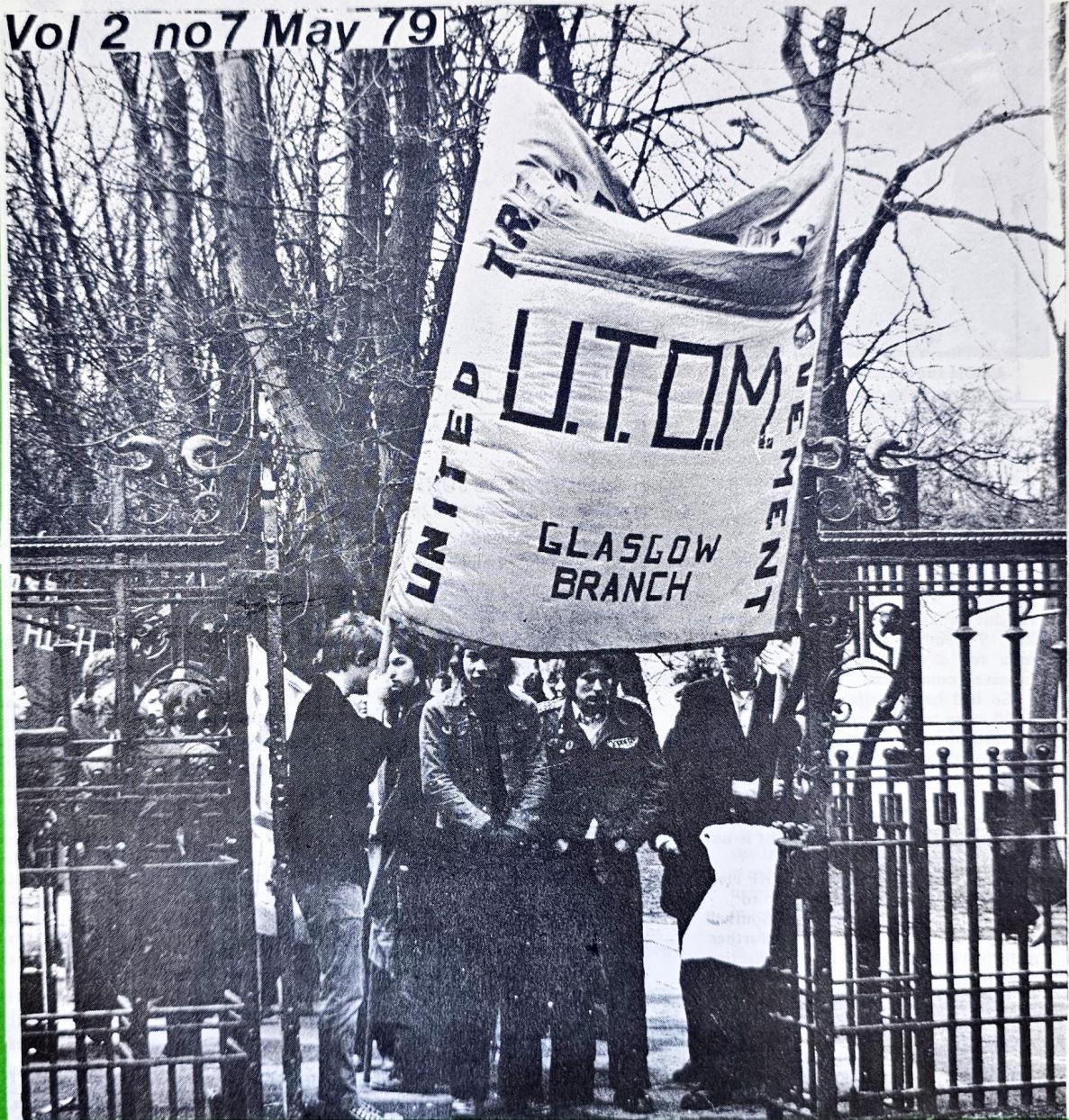


TROOPS OUT

Paper of the United Troops Out Movement

10p

Vol 2 no 7 May 79



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



UTOM supporters outside Callaghan's Wandsworth Town Hall meeting on April 23. IMG, SWP and RCG
protestors also joined in a successful barrage, forcing Callaghan to devote 5 minutes of platitudes to 'the troubles'.

British politicians tried desperately to keep Northern Ireland out of the elections. But it is Northern Ireland and racism, the two most embarrassing 'problems' confronting British politicians, which have made the running during the election.

The armed wings of the Republican movement have not only managed to assassinate Airey Neave, the 'all-out war' toughie of Tory N.I. policy, but also to kill 9 members of the 'security forces' in a ten day period, while continuing massive commercial target bombings.

So bad has the situation become that 1000 extra troops were sent in last week —a propaganda defeat for the Government's attempt to play down troop presence in favour of the 'normal' image of the RUC.

Another propaganda defeat is that the re-introduction of internment is now being talked about seriously.

Here in Britain, opposition to NF election activity, culminating as we go to press in the massive revolt of the Southall Asians against police and NF, has further disturbed the apathy of a normal election campaign.

The April 21 UTOM/SF Glasgow March brought out the NF and Ulster fascists together..

There is now a real possibility of joint anti-racist work between those groups who are most threatened by the National Front and by state racism—including Irish groups. That is one of the best hopes we have of broadening out the struggle to get the Troops out.

An unfortunate omission in a quote from Caryl Churchill last month completely altered her meaning. She is quoted as saying 'I feel qualified to write a play about all the issues involved in Northern Ireland', whereas of course what she said was 'I don't feel qualified... Our apologies to her

LONDON ANTI-RACIST MARCH

SATURDAY 16 JUNE 2.30 at SPEAKERS CORNER

Proposed initially by East London UTOM after the attack by the National Front on the Bloody Sunday Commemoration March at the end of January. Adopted as a national initiative at UTOM National Liaison Committee meeting in Birmingham in March. The demonstration is seen as an opportunity to make links with black and Asian and white groups fighting both state and National Front racism, to offer them the support of those engaged in fighting for the rights and independence of Irish people, and to widen the awareness of such groups about the similar nature of state repression suffered by the Irish.

FIGHT STATE RACISM

ABOLISH RACIST IMMIGRATION CONTROLS
OPPOSE THE NATIONAL FRONT

REPEAL THE PTA

For further information or offers of help in organising contact East London UTOM, Box 13, Kingsland High Street, London E8 2NS

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

TROOPS 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.

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.

WHOSE VIOLENCE AND WHY?

'O.K. The British Army and the RUC may beat up people and smash up homes in Northern Ireland. But why don't you go on about the IRA as well? Aren't they just as bad, if not worse, when they plant bombs and shoot people? Isn't the Troops Out movement being hypocritical?'

