

# TROOPS OUT

Paper of the United Troops Out Movement

10p

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



On 28th January the National Front and the British Movement combined forces to attempt to break up the Bloody Sunday Commemoration march in London by a series of concerted violent attacks. This was not the first of such attacks but it was highly significant.

Both of these racist organisations of the far right have received major setbacks recently. The organisation and militancy of their main targets, black and asian people, has risen in recent years. Recently it has combined with a new spate of activity by the British left in the Anti Nazi League and the local Anti Racist Committees to deliver a series of blows to fascist confidence and to their attempts to control the streets.

It is in this context that the NF and British Movement's renewed attention to Ireland has to be seen. Partly they are seeking an outlet for the pent up frustration of their activists — the thugs we saw on the streets on the Bloody Sunday Anniversary. But more importantly, they see in the Irish question an opportunity to make ideological inroads into the British working class and to divide workers along the lines where the British left is ideologically weakest — the question of opposition to British imperialism in Ireland.

The NF have long been aware of this weak point. NF support for Loyalism and various Loyalist paramilitary organisations dates back to the 1960s. In 1972, for instance, John Tyndall saluted the Loyalists as embodying "the finest traditions of the British race", and the fringe groups associated with the NF have been involved from time to time in supplying arms and information to the UDA.

Loyalism is an extreme right wing movement that shares much of the politics of the NF, and which is above all based on the politics of dividing the working class through the use of racist ideology. But its specifically Ulster loyalty has however always prevented wholesale identification with the explicitly British nationalism of the NF.

and that has always prevented the organisational development of the NF in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, as the NF is well aware, the reactionary grip that Loyalism has over the Protestant workers and the barrier that that presents to working class unity in Ireland is in many ways a model for the sort of role they would hope to play in relation to the British working class in the class struggle in Britain.

Yet the response of the British anti-fascist movement to this issue has been negligible. The left press has often been filled with cries that "Wherever the NF raises its ugly head we will confront it on the streets" etc. The defence of Brick Lane has shown a sustained attempt to implement this policy and it has been mirrored around the country. But the political confusion and prevalent chauvinism of much of the labour movement has prevented the British anti-fascist movement from making a stand against an actual living example of a mass right wing movement paralysing and dividing the working class in Northern Ireland and in Ireland as a whole. The result is that demonstrations against British military occupation, torture, brutality and lies in Ireland have never been defended by the British anti-fascist movement as a whole.

It is time for the Anti Nazi League and the Anti Racist Committees to open their eyes to the activities of the NF and British Movement when they attack those who demonstrate in support of the democratic rights of the Irish people. What is needed from them is a firm commitment to the defence of Irish demonstrations against fascist aggression and beyond that the defence of the Irish people's right to determine their own future free from British interference and military occupation.

UTOM is a national movement based on a network of branches campaigning around the two demands:

#### TOOPS OUT NOW

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

We work in a non-sectarian way with trade unionists, labour party branches, left groups, black and anti-racist groups, students, women's groups and gay groups, and with any other sections of the community receptive to the argument that there is an imperialist war going on in Ireland, and that no solution acceptable to the Irish people can be reached until Britain withdraws.

If you want to join UTOM, or want more information about what we stand for write to the national address:  
Box UT, c/o 2a St Pauls Rd, London N1.

#### UTOM BRANCHES

England	Scotland
Basingstoke	Oxford
Birmingham	Sheffield
Bradford	Swindon
Brighton	Wolverhampton
Bristol	
Canterbury	Wales
Cleveland	Cardiff
Colchester	Newport
Coventry	Swansea
Harlow	London area
Hemel Hempstead	Camden & Islington
Leamington	East London
Leeds	Haringey
Leicester	Kilburn
Liverpool	NELP
Manchester	South London
Manchester Poly	Southeast
Norwich	SE London

*The Literature Collective welcomes articles, cartoons and ideas for the paper from readers. New writers should bear in mind that we cannot guarantee to publish everything submitted, so don't get demoralised.*

*The articles in 'Troops Out' represent the views of the Editorial Collective or of the individuals or branches who sign them. They do not necessarily represent the views of the UTOM as a whole. UTOM policy is made by general conferences of the whole membership.*

# WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?

## IRELAND AND THE BRITISH WORKING PEOPLE

The forces of the extreme right in this country seem to understand clearly where they stand in relation to Ireland. Like the National Front which attacked this year's Bloody Sunday march, they applaud the presence of Britain's army and call for further repression in Ireland. By contrast, the forces of the working class are confused and disoriented on this question—and this despite the fact that Britain's presence in Ireland is a sword which hangs over the head of the British Labour Movement.

The following article, another in our discussion series, is an attempt to answer some common questions and attitudes encountered when trying to convince workers here of our demands.

*You talk about repression but we don't see much of that over here. What we do see are laws that protect us against terrorism.*

Britain's presence in Ireland has been described as a "laboratory of repression". In part what this means is that in the name of opposing "terrorism" laws have been made in England, Scotland and Wales which restrict rights won by working people in struggle over generations.

The infamous "Prevention of Terrorism Act" is a case in point. This act allows detention of suspects for up to 12 days without charge or trial. It also allows permanent exile (exclusion) without a real right of appeal. Under this Act the British Government has restricted the flow of information about Ireland, and the vast majority of its victims have been workers, including many active trade unionists.

This Act became law without any serious opposition from the Labour Movement and it has left British workers in a weak position. For now it can easily be extended to deal with further "crimes". The Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police has already called for restrictions on the rights of suspects. At present in the Six Counties Roy Mason can suspend habeas corpus at will through 'orders-in-council', and juries have been done away with for certain charges. How long will it be before this is common practice in England, Scotland and Wales?

*The laws may have been changed but how are our rights as trade unionists affected?*

The army and police in the North of Ireland have been trained in methods which are being and will be used in this country against trade unionists. The past two Loyalist strikes have been an excellent training-ground for them, taking over working-people's jobs: *scabbing*. When the

army was used this winter to try and break the lorry drivers strike in the North of Ireland, there was scarcely a whimper raised, and the Official Unionists welcomed them.

This was what happened to the fire-fighters in this country, and what will happen to other groups of workers here as long as the army is used in Ireland. Few other armies in Europe have had this opportunity to practice running 'essential services', and the British Army gets additional political capital from being seen as a "peace-keeping force" instead of as the instrument of war it really is.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) is another area of experiment in anti-working class activity. The Special Patrol Group which was used by the London Police to attack pickets at Grunwick's was built up from an experimental force within the RUC, Britain's police force in Ireland. Just as the SPGs attack trade unionists and black people in Britain so do they attack anti-Loyalists in Ireland. Here again the lack of any significant protest in Britain has weakened British working people in their own struggles.

