hall in Red Lion Square for the same date at 7.30 pm.



Namibia in struggle - victory to SWAPO

The struggle for self-determination in Namibia has been led by the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), and it's military wing, The Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). Recent events in Namibia have exposed attempts by the S. African 'security' forces to undermine the newly agreed implementation of UN Resolution 435. SWAPO's massive popular support promises to sweep it to power in the event of free and fair elections. Uppermost in the minds of S. African strategists in the task of preventing SWAPO from gaining a two-thirds majority in the Constituent Assembly. Such a majority would allow SWAPO to determine the future Constitution of Namibia.

Here, Ros Young of the Namibia Support Committee, describes how events in the struggle have been manipulated by British and S. African interests in Namibia.

The UN Plan is finally being implemented as a result of a series of coinciding factors. What is often not reported or taken seriously is the growing challenge to South Africa's occupation by the mass trade union and student movement in the last couple of years. They are the mass base of SWAPO's support inside the country and their growing militancy and strength together with PLAN's military successes in recent years has shown the South Africans that their days are definitely numbered in Namibia. This has coincided with South Africa's military defeat and loss of air superiority in Angola last year at the hands of the combined forces of FAPLA, Cuba and PLAN.

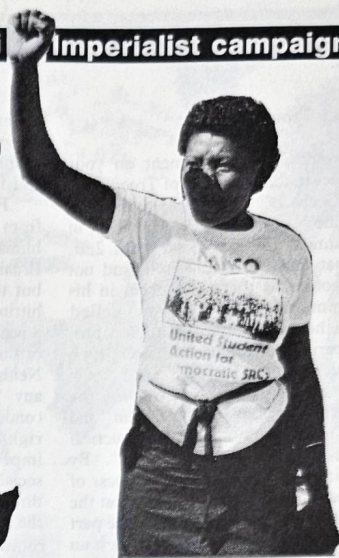
Going back to the events in northern Namibia from 1 April, it was unfortunate for the Namibian people, to say the least; that British Prime Minister Thatcher made an 'unexpected' visit to Namibia's capital Windhoek on that day. In hindsight it appears that Thatcher and the South Africans had a premeditated plan to attack SWAPO to try to isolate them internationally. No sooner had she arrived than the South Africans were shouting about a massive infiltration of SWAPO combatants into the north, an accusation with no basis in fact. Thatcher then bullied the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in Namibia, Martti

Athisaari, to sanction the release of South African police and troops form bases to 'round up' the combatants (in contravention of the UN plan). It was all very neatly done, with the western press, particularly the British, falling over themselves to swallow, ad nauseum, South Africa's version of events. Within a week the massive smear campaign against SWAPO had got into full swing. Very few commentators bothered to report SWAPO's accounts of events. SWAPO, civilian eye-witnesses and church sources all concur that it was the South Africans who broke the formal ceasefire by ambushing and murdering a group of PLAN combatants who were preparing to hand themselves over to the UN monitoring force (UNTAG). South Africa was well aware that there were substantial numbers of SWAPO combatants inside Namibia before 1 April, not surprisingly since they have been engaged in a bush war with them for the last two decades. Thatcher and the South Africans, to justify the attacks on PLAN, claimed that SWAPO had broken UNSCR 435 and the Geneva Protocol. There is nothing in any of these agreements that says PLAN should not be in Namibia at the start of the independence process. On the contrary, the UNSCR 435 makes provisions for PLAN's confinement to bases in Namibia under the supervision of UNTAG.

And the Geneva Protocol, which was still a secret document by 1 April (and SWAPO was not a signatory to it) only refers to PLAN forces in Angola.

So while PLAN combatants and civilians were being massacred in their hundreds, Thatcher was denouncing SWAPO as a terrorist organisation and the South Africans were being elevated by the Tories and the media into a peacekeeping force. The Labour Party leadership missed their chance to expose the lying machinations of the government on this serious international issue. Instead of clearly and loudly defending SWAPO from the beginning, they were more concerned whether the Geneva Protocol was in the House of Commons Library or not. Moreover, the media smear campaign against SWAPO was full of patronising insults with reports based on racist assumptions that SWAPO ie Black people, were lying about events, were misinterpreting what had been written in the UN documents, and were clearly to blame for the battles that followed. Some commentators tried to misrepresent and demean the anti-colonial struggle by labelling SWAPO as a 'tribal' organisation and so on.