This is perhaps the most frequent and thorny question put to Troops Out supporters. In another of our regular discussion articles the Colchester UTOM group outline their views on the subject. Their's is a garrison town where thousands of squaddies are stationed before and after serving in Ireland, so it's not surprising that they've often come up against this argument.

WHICH IRA?

The IRA that appears in the media is very different from the one that exists in reality. You can't believe everything you see in the papers and on TV, but it's from those sources that most people get their image of the IRA as 'mad bombers' and 'terrorists'. Undeniably the Provos use violence, but many of the less savoury incidents ascribed to them have actually been the responsibility of their enemies. Like the bomb that went off in McGurk's pub in early 1970s, killing several Catholics. At the time newspaper headlines screamed that the IRA had carried out this crime, yet with no fuss or noise Loyalists were found guilty several years later.

Towards the end of 1978 a number of bombings were claimed by the bogus 'Irish Freedom Fighters'. *Republican News* exposed this phony setup as none other than the dirty tricks section of the British Army, the SAS. Many reporters nowadays simply duplicate army information hand-outs for their writeups on Ireland. In polite terms it's called 'The battle for hearts and minds'. Really it's a crude propaganda war that has employed much censorship over the years in order to portray the IRA as no more than blood-thirsty loonies and mad people. The actual truth is rather different. As the late Airey Neave said on TV after a BBC 'Tonight' programme on RUC torture: 'We are losing the propaganda war in Northern Ireland... A review of present attitudes to media freedom is needed... We surely have a solemn duty to combine all legal, security and publicity weapons available to us.'

'But as you say yourselves, the IRA do use violence, don't they?'

Of course. The Provos do not deny this fact. They are fighting a war, they do plant bombs and they do use guns. But they don't do this for no reason at all, or because they are merely gun-toting criminals as the British government would have us believe. The reason they have taken up arms is because they are involved in a war of national liberation against an

occupying country—Britain. The Provos started to emerge at the end of 1969 in order to protect Catholic ghettos from Loyalist pogroms. However they soon found themselves waging armed struggle against British troops who were trying to crush Republican sentiment in the Catholic areas. This meant a war between nationalist forces and the British state. And this is why the prisoners in H Block Long Kesh and in Armagh Jail are currently demanding Prisoner of War status—just as soldiers fighting against German fascism were allowed during the 2nd World War.

Their violence is therefore of a very different kind from that of the British Army, UDR or RUC. One is the violence of an oppressed people, the other that of the oppressors.

DOUBLE STANDARDS—WHOSE?

In fact the Troops Out Movement is less hypocritical than a good number of British left-wingers over Ireland. Many from within Labour Party or trade union ranks have no qualms about supporting nationalist struggles in such places as South Africa, Zimbabwe or Palestine. This is the case despite the violence involved being just as, or even more, intense. Seen from thousands of miles away, it's easy to see that bombs going off in white areas of Johannesburg are the result of the black majority being denied its rights. But Ireland, just a few miles away over the sea, and seen from the imperialist country that has been oppressing it for the last 700 odd years, seems like a different kettle of fish altogether. Yet all violence in Ireland—even that which appears senseless—is the result of the Irish people as a whole being refused self-determination. So what UTOM concentrates on doing is removing the root cause of the whole situation—British domination of Ireland. As members of an oppressing nation our's is not the right to moralise and pontificate about a situation our country is responsible for.

Postscript

This article was intended to break down some of the most popular myths about the IRA. However, it was felt by the Colchester UTOM group that criticism could be made from a feminist/socialist angle concerning the nationalist movement, in particular their attitude towards sexism, but that this was beyond the scope of this article. Hopefully, these aspects are examined regularly in *Troops Out*.

Colchester UTOM

'But moralising apart, aren't the IRA isolated from most Catholics in the North—the very people they claim to protect?'

There is no way the most efficient guerrilla organisation in western Europe can survive for ten years without the popular support it undoubtedly receives. If that did not exist, then the British Army would have been able to defeat it long ago. The strength of anti-imperialist feeling is not to be found in the N.I. Office's perennial bleatings about how the IRA is nearly defeated, etc., etc. If that was the case Roy Mason would have been able to retire many a month ago, and Airey Neave, assassinated by another armed group, the INLA, would be alive today.

No, the true extent of anti-Army and RUC sentiment is to be found in such demonstrations as that organised by Provisional Sinn Fein last October when 10,000 people turned out to march in commemoration of the First Derry Civil Rights protest. The 'forces of the British Crown' are fighting a people rather than an 'isolated band of terrorists'. And they know this as is clearly shown by the number of people picked up and interrogated by the RUC during the last 3 years—10,203.

So you support the IRA?

The United Troops Out Movement welcomes involvement and/or assistance from anyone who supports our two basic demands which are emblazoned on the front of every issue of this paper: 'Troops Out Now!' and 'Self-Determination for the Irish People as a whole'. In other words, our activities are geared towards helping the achievement of a united and independent 32 county republic.

There are many groups and individuals in Ireland who are struggling for these aims in different ways. Every Irish person has the right to resist British occupation of her or his country. So we take no position on any particular organisation. But we do defend this right in general and without hesitation. Britain has no right to be there and we are building a mass movement of ordinary people in this country on that basis.



London Picket in support of Armagh



Armagh Picket outside the jail.

SIX WEEKS AFTER BENNET — TORTURE AS USUAL

It's now six weeks since the Bennett Report was published. Up-to-date information obtained for *Troops Out* in Belfast last week shows that despite all the crocodile tears that have been shed over the 'revelations', the practice of torture by the RUC at Castlereagh is continuing almost unabated.

Most people thought that after the Report there would at least be a lull in the brutality — for public relations purposes if for nothing else. But it is now becoming clear that such is the confidence of the RUC that the establishment will block any attempts to probe further into the brutality that they have felt safe to continue as before. The only 'concessions' that they are making is to take

more care not to leave visible scars. Suspects under interrogation have been mocked by policemen asking them: 'How is Harry Bennett going to help you now?' while the beatings continue. In other interrogations, the RUC have detailed their contempt for judges, courts and the media. The closed circuit TVs to monitor interrogations are an object of derision for the police in the barracks.

For obvious reasons, we cannot print the names of our sources, but sworn statements in our possession from two 17-year-old Twinbrook youths reveal the continuing pattern of brutal interrogation. We also know of several other statements of brutal treatment given to members of the Association for Legal Justice since the Bennett Report.

IN ARMAGH & LONDON

On International Women's Day, in March, the West-Belfast based Women Against Imperialism Group decided to mark the occasion by drawing public attention to the Republican and Socialist women prisoners held in Armagh Jail. These women, like the men in the H Blocks of Long Kesh, are protesting for the right to be treated as Political Prisoners. Because the regime in Armagh is not quite so severe as that in Long Kesh, in that the women — like all women prisoners in British jails — are allowed to wear their own clothes, and therefore are not reduced to wearing only blankets — less attention has been paid them by the press.

At this first picket, 11 women and 2 men were arrested after the RUC charged the picket. Their cases are yet to come up in court. This made the Women Against Imperialism Group more than ever determined to keep up the pickets, and another one was called for the same time the following month.

On the 7th of April about 50 supporters, men and women came down from Belfast to meet with an equal number from Dublin outside Armagh Jail. The women inside had broken the windows and were leaning out to greet them, with a banner hung from the windows.

The pickets stood in the road outside the jail until RUC policemen and women attempted to push them roughly off it. They then sat down and were individually dragged onto the pavement, with verbal harassment and sneers, particularly from women police.

One of the pickets then read out the names of all the women prisoners they had come to support. In order to reach the women inside each name was then shouted out by the whole picket, after which the woman named appeared at the windows and shouted back. In this way they sent greetings of support to each woman. They also shouted to the women inside that there was a simultaneous demonstration being carried out by women in London.

The London demonstration, called by the Women and Ireland Group and sup-

Both the statements in our possession report punching, concentrated particularly around the stomach area — the most painful and the least visible — slapping about the face and head — confusing, painful and disorienting but the marks fade quickly and are hard to identify under the hair; throttling and continual intimidation, threats and abuse which it is impossible to prove took place.

A spokesperson for the Association for Legal Justice in Belfast said that the RUC were ignoring the Report. They are aware that as long as government policy requires forced confessions, the government will also take care to protect those who do their required dirty work.

ported by UTOM, marched, without police notification, from Cricklewood Broadway to Kilburn Square where a meeting was held. Because of not having notified the police, the organisers decided that it would be safer to march along the pavement. In this way we were in very close contact with the large crowd of shoppers out on a Saturday, and this may have had a better effect than a more isolated 'demo' passing like a spectacle down the street. In any case there was very little hostility and much support shown, both on the march and at the meeting afterwards, where representatives of the two groups, the RCG, the RCT, the IRSP and Sinn Fein spoke.

Further regular pickets of Armagh Jail are planned, and it is hoped to coordinate these again with London support. The women in Armagh Jail have never been forgotten by their relatives or by the resistance movement, and these pickets will insure that they are not forgotten by the general public outside.



Section of the opposition to the march out

Solidarity AND IN GLASGOW

Saturday April 21 saw the first 'Troops Out' demonstration to attempt to march through Glasgow City Centre since 1972.

Glasgow is a city where many of the tensions of Belfast are reproduced. It has more than its fair share of Orange Protectors, either first or second generation over from the North, and despite disclaimers from the parent organisations in Belfast, many supporters of the UDA and the UVF. Earlier this year there were three bombings of pubs where Irish catholics drink.

The 1972 march was beaten off the streets, and the myth since then in Glasgow has been that such a march couldn't be done. But recently Irish work has picked up, with small SF and UTOM marches, and regular pickets of the City Centre Army Recruitment Office.

The march was from the beginning the subject of much media vilification. Strenuous efforts were made to have it banned. The NF promised a counter-demonstration. Early morning newspapers on sale the night before promised a massive police operation and warned the decent citizens of Glasgow to stay at home.

700 supporters from UTOM, Sinn Fein, IMG and SWP and the local Irish community set off, led by a pipe band.

The minute the march left the park gates the hate-filled yells began, and the missiles started coming over. A thin 'line'—it couldn't even have been called a cordon—shambled along between the march and the 'Orangies'. Banners and placards called for support for the army,

the SAS, the paras: 'Back to your bogs', 'Hang the IRA', 'UVF, UVF' were constant. It was impossible to tell who were National Front, who Protestant murder gang supporters—may be because they were making common cause.

About a mile and a half from its goal, the march was directed onto waste ground by police, who had cordoned off the road leading into the centre. Mobs of the opposition more or less surrounded it. Eventually the marchers regrouped and left together. The organisers having decided, perhaps wisely in the Glasgow context, not to try for the Centre.

Nerves were frayed, and there were ugly incidents at a press conference later. But

the march had broken the myth that you can't march in Glasgow. More marches will be held soon. People had been injured, but the march as a whole was not intimidated. With better contingency plans it could probably have reached the centre.

The small numbers of police 'protecting' the march contrasted sharply with the three-deep lines on each side of the NF march the same day in Leicester. Moreover, all the counter-demonstrators arrested were let go without charges, and the five from the march who were arrested were all charged, including two members of pipe bands.

This point was not lost on the East London Asian community. In Brick Lane the next day, some youths who had seen both demos on telly approached a member of Troops Out to say they were interested in joint work. 'People are dying in prison in Ireland to get rid of the British', one said, 'and we remember that our people died in prison for the same reason... we can learn from the Irish'.

SUFFER! LITTLE CHILDREN

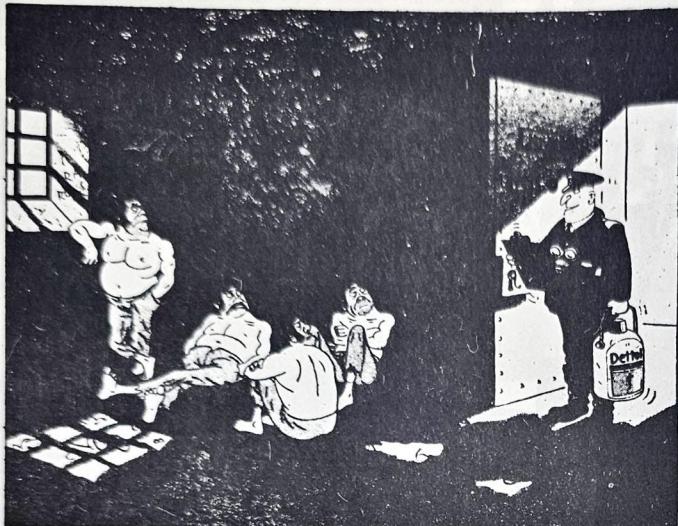
Mothers in the Andersonstown area of Belfast have formed a committee in an attempt to highlight a new form of harassment of young boys in the district. In the latter part of 1978 and the early part of this year, more than 100 youths have been detained by the Army and RUC, held for 3 or more days in Castlereagh Interrogation Centre and then charged with a variety of offences. The common thread behind these incidents is that all the alleged offences are said to have been committed several years ago, in some cases when the youths charged were no more than 11 years old.

However since they are now at an age when, at judges' discretion, they can be treated as adults, many are now in remand for long periods in adult prisons awaiting trial.

A typical case is that of Patrick Fox who was just turned 16 when he was arrested and charged. He spent several months in St. Patrick's Training School before he finally got bail. At one of his periodic appearances in Court, a few days after his 17th birthday, he was re-charged with the same offences, the result being that for his alleged offence committed as a minor he was first charged as a juvenile and now faces trial as an adult when the case finally comes to court.

Nearly all of these lads were brutalised in RUC custody. Not surprisingly, most say that they would have signed anything to get out of there. In every case, the only evidence that the RUC have against them is the statements that the boys signed.

RACISM, COLONIALISM & THE ANTI-IRISH JOKE



"We've decided to use IRA rules in future—so it's knee-capping for suspicion and a bullet in the neck for a near certainty!"

A slightly longer version of this article was published a year ago in *Socialist Challenge*. We have reprinted it here because many people did not see that version, and, more importantly, because racism against the Irish is still very much with us. Recent National Front tactics of attacking the Irish obviously hope to gain support from what they see as widespread anti-Irish prejudice in Britain. And racist jokes and cartoons continue unabated.

Most of the 'comedy' in TV's *Robin's Nest* comes from the 'loveable' thickness of the Irish kitchen hand. A recent JAK cartoon (see above) deliberately

harks back to the Victorian ape-like Irish thugs. The instances of blatant racism would probably evoke widespread protests from anti-racist groups if the characters portrayed were black. But such groups have been slow to recognise anti-Irish racism, and are only just beginning to respond to the overtly racist attacks of the National Front.

We hope that reprinting this article will have the double effect of concentrating people's minds on racism against the Irish, and also of making them take more seriously the long-held aspirations of the Irish for national unity, free from Britain.



According to 'comedian' Dick Emery, who came to England to build the Nottingham Yarwood informed the nation that Father Ch down the chimney instead of through the front

The suggestion that such anti-Irish jokes may be anything other than harmless fun is often met by cries of 'Don't be a spoilsport!' or 'Everybody should be able to laugh at themselves!' To these people we offer a joke that has been doing the rounds of the Irish community in this country. 'Heard the one about the Irish Evil Knievel? He's going to jump over ten English people using a steamroller, and he's made three unsuccessful attempts already.'

Many Irish people find anti-Irish jokes thoroughly unfunny and are getting their own back. Throughout the past year, the letters page and leader column of the *Irish Post* 'The Voice of the Irish Community in Britain', have reflected this concern.

IMPRESSIONED

The British are not, of course, the only people who tell 'thick' jokes against other groups of people. There are anti-Pom jokes in Australia, anti-Polish jokes in the United States, and even a recent fashion for anti-Kerryman jokes in Ireland. All such jokes are based on a relationship between the tellers and the targets which is, to varying degrees, antagonistic. The target group is seen as 'different' and is in some measure despised. (Kerryman jokes reflect urban chauvinism, and may also be a reaction to anti-Irish jokes, displacing them onto another target.)

The antagonism between British and Irish people has a long history and is currently being fuelled by the war in the north. The rash of anti-Irish jokes has developed since the upsurge in the conflict in 1969.

Anti-Irish jokes are a reaction on the part of British people to a situation which they find frustrating and which they fail to understand. The 'Irish question' is seen—as ever—as a rather marginal irritant on the British body politic, but an irritant nevertheless. To portray the Irish as stupid is to reflect the logic of the Government and the Press, which continually inform us that the war is going on because of Irish irrationality: because of men-of-violence, because of outmoded religious passions, and because of irresponsible southern politicians.

HISTORICAL CAUSES

The *Irish Post*'s readers, however, perceive the war quite differently from most British people. They see its causes not as psychological but as historical. They see the war stemming not from Irish irrationality, but from centuries of British domination culminating in the setting up of an oppressive province in the North-east.

Robin Hood was a myopic Irish labourer
ham by-pass. At Christmas a year ago, Mike
Christer as must be Irish—because he comes
front A or.

And just as a person who understands the threat of racism cannot laugh at racist jokes which portray blacks as spear-carrying primitives, and a person who understands sexism cannot laugh at cartoons which portray women as big-boobed featherbrains, so a person who understands the present relationship between the British and Irish peoples cannot laugh when members of the oppressor nation portray 'Paddy' as thick.

It is true that some Irish people do laugh at anti-Irish jokes, and some even tell them. But these are people who are less politically aware, less confident of their national identity, who—like the black person who says that immigration should be stopped—have internalised the values of the colonising country. More politically aware Irish people see the *British* as stupid—or at least as a rather strange people, with their big-headed chauvinism, their self-delusions and their inability to comprehend the Irish reality. 'Heard the one about the Englishman with the inferiority complex? He thought he was the same as everyone else.'

The denigration of the Irish as inferior in intelligence, morality or pedigree to the English has a long history. Bernard Levin recently wrote in the *Times* 'There they go still, the Irish "patriots" with minds locked and barred, mouths gaping wide to extrude the very last morsel of folly, and consumed with a wild terror that sense may one day prevail.' Levin was invoking the Victorian image of the Irish.

In Victorian days, the supposed inferiority of the Irish was communicated by caricaturing them as monkeys, and later as apes. In 1848 *Punch* repeatedly caricatured John Mitchel, the outstanding radical leader of the Young Ireland movement, as a vicious monkey.

Previously cartoonists had represented the Irish as drink-sodden peasants, or—with other radicals—as pig-like creatures, identifying them as apes of the 'swinish mob'. The monkey image derived from the growing debate among natural scientists about the ancestry of humans and their relationships to animals. As the debate grew, and increasing information about the great apes was disseminated, so 'Paddy' came to be represented as a full-blown ape, placing the Irish on a lower rung of the ladder of human development than their conquerors—who, of course, represented themselves with the features of Greek gods.

CHARACTER

The British saw the causes of Irish

poverty and violence not in the colonial system—but in the Irish character. The Reverend James Page, who toured Ireland in 1836, observed: 'The poor Irish work ... for what can, at the lowest calculation sustain life. That obtained, they sit down contentedly in their cabins in the midst of filth and wretchedness almost exceeding what the greatest stretch of an Englishman's imagination can conceive. For subsistence they will work, and that with cheerfulness. Beyond this their degraded condition does not permit them to pass.'

The famous historian Thomas Macaulay in his *History of England* analysed the rebellions of the Irish as a result of their character, and explained the rising of 1690 thus: 'The habits of the Celtic peasant were such that he made no sacrifice in quitting his potato ground for the camp. He loved excitement and adventure ... Far more seductive bait than his miserable stipend was the promise of boundless license.'

Because the Irish were 'inferior', they needed to be ruled by the British, argued the colonisers, and different standards of justice could be applied to them.

HALF DEVIL

The British saw all their colonial subjects as, in Kipling's phrase, 'half devil and half child'. Richard Ned Lebow, who has studied colonial attitudes in his book *White Britain and Black Ireland* (ISHI 1976), points out that in almost all colonial situations the coloniser has a stereotyped image of the 'native' and that these stereotypes are remarkably similar.

Following Albert Memmi and Sartre, Lebow argues that this image differen-

tiates the coloniser from the colonised, and thus justifies different standards of treatment. In earlier days, the differentiation was even more drastic, with the subject peoples being seen as animals or as races destined to be slaves: images which allowed the Spanish conquistadors, the Pilgrim Fathers and others to treat American Indians with unbelievable cruelty while retaining a clear conscience. There was a contradiction between believing that your nation was the upholder of freedom and justice and the ruthless methods that were necessary to subdue the colonies. The way out of this moral dilemma was to conceive of the subject peoples as inferior to your own and as benefitting from colonisation.

IRRESPONSIBLE

The present establishment view that the Irish are—with a few notable exceptions such as Conor Cruise O'Brien—inept, incompetent and irresponsible and would, left to themselves, turn Ireland into a slaughterhouse is, then, part of a long tradition. This view is at the heart of the anti-Irish jokes, which have been fuelled by a number of factors: the continuing colonial role of Britain in Ireland and the ideology of British superiority that accompanies and justifies this, the systematic mystification of the war by the Government and the press, and the frustration at the continuing and apparently insoluble 'troubles'.

In turn the propagation of Irish jokes represents a propaganda 'plus' for the Government, reinforcing and making socially acceptable chauvinist attitudes towards Irish people and their political objectives, and thus easing the Government's task of justifying the occupation of the North.





It should have been a bed of roses for Jim Callaghan. A quick trip round the localities, shake a few hands, address the faithful, make a few promises and smile, smile smile for the press cameras.

But it hasn't turned out like that. Take his meeting at Wandsworth Town Hall as one example. In sails Sunny Jim, hand extended to be shaken by his faithful followers. But: no takers. The front row of spectators outside is half troops out supporters and half plain clothes police who are keeping their hands ready for other eventualities.

Up to the platform. Into his usual speech: prices, rates, national interest, Tory menace, leave it to Uncle Jim. Then offstage: 'What about the torture of Irish political prisoners, Castlereagh, the H-Blocks?' 'Stop British Repression!' 'Hands off Ireland!' Jim knows the score. He's met this barrage almost everywhere he has gone, in Stockport, Manchester, Cardiff, Birmingham... So he's got his stock replies ready to hand.

Reply Number One: Use physical force on questioners and hecklers. At Manchester the Socialist Unity candidate Jeff West was forcibly ejected by Labour Party stewards and handed over to police. Ireland brings out the boot boy in many Labour voters. At Wandsworth the Guardian reported one Labour supporter loudly declaring that all the Irish should be killed.

Reply Number Two: Use the law. Apart from arresting people who speak out on Ireland at his meetings, Callaghan supporters have also found it helpful to arrest candidates who campaign on the

question of Ireland. The most notable arrest was that of Pat Arrowsmith who committed the crime of addressing crowds about England's Irish policy on the streets of Callaghan's Cardiff constituency. She was charged with using 'insulting words likely to cause a breach of the peace'.

An RCG supporter at a Callaghan meeting in Upminster was arrested for shouting 'Labour torturers, hands off Ireland'. Quite enough to warrant a charge of threatening behaviour.

Reply Number Three is the smear. His critics are Rentamob, following him round the country to howl him down. After all he can't let on that UTOM has almost 40 branches around the country, that 10 election candidates are standing with 'Troops Out' as a major plank, and that numerous other groups such as Hands Off Ireland, the SWP and the IMG organise widespread opposition to Callaghan's Irish policy. Not to mention the fact that most opinion polls show that a majority of people in Britain want to get out of Ireland.

But Reply Number Four is always the tops as far as the press and the propaganda machine is concerned. To deliver this one Jim adopts his most paternal, stern and statesmanlike pose, looks down his nose and wags his finger. 'It is a solemn duty', he intones, 'that the British soldier is carrying out in that country, and I hope the people who have been shouting in this hall will remember the danger that the soldiers are in tonight'. And then, just in case the quasi-religious moralism doesn't have the required effect, he's got an extra string to this bow.

UTOM AND THE ELECTIONS

(from Press release issued April 23)

The United Troops Out Movement is a national organisation with around 40 branches spread throughout the country. We are rapidly expanding with our membership growing all the time. Contrary to what has been suggested in the press we have no 'mobile squad' of hecklers attempting to disrupt Mr Callaghan's rallies: our local supporters are simply attending and responding.

We shall continue to intervene vigorously at election meetings. In the present context when the main political parties are refusing to make an issue in the elections of a war that has been going on for 10 years it is impossible for advocates of a progressive solution to raise the issue in any other way. As the Prime Minister who has been responsible both for continued stalemate and for gross dereliction of human rights Mr Callaghan deserves special attention, as also for the fact that he sent the troops in 10 years ago.

Mr Callaghan's only reaction to his critics during election rallies has been the ritual denunciation of violence (though not of the violence of the security forces) aimed at eliciting an emotional response from his audience to cover up his inability to answer criticisms. Mrs Thatcher announced that the country is united on the issue of Ireland. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is a massive gulf between Westminster and public opinion. Time and again opinion polls have demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of people in both Britain and Ireland want Britain to withdraw from Ireland.

All those opposed to British activity in Ireland, he reveals, are secret sadists and psychopaths. Troops Out = support for the aims of republicanism = support for the IRA = support for violence against military targets = murders of innocent mothers of 6 = sadism + psychopathy.

The cold logic of Jim's mathematics has once again demonstrated that only such people can possibly oppose torture of suspects under interrogation, dawn raids and searches on thousands of people's homes, SAS assassinations of Republicans, an inhuman prison regime, saturation military occupation of areas of political opposition and the rest.

Such was the problem facing the PM on his campaign trail and such is his response. But like it or not, Ireland has been made an issue in this campaign. Callaghan's replies only serve to illustrate the dead end his Irish policy is at.

DID NOT WANT TO BE A SOLDIER

Also in March, another soldier stationed in Colchester was court martialled for desertion after he 'became disillusioned with Army life'. Gunner Glenn Miller of the 47th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, was arrested after being absent for over a year at his home in Harold Hill, Essex.

Defence counsel said Miller originally enjoyed being in the Army—especially his tour in N. Ireland. 'It was when he came back to England that the trouble started. He did not like the barrack life and decided he did not want to be a soldier.'

Letters



Dear Troops Out,

I was interested in the article by an ex-soldier in your April issue, especially concerning the Belfast barracks incident where Trooper Eddie Maggs cracked up, killing a Quartermaster before being shot dead himself. Some remarks made afterwards by the trooper's father in our local press bear out what the author was saying. Apparently Eddie had 'dreaded' returning to Northern Ireland. 'If only he had deserted everything would have been fine,' said Mr Douglas Maggs. He said his son had already decided to leave the army to become a fireman next August. 'The reason for him leaving . . . was that he could not face service in N. Ireland. It was the fact that everyone is your enemy out there. No one wants you there—it's a lost cause like Vietnam.'

Trooper Maggs hailed from the Essex town of Walton-on-the-Naze, only a few miles down the road from Colchester's Army Garrison. And ironically, the day after his death 500 Colchester soldiers left to start a 4 month tour of duty in West Belfast. In January this year a local army spokesperson said that the garrison's morale was high. And the local *Evening Gazette* commenced an article with the statement that 'Colchester troops sent to N. Ireland have never had it so good'!

Perhaps the local Troops Out Group should go and ask for another statement in the light of the Maggs death, and the recent Northamptonshire siege in which a Corporal who cracked up in N.I. was captured by armed police. The iceberg of which Trooper Maggs was only the tip is beginning to reveal itself.

Best wishes,
Colchester Troops Out reader

BORED SOLDIER BLASTS OUT

A bored Colchester soldier set off explosives behind a cookhouse and later escaped from a guardroom for a drink, a court martial was told in March of this year. Private Frederick Beechey, 22, of the Staffordshire Regiment admitted conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, escaping and going absent without leave for 15 months.

The incident took place in Belize, Central America. Beechey told officers at the time he had been drinking and another soldier brought the plastic explosive and a detonator along, but he set it off. He was sentenced to dismissal and 84 days detention.

WHEN MEN ARE TRAINED TO BE SOLDIERS . . .

A Colchester based soldier, Stephen Woodward, 24, was recently fined £50 with £40 costs after admitting causing actual bodily harm to a squaddie from another regiment.

The incident happened on a Norwich to London train in January. According to the prosecution 'All of a sudden Woodward started raining blows'. After challenging the victim to hit him, he kicked him in the side of the head, cutting his ear badly, the court heard.

The defence council said that it was a case of inter-regiment rivalry. 'When men are trained to be soldiers', he continued, 'certain things can provoke them to behave in a way they would later regret.'

POEM

BOMB DISPOSAL
by Phil Boyd

I watched you
the other night
on the Tele

— Frightened
uncomprehending
huddles of boy soldiers
with raw scrubbed necks
and ashen cheeks
— determined
anxious expressions
across the faces
of officers

I watched you
crammed into doorways
or prostrate behind sandbags
as the experts from the squad
attempted to defuse it.

I read fear in your faces
the fear
the unknowing

saw
the look of men
with so many questions unanswered
that they no longer ask why.

Robert Emmet warned you
but you hanged him

James Connolly told you what would

happen
but you shot him
A million and a half peasants screamed
out to you
but you let them starve.

So still you cannot see
that sooner or later
it's going to explode
in your faces.

—from Voices, Spring 1979

Ed: Troops Out is a single issue campaign. But that doesn't mean this issue can be cut off from all other social and political questions. The Literature Collective supports the struggles of all oppressed minorities. But we don't ask all our readers to agree with us as a precondition of joint work to get Britain out of Ireland. Despite our intense disagreement with the content of this letter we will still work with Padraig MacAtee to get the Troops Out. We hope that he will be willing to work with us.



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Derry Relatives Action Committee, 25p.

This is not a pamphlet written by full-time political activists. It was put together by a group of women from the Derry RAC because they felt there was a real need for prisoners' relatives themselves to start producing material. It is mainly written by women: the mothers of the generation of '69 writing 10 years later in the ironically named 'Year of the Child', when their offspring have been seized from them, tortured and incarcerated—some for 'the rest of their natural lives'. On the inside pages the faces of these children in 1969 smile out at us. Don Bosco Doherty has gappy teeth and a rumpled collar, his pullover skewed to one side. Today in Long Kesh his eyesight is failing, his health broken: he had to break his blanket protest because of his ill-health. Lorraine Halpenny puts on a demure half smile under the frothy white veils of her bridesmaid's outfit. Today she has been sentenced when 17 years old to 2 life sentences and 29 years imprisonment.

*The year of the child is seventy-nine
But what of the child of sixty-nine
Where is he now ten years on*

Trinity by Leon Uris (Corgi £1.75)

Leon Uris' novel begins with the famine of the 1840s and runs through to the eve of the Easter Rising of 1916. It follows the history of Ireland through the stories of three families: the Larks, Catholic hill farmers from Donegal; the Macleods, Protestant shipyard workers in Belfast and the Hubbles, representatives of the British aristocracy in the North. Uris' strength is as a storyteller. The narrative is strongly sustained through some 900 pages and the climaxes often genuinely thrilling and gripping. His characters are rather larger than life, in particular the heroic figure of Conor Larkin around whom the story is built. But this is no book of 'stage Irishmen': it is peopled with credible characters, notably several strong independent women characters who are by no means appendages to what might, in the hands of a worse writer, have been written as a tale of male heroics and tragic passions.

The greatest strength of the book is in its broad sense of history. Uris tries to bring to life the oppression of the Irish people through the experience of ordinary people and also the thinking of the oppressors, notably the great shipbuilding magnate and the great aristocratic

*In a British prison with a blanket on
Washed only by his mother's tears
Swept from child to manhood by ten
war-torn years*

*What saw the child of sixty-nine
Just to be Irish was a crime.
Raided homes with Brits running wild
What have they done to the mind of
this child
His growing years filled with strife
Throwing stones was a way of life
And on that fatal January day
He saw the men that they left dead
He saw the streets with blood run red
He had to choose though but a child
To fight the enemy or be defiled
Need you ask why this child was led
To become a naked body on a prison bed.*

The anguish of these mothers' experiences speaks directly to us. Their voices are rarely heard in the media but they give us a far deeper insight into what the struggle in Northern Ireland means to the mass of ordinary people than reams of commercial newsprint can.

Available from Mary Nellis, Derry
Relatives Action Committee. 25p + 10p p&p

family with which he is allied by marriage. The roots of partition in their economic and social concerns are brought to the fore, and it is made clear that partition was a class issue as well as a conspiracy formed in the minds of the British imperial government. It's far easier to understand these broad social forces shaping Irish history through characters we can identify with than through the usual plodding history books.

Uris is not a great descriptive writer, nor does he evoke the landscape, the speech or the culture of the Irish people with unerring accuracy. But he never trivialises or caricatures. One senses a real sympathy for the oppressed. Some readers may be put off because Uris' most famous book, *Exodus* is reputed to be Zionist in outlook. I haven't read that book, but the history of the Jewish people is clearly a long history of oppression even if in recent years the role of the Zionist State of Israel in oppressing the Palestinians tends to put that history in the shadow. But in *Trinity* at least there is no doubt as to who are the oppressors and who are the oppressed. It's an exciting novel and a good way to learn a lot of history.

S.T., Camden & Islington UTOM

PATRIOT GAME

The best film on Ireland so far

Given the total deficiency of media coverage of the situation in Ireland, the best way of finding out what's really happening is to go across and see for yourself.

It is of course impossible for us to take enough people to the North to fuel a mass withdrawal campaign in Britain. But now we can do the next best thing — show them *Patriot Game*.

Patriot Game is a new feature-length film by a young American director. It succeeds as no other film has in capturing the spirit of the nationalist ghettos and showing that the struggle in the North is the expression of popular resistance to British oppression. People who knew little about Ireland before seeing the film have been profoundly shocked by it and, more important, stimulated into action.

Patriot Game traces the history of the northern statelet by using television film and intercuts this with scenes of life in the North today and interviews with Republican men and women. We see Turf Lodge women protesting against the British army, army patrols 'at work' in nationalist areas, the Belfast people's taxi, city centre bombings, the Republican press centre, and a fine sequence in a Belfast social club showing the response when an army patrol comes in.

UTOM is buying a copy of *Patriot Game* thanks to loans from supporters totalling £700. We need to recoup this money quickly, so *Patriot Game* will be launched at major showings in London in May. It will be available to branches throughout the country from mid-June.

Patriot Game, 93 minutes, black & white
To book the film write to: Troops Out
(Literature Committee), Box 10,
2a St. Pauls Road, London N1.
Prices (payable in advance, reductions available on block bookings):

£20 to UTOM branches and affiliated bodies plus £8.50 postage;
£24 to other non-grant-aided bodies plus £8.50 postage;
£35 to student unions and other grant-aided bodies plus £8.50 postage.
Donations to help pay off the initial cost would be appreciated.

THE BRITISH MEDIA & IRELAND:

Truth the First Casualty

A 56-page booklet
edited and produced by the
Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland

Available by post from:
Information on Ireland,
1 North End Road, London W14

Prices:
Britain and Ireland:
Single copies 50p + 15p p&p
10 copies for £3.40 + 60p p&p

Other Countries:
Single copies 50p + 50p p&p
10 copies for £3.40 + £1.20 p&p

DIARY OF EVENTS

MARCH

26 SDLP in 'hardest line yet' calls for en bloc resignation of N.I. Police Authority following Bennett Report hoo-haa. Says NIPA should have held tribunal of enquiry long ago. NIPA says it has 'repeatedly' sought talks with SDLP and been refused.

27 Justice Barra O'Brian (the man who conducted an enquiry into Gardai brutality in the South) suggests that files on guards named for ill-treatment are available to the Minister of Justice, who has as yet done nothing about investigating these allegations. Collins denies that such information available. ICTU Construction Committee, representing 12 building unions, recommends strike action. Post Office strike still solid.

28 Callaghan loses vote of confidence in the House as all but one of Ulster Unionist MPs vote against, and Gerry Fitt of SDLP and Frank Maguire, independent republican, abstain. If this doesn't encourage Labour to drop its hold on Northern Ireland what will? A group of Belfast solicitors, in the wake of the Bennett Report, call for an end to emergency legislation and a review of all convictions based on so-called voluntary confessions. IRA machinegun attack on RUC landrover in Derry. IRA blow up £1½ million hotel in Co. Down which opened only two weeks previously.

British Party Election Manifestos and Ireland:

Labour: 'Continuing direct rule the only viable alternative'. Army occupation still necessary.

Tories: Union to be maintained; no amnesty for convicted terrorists.

Liberals: 'No capitulation to violence; direct rule must continue for present.'

CP: Gradual withdrawal.

29 Ulster Defence Association (the Protestant paramilitary group which, according to Irish Times, 'has killed hardly anybody in the last 2 years'), presents proposals for an independent Northern Ireland with perhaps American style constitution. Cork University students organise a display of contraceptives in protest against weakness of Haughey's Family Planning Bill.

The proposals put forward by the UDA in the guise of the 'New Ulster Political Research Group' call for an independent Northern Ireland with an American-style constitutional structure and a bill of rights. Clearly some of the Loyalists have become disenchanted with Britain's intervention, since it has led not to the reassent of the power of Stormont but to a policy of repression imposed from London and from which the Loyalist paramilitaries have not always been exempt.

30 Election campaign opens with a bang. Conservative spokesman on Northern Ireland Airey Neave is killed by a car bomb while driving up the ramp of the House of Commons car park. Irish National Liberation Army claims responsibility. N.I. Secretary Roy Mason announces he will leave his post, regardless of election results.

31 Opposition Southern party, Fine Gael, at Annual Conference, calls for 'confederal solution' to N.I. problem. Free lance journalist Ron McKay is detained under the PTA at Glasgow Airport on return from visit to Belfast. After being held overnight, fingerprinted and photographed he is charged with refusing to give information to police, and his research material on the use of computers in the North for information gathering and storage is confiscated and forwarded to the DPP 'with a view to possible charges under the Official Secrets Act'. IRA fire bombs in City Centre premises in Derry.

APRIL

1 A series of commercial bombings (the most serious in Omagh and Markethill, Co. Armagh) result in Democratic Unionist Party calls for re-erection of town centre barriers. 2 policemen, one policewoman and 2 civilians injured in Omagh barracks blast.

2 Extra police guards supplied for British Ministers and MPs with Northern Ireland connections. Both RUC and Scotland Yard deny Mirror allegations that an 'IRA death list' of prominent politicians in Britain had been passed on to the Yard.

3 UVF man given 12 year sentence in Edinburgh for procuring gelegenheit.

4 8 Hull Prison officers found guilty of mistreating prisoners (including Republican prisoners) in aftermath of riot. All later given suspended sentences. All appealing.

8 Greenjacket Corporal stationed in Derry cracks up, goes AWOL and is finally captured after a seige at Northampton home of a friend. 'He cracked under the pressure of the war in Ireland', said a woman friend.

9 First Public Enquiry into allegations of ill-treatment by RUC, made by a Derry man Joseph Rafferty, finally opens in Belfast and is immediately adjourned. This 'tribunal' has been repeatedly delayed by manoeuvres of the RUC, and may not take place for months.

10 'Artists impressions' of 4 men 'suspected of a connection' with Neave's assassination are plastered all over the front pages of British papers. It would seem that these 'photofit' pictures were, in fact, compiled from photos of four men in police files already. Is this the ultimate 'fit up'?

11 British soldier killed in Ballymurphy area of Belfast. Another seriously injured. Belfast Solicitor J Donall Murphy quits the N.I. Police Authority. His reasons, in a letter to Mason: 'The apparent continuation of the unresolved crisis concerning ill-treatment of suspects and prisoners while in police custody'. Former Royal Army Medical Corps surgeon claims in press statement (and later on telly) that he resigned from army because the army was sending brain-damaged soldiers back on to active duty in the North who were a 'danger to themselves and others', because they are so desperately short of men. Part-time UDR Corporal killed in South Armagh.

12 Ruraigh O'Bradaigh, President of Provisional Sinn Fein, slips across border to speak at Easter Commemoration in Belfast. 'To highlight the question of British occupation of Ireland we are now quite capable of striking at British targets wherever and whenever they can be found'.

14 Paisley calls for Ulster to be put 'on a war footing'. Pat Arrowsmith, campaigning against Callaghan on a 'Troops Out' platform in Cardiff is arrested during campaign speech for use of 'language likely to be insulting and cause a breach of the peace'.

16 Crumlin Road Jail Prison Officer shot dead after leaving wedding with family in Co. Tyrone.

17 Four RUC men killed in S. Armagh in one bomb blast.

19 Speaker of the US House of Representatives Tip O'Neil says in Dublin that Northern Ireland is being used as a political football by major British parties. British Army cadet captain, on 4-day 'familiarization tour' of the North, is shot dead on the Falls Road, Belfast. Armagh Jail woman prison officer shot dead. Chris Ryder, TV hack often used by Army to 'float' new ideas for suppression of Republicans, speaks on Nationwide about the possibility of reintroducing 'selective' internment, in order 'to get the organ grinders, not the monkeys'—a particularly inept borrowing of Aneurin Bevan's phrase from the Suez Crisis period.

20 Tip O'Neil arrives in N.I. Meets Derry RAC, Hume, Fitt, Napier, Paisley, West, 'Peace People'. Liberal MP Pardoe says on phone-in programme that O'Neil's views about British withdrawal differ from Liberal Party views 'only in that we want a time scale set for withdrawal'. Suggests two or three years.

21 Troops strength in N.I. up for first time in two years as 1000 extra troops go in. New York State Governor Hugh Carey says US Government should impose economic sanctions on Britain to force them to stop violating human rights, just as US does with other countries like Chile, Rhodesia. Compares Britain with Russia. Various Unionist parties agree to close ranks in matter of not standing candidates against each other in vulnerable seats.

21 UTOM/SF march in Glasgow stopped by police short of City Centre goal.

23 Massive largely local Asian protest against NF meeting in Southall, London. One demonstrator, on way home from protest, is killed, eyewitnesses allege, by an unprovoked attack by the Special Patrol Group (SPG); a force introduced in London some years ago after their successful development in Northern Ireland. He was Blair Peach, a New Zealand school teacher living in East London.

AFTER THE ELECTIONS?

The imperialist system worldwide is in crisis. In Africa and Asia it has suffered staggering defeats—Iran, Angola, Zimbabwe—and attempts at stabilisation are proving inadequate. The future promises even greater turmoil.

Nearer home in Europe imperialism's major project, reorganising the old economic and political order into the new structures of the EEC, is making little if any progress and could even collapse.

And here at home British imperialism is showing clear signs of demoralisation, its confidence having been drastically shaken by its failures in Ireland. Britain has failed ignominiously to defeat the armed resistance in the North and is facing with growing difficulty the grim determination of H Block and street protests. Even on the propaganda front it has suffered embarrassing setbacks, with the Amnesty and Bennett Reports as well as the botched murder of John Boyle by the SAS.

EEC LINK

The issues of Ireland and the EEC are intimately linked. We should remember that it was British imperialism's attempts to reform the 'Orange State' as a step towards economic integration with the 'Free State' to form a rational economic unit within the EEC that helped to precipitate the present crisis. Imperialism's plans for a reorganised Europe held no place for the political slum of Ulster and the anomaly of an Irish economy divided by partition.

But the first moves in this direction forced the national question violently into the fore. In the wake of the massive nationalist rebellion Britain decided to shelf its grand scheme for Ireland temporarily and attempt to stabilise the situation.

Loyalist resistance also proved an obstacle. Imperialism's old ally opposed the reforms which threatened to destroy its ascendancy. Nor were the southern Irish bourgeoisie, a potential ally for Britain's scheme, anxious to approach the task of unifying Ireland. They felt too weak to take on the radical nationalist forces and the ultra-reaction of Loyalism. But with the fragmentation of the Loyalist monolith the southern bourgeoisie are now showing signs of greater courage. Both the ruling Fianna Fail and the opposition Fine Gael parties have recently made cautious initiatives towards some sort of all-Ireland solution.

NEW POLICIES?

What will the new Westminster Government's Irish policy be? Will a new Labour government with a secure majority respond to

Dublin's initiatives? Will it even encourage Dublin to take a more active role?

Will a new Tory government with a secure majority, but traumatised by the assassination of Airey Neave implement a hard line policy and make 'security' the foremost priority? Will the madmen and women of the extreme right have their way? Or will the Tories in a hung Parliament be forced into a pact with the Unionists?

DANGEROUS ALTERNATIVES

This latter would be very dangerous, resulting in an inevitable drift towards integration with Britain or an attempt to restore Stormont. But if this were to happen it might provoke a split in the ranks of the Tories. For the Heath wing of the party has already voiced its dissent. After Thatcher's last Belfast visit when she vowed to strengthen the Union and hinted at a new Stormont, Heath's man William van Staabenze followed hotly in her footsteps and said that a section of the party would not tolerate such moves to put the clock back to before 1969.

'CONFEDERATION'?

The Heath wing favours the EEC, as do the Liberals. Two leading Liberal MPs have recently demanded a British withdrawal from Ireland, while David Steel, party leader, has voiced approval for the proposals of Fine Gael for a 'confederal solution', i.e. confederation between the 6 northeastern counties and the 26 counties. Fitzgerald of Fine Gael, when he announced his proposals, stressed the advantages of the EEC dimension. And confederation has for British politicians the attraction of being able to accommodate the 'Independent North' idea.

This idea has the backing of among others Paddy Devlin and the UDA as well as American support. Fitzgerald's scheme has also, significantly, been praised by the voice of big business, The Economist.

CERTAINTY

What is absolutely certain is that where Ireland in the context of Europe is concerned, imperialism greatly fears the spread of the effects of the rebellion in the North. It fears the fulfillment of the prophetic words of the Irish revolutionary socialist James Connolly, who said: 'Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord.'

J L, London UTOM