This question has been made even more urgent by rumours that Newman, chief of the RUC (and responsible for the Castle-reagh torture centre where trade unionist Brian Maguire was murdered) is to be selected as next chief of the Metropolitan Police.

*Yes, but isn't it really just a Paddy's quarrel among themselves?*

One of the most astounding things about British people is the fact that they still retain so many delusions from the days of Empire. People in this country seem to think that in some way the Six Counties are "ours" while the people in them are not "us". This attitude has been very convenient for British bosses as it has allowed them to foment anti-Irish racism on one hand while on the other to use British working people as cannon-fodder in defending one of the last colonies.

The working people of Britain have

gained nothing from Britain's war in Ireland. But the government uses the war to reinforce the chauvinism that exists among British workers. Workers are asked to identify with the role of the British State and see it as some sort of impartial arbiter between warring factions of workers—a peace-keeping force. *Somehow workers have been persuaded that the Army can solve the problems of Northern Ireland workers—yet they would never dream of accepting that the Army could solve their own problems in this country.* But the government realises that if workers accept one it's a big step toward getting them to accept the other. Ominously, prominent academic voices in government circles have recently been arguing that the current strike wave is not a struggle of workers against capital but "a civil war within the working class".

*If the troops do withdraw, what's in it for us? What difference would it make here?*

A defeat for Britain in Northern Ireland would be a defeat for the multinational factory owners, the big financiers and the bosses and their armed might. Turn the situation around and look at it over here. It's the same groups that are trying to stop the low-paid getting more, who are cutting the social services and housing, who are campaigning on reactionary law and order platforms and who see the defeat of the struggle in Ireland as a priority. *It's the same forces that workers are fighting against over here that the Irish resistance is fighting against over there.*

This common interest of the two working classes has been recognised for centuries by Irish militants, many of whom were forced by economic pressures to emigrate to England. Many of the leading Chartists came from Irish backgrounds, and James Connolly was only the most prominent spokesperson of this Irish socialist tradition which never ceased to stress that the common people of both countries were being used against each other and having their claims and aspirations crushed and dissipated by the British ruling class.

They recognised, as the British working class have rarely done, that it is ruling class interests—the interests of those using the cheap labour and resources of an underdeveloped area and divided working class—that the government is trying to defend by keeping the Army there. A defeat for Britain in Ireland would show that the state is not invincible, just as the defeat of the Americans in Vietnam showed that American imperialism could be defeated, and encouraged anti-imperialist struggles all over the globe. A defeat for the British state is a victory for all British workers.



# Who's Afraid of the Irish M.P.s?

Today a few Unionist MPs help to keep Callaghan's Labour Government in office. But in the 1880s a large group of Irish MPs manipulated and toppled successive British governments, motivated by very different purposes.

## GLADSTONE AND THE CARROT

The years 1880-85 saw the rise of Parnell's Home Rule Party at Westminster to its maximum voting strength. The Irish introduced bills which Liberals and Tories united to denounce, yet rivalled each other by seeking to repress agitation while still conceding some of the demands. The old story - stick and carrot. Parnell rejected no concession however small so long as it left him free to fight for the legislative independence of Ireland, nor would he accept any concession however great which did not leave him that freedom. He foresaw Gladstone's expedient conversion to a form of Home Rule for Ireland. However, to help prevent his own working classes uniting with the persecuted Irish, Gladstone had either to destroy or to 'capture' the Irish parliamentary party.

## (IRISH) CRIMES

In May 1885 Gladstone announced - under pressure from his right wing - that the Government intended to renew the draconian (Irish) Crimes Act. Parnell saw an Irish opportunity. He was responsive to the political bribes from the Tories and led his party into the Opposition Lobby for the division on the Budget, a vote which brought down the Government. A Tory Government took power wholly dependent upon combined Irish and radical support.

During the general election that soon followed, Gladstone appealed for a majority big enough to make him independent of the peculiar Tory-Irish alliance. The result had Liberals outnumbering Tories by 86 seats - exactly the number of the Irish party. The balance of power was theirs, and they had triumphed throughout Ireland.

## GLADSTONE DEFEATED

Once again Prime Minister, Gladstone at once announced an immediate Home Rule Bill for Ireland, but the bill was doomed to defeat - not merely by all the anti-Irish prejudice which Gladstone himself had helped to create. The Whigs in his camp disliked the Irish alliance but feared the rise of left wing radicals at home if the Irish went off to Dublin. Gladstone's rival for power, Joseph Chamberlain, deserted him, ironically together with many radicals who defected because they felt the Bill did not go far enough. And most of Parliament believed it could control the Irish better at Westminster than at Dublin.

Gladstone went to the country on the Home Rule issue and suffered a grave defeat. While the Irish party remained

intact.

## SALISBURY AND THE STICK

After that 1886 election the Tories and Unionists enjoyed a majority over the Liberals and Nationalists, and the new Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, soon let the Irish know they had nothing to hope for from him. He compared them to "Hottentots, and other races incapable of self-government". He said he would sooner spend public money to secure the emigration of a million Irishmen than in buying out a single landlord, and that all Ireland needed was "twenty years of resolute government".

## PERPETUAL COERCION

When the Irish party tried out an agricultural plan, it was suppressed as general mutiny, and early in 1887 the Tories brought in a *Perpetual Coercion Bill* against Ireland. No charge there was

too fantastic. A boy of ten was convicted of 'intimidating' a policeman by whistling a tune; an Italian organ-grinder who had trained his monkey to draw and fire a toy pistol was fined under the Arms Act and the pistol confiscated. Riots and violence erupted, especially in Co. Cork. Even the Tories found it impossible to rely solely on coercion.

Parnell had died broken-hearted in 1891 after the divorce scandal and consequent disastrous split in his party. A year later the Liberals returned to power, but Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was thrown out by the Lords and he retired. The Liberals called another election aiming for an outright majority rather than rely on Irish support, - that ended with the Tories returning to power for a decade.

*As it turned out, the only Irish Home Rule which a British Government was to sanction was Stormont for its Unionist allies. Callaghan may well be feeling the need to make deals with them once more.*



*'Britannia at the Crossroads. Gladstone the Liberal - olive branch of Home Rule, or Conservative Lord Salisbury offering coercion.'* Punch Cartoon from the 1880's

"I am not complaining of the penalties which my masters inflict on me – it is my job to suffer – but I insist and I have the right to inform the world of the treatment to which I am being subjected."