When evidence started to emerge that the South African Defence Force (SADF); together with their notorious Koevoet



counter-insurgency unit and their local SWATF battalions, had executed captured PLAN combatants instead of handing them over to UNTAG, the media became quiet. Paradoxically it was the right-wing Sunday Telegraph which first reported the executions on 9 April. Little attention is now being given to the activities of the SADF 'verification patrols' who are still searching out remaining PLAN combatants, despite South Africa's claims to the contrary that all their forces have now gone back to bases.

Despite these setbacks SWAPO is determined that the independence process continues. SWAPO's external leadership is now on the verge of going back into Namibia to prepare for the mass return of exiled Namibians and to organise SWAPO's election campaign. If South Africa and Thatcher hoped that by attacking PLAN combatants they would weaken SWAPO's support in Namibia they were seriously mistaken. On the contrary it has increased. When 31 captured PLAN combatants were escorted to the Angolan border by UNTAG at the end of April, over 5,000 school students appeared from nowhere and followed the convoy, giving the combatants a 'heros escort'. And on 18 May all secondary schools in northern Namibia were shut down when thousands of school students staged a walkout in protest at South Africa's continued presence in the country. Whatever plans South Africa has in store, it cannot halt the decolonisation of Namibia now - the struggle continues.

For more information on Namibia and the Namibia Emergency Campaign (jointly organised by NSC and AAM) please contact NSC, PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW. Tel: 01-267 1941/2

Dear Troops Out,

I would like to comment on your report in the May issue of *Troops Out* on Gorbachev's meeting with the Irish Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, in Shannon, Co. Clare, on April 2nd. What must be emphasised, and not forgotten, is that Gorbachev, in his comments about the so-called Northern Ireland problem, has a pro-imperialist and pro-British occupation position.

He said "we believe that it is the internal business of Great Britain" and "we did not have any practical discussions on the problem". By saying "it is the internal business of Great Britain" he was saying that the British-occupied six counties are part of Britain and the problem there is an internal one for Britain to solve.

Likewise, in his meetings with Thatcher on his visit to London he made no mention of British involvement in Ireland. For Gorbachev, like all stalinists, peaceful co-existence and cooperation with imperialism is the order of the day. And whatever the cost to the oppressed in Ireland, South Africa, Namibia or Palestine, stalinism will continue with its betrayals of these peoples in order to cooperate and help imperialism in every way possible. The present talks between stalinism, imperialism, and the racist regime in South Africa in attempting to bring about "settlements" in both South Africa and Namibia is a case in point. These so-called "settlements" will undoubtedly be to the benefit of imperialism and its agency, the South African regime, and against the interests of the black working-class masses and peasants and of socialism in both South Africa and Namibia.

Likewise on British occupation and oppression in Ireland, Gorbachev and stalinism have nothing to say. Gorbachev won't rock the boat of collaboration and cooperation with imperialism by mentioning Britain's role in Ireland. The smiles and back-slapping that we all saw on our TV

screens when Gorbachev met Thatcher shows in the starkest possible way the counter-revolutionary role of stalinism and its relationship to imperialism.

From time to time spokespeople from the Kremlin will condemn human rights abuses carried out by Britain and other imperialist countries, but this is only done as a means of hitting back at their criticisms of the Soviet Union's own abuses and denial of human rights to its own citizens. Neither stalinism nor imperialism is in any position to preach about or condemn the others record on human rights. In its relationship to imperialism, in its betrayals of socialism and the oppressed millions throughout the world, stalinism allows the barbarism of imperialism to continue to plague the world with the tyranny of oppression, famine, disease, exploitation and every other kind of skulduggery known to humanity. In that sense it is, as Trotsky once remarked, "the syphilis of the international working-class movement", whether in relation to Ireland or where ever people are oppressed by capitalism and imperialism. Gorbachev's visit to Ireland and Britain shows us that he is no friend of Irish freedom and like all stalinists before him prefers to continue the counter-revolutionary doctrine of peaceful co-existence with imperialism.

Socialism in Ireland and on a world wide basis can only be built in an all out struggle against imperialism and counter-revolutionary stalinism.

Charlie Walsh
Kilburn

Dear Troops Out

Our campaigns welcome the detailed report about the conditions of H Wing in Durham Prison, sponsored by Women in Prison, the Prison Reform Trust, the Howard League and National Council for Civil Liberties.

It was not within the authors' brief to specify the particular situation of the four Category A women prisoners held

at Durham, three of whom are Irish. Many observations in the report, though, point to the special discriminatory nature of their imprisonment. We regret that the authors stopped short of recommending total closure.

