

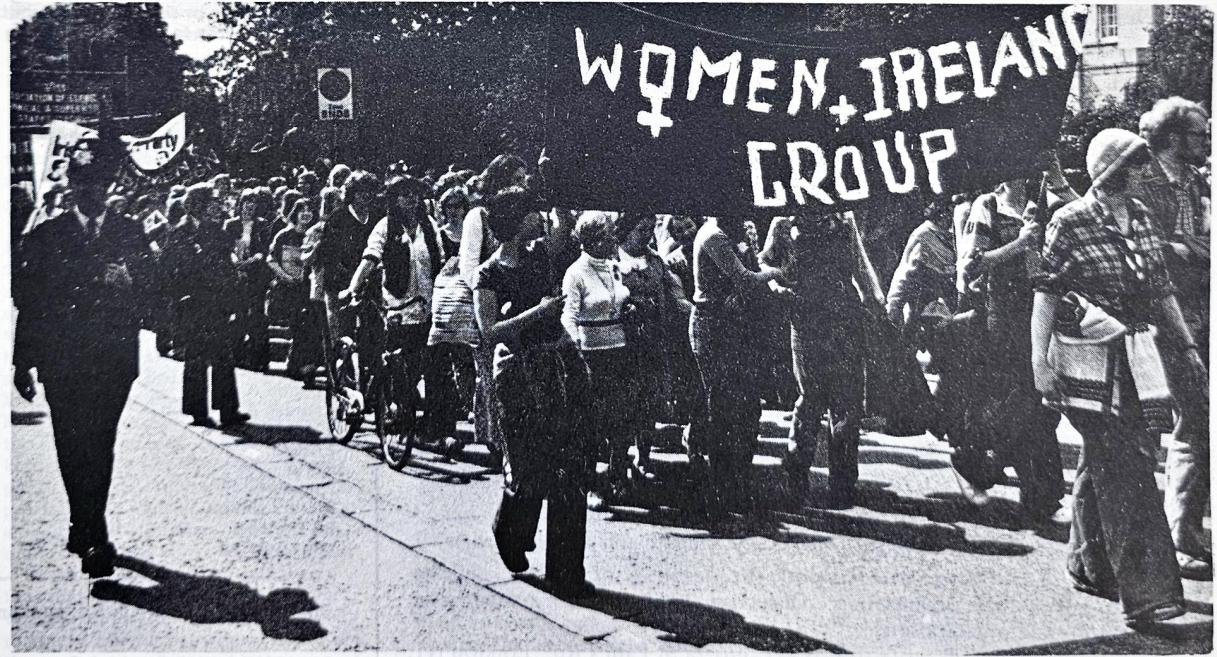
TROOPS OUT

Paper of the United Troops Out Movement

Vol.3 No.2 November 1979

top

WOMEN
ON
THE
MOVE
IN
IRELAND



AND SUPPORT FROM WOMEN IN ENGLAND

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



EDITORIAL

In this month's main article we note that it is the Catholic population who will inevitably bear the brunt of any new British 'initiative'. But the victims of current British policy rarely get a voice.

The following is an extract from a letter smuggled out of one of England's concentration camps in Ireland, H Block. H Block has been likened to the sewer pipes of Calcutta.

My cell is my whole world 24 hours a day every day. I receive no exercise, and see only the screws that open and close the door. The window is blocked and the walls, ceiling, and floor is covered in excreta, maggots infest piles of rotting food, that sits in pools of urine on the floor. Where I eat my meals naked, as everything has been taken from me, except three filthy torn rags for blankets and a piece of foam for a bed. These are constantly damp, from the hosing down of the cells or lying in the urine.

I can see my bones through my chalk white skin, and dirty, my hair and beard hang down greasy, filthy and matted over my body, which is covered and tortured by rashes, sores, and parasites. I'm always cold, sick, hungry, and coughing, all medical attention has been refused me.

During special searches, at least twice a week, I'm forced to straddle a mirror, then kicked and beat until I squat or collapse, hands force my buttocks apart, and sometimes fingers are inserted inside my body.

I can see no one nor the sky, a bird, feel the breeze, read a book or paper, sometimes I feel death would be preferable to this sub-human existence.

400, Irishmen and women, republican POWs, live in conditions, because they refuse to be branded criminals, rewrite this letter as many times as you can and send it to friends and relations, etc. . . . Tell the world of the Concentration Camps England maintains in Ireland, in the name of Peace and Justice, by simply writing a copy (or copies) of this letter, you can help these men and women, and perhaps save a life. Is this too much to ask?

HELP SMASH H BLOCK

UNITED TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8.

City Poly, Whitechapel Road (tube Aldgate and Aldgate East).

Open to all those who support the demands of UTOM, and its growth as an organisation. Observers invited from sympathetic groups and organisations.

For further details write to Box UT, c/o 2a St Paul's Rd., London N1.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN IRELAND?

LIVERPOOL UTOM NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT; FOR TROOPS OUT.
Saturday, 3rd November, 1.30pm. London coach picking up from Kings Cross (York Rd) 7.30am.

An informal day of information and discussion organised by Camden & Islington UTOM. Sessions on the media, the Provos, women, H-Block, the Army, trade unions. Showing of 'The Patriot Game', Saturday 24th November, Caxton House, St John's Way (nr Archway Tube). £1 or 50p unwaged.

SMASH THE PTA!

RCT-organised march from Kennington to Brixton Prison. Supported by Sinn Fein, IRSP, SWP, UTOM. Saturday, 24th November. Assemble Kennington Park (Oval Tube) 1pm.



TROOPS OUT is produced by an editorial collective composed of members of London UTOM branches. We meet every Wednesday. If you are in UTOM, and would like to work on the paper, write to us at the address below.

Subscriptions: £2 for 10 issues yearly. Checks payable to 'Troops Out (Literature Committee)'. Send subs and contributions to **BOX UT, 2A ST PAUL'S RD, LONDON N1**.

The United Troops Out Movement now has branches in many parts of England, Scotland and Wales. We are also in touch with some other local groups who are either in the process of forming UTOM branches, or who are doing similar work. If you want to be put in touch with your nearest branch or similar group from the list below, write to the address on the coupon.

England	
Barnsley	Manchester
Basingstoke	Merseyside
Birmingham	Norwich
Brighton	Nottingham
Bristol	Oxford
Burnley	Portsmouth
Colchester	St Albans
Crawley	Preston
Gravesend	Sheffield
Harlow	Swindon
Hemel Hempstead	Watford
Huddersfield	York
Leamington	Scotland
Leeds	Aberdeen
London Area	Dundee
Camden & Islington	Edinburgh
East London	Glasgow
Enfield	Paisley
Haringey	Stirling
Kilburn	Wales
South London	Cardiff
SE London	Swansea
West London	

To: Box UT, 2a St Pauls Rd, London N1

I would like to join/be sent information on the United Troops Out Movement

Name

Address

Womens Conferences in Belfast and London.



'OPENLY ACTIVE'

How can feminists relate to the war of national liberation in Ireland? And how do women in that struggle relate to feminism? Two recent conferences, in Belfast and in London, show how the links of a joint struggle, for women's liberation and national liberation, are slowly being forged.

The Belfast conference at the end of September was organised by the Women Against Imperialism Group. These are feminists in West Belfast who are, as their name implies, involved in the fight to get rid of Britain as an imperialist oppressor of the Irish people, and who take that struggle as their starting point in raising

The Belfast conference brought together socialist feminists from the south with women from several different groups and campaigns in the north.