O'Donovan Rossa, Irish political prisoner in the last century, quoted by Danny Morrison in his statement to the TWU conference.

The Theatre Writers' Union conference on censorship held in London on 28th January attracted some 200 people, mainly media workers. It was arranged as a series of five panels – on industrial affairs, sexual politics, racism, Ireland and law-and-order.

Censorship of Irish coverage was mentioned in every session, for it is in relation to Ireland that interference has been most blatant. As Philip Schlesinger, author of the very perceptive book about the BBC, *Putting 'Reality' Together*, said,

## CLOSING OUR EARS



"Northern Ireland has presented a crisis for the British state and the British media, and especially for the public broadcasting system."

The authorities are not keen to use open censorship because it alienates media workers and creates publicity for the 'undesirable' programme. Open censorship has been used against works related to other topics – such as Howard Schuman's play about censorship, *Censored Scenes from King Kong*, and Roy Minton's *Scum*, about borstal boys. But Ireland – with over 20 TV programmes censored – has suffered the most.

To avoid the pitfalls of the open use of the blue pencil more subtle methods of control have been developed. It is now well known that in both BBC and ITV programmes on Ireland have to be 'referred-up' for vetting before transmission, and often before filming starts. The result has been self-censorship by career-conscious programme makers.

## ATTACKS

Impressive panels had been invited for all the sessions. Along with Philip Schlesinger, the speakers on the media and Ireland included film-maker Kenneth Griffith, John O'Callaghan of RTE who resigned from the *Guardian* in 1972 over their Irish coverage. Belfast author John McGuffin, and artist Conrad Atkinson, whose work condemning British repression was recently banned from the Ulster Museum.

Danny Morrison, editor of *Republican*

News, sent a statement which graphically described the British attempts to suppress news of the war by attacking *Republican News*.

Kenneth Griffith told how he had been prevented as a condition of an out-of-court settlement from speaking about his banned film *Hang Out Your Brightest Colours – the Life and Death of Michael Collins* for two years. The two years were just up, so for the first time Griffith was able to describe the lengths to which the IBA had gone to prevent the issue coming to court and causing a public rumpus.



*Troops Out* readers should look out for Griffith's new film *Curious Journey*, which centres on interviews with old Irish men and women who were active against the British between 1916 and 1921. Attempts were made to get him to cut some of the quotes from Irish historical figures but he has refused to do this.

The conference was a rare occasion for Irish people, to present their views to a British audience.

John McGuffin pointed out that in the early days of the civil rights movement coverage was quite sympathetic. "The break-off point", he said, "comes when British troops become involved. The British media have never ever told the truth about British soldiers".

He also hammered journalists for what he called "the Europa syndrome" – when journalists find it easier to stay inside the Europa Hotel or McGlade's Bar and get on the phone to the army information office when trouble brews, rather than going out to investigate what's happening.

The conference provided a picture of how the media operate as a ruling class weapon, preventing progressive voices from being heard. The repeated conflicts over Irish coverage can be seen as a foretaste of what will happen as sections of the British people become increasingly militant.

## THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL ON BRITAIN'S PRESENCE IN IRELAND

### A Report on the Preliminary Hearing

The preliminary hearing of the International Tribunal was held in Paris on the 27th and 28th of January. The judges were Etienne Bloch (for France), Phil Flynn, deputy general secretary of the Irish Local Government and Public Services Union (for Ireland) and Ron Knowles, editor of the NUT's paper, the *Journalist*, (for Britain).

An extensive range of evidence was examined. Official British government documents were produced and judged against international civil rights conventions. This was in order to show that the administrative measures taken by Britain proved that only by the systematic flouting of internationally accepted standards of individual civil liberties could Britain maintain its presence in Northern Ireland.

### EVIDENCE ON TOILET PAPER

Father Denis Faul and a representative of the Belfast Central Relatives Action Committee gave evidence of British interrogation methods and of the conditions to which Republican prisoners were subject. This evidence included personal statements by the prisoners snuggled out on toilet paper.

In fact the extent of the evidence was so great that it was not possible to present it in the detail originally intended; however, material was also presented to the hearing on the consequences of the British presence for the economy and the position of women in the six counties.

### CASE ESTABLISHED

The object of the preliminary hearing was to consider the need for a full investigation of Britain's presence in Ireland and the judges unanimously decided that a *prima facie* case had been made for the calling of a full-scale tribunal in London later this year. The hearing concluded by issuing a lengthy judgement which made reference to a whole range of issues as questions which should be considered by the full Tribunal. These covered the historical background to Britain's involvement in Ireland and in the six counties in particular and the social, economic and political consequences for the Northern Ireland community today. In the words of the statement itself "we regard it as fundamental to the whole question of Britain's presence in Ireland to examine the manner in which the Northern Ireland statelet came into being and the manner in which it has been maintained and also through detailed consideration whether in fact it can be maintained without resort to breaches of human rights charters."

International Tribunal Planning Committee fund raising social 23 March, North London Poly (Kentish Town Site), Belt & Braces Road show and supporting band & disco.

# THE SHACKLETON REVIEW- GOVERNMENT WHITEWASH



For the past 4 years, with no fuss or embarrassing publicity, Parliament has renewed the most repressive legislation in modern Britain, The Prevention of Terrorism Act (Temporary Provisions). This year, however, renewal will be connected with debate on the recommendations of Lord Shackleton's enquiry into the PTA and this may allow publicity to be given to the way the Act is used to terrorise the Irish community in this country.

"I have carefully considered the need for this legislation and I am convinced of its necessity. It is right that the balance between civil rights and the need for the protection of our citizens should be weighed up and discussed. There is a balance to be struck, and my judgement is that the continuance of the Act is a necessity." *Rees. Hansard, vol. 927.65, col. 1475*

Shackleton reviewed the PTA whilst "accepting the continuing need for legislation against terrorism". The government claims that the Act with its extensive powers of detention and deportation is necessary to stop the spread of terrorist activity in Great Britain. But the experience of the Irish community in Braintree over the past two months, as well as the mass of material now available through UTOM, Irish organisations and the NCCL, expose this claim as a lie.

Towards the end of January, when police were supposedly investigating the December bombings, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Braintree Irish Society were detained under the PTA. Arresting officers used this opportunity to confiscate the membership list of the club, which acts as a centre for local Irish community activity. Throughout the next three weeks a steady stream of members were detained and questioned. One was held for seven days, released and rearrested for a further seven days. So far those still held have been charged with criminal deception and that "terrorist" crime, 'withholding information'. No

charges have been brought directly relating to the bombings. Shackleton recommends that Section II, 'withholding information', be dropped from the Act. The Braintree charges may now however be used as evidence that Section II is still needed.