The report highlights the problems caused to other prisoners when Category A women have visits. Because the visiting area is so small no other prisoner is allowed a visit at the same time (paragraph 99 of the report.) This causes unnecessary tensions between prisoners. This is contrasted with a nearby prison, Frankland, which also holds Category A prisoners, where the visiting room is described as "spacious and comfortable".

The inadequate sanitation at the prison was condemned strongly by the authors (paragraphs 55-59). When the issue of sanitation was raised last year, in response to a letter received from Martina Anderson of H Wing, Douglas Hogg denied strongly that there was a problem and implied that Ms Anderson was exaggerating the problem. Clearly, Pamela Taylor and Anthony Lestor QC, authors of the report, vindicate Martina Anderson's strong complaints.

Something not mentioned in the report, but of which we have been informed, are infestations of mice and insects. One woman found a mouse in the toaster!

Paragraph 128 is of particular interest because it advocates "prisoner responsibility".

"The problems can not be effectively tackled by the staff alone. The women of H Wing need to acknowledge their own responsibility to recommend, to motivate, and to implement the changes to their environment and regime." Yet, when Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson, both of whom have made repeated suggestions and recommendations for improvements on the wing, asked to be included in the group of prisoners speaking to Anthony Lestor, they were at first refused and subsequently had to make special representations to see

him. After the visit these two Republican women and an English prisoner were placed in solitary confinement under Rule 43 (good order and discipline) with no explanation being given.

Three of the four Category A prisoners held in H Wing are Irish, two from the South and one from the North of Ireland. The observation in the report, relating to hardship of families, the cost and time of travelling to visits, is obviously greater for these three prisoners. Yet there is a modern, secure prison in Ireland, at Maghaberry, to which these prisoners could be sent. Given the overcrowding in Britain's prisons, and the spare capacity at Maghaberry, and given the Home Office's stated policy of allowing long-term prisoners to serve their sentences as close to their families as possible, would it not make sense for these three women to be transferred to that prison, nearer to their homes?

Durham H Wing was closed previously as a result of the Mountbatten report condemning it as uncivilised and intolerant. Three years later, in 1975, the wing was re-opened without structural change, yet for the last 24 years it has been considered suitable for long-term women prisoners, where it had already been condemned as unfit for men. It is our belief that the recommendations made by Lord Mountbatten twenty-six years ago are still valid. The initial design of the wing to "break" the most ruthless, violent and organised prisoners of the 1960s was considered inhuman then, and still inhuman. We believe Durham H Wing should close.

NINA HUTCHINSON
Irish Prisoners Appeal
PO Box 447,
London SW9 8BW.

WENDY PEARMAN
Winchester Three Campaign
c/o Grass Roots,
1 Newton Street,
Manchester 1.

Reviews

Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850

Stanley H. Palmer.
Cambridge University Press
1988

Very expensive-order from your library!

One of the common arguments which the withdrawal movement puts forward is that Ireland is a testing ground for policing methods to be used in Britain. There is also an awareness of the double standards about measures permissible against the Irish (e.g. plastic bullets, the PTA), which would have greater political repercussions if used to the same extent against British people. This book traces the historical basis of this apparently contradictory relationship.

Central to the book is the thesis that the establishment of police forces in England can only be understood in relation to their imposition on Ireland. In both countries it was not crime which the police were intended to combat but social and political unrest. In England's case as a result of the development of the industrial working class and in Ireland due to endemic agrarian violence and periodic nationalist resistance engendered by Britain's economic and political domination.

Whereas in Britain large sections of the middle class and aristocracy resisted the introduction of police, as a foreign institution endangering the rights of the proverbial 'Free-born Englishman', there was less objection to infringing the rights of the savage Irish caricatured as 'Paddy'. Contemporary cartoons from 'Punch'

illustrate the text to underline this racist attitude.

In practice this meant that despite the anti-catholic Gordon riots in London which claimed hundreds of lives and caused massive damage, a bill to establish a Police force in the capital was defeated in 1785. However, the following year a 450 strong force was set up in Dublin. Also the first 'Peelers' were not, as is generally believed, introduced into London by Robert Peel as Home Secretary in 1829 but were established by him in Tipperary in 1814 when he was Secretary of State for Ireland. This force was from its inception a quasi-military body to deal with rural unrest. Moreover, the Royal Irish Constabulary (as the Irish police were entitled in recognition of their role in crushing the Fenians) served as a model for forces throughout the

empire. African police were trained by the R.I.C. at Dublin and after partition these facilities were transferred to the RUC at Newtonards. Also numbers of former R.I.C. men found use for their skills in British occupied Palestine.