Maura McCrory, from the Belfast RAC, regretted that more women from the Relatives Action Committees were not at the conference, and spoke of the difficulties many women experienced when they went out of their homes to take up active political work: 'If you can stand up to the Brits, why not to your husbands?', she asked. 'Women have been through too much and learned too much to go back to where they were before. . . . We won't stop with gaining political status for the republican prisoners. We want everybody out of jail, and we won't stop there. We want a say on how the areas where we live are run.'

Martha McClelland, a Derry Sinn Fein member, said that although there was not sex discrimination in Sinn Fein, the social situation of women meant that they were not encouraged to become politically active. Women within Sinn Fein, she continued, now realised the necessity of getting together as republican women and addressing themselves to women's issues. 'For example, how are women going to guarantee their rights in the new Ireland? This is why I am at this conference'.

Mary Reid, speaking as a member of the IRSP, felt that 'women's liberation

After the anti-imperialist women's conference ended in Belfast on September 30, the women present joined in an RAC H-Block protest. As the marchers attempted to go into the City Centre, plastic bullets were fired and a two-year girl was injured. This picture shows the front of the march, before the firing started.

has got to wait until after the revolution', because of the immediacy of the struggle. And while almost all the other speakers concentrated on how women needed to fight for their rights within the struggle and as part of it, the pressing need to get rid of British oppression was always present. Marie Vallely spoke of the solidarity of the republican women in Armagh, across prison authorities attempts to divide them, and to break their protest for POW status, and also of their close identification with their comrades in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh.

Geraldine Crane recounted how the RUC had beaten her up in Castlereagh, and had tried to separate her from her child – and about how they tried to humiliate women, while Catherine Thibodeau, from Turf Lodge, recounted the Tenants Action Committee's long and successful fight to get their houses recognised as unfit and needing to be torn down, a victory which was the work of dedicated women and was now being claimed by local councillors who had not been part of the fight. She gave graphic accounts of the economic oppression of women living in such areas.

From the Irish Women's Federation, Anne Speed of Dublin said that in the past she as a feminist in the south had felt schizophrenic because of the split between feminism and the national struggle, and of how the first Irish Women's Group, Irishwomen United, had broken down because of not recognising that struggle.

Judging from reports of the conference, there is a real growth in determination to push for their own needs as women coming from those women within the national struggle, and a corresponding recognition among some Irish feminists of the necessity of supporting that struggle as part of their feminist perspective. An editorial committee was set up to produce a 32-county anti-imperialist women's journal, and there was a lot of discussion of women's issues that could be taken up on a 32-county basis, as well as some of the differences between the position of women north and south.

The London conference in early October was called by the Women and Ireland Group, for women who were already active in Britain in support of the Irish struggle on an anti-imperialist basis.

It was attended by over 60 women, from London, Leeds, Norwich, Birmingham, Bristol and Brighton. Speakers included Mary Enright who came over to represent Women Against Imperialism, and women from Sinn Fein and IRSP in England, and from UTOM.

Mary Enright, described how her group had come into being, and its relationship to the Republican movement and the growth of a women's movement in the North. She pointed out that while questions such as abortion were not less important to women there, in a country at war the demands of any women's movement will be different, and that many women are actively engaged in, and give priority to, the struggle for national liberation. She hoped that women in Britain would realise this and offer solidarity with these women.

Sue O'Halloran from Sinn Fein, and Von McClary from the IRSP Support Group gave political analyses of how their groups saw the situation in Britain now, and what solidarity groups should be doing, and also spoke of the place of ideas of women's liberation within their groups.

The rest of the day was spent in working out a strategy for the months ahead. More formal links were needed with women in the North, and more use of the material and knowledge the Women and Ireland group had. It was suggested that women in UTOM branches could try to set up meetings around the country at which the largely London-based W&I group could speak, and that women from the RAC's should be brought over to speak often – all with a view to involving more women in Britain who did not identify the war in the North as having anything in common with their socialism or feminism.

'Defiantly Militant'

"The role of women in the struggle against British Imperialism in Ireland has always been prominent, wherever you found an Irishman fighting to rid Ireland of the British, you found an Irish woman beside him, from Countess Markievicz who stood shoulder to shoulder with the men in the Easter rebellion of 1916, to the Irish women today. It is interesting and gratifying when one looks back to see how the women's role in the struggle here has changed as the war continues. One would almost think that they had drawn up a strategy of resistance, first passive, then obstructive, and then, finally, openly active and defiantly militant. We feel that women everywhere who fight for equality and liberation are bonded to us in a spirit of solidarity. . . .

The women's liberation movement have been working long and hard worldwide to gain for women what is ours by right - equality. They have formed political pressure groups and by their efforts have gained many sweeping changes on behalf of women everywhere. . . .

"We have come a long way from Emily Pankhurst, but most of it very slowly. . . . It's a never-ending struggle and one that is world wide. We were outraged lately by the Ayatollah Khomeini order that all women in Iran must wear the heavy black dress which covers them from neck to ankles, but were delighted to read that the women protested in the streets and refused to wear it.

"Wherever a human right is violated, wherever people are treated as second class citizens, be it because of sex, religion, or race, people must fight back. We have, after all, nothing to lose, but our chains."

Extract from statement of Protesting P.o.W.'s,
'B' Wing, ARMAGH GAOL

Women & Ireland are holding an Organising Meeting for all women interested in starting a campaign on women political prisoners in Ireland and other countries (like Chile).
Meet at 8pm, 28th November, at A Woman's Place, 48 William IV Street, London W.C.2

BELFAST H-BLOCK CONFERENCE

An important initiative in the fight for political status took place on October 21 in Belfast. At an open conference attended by over 500 committed people from all over Ireland, a new National Committee was set up to organise a mass, all-Ireland movement to win political status.

Representatives from Provisional Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the People's Democracy, and many other groups, and individuals, spoke with urgency and determination of the vital need to unite to win this fight.

Acknowledging the political differences that exist, they pledged to sink these in a common struggle.

Essentially, the conference and the new committee hope to draw out on the streets all those Irish men and women who recognise the prisoners as political prisoners, whether or not they also give support to the armed struggle. As one speaker pointed out, the media has ignored one finding of the recent survey in the South, which is that a majority of the Irish people do support political status. And it is these people, as individuals, or through the trade unions,

cultural and social organisations, which the conference and the activities arising from it are aimed at.

Documents smuggled out from the men in Long Kesh and the women in Armagh reinforced the appeal for unity, and the will of the conference to achieve it. *'We are prepared to die for the right to political status'*, the men in Long Kesh said. *'There is strength that can lie in your unity, a power which can throw open, bring down and smash the H Blocks, and we appeal to you to use it, to come together, to unite your voices and your actions, because together in your hands lies the power of a people, a strength that the British government cannot ignore. This is a power and strength that is seldom used in Ireland, but when used, as in 1919, it must be listened to. It is a power which can save our lives, which are in your hands. Unite and use it'*.