PTA statistics since 1974 show that the Braintree community's experience is not an isolated case. Between November 1974 and January 1979 3782 people were detained in Great Britain under the

PTA. Only 151 of these were ever charged and very few of the charges related in any way to terrorist activity. Charges included traffic offences, nonpayment of fines, theft, and wasting police time! In Northern Ireland during the same period 588 were detained; and only 33 were charged with PTA offences — including an ominous number of 'withholding information' charges.

will say nothing at all to them. They realise that there can be several reasons for this and indeed the person concerned is not bound to say anything. But the police cannot rule out the possibility that he has been trained in what might be called "anti-interrogation" techniques and that this may be an indication of

totally useless. We want an end to the exclusion orders — at present running at an average of one person a week — along with the rest of the Act.

The recommendation that the power given to police at ports and airports to detain without permission from a higher authority for up to seven days be dropped, is another reform which would change nothing. At present police (other than those at ports of entry) must get permission from the Home Secretary to hold someone for more than 48 hours. Such police requests have *never* been refused. Detention without trial is now part of British law and a grim experience for hundreds of Irish labourers who have been lifted at Stranraer and Merseyside on their way to work in Great Britain.

The recommendations which will inspire the most cynical laughter are those which relate to the rights, diet, exercise and comfort of detainees. Police and prison screws have never been very good at providing Irish prisoners with home comforts, and for Lord Shackleton to imagine that a recommendation from him will result in 'Judges' Rules' being applied in all cases shows his complete ignorance of the workings of British

The police often find that the person concerned justice — or his complete cynicism.

The PTA, 'reformed' or not, is sure to be renewed. But if every UTOM branch, together with trade unions, trades councils and other groups who oppose the Act, makes enough of a stink, it may not get an effortless passage. The PTA is no longer a 'Temporary' Act. Every year it remains on the statute books 'ordinary'

British law moves more in the same direction.

We must continue to show that a further erosion of our rights to speak out against British imperialism will not be tolerated.

Further information can be had from:

- National Council for Civil Liberties, 186 King's Cross Rd., London WC1.
- Merseyside UTOM pamphlet "Repeal the Terror Act", Box UTOM, c/o 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF THE P.T.A.

The previous article has explained how the PTA is used to try and silence people who speak out against the occupation of the North of Ireland. It is in particular used to deter members of the Irish community from organising against Britain in Ireland. But the methods used by the state go beyond mere deterrents. Below is an interview with Peter Grimes, national organiser of the IRSP in England, which shows how much further the state is ready to go.

What were your first experiences of Special Branch activity?

My flat was raided in 1976. They said they were looking for arms. None were found, but I was taken to Bethnal Green nick. There I was asked to relay information on IRSP activities to them. I refused and on my release I made their offer public. I did not fancy unexpectedly disappearing. From that time, myself and other members and supporters have been subjected to phone tapping and surveillance by the police.

How did you come to be lifted under the PTA?

In 1977, the IRSP were approached about setting up a support group in Ramsgate by someone called Con Mallon. We arranged for paper sales and collections for the prisoners and I went down to see Mallon to discuss extending the group's activities.

In August 1977 I was arrested by two armed plain clothes police whilst I was at work. I was asked if I knew a Harry Driver. I did not. I was then asked if I knew Con Mallon. I did and they told me he was one and the same. I was told they had found explosive materials and ammunition in his possession and I was to tell them all about it. I knew nothing about it.

What sort of questions were you asked?

I was held for six days and questioned for four hours with two hours' break. They wanted to know about people in left wing groups and unions. They were interested in the sexual behaviour of various people. I was asked to sign notes they made but I refused.

During this time I was not allowed to sleep, wash, change my clothes or exercise.

They also arrested my girlfriend for 3 days. I could hear her shouting from the next cell. My father was also held for 2 days. When I was released I found out that my flat and my friends' flats had been raided. They took away diaries, note books and documents.

What was the outcome of your arrest?

I was charged under Section 4 of the PTA "for withholding information which might be of material assistance in preventing acts of terrorism". I was given bail of £5,000 and ordered to keep away from IRSP members and activities. As London organiser this was an attempt to break up the support group.

At the court I had to prove that I did not know about Mallon and the explosives, not them prove that I did.

Finally I was given 3 months in Pentonville.

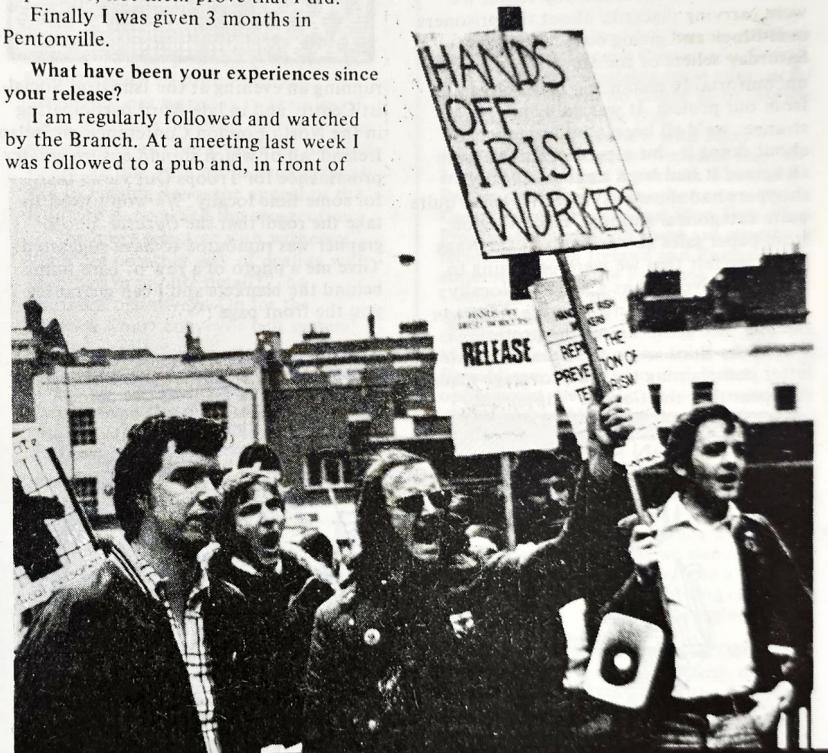
What have been your experiences since your release?

I am regularly followed and watched by the Branch. At a meeting last week I was followed to a pub and, in front of

members of other political groups, was greeted by two Branch men. It's like a constant reminder. They are trying to force me out of activity.

Recently I was offered money again for "reporting". I went to the NCCL and made a statement. This was distributed by Tom Litterick M.P. in the House of Commons and he wrote to Merlyn Rees (Home Secretary) about it.

It might be coincidental that I've been rejected for 3 gardening jobs despite being a craftsman gardener, or that my brother's application for a government training scheme was turned down when he admitted to being the brother of Peter Grimes. I suppose it's too much to suspect them of having my father's disability allowances and privileges withdrawn.



### TUCAR TOUR - 12th to 17th MARCH

**Phil Flynn**, Deputy General Secretary of the Irish Local Government Association and Public Service Union, Dublin, and **John Major**, Nalgo member from Belfast, will speak at UTOM-organised meetings about the British and Irish governments' use of special laws and special courts, the police and the army against trade unionists and political activists.

**Monday 12 March: Manchester** Cavendish House, Manchester Poly, All Saints, 8 pm

**Tuesday 13 March: Liverpool** AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant, 7.30 pm

**Wednesday 14 March: Birmingham** Phone 021 773 8683 for details

**Thursday 15 March: Sheffield** Phone 0742 668093 for details

**Friday 16 March: South London** Leanders Hall [off Tanners Hill] SE13, 7.30 pm

**Saturday 17 March: East London** City Poly S.U., Whitechapel High Street, Aldgate East tube, 7.30. To be followed by a social

**Brighton:** Write to Box 10, 2a St Pauls Rd, N1 for details and confirmation

# BRANCH NEWS BRANCH NEWS

## BLANKET APPROVAL FOR UTOM



Camden & Islington Branch reports on their first public activity:

"There were 25 of us, 12 wrapped in blankets, among the shoppers outside Sainsbury's on the Holloway Road. We were carrying placards about the prisoners in H-Block and giving out leaflets. The Saturday sellers of the *Morning Star* were uncomfortably distancing themselves from our protest. It was cold and strange: we'd all been a bit apprehensive about doing it—but after 2 hours we were all agreed it had been a success. Many shoppers had showed sympathy, some quite quite categorical support. Following on from paper sales at weekends at the Nags Head, we felt that we were beginning to make ourselves felt as a presence locally.

"For two weeks in a row the *Islington Gazette* had items about the protest, and in the third week carried a very irate letter complaining that the coverage made it appear that the *Gazette* supported



## IS THIS A NEW ONE?

A *Troops Out* seller from the newly-formed Dundee UTOM branch was stopped from selling the paper by a policeman who claimed that as it wasn't registered with the Post Office it wasn't a proper newspaper! [So far as we know, registration with the P.O. is for the purposes of getting cheap mail privileges]. Has any other branch come up against this one?

## an old one

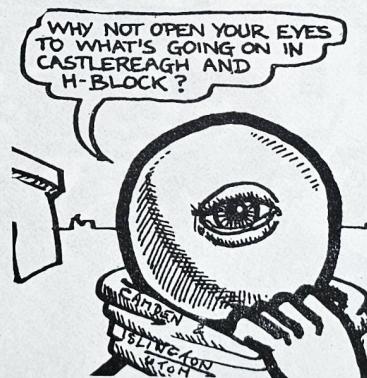
Yorkshire branches report great difficulty in helping with Brendan Gallagher's campaign against Roy Mason in Barnsley, because it is impossible for Mr Gallagher to get a pub or other meeting place in the centre of town, partly because of threats from the NF.

UTOM. The letter writer had rushed into print to assure the paper's readers, and us, that these 'so-called' political prisoners had been convicted under normal criminal law!

"It seems that this hack has probably had the last word in the *Gazette* on this occasion. But on March 11th we are



running an evening at the Islington Socialist Centre, and in late April participating in the North London Conference on Ireland, all of which should ensure greater prominence for Troops Out views than for some time locally. We won't need to take the road that the *Gazette* photographer was rumoured to have suggested: 'Give me a photo of a row of bare bums behind the blankets and I can guarantee you the front page!'"



## LEICESTER TRADES COUNCIL

### Leicester UTOM reports:

"The January meeting of Leicester Trades Council passed a motion

"The January meeting of Leicester Trades Council adopted the following positions on Ireland's British problem: Troops Out Now; Self-Determination; Repeal of the PTA; Political Status, and set up a subcommittee to campaign for these demands.

An amendment to add affiliation to UTOM was, however, defeated.

### Leicester comments:

Whilst the passing of this motion does not mean that trade unions throughout Leicester have adopted the above demands and will be campaigning for their implementation, it does mark a tremendous advance in Irish solidarity work. The Trades Council subcommittee will have a far greater prestige than the local UTOM group, and should find it less difficult to get speakers into union branches in order to win them over to campaigning for the above demands, especially since they are now the official positions of the Trades Council.

The success of the UTOM branch in getting the above motion through is evidence of the possibilities which exist for making gains in the labour movement, provided that a serious orientation towards the labour movement is made by UTOM both locally and nationally."

## CONFERENCES



Two local London conferences on Ireland are planned, for late April and late May. The new Camden & Islington UTOM branch initiated the first one, in April, while the second is the work of the South and South East London Branches.

## ANTI-RACIST TURN TO IRELAND

Following the NF and British Movement Movement attacks on the Bloody Sunday march, at least two UTOM branches have successfully approached their local anti-racist groups for work around Ireland to combat anti-Irish racism.

Sheffield UTOM has persuaded the Council Workers Against the Nazis to recognise racism against the Irish, and the local ANL has agreed to a meeting on Ireland.

### S London UTOM reports:

"After some debate the Lambeth Anti-Racist group ALARM and SL UTOM agreed to a mutual affiliation at a meeting on January 30th. ALARM passed the following motion:

ALARM recognises racism practised against the Irish as a consequence of the imperialist oppression of Ireland by the English, which is maintained by the force of the British Army on Irish soil. ALARM therefore supports the two demands of Troops Out Now and Self-Determination for the Irish People.

"We feel this kind of affiliation is important in the light of the NF attack on the march, and also in a more general sense to argue the connection between anti-racist work and oppression in Ireland."



"We feel the British people should support *all* demonstrations and raise the H Block issue at trades councils and in their unions. Our motto is Organise, Demonstrate, SMASH THE H BLOCKS!"

March 1 is the 3rd anniversary of withdrawal of political status from Irish prisoners of war in the North. Leading up to that anniversary, the Relatives Action Committees protesting on behalf of the men in the H Blocks and the women in Armagh have stepped up their protests. Each week now in Belfast marches of several thousand people show their support for the prisoners, although they go unreported in this country.

What follows is part of a statement sent over by the Central Relatives Action Committee, Belfast, addressed to the British people.

"...The search procedure at the Blocks is getting worse. The PoWs have to stand on a mirror and then squat and have a torch shone up their anus. The screws are trying hard to break their morale before Kieran Nugent is released on May 16th. Eight prisoners on the blanket protest whose mothers or fathers have died have all been refused parole for the funerals.

"...The prisoners remain unbroken. Their heroic stand in the face of unimaginable suffering echoes throughout the world. Britain stands indicted before all the peoples of the world to its eternal shame. Roy Mason and the rest of the Brit warlords are starting to crumble in the face of intense international pressure. It is only a matter of time before the H-Blocks of Long Kesh crumble along with them.



"Victory to the blanket men"

"Victory to the Irish People's war of Liberation"

## BRIT BITS

Steven Cox, an ex-soldier who served in Northern Ireland, was jailed for life at the Old Bailey in early February for murdering a pub barman who surprised him in the course of a robbery. He denied murder. "My army training took over and I fired automatically", he said.

• • •

### BOREHAM BORED

MR JUSTICE BOREHAM lived up to his name in the continuing "Hull Riot" case being heard at York Crown Court. 12 prison officers are charged with conspiring to beat prisoners, including a number of Irish political prisoners, in the aftermath of prison protests.

Probably not warming to the idea of these prisoners indicting British prison justice in open court, the Bore decided to act. In line with his judicial gymnastics in turning down the appeal of the Guilford 4, he asked the prosecution to "be more selective with witnesses". "Is there no other way of dealing with this than in minute detail?", he enquired plaintively. Oh for the Diplock Court conveyor belt system!

• • •

### HERO EXPOSED

Two months ago, Detective Constable Edward Morley was a hero - the man who pursued and confronted a gang of mad bombers driving a White Opel Kadet car through the Surrey countryside. The "hero" told the press how he finally cornered them in a cul de sac before they fired at him with a shotgun and made their escape. Like many British heroics in the Irish War, this one was a fairy tale. Unlike most others this one has been exposed for what it is. For a month later the White Opel Kadet that Morley claimed to have pursued was located in a garage in Ireland and conclusively shown by Irish police to have been there since a month before the incident. Poor Morley - shown up for an incompetent liar, he is now suspended from duty and taking medication. Meanwhile more accomplished "heroes" like the 16 RUC men decorated for gallantry this week, continue to collect their medals.

## Ireland Socialist Review No. 4

Just out. Available from 60 Loughborough Road, London SW9. Price 30p + 15p postage. Will be reviewed in the next issue.

### Utum National Liaison Committee Meeting, Birmingham, 10th March.

See Branch Secretaries for details.

Pooled fare, accommodation.

Send agenda items to Birmingham as soon as possible..

## \* REVIEW \*

### HANDS OFF UTOM!

*Hands Off Ireland* is a journal produced by the Revolutionary Communist Group. The latest issue contains some very useful articles which will no doubt be of interest to readers of *Troops Out*.

There is an interview with Mary MacLaughlin about her husband Ray, an Irish POW serving 12 years in Wakefield Prison. And there is another one with Gerry Adams Provisional Sinn Fein Vice-President. In addition there are reports of recent demos in Ireland and England, statements from the Relatives Action Committee, and much more.

Unfortunately it is ruined by hysterical rantings against the United Troops Out Movement and our supporters. We are anti-Republican; liberal; pro-imperialist; opportunist; petit-bourgeois; chauvinist; radicalised middle class layers and a whole lot of other things.

We are accused of sabotaging the principled anti-imperialist alliance of the RCG, PAC and Provisional Sinn Fein (England). We don't support their demos or meetings; we hold counterdemos; we slander them; oppose the armed struggle, and above all we prevent the English working class from supporting the liberation struggle.

This is untrue. In Leeds UTOM alone, we have organised meetings with speakers from Provisional Sinn Fein, the PAC, and the Irish Republican Socialist Party. We have published two issues of a journal which included commissioned articles by Sinn Fein and by the PAC. We have sold Republican literature, and have always defended the Republican movement. Anyone who has had any contact with UTOM will be amazed to see these accusations.

Knowing the truth behind the RCG's distortions, I was extremely angry when I read *Hands Off Ireland*. It would be possible to refute every attack made upon us, but it would be extremely tedious, and unlike them, we do not believe that the English working class will be won to our cause by denunciations and counter-denunciations. It is more likely to put people off, and it is time they realised it. If the whole thing wasn't so tragic, it would be funny. Your money would be much better spent buying *Republican News* / *An Phoblacht* or *The Starry Plough*.

*Hands Off Ireland*, 25p from RCG, 49 Railton Road, London SE24 0LN.

# FLASHPOINTS



## PRESENT AND FUTURE

### REVIEWS

**Frank Burton: The Politics of Legitimacy; struggles in a Belfast Community** (Routledge Kegan Paul). £6.95.

Skip over the impenetrable sociological jargon of the introduction and you get to Burton's analysis of the Belfast community "Anro" where he lived for 8 months in 1972. He describes the tight family and friendship networks that keep the people of the area together and helping one another, and is impressed by the "highly politicised nature of Anro". He makes it clear that the IRA could not continue and flourish without the active aid of the community, and in turn that the IRA and Sinn Fein organisations are a part of that community. Against the theory that the IRA exercise a Mafia-like control over the Catholics, he says: "The main reason for (IRA) existence and persistence is the centrality of their movement in the Northern Ireland Catholics' consciousness".

### LIFE IN BELFAST TODAY

He explains how self preservation leads people to be wary – to try to gauge the religion of a stranger, to choose a bus stop which does not immediately mark you out as a resident of a Catholic ghetto; to avoid buses that run through Protestant areas. It seems almost ludicrous to subject these everyday details to such serious analysis – but it is nevertheless the first time that they have been recorded on paper.

Burton says in his analysis of Northern Ireland Republicanism, that he heard much criticism of IRA tactics, and debate about whether their role should be 'offensive' or merely 'defensive', but he warns that these criticisms should not be seen in the same light as criticisms from

### REVIEWS

### REVIEWS

'outside'. Particularly in Anro, "voicing anti-Provo views does not entail a commitment to the British Army". In this, the most interesting part of the book, he examines the political interaction between the IRA, its supporters and its critics. But here is also its biggest failing. Burton makes no comment on political debate within the IRA.

This is strange since he tells us that some of his IRA respondents were "well-read . . . with a clearly articulated ideology". (They) "liked to debate about politics". He seems, in fact, to make an artificial division between a formal political line and the real life political relationship between the IRA and the community. He then limits himself to examining this relationship from a human and an organisational angle, and says nothing about the political debate among Republicans in which he clearly participated

### ATMOSPHERE & ANALYSIS

Burton succeeds in capturing the atmosphere of "Anro". Its people come to life: the IRA "radiating a glow of involvement – a quick walking 'busy' appearance". But there is also the constant fraying of the nerves through fear and harassment, and this often leads to severe depression (the 'Big Ds', as the IRA call them) among combatants and non-combatants alike.

It's an exciting story decently set in a properly sociological framework to shield us from the temptation to sympathise too much with the protagonists. The juxtaposition of sociological jargon with life in "Anro" seems incongruous. In spite of this, it's an excellent book – readable (in most places), even moving. Get hold of it and read it.

### REVIEWS

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#### FLASHPOINT

It's two years from now. The IRA offensive is reaching new peaks: they've got hold of Libyan armoured cars and the most up to date guns and missiles. British Army casualties are soaring and panic and unrest are creeping through the ranks. Desertion is becoming a serious threat. A young squaddie has panicked under fire and fled, and a court-martial has decided to clamp down on the growing disaffection by sentencing him to death by firing squad.

"Flashpoint", a new play by Tom Kempinski now transferred to the Mayfair Theatre in the West End after a successful local run, begins here. On the night before the execution, the 5 man firing squad are assembled together in barracks. The play traces the explosion of tension within the group of soldiers, and in the process explores the role of the Army in Northern Ireland.

The action is tense and fast and the dialogue is rapidfire. The characters are rather stereotyped and the denouement perhaps rather corny. But the play grips and sweeps you along, and the crisis point of the play when the soldiers turn against themselves the torture and brutality techniques of the war they usually direct at other people is shocking and powerful.

Politically, the play is very incomplete. It raises a lot of questions but it doesn't attempt to give answers. But perhaps, since the few answers it does offer are quite soggy, this is no bad thing. It is thought provoking, but at West End Theatre prices you have to spend at least £2.50 to get your thoughts provoked.

"Flashpoint" is at the Mayfair Theatre in Stratton St., W1, near Green Park Tube (Tel. 493-2031).

# DIARY OF EVENTS

**JAN**

25 Leaked report of N.I. Housing Exec recommends demolition of all but two Turf Lodge estate housing blocks. Tenants have been campaigning for demolition for some time. Report acknowledges housing very substandard, advises replace some, rest of tenants to go to new Pogallass estate on Belfast borders.

26 Belfast DPP's office instructs RUC to charge two SAS men with murder of 16 year old John Boyle in 1978. Army had claimed Boyle was shot while aiming a gun at them.

27 US Congressman Biaggi's conference on an independent 6 county solution for N.Ireland gets brush off from Alliance/SDLP/Official Unionists & DUP. Provisionals previously refused to attend Body of Englishman resident in Ireland found in Dublin mountains.

28 Phone call claims he was SAS—Provisionals later deny any connection with killing.

18 men detained under PTA in Paisley.

Bloody Sunday commemoration march in London, called by SF, attacked by large contingents of NF and British Movement. Socialist Labour Party Conference calls for political status and British withdrawal; is divided on degree of support for armed struggle.

29 Official Unionist reject Mason's latest plan for 'interim devolution'.

30 News that Housing Executive is to sell off more than 1/4 of its stock. SDLP rejects Masons devolution plan; calls it 'part of the Roy Mason image promotion'. N.I. Office published broadsheet to counter concern over H Blocks. Guardian describes it as 'unprecedented move'.

31 SLP President Merrigan is forced at party conference to withdraw his condemnation of provisional bombing campaign.

The fact that charges have been brought against 2 SAS men for shooting John Boyle doesn't mean that they will be found guilty. They are held in military, rather than police custody, their identity and even their rank is carefully concealed. If the file sent to the DPP's office and held for over five months had not been leaked, it is questionable whether they would ever have been charged. It is noteworthy that the charges were finally brought not through the DPP but through the Attorney General, Silkin, indicating that the case had become too much of a political embarrassment to ignore.

**FEB**

1 Confidential post mortem details on John Boyle leaked to press. He was not carrying a gun, was shot in back of head. Report has been with DPP over 5 months. Mason, in H of C, says there is no need to investigate extent to which 'yellow card' instructions on situations in which soldiers can shoot to kill are ignored. It is alleged that army undercover squads have killed 10 men on stake-outs over past year.

4 more charged under Section 11 of the PTA [withholding information] and with car offences. 8 others still held at Paddington.

22 N.I. men charged in Greece with smuggling arms and ammunition. 4 more PTA arrests in Scotland.

SAS man on 'navigation training exercise' in Brecon Beacons dies of exposure. It is well known that the SAS aren't too hot on map reading.

4 Father Faul says compromise on H Block conditions could easily be reached, but not while Mason is N.I. Secy. But "with the help of God he will not be Secretary of State for very long more". Former head of training for prison warders in N.I. and his wife are shot dead in Belfast.

5 30 men appear in court in Paisley under PTA, 24 charged with conspiring to raise money and receive firearms and explosives for acts of terrorism. Police claim UDA network. Gerry Fitt says he won't support the Government in votes of confidence in response to Roy Mason's description of the SDLP as 'extremists', the Official Unionists as 'moderates'. Official Unionist leader Harry West says he is prepared to meet the Republican Clubs [formerly Official Sinn Fein] for talks.

Mason had a field day in February. First he upset the SDLP; then he went on Panorama to give the nation the truth about the H Blocks. His crude BIG LIE technique eventually reduced his interviewer Keith Kyle to utter frustration: 'Long Kesh is one of Europe's most humane prisons' 'H Block operates with human rights in mind'; The Burntollet March only got 250 supporters, he intoned. And finally: 'There's no pact between the Government and the Unionists'. On this last BIG LIE Powell would beg to differ. He has stated publicly more than once that the Parliamentary Unionist group have an agreement that in return for more seats in the Commons they will keep the government in power. They proved this when they did not oppose the government in the crucial vote of confidence after the sanctions defeat. And guess who dreamt up this sordid bargain? None other than yesterday's extremist Michael Foot. Yes, Foot 'played the Orange Card'.

6 2 SAS men charged with John Boyle murder appear in court, but cannot be identified as surrounded by others, all of whom stand up when their names are called. Lawyer later says even he does not know which of 7 men are his clients.

7 Home Office proposals call for abolition of arrested person's right to remain silent in court. Also seem to ask for regularising of the widespread flouting of Judges Rules whereby police hold people in custody for longer and longer periods without charging them.

The bill to increase Loyalist representation at Parliament continues to go through. Surprisingly, it has caused a flurry of activity among a number of Labour MPs not famed for their support of the Loyalist cause. Four junior ministerial assistants have resigned their positions over the bill, the most prominent being Jock Stallard. Stallard's reasons for resigning are informative. Clearly government policy on Ireland has ground to a halt, and Stallard and others see in the present bill only an increase in the polarisation of the two communities. But as Stallard's resignation statement makes clear, they are also worried about the threat to the Irish vote. Many Labour MPs, he says fear that "the proposals will . . . alienate the support we have so far enjoyed from the Irish community here, and our future credibility must suffer". Stallard is also worried about the pressure a larger Unionist vote could exert on a minority Labour Government: "I shudder to think what demands a numerically stronger Unionist/Loyalist faction in the House could and would make on any future Labour Government".

11 Official Unionist MP for South Down, Kilfedder, resigns or is booted out because he yearns for return of Stormont rather than Powell-backed plans for closer integration into Britain.

12 Capt. George Nairac, army undercover agent abducted and killed in South Armagh is posthumously awarded the George Cross for, among other things, his 'quick analytical brain'. Mason appears on Panorama to counter growing scandal about H Blocks. After denying there are any such things as political prisoners he describes the Provisional IRA as a 'Marxist-based organisation dedicated to driving the British from Ireland'.

13 British Government to inject an extra £15.4m into N.I. Social Services next year . . . 4.2% more proportionately than Social Services in Britain will receive.

14 Gardian says bill to bring homosexual law in N.Ireland into line with that in Britain is to be introduced shortly because of Britain's urgent need to answer case before Human Rights Court in Strasbourg.

O'Kennedy and Mason meet for talks in London. Later it is reported O'Kennedy asked Mason to 'find a solution' to the H Block protests. Is reported as 'understandingly' avoiding pressing the government on 'solutions' for N.I. before a general election.

16 16 RUC men decorated for gallantry, including unheard of number of George Crosses. Several shown on television backs to camera. 4 life sentences passed in Belfast on member of Protestant murder gang.

20 'Shankill butchers'—Protestant murder gang—receive total of 42 life sentences for killing 19 Catholics in Belfast [see box]. Two journalists in Belfast warned by RUC they may be charged under Official Secrets Act for leaking Boyle file.

No doubt most people who read of the conviction of the 'Shankill butchers' for a particularly grisly series of murders of Catholics over 18 months deplored it as just one more sectarian struggle going on. But in fact they point up the difference between the two sides in the North. There have been many more instances of Protestant extremists killing Catholics at random than of the reverse. In fact, when the UDA declared an official halt to sectarian murders, the death toll dropped dramatically. It would seem from the Shankill killings that for some Protestants, Catholics do not rate as human beings at all—much the same attitude the NF has towards black people in Britain.

21 Charges of IRA membership and of 'conspiring to pervert the course of public justice' against twelve members of Sinn Fein in Belfast withdrawn. The prosecution, aimed at the suppression of Republican News, was declared to be based on 'insufficient evidence'.

22 Because of case brought to Human Rights Court by Cork woman unable to get a legal separation in Ireland through lack of legal aid, Dublin govt says it will extend legal aid to family law cases before the end of the year.

25 Soldier in barracks in N.Ireland shoots another soldier and is himself shot dead. His father speaks of 'this useless war' and says other soldiers in his son's position—hating to go back to Northern Ireland, would have deserted, and that if his son had done so he would be alive today.

# MASON'S COVER-UP CONTINUES

## H-BLOCKS: THE FICTION

The Northern Ireland Information Office have produced a broadsheet extolling the Maze Prison (which contains the H-Blocks) as the most modern and comfortable in Western Europe. It has been printed principally to stem the mounting concern of the 30 million strong Irish American community, and follows on the tour of the USA by the British Ambassador Jay which tried to undo the damage done by influential columnists like Jack Anderson of the *Washington Post*, who has likened the H-Blocks to the 'Tiger Cages' of the Vietnam War.

But the explanation that the N. I. Office offer of the appalling conditions, some of which are shown in photographs for the first time, is almost banal. Politics are not mentioned. Readers are asked to believe that the terrible suffering of the prisoners, which is made all the more amazing by seeing the relative comfort they could enjoy if they broke their protest, is motivated solely by a desire "to live a life above and beyond the normal rules that apply in prisons". Clearly the N. I. Office cannot grasp any motivation that goes beyond material selfishness and believe that the most shocking thing that their readers will be able to conceive of is that these "dirty" prisoners are mucking up their beautiful new expensive prison.

It is clear that the endurance of the Irish POWs has surprised the British authorities. The world is becoming increasingly amazed at their fortitude and suffering. The prison struggle is now crucial to the course of the Irish War.

## English jails – Blanket protest continuing

Six men are on the blanket (towel) in English jails at the moment. They are:

Robert Cunningham	– Tyrone	Albany Prison, Isle of Wight
Patrick Guilfoyle	– Tipperary	
Anthony Cunningham	– Belfast	
Liam Baker	– Belfast	
James Bennett	– Belfast	Strangeways
Mick Murray	– Dublin	Wormwood Scrubs

The blanket protest of 6 men in English jails is continuing. Their struggle against the authorities is aimed at winning repatriation. Latest reports from the prisoners point to an increase in harassment for all prisoners especially the blanket men. In Albany the four men have had their mattresses taken out of their cells and now have to sleep on planks of wood on top of concrete bed blocks. The cells are hosed down every morning leaving damp conditions to further affect the prisoners' health. Further harassments include the refusal to allow the men cigarettes, family pictures, radios, watches etc.

Despite their total isolation the other two blanket men James Bennett and Mick Murray are reported to be in high spirits.

In an attempt to break the prisoners' morale and to try to break their unity there has been an increase in the number of Irish POWs in England who have been moved to local nicks. These prisons were

not designed for "top security" prisoners and they are therefore held in solitary confinement under Rule 43 G. O. D. (Good Order and Discipline) from the time they arrive there, according to the prison authorities "for their own good". In addition in these prisons minimal privileges such as educational facilities which are available in strong nicks are not available to those in local nicks.

An Cumann Cabhrach, the prisoners' welfare organisation in England, would like paperback books or Irish folk records for the prisoners. Donations can be sent to:

Prisoners' Books,  
c/o UTOB, Box 10, 2a St. Paul's Rd., London  
N1.

In addition birthday cards can be sent to the following prisoners:

March 12th: John McCluskey, H.M.Prison,  
Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Road,  
LONDON.

March 31st: Pat Guilfoyle, H.M.Prison, Albany,  
Newport, Isle of Wight.