Amongst the wealth of useful data and quotations in the book is an extract from a speech of De Valera as president of Sinn Fein in 1919, which, though referring to the R.I.C., is just as relevant a rebuttal to those today who call for support for the R.U.C.: "The people of Ireland ought not to fraternize...with the forces which are the main instruments in keeping them in subjection... (The R.I.C.'s) history is a continuity of brutal treason against their own people. From their very foundation they have been the great obstacle to every movement for social as well as national liberty."

David Moss

One day at a time....

May

15th

A civilian, Malachy Trainor, is shot dead by loyalists in north Belfast where he was working on housing repairs.

Three hours later, loyalists fire an RPG missile at the Sinn Féin advice centre in Ardoyne, Belfast, followed by grenades and some shooting. The building is damaged but no one is injured.

In London, a new training scheme is launched for young migrants 80% of whom are expected to be Irish. The European Social Fund has put up £400,000, matched by the same amount from ILEA and ten local authorities.

16th

The Energy Ministers of Britain and the Irish Republic meet in London for preliminary talks about setting up a cross-border electricity connection and possibly a gas pipeline from the off-shore fields being developed by the Republic. The Irish side also raises the issue of Sellafield, nuclear waste and new nuclear power stations in west Britain, all of which present dangers to Ireland.

Also in London, six broadcasting journalists challenge in the High Court the legality of the Home Secretary's broadcasting ban on Sinn Féin etc imposed last October. On 26th May, the three judges rule against the journalists; the NUJ plans to take it to the court of appeal.

17th

The General Synod of the Church of Ireland votes in favour of the ordination of women as priests and bishops by a huge majority - 74% of the clergy and 87% of the laity. (The Church of Ireland is the Anglican order, and covers the whole of Ireland.)

18th

Local government elections in the North. On the unionist side, Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party's vote falls sharply from a 24.3% share of the vote in 1985 to 17.8%. On the nationalist side, Sinn Féin loses 16 seats but holds its share of the vote at 11.3%. New actors on the electoral stage are four "model conservatives" elected in North Down, integrationists who campaign for the right to organise the (British) Conservative Party in N. Ireland. In Derry, it later transpires, plainclothes soldiers are seen filming outside a polling station; they are challenged by Sinn Féin supporters and pretend they are from UTV. The NUJ complains that such tactics put its members at risk; the Army promises an investigation. Final results of the elections (with election postponed in one area) are UUP, 187 seats; DUP, 114; Alliance, 37; SDLP, 121; Sinn Féin, 43; others, 57.

In the USA, Vermont adopts the MacBride Principles (to counter discrimination in employment where there are US investments in N. Ireland), the 12th state to do so.

23rd

Further doubts about the Gibraltar Inquest (into the shooting by the SAS of three unarmed IRA members in March 1988) are raised by *The Independent* newspaper in Britain. It publishes more evidence that the Spanish police had the team under surveillance and told the British police in Gibraltar that their car did not contain a bomb.

24th

The review of the Anglo-Irish Agreement

is published. It is the produce of both governments, and a legal requirement stipulated by the Agreement. It looks back over the three years since the Agreement and the Intergovernmental Conference came into operation, and reaffirms the commitment of both governments to devolution in the North. For the future it proposes to regularise the meetings of the Conference and widen its range; to improve the monitoring of complaints against the RUC and Army; to provide "additional safeguards" for suspects held on non-political charges; and to expand cross-border economic cooperation, particularly in the light of the Single European Act 1992. Sticking points between the two governments are admitted to be the British refusal to introduce three-judge courts in the North and problems surrounding extradition.

25th

In Dublin, premier Charles Haughey dissolves the Dail (parliament) and calls a general election, to take place on 15th June in tandem with the EC election. His Fianna Fail party formed the government in 1987 but did not have an overall majority.

In the House of Commons, the Fair Employment Bill passes its third stage and goes to the House of Lords. The government has been pressurised from the USA, Ireland and Britain to strengthen the Bill and it has needed nearly 80 amendments to achieve this, including the setting of goals and timetables to end discrimination and increasing employers' fines from £8,500 to £30,000.