The Relatives Action Committees which called the conference have a strong representation on the new committee, which also contains representatives from Sinn Fein, IRSP and PD, solicitors who work in the Diplock Courts, the Association for Legal Justice, and individuals

SUPPORT THE WOMEN ARRESTED ON ARMAGH PICKET

As we reported a few issues earlier, Women Against Imperialism held a picket of Armagh Jail on International Women's Day in solidarity with the women political prisoners held there. The picket was very successful, but as the people were moving off to go home, they were attacked by the RUC. Several women and two men were arrested, and the women are coming up in a group for trial at the end of October. The Women & Ireland group in Britain, with support from UTOM and other groups will be organising activities in support in Britain, and to publicise the plight of the women in Armagh. Meanwhile, money is needed for the anticipated fines of those arrested on the picket. Cheques/POs should be made out to Women Against Imperialism and sent to them c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast 12.

TWO WOMEN'S JOURNALS FROM THE NORTH

Beansaoir (free woman) is published quarterly by the Women Against Imperialism Group. This issue has articles on the Payment of Debt Act, rape, how the British Army and RUC sexually intimidate women, contraception, and a selection of writings from women on protest in Armagh Prison. For a copy write to Women Against Imperialism, c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast 12. 20p (outside Ireland) + 12p p&p.

Women's Action is published quarterly by the Belfast Women's Collective, and their latest issue discusses feminism & nationalism, abortion, ten years of Irish feminism. Available from Belfast Women's Collective, c/o Just Books, 7 Winetavern St., Belfast 1. 20p (outside Ireland) + 12p p&p.

active in civil rights work.

The Conference voted for a march to Long Kesh on New Year's Day, and a lobby of the SDLP Annual Conference in November. Beyond that, it gave its wholehearted support to the new committee in organising initiatives, co-opting people to join in, and in particular concentrating on mobilising the undoubtedly support which exists in the Republic and outside the heart of the nationalist areas.

The fight for political status has become central to the whole struggle in the North. The determination of the prisoners is matched only by the intransigency of the British government, which treats them as political in the 'special courts', but will not concede that status.

It is vital that UTOM and other groups in Britain take notice of, and respond to, the initiatives that came out of this conference. Concerted pressure from within Ireland, from Britain and Europe, from America and elsewhere can win this issue. Mary Nellis, from the Derry Relatives Action Committee, spoke of the work UTOM is already doing, but that is only the beginning.

THOUGHTS ON THE PTA

PTA figures issued by the government show an analysis of the use of the law, they do not show the harsh reality of police abuse of power, harassment and repression of Irish people and of anyone who raises a voice against British occupation of Ireland.

The so-called 'temporary' law now has become, like the Incitement to Disaffection Act, a permanent cudgel in the hands of the British state. Emergency law, like extensive censorship, is part of the machinery of repression.

Over 4000 people have been detained - that means people lifted from their homes in the middle of the night, dragged from trains and buses, humiliated and degraded to provide an opportunity for the police to gather low-level type intelligence material to satisfy the desires of the National Police and Lisburn computers. To the academic 4000 people doesn't mean a lot. To the person lifted in the North of Ireland, he or she stands a 50% chance of being on stage one of the conveyor belt to either H Block or Armagh.

The PTA in Ireland means up to 7 days in one of the torture centres like Castlereagh or Strand Road in Derry. In Britain detention under the PTA doesn't necessarily infer physical torture - it will probably mean long interrogations, deprivation of sleep and verbal abuse for the 'suspect' whose so-called 'crime' is likely to be the distribution of *An Phoblacht*/Republican News, or a tiny voice of opposition to British troops on the streets of Ireland or the torture of the H Block prisoners of Long Kesh.

MEDIA BACK-UP

The British government uses the PTA as an effective media back-up to propagandise against the Republican movement. Following the death of Airey Neave, a number of suspects are being interviewed at Paddington Green. The membership of JRSP scooped up and questioned about sexual preference, political beliefs, political contacts - hardly a word about Airey Neave! But to the viewer of the TV or the reader of the 'Standard' it looks as though the police are onto a good thing. Far from it, they thrash about blindly and use the PTA to prevent their being taken as ineffective. The mounties may always get their man - the anti-terrorist squad seldom does!

HELD UNDER THE PTA

What's it like to be 'detained' under the PTA? Ask Mary Nelligs or Vivien Doherty from Derry - on their way to an Edinburgh Trades Council meeting they were taken physically off the train at Stranraer. Mary has two sons on the blanket and Vivien's brother, Don Bosco Doherty, got 16 years for a 'verbal' confession following the Castlereagh treatment.

The police knew they were going to a meeting to talk about repression in Ireland - both were taken to the police station and humiliated. Vivien had to be treated in hospital because of the way she was handled in police custody. Released 4 hours later, so that they missed their train connections - in an attempt to try and silence their voices.

Each case of detention under the PTA has its own story - just as each SUS case has a story. Monitoring statistics doesn't mean very much.

DIVINE RIGHT OF EXCLUSION

Part of the power of the PTA is the Secretary of State's 'divine' right to exclude people he doesn't like. Lord Shackleton, who did a government report on the PTA said, 'It's not judicial' - tell that to the people who are in prison for breaking exclusion orders, the penalty 5 years!

Week in and week out there's a secret trial in Britain: the person being served with an 'exclusion order' has no right to know why and what the exclusion is based on, no right to legal representation, no real appeal process, just a 'non-judicial' interview with a government-appointed observer like Lord Alport - who incidentally owns quite a chunk of land in Ireland.

The detainee may not even know the reasons for his or her failure to get the exclusion order reversed!

FORGETTING

Britain is having a field day giving publicity to the Charter 77 dissidents in Czechoslovakia; what about its own police state and secret trials?

The PTA has been used by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir David McNee in his new call for extended police powers. Have colonial chickens come home to roost? Will we ever have 3 day detention, search and seizure and arbitrary arrests? But then, if we do, it will only happen to 'subversives' who will get 'what they deserve'.

NO VIOLENCE, PLEASE

If you torment people enough, arrest, detain, torture (or 'degrade and humiliate' as it's now officially called) through cigarette burns on the testicles, broken fingers and perforated eardrums, and the like. If the sledgehammer comes through the door in the early hours of the morning and your family undergo physical and sexual abuse, how long does it take for the so-called 'subversive' to become a 'terrorist', how long before you take up the bomb and the bullet, as you've nothing else left?

Karl Marx once said, 'the country of the oppressor is always the last to be free'. He's probably right. So many people ignore the plight of Irish people while taking up the call for solidarity from countries thousands of miles away. But then: 'no violence, please, we're British'. Ask the people of Aden, India, Kenya, Malaysia and Cyprus about that! Ireland - is it Britain's Vietnam?

Pat McCarthy, Former N.Ireland Officer
National Council of Civil Liberties

IN BRIEF . . .

The power-snaring Assembly at Stormont was supposed to have been totally destroyed by the Ulster Workers' Council strike in 1973. But no! Parliament never actually abolished it. And now we find that Mr. Ronnie Bunting who has occupied the post of Clerk to the phantom assembly up until 30th September is retiring. But this is not the end. Mr. A. B. Kennedy, another civil servant, is taking his place. Does this indicate a new political initiative?

President Nyerere of Tanzania, on a recent visit to Ireland, didn't quite give journalists the story they expected. At a press conference in Dublin, when asked about his attitude to the Provisional IRA, given his support for African liberation movements, he replied, "Can I have another question?"

But someone who will be answering the questions of religion and politics in Ireland is Argentinian psychologist, and ecumenical Christian, Bruno Giorgi. Now in Coleraine, he has shown interest in Ian Paisley because of his "theories about Catholics' distinct personality features". And since it hasn't been done before, Bruno will also translate into Irish the work of psychologist Hans Eysenck! (well known for his racialist theories)

Meanwhile, a letter circulating amongst BBC news staff in northern Ireland hopes to clear up the problem of addressing Ian Paisley e.g. Mr, Rev. or Dr. Henceforth he will be Doctor on the BBC, but Rev. in the *Guardian*, which along with the academic authorities in the USA does not recognise his honorary doctorate from the Bob Jones University of South Carolina

Further north in Chicago, that well known Royal parasite, Princess Margaret, has been "endearing" herself with the Mayor Jayne Byrne at a private dinner. Regarding the assassination of Mountbatten, she answered "Irish Pigs", but realising her mistake said "You're Irish!" Too late, the Mayor had left the table in disgust

Life in the Professionals can be deadly, in more ways than one. Two soldiers on forced marches died last September, one in Surrey and the other in Hong Kong. Recently, another died in similar circumstances in mid October. If only they bred them like the new General Officer Commanding in N. Ireland, Major General Sir Timothy Creasey. In 1962, armed only with his swagger stick, he confronted 800 "rebels" in the Congo and rescued a Belgian priest. Perhaps he'll do an encore in Belfast?

The recent fulminations of Paisley on the Pope's possible visit to northern Ireland prompted sympathetic correspondence in a West country paper, the *Sunday Independent*. This came from Mr. Derek Merry signing himself "Company Commander, Ulster Defence Association, Plymouth". Mr. Merry is also an officer with the local National Front. On the same page was another letter signed "R. Walker, Nationalists Against Homosexuality" - another NF member, wearing yet another hat.

CHANGE WITHOUT

During the British General Election the main concern of Troops Out supporters was to 'make Ireland an issue', and to break the 'wall of silence' that surrounded the situation in Northern Ireland. Six short months later the deafening silence on Ireland has been replaced by a bewildering chatter in press, TV, and no doubt in countless homes and workplaces. Political parties have debated it, the Pope talked about it, newspapers are editorialising about it, the INLA and IRA have blown up a top politician and a member of the Royal Family, and Conor Cruise O'Brien is being wheeled onto TV or radio almost every other day to rap over the knuckles yet another innocent-looking figure (Cyril Smith, the Pope, Congressman Biaggi) who is unknowingly 'giving support, aid and comfort to terrorists'.

So what has changed? The trends of events are easily submerged by the flurry of incidents that appear, and the bias of the press mystifies rather than illuminating them. But it is possible to pick out the main reasons for current developments.

EFFECTIVE MILITARY OFFENSIVE

No-one can be unaware by now that the IRA are today stronger, better organised and more clearly led politically than ever. Yet Roy Mason based his whole term as Northern Ireland Secretary on the promise that he was on the verge of defeating the IRA. His boasts have been utterly exposed as false. But why are the IRA doing so well? The press has got one answer. They usually present it as a question of conspiratorial technique. The IRA are 'tiny and isolated', but are using a cunning technique – something to do with a 'cell structure' – and controlled by a Machiavellian mastermind and Marxist, the ex-Belfast barman Gerry Adams, they are able to carry on with their campaign of 'mindless violence'.

The military reorganisation of the IRA undoubtedly is a factor in the effectiveness of their current offensive. The attack on the British Army convoy at Warrenpoint which saw the deaths of the largest number of British soldiers in a single engagement since the Korean War is an index of their increased military sophistication. But military capability does not spring out of thin air.

Rather, as the Army themselves recognised in an internal document which recently fell into the hands of the IRA, the basis of the IRA's strength lies in the political support they enjoy among the Catholic community in the North that ten years of Army occupation has only served to consolidate. Thus despite saturation coverage by police and army and the most sophisticated intelligence machinery, and despite torture in the interrogation centres – which still continues even after its exposure by the Government's own Bennett Report – the British have been unable to break the organisation.

THE SECURITY CONTROVERSY

The Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary are now uncomfortably aware that there is no possibility of defeating the IRA in the foreseeable future. This has resulted in considerable confusion and mutual recriminations between Army and RUC. Morale is very low in the Army with breakdowns, desertions and leaving the Army frequent. And more and more in recent months pressure has been building up among the military to be allowed to take overall control of 'security' and introduce some sort of selective internment.

But the politicians understand that the reintroduction of internment could only strengthen republican resistance. Moreover, removing the 'primacy' of the RUC in security matters

would be a clear step backwards from their long-term goal of handing over more and more of the responsibility for the conduct of the war to the RUC and some new form of Northern Ireland Government – the Ulsterisation policy.

The current solution to this bubbling controversy has been the introduction of the new security supremo Maurice Oldfield. Dressed up by the press as Britain's top spymaster, a real-life Smiley, or 'M', his job is really very down to earth and unromantic. He has to coordinate the squabbling 'security forces', and in this he will be aided by the simultaneous replacement of the Chiefs of both the British Army in Ireland and of the RUC. But more than that, his appointment signals a re-orientation towards greater concentration on intelligence and covert operations, particularly by the Army, and acknowledges the failure of 'normal policing' – if you can call the torture in Castlereagh that – to produce the goods.

More use of plainclothes soldiers – the IRA shot two of them the other day in an unmarked car in West Belfast, and Time Out revealed last week several more cases of their use – and a fullscale attempt to bring the information on the entire Catholic population stored away in the computer banks up to date is now on the cards.



MAURICE OLDFIELD
BRITISH RESPONSE

The situation in the North is becoming increasingly difficult for British politicians, and Humphrey Atkins, the new Northern Ireland Secretary is floundering. He began with a convincing display of incompetence – he went on holiday abroad during the 'marching season' when any novice should know that major incidents abound, and then showed remarkable indecisiveness in dealing with American proposals for 'peace talks'. He seems to be getting the hang of things now though, but still does not enjoy the confidence of the Army in the same way as the militaristic Mason did.

Not surprisingly, in view of the military situation on the ground and the intransigence of British government policy, his political opportunities are somewhat restricted. His main theme seems to be to drift along, keeping everyone guessing, while he holds 'promising talks' with all and sundry among 'respectable' political forces.

He has now come up with a new 'political initiative' – a plan for a single-chamber elected advisory assembly – which it is hoped will be put before Parliament before the Christmas recess. But this cynical attempt to present political inertia as movement is probably doomed before it starts – Unionists have already rejected it as a 'useless talking shop', while it has little appeal even for moderate Catholic politicians.

PROGRESS

LOYALIST RESPONSES

The Loyalist paramilitaries, and the Unionist politicians, are also responding to the failure of the police and army to smash republican resistance. After the IRA's display of weaponry to the press in central Belfast on the anniversary of internment, they were baying for action. And it wasn't just talk. Since the death of Mountbatten seven Catholics, seemingly chosen at random, have been shot dead by Loyalist death squads. This signals the resurgence of the sectarian assassination campaign of the mid 70's.

Yet the British press have deliberately chosen to play down and muddle this new development. Their reports of these killings have suppressed key facts. The *Guardian* recently presented one such murder side by side with a report of a death in a Belfast pub fight; trying to create the impression that there is just a general climate of violence and killing in Northern Ireland.

The Unionist establishment, however, is not so coy. John Taylor, Unionist Euro MP, in a public speech for which he will *not* be prosecuted, called for Loyalist assassins to select targets in the South as well as Northern Ireland. And Andy Tyrie, the leader of the paramilitary UDA, makes thinly-veiled references to these assassinations and the activity of his organisation. Yet, as he told the *Irish Times* he has never in his paramilitary career been arrested or questioned by police or Army.

Unionist politicians and their supporters are lining up behind Ian Paisley, and have been anticipating vague rumours of a new 'political initiative' by rejecting it in advance.



IRISH GOVERNMENT BACKTRACKS

A second strand to his diplomacy is to pressure the Irish government to take more action against the IRA. Since Warren-point he has been pushing some form of arrangement with Jack Lynch, the Prime Minister of the Republic. Talks as in the past have centred on border security, but the agreement to allow British helicopters to overfly the airspace of the South has broken new ground, and other agreements reached at the last talks seem to indicate that the Irish Government may use courts and police in the south in an increasing security role in cooperation with the British government and the RUC.

These agreements reflect changes in Southern politics. Lynch has now shelved his party's vague – but oft-repeated commitment to an eventual united Ireland, and demands for Britain to commit itself to a policy of withdrawal. Because of this, he is facing criticism from within Fianna Fail.

Many commentators believe that Fianna Fail's 'better' line on the North was a significant factor in winning the last election in the Republic, but as so often before in Irish

politics, once a party is in power it pulls back on its proclaimed intentions to do something about the North. Lynch and Atkins now seem to be talking the same language – that of some form of devolved northern government which entirely leaves out moves towards unity, or even the kind of all-Ireland dimension agreed on in the Sunningdale talks years before.

This may give Atkins a slight breathing space. Britain has been acutely embarrassed in recent months by the American interest in Ireland, and fears accountability to an international audience for its Irish policy. To be able to point to accord with the Irish government may ease the pressure for a time. But reaction from within the Republic may not allow Fianna Fail to retrench so easily. The results of a recent opinion poll showing that 70% of the people in the South see a United Ireland as the only eventual solution are causing Lynch a lot of embarrassment.

SHIFT IN BRITISH OPINION

In Britain things have shifted over the summer. The debates on 'troops out' at both the Liberal and Labour Party conferences clearly legitimise discussion of withdrawal from Ireland: to argue for it no longer means being immediately labelled a supporter of the IRA – Cyril Smith, John Pardoe, the *Daily Mirror* and the *New Statesman* are hardly fifth-column terrorists. The moves at the conferences were defeated, but the debate was significantly different. Instead of an outright rejection of the possibility of withdrawal there was more emphasis on the question: What would happen if the troops left? To ask that question is to open up a whole area of discussion that the government has long sought to cut off.

CONCLUSIONS

There has been a qualitative change in what is being said, in Britain and abroad, about Ireland. This is indicated by the pressures for Britain to give up its sterile policy of military repression and take steps which would break the deadlock and lead to eventual Irish reunification...

But Britain's response to these demands has been only more of the same old line. Atkins' so-called political initiative is doomed before it begins, and the only effect of British government policy so far has been on the Irish Government, which is bowing to British pressure, combined with its own fears of political change involving the North.

Although the military fight against Britain in the North is going well, the entire catholic population will bear the brunt of Britain's lack of policy, through increased security force repression, and through the 'Loyalist backlash' which is encouraged by Britain's continued determination to hold on to Northern Ireland.

If the public pressure in Britain and abroad, and the military and civilian resistance in the North are kept up, it seems inevitable that British policy will have to shift before long. And there is only one sensible direction in which it can shift – towards withdrawal.

When that happens, it will probably be accompanied by attempts at compromise solutions which will remove the embarrassment of the British Army without going any way towards allowing the Irish people self-determination. All supporters of *both* the demands of the Troops Out Movement need to pay careful attention to future developments. The demand for self-determination for the Irish people *as a whole* – which means, quite simply, an all-Ireland solution, will need to be pushed loud and clear.

OLIVERS ARMY- Here to Stay

We're starting, in this issue, a new series of articles on events in Irish history — concentrating on periods when British — or English troops perpetrated the main invasions of Ireland, on the effects of economic imperialism (as in the Famine), and on the Irish struggle to regain their country. The first article deals with Cromwell.

Everybody knows that Cromwell went to Ireland and massacred the inhabitants of Drogheda; it's one of those unsavoury events in English history books that carry few explanations. . . 'The less said the better'. Attempts to understand such events cast England's role in an even murkier light than the simple knowledge that a massacre occurred.

REVOLUTION AND REBELLION

Sensing the growing struggle between Monarch and State in England, and the inevitable weakening of England's grip on Ireland, Irish Catholics rebelled in 1641, and that rebellion continued until 1649. The course of the rebellion, though fascinating and complex, cannot be considered here: What should concern us is the effect it had in England.

We must consider the ideological climate of the 1640's. Whatever name the English civil war goes under, a revolution in ideas was taking place in which people were throwing out such concepts as 'the will of God', and the 'Divine Right' of kingship, and replacing them with ideas of man's responsibility to determine his own future. A catholic rebellion, with its overtones of manipulation by Rome, was deeply threatening to this emergent ideology, as well as to the economic investments that the British state had made in Ireland through plantation policies.

DOUBLE THREAT

This double threat was ruthlessly harnessed by Cromwellians. The parliamentary army was raised through loans from speculating English landlords, on the promise of repayment in Irish land: 'First defeat the King, and then the Irish menace'. This economic thrust of an emerging ruling class required, however, an ideological basis, and this was found in the religious disputes of the day.

The overriding theological explanation of the civil war was bound up in the theory of the Millenium; the 'second coming', or reestablishment of the kingdom of Christ, with a golden age for humanity in its wake. The enemies of the millenium were those who had corrupted Christ's teachings in the previous 1000 years — the Monarchy, the established church, and (especially when considering Ireland) Catholicism. These forces represented the 'Antichrist', which had to be smashed to make way for Christ's kingdom.

LEVELLERS

The army was deeply imbued with these theories, as it was the chief instru-

ment for smashing the prevailing order, but interpretations of the ideology varied widely. The majority accepted the Cromwellian dogma of Rome as Anti-christ, and the suppression of Irish catholics as a holy crusade. A fragment from one of their tracts exemplifies their attitudes: 'the Anti-christian whore is filled with fears that you are the men commissioned by God to execute upon her the judgement written, to stain her glory and spoil her beauty, to dash her bastard's brains against the stones, and to give her blood for blood to drink, to burn her flesh with fire'.

Whole regiments, however, had a more revolutionary analysis of the prevailing ideology, developed from the original radical leap of fighting their own monarch. These 'Leveller' regiments recognised a common cause with the Irish rebels. 'The cause of the Irish natives in seeking their just freedoms, immunities and liberties, was the very same with our cause here, endeavouring our own rescue and freedom from the power of oppressors'. If the fight for the millenium was really the fight for freedom, then 'Irish papists' should be allowed to enjoy their religion'.

They understood that it was economic constraints that predicated the suppression of the Irish, and explained the seeming anomalies of the rebellion, such as the pact of military co-operation between Ulster puritans and Ulster catholic rebels against attempts to unite English and Scots settlers under the banner of 'loyalty to the crown' in political terms. Their influence was sufficiently great for the Council of Officers to vote that the army not be used to 'eradicate the natives or divest them of their estates', which was, of course, Cromwell's precise intention.

MUTINY

When the army of invasion was assembled, these differences came head. In April, 1649, a Leveller pamphlet of extraordinary vision and sophistication appeared (the '18 Queries') arguing that the enemies of freedom were to be found, not in Ireland, but in the powerful interests within Parliament; and that no man seeking freedom could in any way justify an Irish invasion. The rhetoric of the 'Queries' has a chillingly familiar ring:

'10 Whether those who pretend for freedom (as the English now) shall not make themselves altogether inexcusable in entrenching upon other's freedoms, and whether it be not the character of a true patriot to endeavour the just freedom of all as well as his own?'

Similarly: '(5) How can the conquered be accounted rebels, if at any time they attempt to free themselves and recover their own?'

Troops en route for Ireland refused to proceed, and an effective mutiny occurred.

THE 'SHORT, SHARP SHOCK'

Even Cromwell later expressed sentiments suggesting that it was the Irish clergy, rather than people, that he set out to eradicate, but with powerful creditors at his back he was far too pressed at the time for niceties of conscience. The leveller regiments were engaged by the 'crusading' majority at Burford, and their opposition annihilated.

Criticism suppressed, Cromwell was more concerned with getting back quickly than waging a holy war. There were factions in parliament that would be only too happy to see him involved in a drawn-out campaign while they arranged their own affairs at home, and hence he administered his now notorious 'short, sharp shock' policy. The citizens of Drogheda and Wexford were massacred to discourage further resistance, and from then on 'leniency' was shown to those who had rebelled: they were given the option of exile, by joining continental armies.

This policy made Irish genocide more palatable, but the Cromwellian settlement was genocide none the less. By the end of the rebellion 42% of the population was dead, 3% exiled to foreign service and 7% had been sold into slavery. Of those remaining, only those adjudged 'loyal' during the rebellion were allowed to remain at large — the majority were herded into the barren province of Connaught on pain of death if they attempted to return east of the Shannon. 2,500,000 acres were confiscated and given to parliament's investors. The attempt to wipe out the Irish failed only because the incoming English were so desperate for labour that they couldn't afford to implement their barbaric 'rights'.

CLASS ANTAGONISM

So ended the rebellion, and England's attempt at a solution, but it would be wrong to simplify relations between the two countries to those of oppressor and oppressed without examining the effect that Cromwell's suppression had in England. The economic necessity of invasion required an ideological framework that very nearly collapsed in the face of principled opposition. And the cost of preventing that collapse was the suppression of the freedom of the great mass of the English people to think for themselves, as well as the Irish.

To demand self-determination for the Irish people is not merely altruism: it is a prerequisite to recognising the class antagonisms beneath Britain's capacity to justify through ideology its economic rapacity. Inevitably they became the first English 'Troops Out' movement — demanding it before they went in! We have a long way to go yet.

J. Burke & R. Marks, Leeds

Origins of the PROVOS

IN 1968, THE NORTHERN IRELAND GOVERNMENT WAS HAVING A LOT OF BOTHER WITH THE CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION'S OUTRAGEOUS DEMANDS FOR CATHOLIC EQUALITY. SOLUTION? LET THE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY SORT THEM OUT....



BURNTOLLET JAN. 4th, 1969

...THAT NIGHT DRUNKEN SPECIALS RAN AMOK IN DERRY'S BOGSIDE....



PART 1
OF AN
INFORMATIVE
SERIES BY
THE IRISH
HISTORY CO-OP

PRIME-MINISTER O'NEILL,
FIGHTING TO MAINTAIN THE
PARTY LEADERSHIP, COULD
ONLY DRIVE.....

"ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!
WE HAVE HEARD SUFFICIENT
FOR NOW ABOUT CIVIL RIGHTS. LET US
HEAR A LITTLE ABOUT CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY"



...THE R.U.C. (COPS TO YOU) DECIDED IT HAD TO BE THE I.R.A., ROARED INTO THE BOGSIDE TO INTERVIEW A FEW PEOPLE AND...UM....BEAT ONE SAM DEVENNY TO DEATH.



WHEN THE R.U.C. TRIED TO BREAK UP A PUB BRAWL IN BELFAST'S CRUMBLIN ROAD IN MID-MAY, THERE WERE RIOTS AGAIN...



...AND THE ARDYNE CATHOLICS STARTED FORMING VIGILANTE GROUPS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THE POLICE

WITH FEW MEN, AND FEWER GUNS, THE I.R.A. WERE MORE CONCERNED WITH CIVIL RIGHTS THAN ARMED RESISTANCE



SO WHO BLEW UP CASTLEREAGH SUB-STATION ON MARCH 20th, 1969?



...AND A WATER-PIPE AT SILENT VALLEY ON APRIL 20th? ...AND AN ELECTRIC PYLON AT KILMORE THE SAME NIGHT? ...AND A WATER-PIPE AT TEMPLEPATRICK ON THE 23rd?

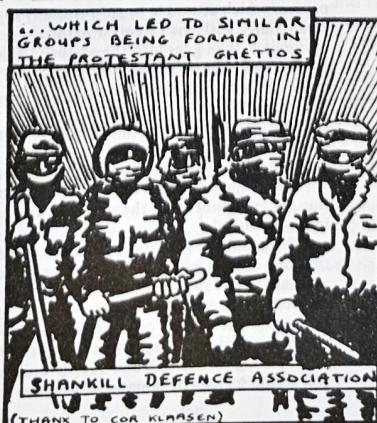
HOME AFFAIRS' SECRETARY JOHN TAYLOR INTERVENED BEFORE THINGS GOT TOO OUT OF HAND.



EDITOR'S NOTE: NO, IT WAS THE PROTESTANT UVF, WHIPPING UP A BIT OF LOYALIST PARANOIA TO FORCE O'NEILL TO RESIGN.



O'NEILL'S RESPONSE WAS.... TO BE EXPECTED.



...WHICH LED TO SIMILAR GROUPS BEING FORMED IN THE PROTESTANT GHETTOS



IT IS! CATHOLICS GOT PISSED OFF WITH BEING KICKED AROUND BY LOYALIST POLICE & POLITICIANS, SO...

NEXT ISSUE - WHO ARE THE TERRORISTS?

REVIEWS



Trade Unions in Northern Ireland, Belfast Bulletin No. 7.

This is the seventh quarterly bulletin from the Belfast Workers Research Unit, and proved to be the most difficult to write due to the reluctance of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC of ICTU) to offer any assistance. Notwithstanding, the 53 pages on seven separate topics are excellently researched and abundant with facts and figures.

In the first article, the growth of Trade Unionism before partition is charted, with the formation of the Irish Trades Union Congress in 1894 leading to the present ICTU, whose Northern Ireland Committee the Stormont Government finally recognised in 1964. The record of the Northern Trade Unions in combatting sectarianism and repression is analysed, and condemned in the main, despite trade union involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. In particular, the Better Life for All Campaign, backed by the British Labour and Communist parties, is shown to have failed to gain support due to its lack of a political program and its ultimate identification of violence with 'extremists' and not the State itself.

An in-depth study of trade union defence of working class standards in the North concludes that the trade unions have been grossly inefficient, and the profile of the 12-man NIC which follows lets one see why. The massive under-representation of women in the movement, both at rank and file and official level, is coupled with chauvinist and sexist attitudes from male members and a policy of not encouraging female involvement.

One is left in no doubt that 'the history of contemporary Ireland is one of division', and Connolly's prophecy of a divided working class is taken further by the 'relatively few militants with a socialist perspective of both industrial and political issues', which the study finds. The contradiction between 'the conservative ideology of loyalism and the real needs of the working class' is the main one facing Protestant workers. However, the Orange State's guarantee to loyalists of better access to housing and jobs than their Catholic counterparts allows this contradiction to remain. The trade union leadership, for its part, remains silent 'in the interests of unity'. Although sometimes depressing reading, the Bulletin is valuable, and an excellent source of reference.

DM, S London UTOM

Order from Workers Research Unit, c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast 12. 60p + 15p p&p.

H BLOCKS

This month sees the third anniversary of Kieran Nugent becoming the first person to go 'on the blanket' in Long Kesh. Kieran Nugent was released recently, but some 400 prisoners remain in the H Blocks, many serving much longer sentences, while some 40 women are protesting for political status in Armagh prison, as are the 160 Republicans on remand in Crumlin Road jail in Belfast.

Week after week Republican News is carrying messages of congratulation from relatives and friends to those who have completed two years or more in what is rightly called 'the Hell Hole'. It is time that we in England, Scotland and Wales redoubled our efforts to publicise their situation and their demands.

One invaluable aid in our work is a book recently published by Father Denis Faul and Father Raymond Murray. Called simply *H Blocks* it is a 154-page collection of solid information on the prisoners' campaign. *H Blocks* is a must for activists – at the very least every UTOM branch should have a copy and use it when preparing leaflets and articles.

The book contains a wealth of background detail: on torture in the north of Ireland, on Irish prisoners in British jails over the last 100 years, on special courts, on the start of the H Block campaign and how it became the 'no wash' protest, on the systematic ill-treatment of blanket men, on the women in Armagh, and on the activities of the Relatives Action Committees.

There is also a summary of the findings of the Amnesty and Bennett Reports, a reprint of Archbishop O'Fiaich's condemnation of the H Blocks, Joan Maynard MP's correspondence with Mason's underling Don Concannon, US columnist Jack Anderson's attack on the H Blocks and then-Ambassador Peter Jay's reply.

The experiences, thoughts and feelings of the prisoners themselves are expressed throughout the book by their statements, letters and articles – several originally written on toilet paper and smuggled out.

H Blocks costs £2 plus 40p p&p. Write to Ard Scail, Divis Street, Belfast 12. Make cheques/POs payable to Association for Legal Justice.

H Blocks is also available from H Block Information Centre, 170A Falls Road, Belfast 12 (make cheques/POs payable to H Block Information Centre).

Conveyor Belt. H Block Information Centre.

The H Block Information Centre in Belfast has recently published an excellent short pamphlet entitled *Conveyor Belt*. The pamphlet concisely describes the 'conveyor belt system' through which prisoners are processed on their way to the H Blocks. The conveyor belt starts with torture, goes on through internment by remand, carries on through 'arraignment' (a process which attempts to get prisoners to plead guilty with the carrot of reduced sentences), then goes into the no-jury Diplock courts, and ends up in the mental and physical torture of the H Blocks.

The conveyor belt system is, then, the British Government's method of imprisoning people 'legally' – as opposed to using internment – while at the same time dispensing with the basic principles of justice. In practice this system admits that the prisoners are indeed political.

The pamphlet is a straightforward explanation of a system many people in Britain are unaware of. As such it is excellent for distribution at public meetings.

You can get a free copy by writing to the Centre and enclosing a 10p stamp to cover postage. They will also supply bulk orders and would be glad of donations.



IRISH REVOLUTIONARY SONGS BY THE PEOPLE OF NO PROPERTY

Songs are as much a weapon in our fight to get troops out as leaflets, marches, rallies and newspapers. This new album by the people who made *England's Vietnam, Ballads from Behind the Barri-cades and Ireland: The Fight Goes on* is a valuable addition.

It is not brilliantly recorded – the people who made it didn't have access to unlimited time in a top-class recording studio, but the quality of the songs and the message they get across makes up for that. They sing in support of the H Block Struggle, about daily life, housing and resistance in Derry, and include some sound advice for soldiers over there, in a couple of new 'Troops Out' songs tailor-made for us to use. There's also a song commemorating the Hull Jail Riot, one dedicated to Rose Dugdale, the lament of an exiled Irish labourer dying in Britain, a nostalgic look back at the Angry Brigade, an Irish recruitment song from the 1914-18 period, and a rendition of Bread & Roses dedicated to all the women who have been a vital part of the Irish struggle.

These are sober (and sometimes funny) political songs (as well as some reels). And the words are included, saving hours of playing time trying to learn them off the record.

Distributed in Britain by Troops Out Literature Committee.

Single copies £3.50 + 25p p&p.

Bulk order discount for UTOM branches: £3.00 each for 5 or more (post free).

Also available at the UTOM Conference.

Make cheques payable to Troops Out (Literature Committee) and send to Box 10, 2A St Pauls Rd, London N1.

UTOM CHRISTMAS CARD

Original Cormac card done especially for UTOM.

Single copies 15p + 8p p&p; bulk orders: £1.50 for 10, £3.00 for 25 (post free).

Available at UTOM Conference.

Make cheques/POs out as for record, and send to the same address.

AN PHOBLACHT/REPUBLICAN NEWS

Weekly paper of the Republican movement. Essential reading for up-to-date news of the struggle, seen through the eyes of the people who live there.

AP/RN, 44 Parnell Sq. Dublin 1.

Single copies 15p (Britain) + 8p postage. £10 for year's sub. Write for bulk rates.

Diary of Events

Sept

- 22 Irish Prime Minister Jack Lynch again speaks about need for internal settlement in the North, without mentioning any all-Ireland dimension.
- 24 Irish Foreign Minister O'Kennedy meets New York State Governor Carey for talks about the North. Receives assurances that Carey in accord with Irish Government position.
- 25 O'Kennedy, speaking to the UN Assembly on behalf of the EEC states, brings up Northern Ireland and stresses the need for a political initiative from Britain.
- 27 Liberal Party Annual Conference turns down a motion for troop withdrawal, after extensive debate. Two Liberal MP's, David Alton and Cyril Smith, support motion. EEC Parliament adopts a resolution urging a common policy on terrorism, including a common extradition policy.
- 28 Lynch emerges uncriticised from meeting of Fianna Fail Parliamentary Party.
- 29 The Pope comes to Ireland (see box for details). New General Officer Commanding (GOC) for Northern Ireland is named: Maj. Gen. Richard Lawson.

The Pope's Visit. The Pope's predicted statement on the North, delivered at Drogheda, was a plea for peace and a condemnation of 'the men of violence', although he also made some reference to the need for governments to ensure justice. It was hailed by Margaret Thatcher, the SDLP, and others, condemned by Paisley as not going far enough. The next week Provisional Sinn Fein and the IRA, in separate statements, welcomed his call for justice, but reiterated that the struggle for British withdrawal — without which there would be no justice — would continue.

Other statements by the Pope were particularly welcome to the Catholic hierarchy, with their stress on women's place being in the home, and condemnation of abortion and contraception, divorce and sexual promiscuity.

- 30 Labour Party National Executive Committee, on eve of Annual Conference, removes motions on N.I. from the Agenda on grounds of lack of time, but finds room for a motion on animal welfare.

Oct

- 1 Protestant paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) calls on Provisional IRA to declare unconditional ceasefire following the Pope's plea for peace.
- 2 Sir Maurice Oldfield, former head of British Secret Service (M16) is named to the new post of security policy coordinator for Northern Ireland. Ulsterman Jack Hermon is named as new Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Provisional Sinn Fein President Ruari O'Bradaigh gives Sinn Fein's answer to Pope's plea for peace at Dublin Press Conference. Provisional IRA statement issued in Belfast
- 3 N.I. Office 'leaks' Atkins' plan for a new advisory assembly, which he hopes to present to Parliament before the Christmas recess. Assembly to advise N.I. Secretary on matters excluding security and defence. Catholic woman in West Belfast shot dead by youth as she answers knock on the door.
- 4 Delegate pressure succeeds in putting Northern Ireland back on Labour Party Conference Agenda, with one-half hour allotted for debate on last day of Conference.
- 5 Security talks in London between N.I. Secretary Atkins and Irish Foreign Minister O'Kennedy and Justice Minister Collins (see box for details).

Security talks. After London talks, the Irish government has agreed to allow British Army helicopters to overfly the border for 6½ miles. It was also reported that the British Army is to have access to Irish Army radio wavelengths, and that the Irish have agreed to step up surveillance of known IRA people and to communicate results to police and army in the North. It is also suspected that Ireland will activate the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act provisions to try in the South people considered suspects by the RUC for political 'crimes' committed in the North. Possible further arrangements for joint undercover work not revealed.

Ex-UDR man, claimed by IRA to be still involved in undercover activity shot dead in Newry, his companion seriously injured, while on the way to work in the docks. Newry & District Trades Council decides on protest rally and attacks IRA for 'setting worker against worker'.

Catholic man in South Armagh killed, presumably in retaliation.

Group calling itself the 'South Armagh Republican Action Force', and who in 1976 claimed responsibility for the killing of a busload of Protestants returning from work, threatens retaliatory killings of Protestants if any more murders of Catholics. Motions for troop withdrawal, and for an end to Labour Party's bipartisan policy on N.I. defeated at Annual Conference.

- 6 Catholic man walking home late at night through East Belfast shot dead by youth on bicycle. British soldier seriously ill in hospital in N.I. after being shot by fellow soldier in Castledillon Barracks, South Armagh in incident described by Army as an 'accident'. National Front march in central London to 'Smash the IRA' protected by massive police operation, on foot, on horseback, and in helicopters.
- 8 IRA statement on sectarian assassinations stresses that it is against Republican principles to engage in retaliatory attacks and that such attacks also play into the hands of the British government. 'Certain groups will be doing just that if they carry out their threats of indiscriminate retaliation. . . . We appeal to those groups to consider what effects their actions would have and who it would ultimately satisfy.' Plainclothes British soldier killed, another seriously wounded, leaving West Belfast Army Barracks in unmarked civilian car.
- 9 Ireland in breach of two articles of the 1950 Human Rights Convention (see box for details).

Human rights. Mrs Josie Airey took Ireland to the European Court of Justice over the government's failure to provide legal aid for people seeking judicial separation; while at the same time Irish law does not allow for divorce. As she could not afford lawyers' fees, she was in effect, left at the mercy of her drunken, battering husband. The European Court found in her favour, and Ireland has promised to introduce legal aid for such cases.

- 10 Unionist parties make move to push Atkins for heavier 'security' (see box for details).
- 12 Solicitor's clerk shot dead as he leaves West Belfast army barracks on motorbike. IRA admits responsibility and 'deeply regrets' error.
- 15 Part-time UDR soldier shot dead in Rosslea, Co. Fermanagh. Lynch 'prefers not to believe' results just published of opinion survey conducted in Republic in 1978 which shows 21% of population either wholeheartedly or in part approve of the aims and methods of the IRA; 70% see United Ireland as only long-term solution (along with some other somewhat contradictory results).
- 16 Lynch makes Fianna Fail policy dropping talk of United Ireland and British withdrawal from north official. British soldier (sapper) collapses and dies while on training march.
- 16 out of 21 N.I. District Councils pass Unionist motions on tighter security (see box for details).

Unionists & security. In a move calculated to embarrass Atkins and his hopes for agreement on new Irish assembly, Paisley's Democratic Unionists and the Official Unionists combined to put before N.I.'s 21 District Councils an emergency motion demanding: 'search and seize' operations; curfews in 'Republican enclaves'; the closure of minor cross-border roads and 24 hour blocks on major roads; economic sanctions and the right of hot pursuit if the Republic refuses extradition of IRA suspects; longer minimum sentences and an end to remission for 'terrorist' prisoners. On 16 October 16 of the 19 Councils which debated the motion accepted it (Belfast City Council turned it down).



On the first day of the Labour Party conference, delegates and visitors faced a militant twenty-strong 'troops out' picket and 'blanket' protest organised by the Brighton United Troops Out Movement, members of which distributed two thousand leaflets.

After intensive lobbying and petitioning of the Party leadership at this year's Labour Party Conference in Brighton, delegates were successful in forcing a brief debate on the situation in the North of Ireland onto the conference agenda.

The Labour Party leadership is notoriously hostile to debates taking place at the annual conference. Over the course of the last few years the times when such debates have occurred are exceptional, and then only when the leadership felt sure things 'wouldn't get out of hand'.

This year, Callaghan and Co. had twice as much reason to fear the consequences of a debate on Ireland. After the May general election defeat the mood of the Party has swung radically to the left, particularly in the local constituencies. The whole record of the last two Labour governments of Wilson and Callaghan was

subjected to vigorous criticism. With the guilty verdict at the European Court of Human Rights, the reports of Amnesty International and the Bennett Commission into the RUC still fresh in many people's minds, the party leadership knew they were especially vulnerable to an anti-imperialist condemnation of their past policies in the North of Ireland.

After an energetic campaign of pressure on the Conference Chairman, Tribune MP Frank Allaun, and the Conference Arrangements Committee, delegates were successful in forcing a defeat of the CAC proposals for no-debate, and got a slot allocated for two resolutions on Northern Ireland for the Friday morning.

Both resolutions reflected the disaffection with the leadership's policies which became more evident in recent times. The resolution from Hemel Hempstead LP called for the immediate

withdrawal of the army from Northern Ireland. Moving the motion, Christine Haslock declared that the Labour Party was 'in collusion in maintaining a repressive regime'.

Even more bluntly, in seconding this resolution, Frank Hansen from Brent East Labour Party stated that 'the British army is the main force perpetuating the bloodbath in Ireland'.

The second resolution, moved by Hackney North LP, was seen as a 'fallback' position in view of the certainty that the 'troops out now' position would be defeated. It called on the NEC to break with bipartisan policy with the Tories, and for a 'distinctive Labour policy' which included withdrawal as a part of its position.

Both resolutions were defeated. But there is encouraging evidence to suggest that the anti-imperialist resistance in Northern Ireland and the 'troops out' campaign in Britain are beginning to have an effect in the mainstream labour movement.

Many activists in both Ireland and Britain will think, 'not before time!'. Hopefully, future articles in 'Troops Out' will continue to discuss the prospects for deepening this new, nascent, anti-imperialist mood in the Labour Party, and put forward positive proposals on how the Troops Out Movement can work alongside it.

Colin Kennedy
UTOM and Labour Party Member