26th

It is announced that the Fine Gael candidate in the Dublin West constituency is Austin Currie, a long-standing member of the SDLP (he took part in the Duisburg talks with unionists which were revealed last February). The main issues of the election quickly emerge as health cuts, unemployment and emigration. Two of the opposition parties, Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats, agree on an electoral pact; the two "left" parties, the Labour Party and the Workers Party, fail to do the same.

28th

A report produced by the Prison Reform Trust, the NCCL, the Howard League and Women in Prison criticises conditions in the women's top security wing, Durham Jail (where Irish political prisoners are held). It says treatment of prisoners there could be unlawful, and strip searches are unnecessary.

30th

At the public inquiry into the proposed new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point, Somerset, an Irish environmentalist wins a sympathetic hearing. She raises the safety issue of nuclear-powered ships and submarines in the vicinity, and demands that the British nuclear industry pays the bill for monitoring equipment and emergency plans in Ireland.

In Belfast Crown Court, the trial opens of five men charged with offences related to the killing of two British Army corporals who drove into a republican funeral cortege in Belfast in March 1988 and were perceived to be attacking it. This is the second trial arising from the incident (see below, 1st June).

31st

John Hermon retires as head of the RUC, after almost ten years in the job. He hands over to Hugh Annesley.

On the Gibraltar Inquest: the Foreign



Office makes public a written statement by a Spanish police officer which supports the British authorities' version that Spanish surveillance broke down. However, the same officer has since stated that surveillance was maintained throughout.

Sinn Féin launches its EC election manifesto in Dublin, calling for withdrawal from the EC and negotiations along the lines of EFTA nations. And that SF MEPs would raise the national question in the European parliament. SF has a candidate in the North (which votes as one constituency to elect three MEPs) and candidates in all Southern constituencies except Munster where Father Patrick Ryan is standing as an anti-extradition candidate.

June

1st

In the first of the "corporal trials", which started on 4th April, the two defendants are found guilty of murder and other charges. They are jailed for life, with a minimum recommendation of 25 years.

2nd

Republican prisoner Gerard Kelly is released from the H. Blocks. He was originally jailed for life in 1973 for bombs in central London (including the Old Bailey), went on hunger strike, won a return to the North to serve sentence, escaped in 1983, was rearrested in Amsterdam and extradited but only on charges arising from the escape for which he received a five year sentence.

5th

Sinn Féin's EC candidate in the North, Danny Morrison, is as a candidate in Italy, at the invitation of the left group

Democrazia Proletaria: an international platform to spread the word against the British occupation of the North.

6th

A large IRA bomb damages a new shopping complex in Belfast city centre. A statement by the IRA describes the target as "a symbol of bogus normality".

7th

N. Ireland Secretary Tom King announces the sale of Shorts aerospace company to the Canadian company Bombardier. It will cost Bombardier £30 million; it will cost the British government (in this case, the British people) £780 million approx in loss write-offs etc. Within a few days, Shorts picks up orders from Canadair, Rolls Royce and China Asia Airlines of Taiwan worth £225 million.

12th

Irish TD (member of the Dail) and barrister David Andrews sues the *Sun*. It had described him as "Left-wing Eire MP" when he attended the Gibraltar Inquest as an accredited observer.

13th

Proposals to reform, N. Ireland's secondary schools are unveiled by N. Ireland Education Minister Brian Mawhinney. The package includes a common curriculum, government support for integrated (non-denominational) schools, and parental "choice" and input into a school's financial management.

The Home Office turns down a petition calling for an independent tribunal to re-open the case of the Birmingham Six. The petition had 20,000 signatures.



Financial Appeal

The Troops Out Movement has undertaken to publish an important new book on Ireland, to mark the 20th anniversary of the re-deployment of British troops in the 6 counties.

It is called:

'An Obstacle to Peace-Britains' Role in Ireland 69-89'

The book will cover all aspects of British policy during the last 20 years, both here and in Ireland.

The book is due to be published this year and funds are urgently required to help meet the considerable costs involved.

Please make a donation to support this project. Cheques/P.O.s payable to Troops Out Book Account, Box 353, London NW5 4NH

TROOPS OUT

TROOPS OUT

TROOPS OUT

TIME TO GO

**On the 20th Anniversary
of the Deployment of
British Troops in Ireland**

MARCH AND RALLY

August 12th 1989

**11am Whittington Park
Holloway Road**

To

CARNIVAL

In Finsbury Park

SELF - DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE