

REPUBLICAN NEWS

THE VOICE OF
REPUBLICAN ULSTER

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper

VOLUME 4 Number 38

SATURDAY, 5th OCTOBER, 1974



PRICE FIVEPENCE

GET RID OF DEAD WOOD

Statement from the LEADERSHIP OF THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT to the 70th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis. Delivered on 22/9/74 in the Mansion House, Dublin.

"We send greetings to members of Sinn Féin assembled in National Convention. We do so on behalf of the entire Republican Movement. The goodwill and best wishes to the fighting units of Oglaiha na hÉireann and of the men and women in prison camps and jails go out to you in your work to-day. The part you play in the struggle for freedom is of vital importance and it requires of you the same dedication and quality of service which our fallen comrades rendered. One hundred and thirty five (135) of them have given their lives over the last five years and on this occasion we salute their memory and pledge the entire Movement to the successful completion of the task they so nobly served.

"The last year saw significant advances on the road to full freedom. The ability of our fighting youth to withstand the onslaught of British terrorism have given our Movement a credibility and solidity which we never before broken. Our volunteers have demonstrated ingenuity, daring and courage out-classing and outwitting our enemies be they foreign or domestic. The world has seen many examples of the grim determination of this Movement to end foreign rule in our country for all time.

"The fortitude of our comrades in the jails of Ireland, Britain and United States has been one of the great features of the struggle. For the fifth time in the history of the Six County State, men and women, boys and girls have been sent to concentration camps. We shall not easily forget the humiliation degradation and torture committed on our brothers and sisters by evil and corrupt English minds. While politicians waffle about internment, we shall exact a toll on those who initiated and perpetuate the oppression of our kith and kin.

"The families of those imprisoned bear a tremendous burden to-day. Nothing can substitute for the absent father, mother, brother or sister, but we all have an obligation to ensure that the material necessities of life are adequately provided. With over two thousand families affected, the problem is a gigantic one and while we are conscious and deeply appreciative of the trojan work done by An Cumann Cabhrach and other local committees, we feel that Sinn Féin must play a bigger and better part in providing for the prisoners dependents. There are so-called Christian Churchmen and politicians who desire to see our families starve, let them be answered by a massive effort by your organisation for the Prisoners' Dependents' Fund.

"We congratulate Sinn Féin on its performance in the local elections. The 100% increase in Republican representation on local bodies was a credible achievement and we trust the elected representatives will play a full and constructive role in serving the needs of local communities. Community politics are assuming an increasing importance in the lives of our people and will, if properly developed, replace the sterile game of 'Party politics'. Our aim of power to the people must be our only slogan, but a living expression of the best way to advance the welfare of all.

EXCLUSIVE

LONG KESH HELL HOLE - SEE STORY ON CENTRE PAGES



"We note that in some areas the electoral performance left a great deal to be desired. This can be partly explained by inexperience and lack of knowledge, but it must be emphasised that there is no place in the Republican Movement for the faint hearted and people who drag their feet. This Movement must have a dynamic well-oiled political machine and the responsibility for building such a machine rests squarely with Sinn Féin. It will be no easy task; it will require clear and decisive leadership at all levels of the organisation and an effort no less equal than that demonstrated by the guerrilla units of the people's army.

"The last twelve months saw the futility and the total collapse of British imposed political solutions. As we predicted, the Sunningdale Agreement came to nothing despite massive support from the churches, S.D.L.P. and Free State political parties. In their haste to secure power and privilege, politicians north and south, forgot their origins, traditions and plain common sense. The betrayal of the oppressed people of the North both within and outside the jails was one of the most shameful happenings of the last year.

"The Movement's programme of securing a British withdrawal and establishing an autonomous Ulster within a federally structured Ireland remains the only solid basis for a just and lasting peace. Ulster belongs to the whole people of Ulster and until the division of that Province is healed there is little prospect of peace and harmony prevailing throughout the island. We welcome the dialogue which has taken place at local level on community problems and trust such a development will lead to a greater understanding of our aims and objects for promoting the welfare of all the Irish people.

"There are some who dream of establishing a Six County fascist State. We wish to be very explicit with these people; the days of Unionist supremacy are over; if they resort to arms to impose a fascist State in part of Ulster, we shall meet their attack with the full resources at our command on all all-Ireland basis. No puppet government in Dublin will stand in the way of a risen Nation which will not permit the slaughter of its citizens by English motivated sectarian bigots. We desire no conflict with any fellow countrymen, but we have proved over the last five years our determination, capacity and ability to resist British aggression

irrespective of the form it takes.

"The Dublin Government continues to act as England's apologist and policeman in Ireland. The Government no longer pretends to be anything but a puppet administration of Whitehall. In every sphere of government it has shown itself incompetent and anti-national. We are told its army could not hold the town of Newry; it is not surprising, its forces could not hold nineteen men in Portlaoise prison or guard the skies against the Provo birdie.

"Our people are now learning to their cost the great fraud committed on them by political con-men dominating the news media. The E.E.C. was to give us a land of milk and honey instead we have thousands of farmers and workers on the march battling for their livelihoods. Sunningdale was to bring peace; instead it brought the prospect of civil war and death to the streets of Dublin and Monaghan.

"The time was never more opportune for Sinn Féin to expose the utter hypocrisy of the Dublin Government. Leadership must be given to the small farmers and workers, to those in the media who are beginning to resist the suppression of freedom of speech and those who are opposing the sell-out of our mineral and oil resources.

"Such action can run parallel to the military struggle to defeat British terrorism. Unlike other generations, we do not stand alone in the struggle for Irish freedom to-day. We enjoy the goodwill and active support of people in Foreign lands. We envisage that support developing to the stage where a government of a free and independent Ireland can acquire the means to secure rapid development of our natural resources to effect a radical social revolution.

"In conclusion, we take this opportunity of expressing our deepest gratitude to the thousands of people who stood loyally by this Movement over the last year. No words of praise are too high for the splendid people of the North who provide and care for our volunteers on active service. The same goes for the people of the South who helped the escapees from Portlaoise prison. The struggle in the future will be like the past, hard and difficult. We have the strength not alone to withstand the pressures of the enemy but the means and ability to defeat him.

Death, imprisonment and suffering will not deflect us one iota from realising the ideals which motivated the bravest and best of every generation.

MR. COONEY ADMITS MASSIVE SUPPORT FOR REPUBLICANS

By 'reparation', Mr. Cooney was doubtlessly referring to the policy of placating the English in view of the IRA's freedom struggle.

He said he was afraid that the people of the 26 counties had 'an ambivalent attitude to the IRA'. He then began to complain about the following 'failings' of his own people:

"I see newspapers propagating IRA ideals being sold openly - I see them being purchased on a wide scale, and I must wonder. I see posters and slogans of the IRA which are not being pulled down in anger by an outraged people repelled by the evil of the IRA. A gramophone record exalting the escape from

Portlaoise Prison is being bought on such a scale that it has become a chart-topper".

Mr. Cooney continued: "In relation to that escape it has now become increasingly clear that there was enough support in this small and intimate society to provide secure cover for 19 dangerous criminals who are being sought by the entire police force of the country, supported by large numbers of Troops".

This admission 'from the horse's mouth' of massive public support for the Republican escapees is enlightening. Mr. Cooney is beginning to see the ground slip from under him.

IGNORE ENGLISH ELECTION FARCE



Liam mac neill

VINEGAR HILL

"In the beginning, Australia was largely a convict settlement, but the Irish were political convicts, who came from all classes of society and were endowed with a spirit of revolt. There had been about 30,000 Irish convicts transported altogether for what were described as 'political crimes'. The first arrived about 1772. They fitted in well because they had rural skills, which were necessary in a huge country like Australia.

The lecturer mentioned that Peter Lalor, a brother of James Finton Lalor, led a revolt of miners in Australia. They built a stockade and declared their own Republic and the password was "Vinegar Hill". Within a year the same Peter Lalor became the Speaker of the Houses of Parliament in Victoria. This was a continuous pattern of the Irish "convicts" achieving eminence. Six Prime Ministers of Australia had Irish origins, 40 or 50 local States had Irish Prime Ministers." Professor Kenneth Knight, University of Queensland, Lecturer at the Merriman Summer School, C. Clare, 28/8/74).

BISHOP DALY WAS RIGHT

"First it was the Magnificent Seven who escaped from the Maidstone. Then the Crumlin Road Crushers. After that the Helicopter Five. Bishop Cahal Daly was right. Whether we like it or not, it seems impossible to keep the Provos down.

One answer is to negotiate with them. It will have to be done sooner or later. In the light of the present desperate situation are their terms that outlandish?

They want (A) a statement of British intent to withdraw from Northern Ireland.

(B) The British Army off the streets (Not out of Ulster, mind you)

(C) Ending internment.

(D) General amnesty for sentenced prisoners.

If these are granted, the Provos will down arms. It is worth thinking about. A real difficulty is that the British

Army top brass will understandably be reluctant to concede a defeat in the field. But should loss of face be considered a factor when it comes to an arrangement that could end loss of life? (Sunday Independent 24/8/74).

THEY HAVE TO BE KICKED OUT

"DO you remember Black Mac? That's what the British once called their current darling Archbishop Makarios. Do you remember Jomo the Mau Mau leader who allegedly drank white man's blood? That's the same Jomo Kenyatta who sat beside Queen Elizabeth this year in her coach at Princess Anne's Wedding.

Then there was Bandit Pandit. This was Pandit Nehru who later became Prime Minister of India and head of the Commonwealth Conference.

Why weren't these men listened to in time? Then their countries would not have had to go through the agonies of guerrilla war before they were finally freed.

Alas it seems that the way empires the diplomat of Alas it seems that the way empires behave. They have to be kicked before they leave. Then the rebel of yesterday becomes the diplomat of to-day."

(Sunday Independent 18/8/74).

DROP IT

"In October 1968 I found myself pitch-forked into a bitter party feud. Already a declared O'Neillite I was impudent enough in an election speech to declare my support for one man, one vote, in local government elections. The cabinet deliberated on my indiscretion and I was politely but firmly told to drop it.

Off the record, Captain O'Neill was said to be secretly delighted but Mr. Brian Faulkner was rumoured to be bitterly antagonistic." Dick Ferguson, One time Unionist M.P. for S. Antrim (Irish Times 20/1/70).

A.L.J. HAS MORE NEED THAN ELECTIONEERING.

Part of a letter in the Irish News Saturday 21/9/74.

"Let me say one word about the money that is being spent on this election. Thousands of pounds will be spent yet we will not be one bit better off. I cannot help contrasting this pouring out of good money in a profitless action with the near bankruptcy of the Association of Legal Justice. This organisation sent a delegation to the Amnesty International Conference in Europe recently. The delegates had to pay most of their own expenses. The A.L.J. just could not afford to foot the bill.

The truth is that Human Rights leaders like Father Faul are running their publicity campaigns on a shoe string while politicians are squandering money on useless elections. Would it not be better to take money intended for the coming elections and with it buy advertising space in foreign newspapers where we could tell the real story of N.I. and the minority's sufferings."

SMILES AND HANDSHAKES

"The disclosure that Enock Powell upholder of law and order, met members of the inner council of the paramilitary U.D.A. at a private and unpublicised meeting in Belfast. By all accounts the meeting was a success. During the two-hour meeting he seems to have convinced the U.D.A. men that his economic policy of refusing subsidies for ailing companies would not endanger the shipyard.

Over a cup of tea, he persuaded them of his complete adherence to the Loyalist cause. There were smiles and handshakes as he left the building with promises to meet again." (Irish Times 21/9/74).

Nobody BELIEVED HIM

"Paddy O'Hanlon tried to maintain bravely that there had been no victory and no defeat in Newry, at a time when even the town dog-catcher would have known that the Provos had won by a short head." (AIF McCreary Belfast Telegraph 7/9/74).

THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO

BOOK REVIEW

The first volume of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's book *The Gulag Archipelago* is now on sale in paperback. The book was written partially as an autobiography partly as a collection of obscure information about Soviet history and partly as a form of life insurance. The seizure of a copy of the book kept in manuscript by a woman in Leningrad and the subsequent suicide of that woman caused the author to panic and authorize the publication of his book in the West. This started the sequence of events that led to the author's own expulsion to Germany.

Solzhenitsyn suffers from the complaint common to all writers who are natives of big countries; that is to say he feels compelled to write big big books even when little ones could do. This is a pity. His first novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was brief and compact and its probably one of the finest things written in the Russian language. Since then his books have got longer and longer and more and more involved. If the present work circulates inside Russia in typescript then a copy of it really must take up every considerable space; particularly in view of the large type-face used on Russian typewriters.

In the early part of the book he describes how the Secret Police arrive out of the blue, knock on the door, give you a few minutes to pack a bag and whisk you away. This illustrates how backward Russia still is. In more advanced countries they come crashing through the door brandishing revolvers and drag you out of bed and cart off wearing whatever you happen to sleep in.

The most interesting part of the book deals with the early years after the revolution. It emerges clearly that from the very start the Soviet system was repressive and vindictive. Lenin himself actively encouraged the growth of the Cheka and placed the evil Dzerzhinski in charge of it. It is often said now that Lenin and Trotsky were all right it was Stalin who let things go wrong. Solzhenitsyn puts up convincing arguments against this thesis and sees the Soviet system as getting off on a wrong foot right at the start and going from worse to worse still as time passed.

One of the best things in the book is the passage describing forced feeding: which is used in Russia as a means of dealing with hunger strikers. The description makes clear that identical methods to those used in England are used in Russia. Only in very minor details do the procedures differ. As the saying goes there are some things that know no frontier.

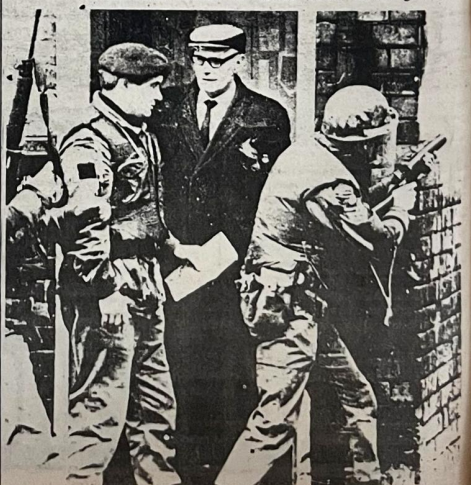


Khrushchev

The writer's own experiences are mixed up with other bits and pieces in this work. He shows great erudition and obviously has a fantastic memory. His great service to history, is his research into the early years of Soviet power; about which very little is known nowadays due to the confusion created later by repeated revisions of history. He gives credit to Khrushchev where it is due for the de-Stalinisation effort of the late fifties though he claims it achieved very little.

This is an interesting historical document and a must for those interested in East European affairs; but one feels that in places the crankiness of genius has distorted and embellished reality.

A rubber bullet is fired. According to instructions the bullet *should* be aimed down at the ground.



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QUESTIONS FOR JIM CURRAN

While deploring the record of the English Labour Party since they ousted the Tories at the Last English General Election, Irish Republicans in the Luton area, are dismayed at the Irish Civil Rights Association's choice of candidates for the forthcoming "tracas".

This so-called Irishman is on record of accusing the local Sinn Fein Cumann of being extremists and terrorists. (we have heard that somewhere before, i.e., recent political trials in England).

He actually boasts of preventing the distribution of literature in connection with the force-feeding issue, in the Luton Catholic Club. He has also stated that while he is Secretary of that club, Sinn Fein would never be permitted to distribute literature there.

As far as his connection with Long Kesh goes, he was stationed there when he was a Sergeant in the R.A.F. when it used by them as a base during World War Two. That was long before it was turned by the English Government into the only concentration camp in Europe. This hardly qualifies him to speak on behalf of the political hostages incarcerated there.

Rather I would suggest that the willingness of Irishmen to swell the ranks of H.M. Forces was a direct encouragement to the English Imperialist Government to impose internment on our men, women, boys and girls.

With regards to Jim Curran's policy statement "The Peaceful Way". His statement relating to, and I quote: "terrorism on both sides", I find rather ambiguous. Would Jim Curran qualify that one of these sides was English Army terrorism or has he joined the ranks of the Free State Tories in condemning the Freedom Struggle?

I can tell Mr. Curran that our internees are starving at the present time. The people of the ghettos are outside the gates of Long Kesh protesting on their behalf.

You and the rest of the bandwagon politicians are conspicuous by your absence. Who the hell do you think you are kidding?

PROVO AND PROUD — Luton.

Held by the enemy in Armagh Jail



This attractive young Irish girl is Miss Eileen Delaney, (17) who hails from Ballymurphy, Belfast. She is interned in Armagh Jail since 26th August, 1974. Her sister Maire, (19) is also interned.

Eileen's brother Kevin, was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment arising out of the political unrest and her father has also been charged for political reasons.

Eileen stood by her fellow-countrymen and women in their hour of need. Have we not a solemn duty to stand by Eileen and her comrades who are held by the enemy as political hostages? The answer is simple and clear: WE LOVE THEM YET, WE WON'T FORGET, THE FELONS OF OUR LAND".

MARTIN WAS A TRUE IRISH PATRIOT

Vol. Martin Patrick Skillen was a member of "D" Company, 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Ogleigh na h-Eireann. He was 21 years of age when he was killed on active service on 3rd August, 1974 in the Galls Road area, Belfast.

Shortly after he died, a simple but moving little ceremony was held in Armagh Jail among the women Republicans prisoners. This oration was given in the jail by the O.C. "A" Company:

We are gathered here today to honour one of Ireland's brave Volunteers. — Martin Skillen who was killed in action against the British Forces of Occupation. He was a true patriot who died willingly to make Ireland a nation for Irishmen, Catholic and Protestant alike who have the right to rule their own country regardless of what has happened in the past.

"The British tyrant has fostered conflict between Catholic and Protestant for their own ends but we shall overcome this for the good of Ireland.

"Vol. Martin Skillen died for all of us, we should be strengthened by this sorrow, more courageous to fight as he fought gallant and true, more determined to achieve victory so that our brave volunteers will not have died in vain.

"Vol. Martin Skillen died for you and for me, but believe it or not, he also died for those Protestants who are in this jail today. These are the sort of people that we have to convince that our policies are the right ones, that an Ireland united is the only solution to Ireland's problems. It will be a hard job, we all know, to put these people on the right road.

"You and I have the opportunity to do this. To show these people what the Irish Republican Movement stands for and to uphold our cause at all times and all cost."

One of the young Republican prisoners present at the ceremony later wrote to a member of the Skillen family. She wrote: Dear Ann this oration was made at the parade we had in honour of Martin, I thought you and your family would like to have it. It was a beautiful parade and very sad, but Martin would have been proud.

"I am proud to say I know him and that he was a member of 'D' Company 2nd Battalion. I know that you are just as proud as I".

Volunteer Skillen's family live in the Turf Lodge area. During the wake when young friends were calling to the family home to pay their last respects, they were stopped by English Army patrols and asked where they were going to the "party" at Skillens.

For several days after the funeral, English soldiers went up the path leading to the Skillens home, made the Sign of the Cross, lifted their berets and burst out laughing. When they passed the house in jeeps, they would raise their berets and start giggling.

Mr. William Skillen informed us that after his son was buried, English soldiers asked members of his family how Martin was keeping. The same

soldiers, members of the Balck Watch Regiment wrote filthy slogans on the Holy Trinity Catholic Church door in Turf Lodge. One slogan read, "THE POPE IS A B."

All this harassment by members of the foreign army of occupation has not intimidated the Skillen Family who will always remember with pride that Martin was a Republican Volunteer who died in action for the cause of Irish Freedom.

IRISH REPUBLICAN FELONS ASSOCIATION NEW BRANCH FORMED IN THE NEW LODGE AREA

Over 150 patrons attended a Supper and Cabaret in St. Kevin's Hall on 21st September. The function was organised by the recently formed New Lodge Road Branch of the Irish Republican Felons Association. The entertainment was provided by the "Strangers" Group and the Liam Leaid Band from the area delighted the audience with their rendering of National Songs. Guest artiste was John McCann a talented exhibition of Irish Dancing was given by the Fleming Children, Aine and Sean.

A spokesman for the Republican Movement congratulated the New Lodge Branch on the success of their initial venture and wished them every success in their future efforts. Mr. Gerry Loughlin proved a very capable M.C.

The Committee wish to return their sincere thanks to all those voluntary workers who assisted in the catering refreshments.

Applications are invited from those who are eligible for membership of the Branch.

PATRICK
McADOREY
LUTON
SINN FEIN
(Sasana)



Editor,
Republican News,
170 Falls Road,
BELFAST.

A chara,

I am enclosing separately for your attention some photographs of a beautifully embroidered cloth, which was made by the women Republican Prisoners in Armagh Gaol for the family of Michael Gaughan.

The Cloth is approximately 4 feet by three and is made of emerald green fabric, on a jet-black background.

It was given to Luton Sinn Fein members recently when they visited Armagh Gaol, and they were asked to present it to the Gaughan parents on behalf of the Armagh Gaol Political Prisoners.

It is now in the possession of the Gaughan family (in Manchester). This may be of interest to "Republican News".

Is Miss,
MICHAEL HOLDEN (Rural).

HEROISM AND DEDICATION WILL SWEEP ENEMY FROM OUR LAND

The Derry Brigade of Ogleigh na h-Eireann, claimed responsibility for the bomb attack which wrecked the principal shopping block on the strand Road on 24th September. "The British Army fell for a well-planned move to divert them and lower their guard on Strand Road. On Saturday, explosives which were obsolete were moved into the Foyle St. area. These were conveniently found by the British Army as planned. The British Army started a wide-scale search. While that was in progress an active service unit moved into Strand Road and planted six bombs." As in all Republican operations due warning was given. There were no civilian casualties.

A synchronised air and ground attack was mounted by a border unit on the enemy's heavily fortified post at Drummackaval Hill near Crossmaglen on Saturday 28th September. The post came under sustained mortar, machine gun and rifle attack. The enemy were panic stricken and did not relieve their besieged unit for many hours. It is worth noticing that this is the area in which apparently the enemy are planning to bring back the B.Specials. When the 45th Marine Commandos are withdrawn at the end of the month they are to be replaced by a redeployment of the R.U.C., the Police Reserve, the sectarian U.D.R. etc.

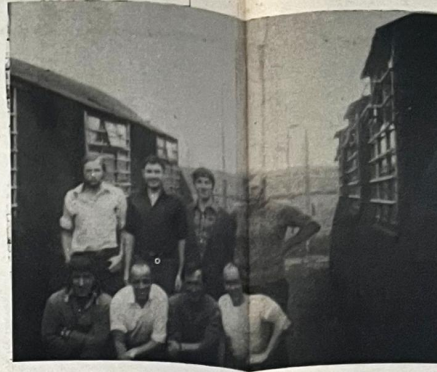
If loyalists allow themselves to be used in this way by a cowardly imperial power who have been militarily beaten out of the area they will suffer even more heavily than has the mercenary professional English army who found themselves powerless in the face of a daring guerrilla army and a united defiant people.

Seventy people were arrested in Ballymurphy on Wednesday 25th September following the shooting of an enemy soldier in the Bullring the previous afternoon. All but one were subsequently released. Though the arrests were reported obliquely in the Irish News the offensive action which provoked the blanket reprisal was not reported by any of the media except this paper. The strike on Ulster Television on which occasionally broke through the B.B.C. stranglehold on information means that the blackout on information about the war will be even greater in the next week.

Fire bombs were planted behind the security barriers in Belfast and in Cookstown on Friday 27th September over £3 million worth of damage was caused when Wellworth's Northern Ireland depot was gutted. Fire bombs also destroyed a raw rubber store in Armagh and the reconstructed Wellworth's store in Derry. Bombs caused damage in Fermanagh and Castledawson.

At Bellaghy a large booby trap explosion was defused and outside Dungannon a booby trap device exploded between a two vehicle mobile patrol without causing enemy casualties. (Sunday 29th September). Buses were hijacked and roads were blocked in Derry and Belfast during the week in protest against army harassment and brutality in Long Kesh. It is interesting to note that the boycott of the Belfast Corporation bus service by the Republican people has resulted in a net loss of revenue of £1 million.

Three young remand prisoners in Crumlin Road have been forced to go on hunger and thirst strike in protest at being kept naked in solitary confinement without heat or food. Paul McManus, Malachy Crilly and Brendan Maskey are showing that they have the spirit of O'Donovan Rossa and Sean MacCaughey. While such heroism and dedication is being shown the Republican movement is assured of the support of the Irish people in triumphantly sweeping the enemies without and within of our country forever.



One of the most degrading, demeaning aspects of the hell-hole of Leavenworth is the system of visits. A prisoner is entitled to a 30 minute visit per week. No great privilege when you consider the surroundings. For the actual visit, your people must wait for periods of up to 5 or 6 hours in the actual visit, your people must wait in the Prison canteen, with little chance of dirty, insanitary huts in the Prison canteen, with little chance of a box or refreshment. The visiting boxes are dirty, filthy places where no one would want to be. The walls are scribbled over with = obscenities people whatever exists. The walls are scribbled over with = obscenities people pencilled in by assiduous, dirty-minded screws. A table divides the

prisoner from his visitor. Before the visit both Prisoner and visitor are subjected to a degrading body-search conducted by British and Scottish soldiers over here for the large bounty the dirty job carries.

In the visiting box a film of dust covers everything, table, chairs, windows, floor. And it is in such filthy, disgusting conditions that the prisoner is expected to greet his visitors — to discuss family problems, perhaps, private personal matters, within earshot of a staring screw who, during the entire visit, remains at the entrance of the visiting box. There isn't even a door to give an illusion of privacy.

All these conditions are deliberately designed to degrade both prisoner and visitor. Peeping Toms at every door, raucous cruel laughter of foreign screws pervades the long dark hall-ways. Men deprived of love and affection see their families forced to suffer such indignities week after week — and must remain silent. Imagine the hatred that grows in men's hearts. The terrible anger that such bureaucratic inhumanity inspires in captured soldiers. And just as the Nazi commanders and guards who glibly looked on as degradation was heaped — on outcasts and hunted, so in time to come and maybe not such a long time as all that, the Prison warders who officiated over the mental and physical torture of Republican prisoners will be hunted as remorselessly as the Nazis.

INFESTED WITH MAGGOTS

Another aspect of Administrative repression is evidenced by the operation of the Parole system. Only six months ago a hunger-strike lasting 35 days was conducted by Republican prisoners protesting at the decision of the Administration to refuse Compassionate Parole to a Dublin man whose mother had died, and demanding an immediate improvement in Compassionate Parole regulations. At present we are demanding an increase in time allowed. At least 24 hours, and more if the situation requires it, seems a reasonable request, yet as usual the Authorities are dragging their feet.

INFESTED WITH MAGGOTS

One horrible development, unfortunately becoming more common as time goes by is the way in which maggots have infested the huts here. What happens is that mice and rats crawl in between the tins of the huts and die there. Then the maggots appear, and soon are dropping in clusters onto mens bedding, into their food, on their bodies. The whole situation is revolting — yet the Administration refuse to admit that any problems exist. What in the name of God can men do. Truesdale knows the situation — he has seen the maggot-infested huts. Perhaps he considers it a refinement of torture. It is even possible that Truesdale takes delight from knowing that Republicans are crucified in such a disgusting belly-training way.

Medical practices and facilities in Long Kesh are abysmal. Doctors who care nothing for the prisoner dispense tablets, usually of the Aspro variety for every complaint. On most occasions we do not even have the dubious benefit of a doctor but must make do with Prison Officers in white coats a symbol which seems to take the place of professional medical qualifications. Cheerfully they lash handfuls of tablets at them — it is all the same to them — as they cant distinguish one tablet from another unless colouring is a distinguishing characteristic. Tragedies have happened in Long Kesh through this massive medical carelessness and neglect. Frank Dodds from Belfast dropped dead in Gate 18 only one year ago. He had been suffering for a considerable time after repeating beatings from British soldiers, and yet no medical treatment was forthcoming.

PROTEST IN EVERY CAGE

Today, within every Compound in Long Kesh there is a protest being conducted against the state of the food supplied and the unclean living so graciously provided. We have not had a sheet on our beds now for almost three months. The rags which Truesdale calls laundered are always stained and torn and even in their so-called 'clean' state obviously constitute a health hazard. The food arrangements here have been referred to on many occasions. And many spokesmen for various political organizations have commented on them, including Faulkner Unionists. When the food reaches the compound it is cold, the potatoes are always dirty and grubby, the meat is often rancid, and the food is unbelievable. We are getting fancy hotel-food as Rees' Civil Servants would have the public believe. Those wonderful menus given to the press would be comical if the real situation were not so desperate. For over three weeks now every prisoner in this



camp has done without food. We have refused prison food and in turn the Prison Administration banned our food parcels and prevented us from using the Prison Tuck Shop. The men are growing progressively weaker, and with the approach of winter the consequences of this are extremely unpleasant. Any outbreak of infection like flu or worse, will seize many victims. This one important fact that must be faced. But remember the Prison Administration is completely to blame. Our requests are genuine, they are neither excessive nor exorbitant. What is so wrong in men asking for an improvement in food and linen conditions. Does there exist some strange secret reason which prevents the British Government's representatives from granting us our just demands? Do they take some strange sadistic delight in depriving men of food. They have taken away our freedom, now they wish to starve us into submission. Is the preparation and distribution of food so difficult, so politically controversial, that by acceding to our demands the whole structure of British domination in Long Kesh is brought into doubt.

That is a short description of conditions in Long Kesh. The examples quoted are only the most glaring in the whole range of repression practised by the Administration in Long Kesh. Of course there are many many other examples — Niggling petty restrictions, small-minded decisions, callous indifference, all designed to erode our already assaulted dignity. Letter Censorship, Inter-compound visits. Collective systems of punishment, and so on. The list is endless.

A CONSTANT REPROACH TO SILENT AND SELFISH

This Concentration Camp is a deliberate affront to the dignity and aspirations of the Irish people. Every man in the camp is a constant reproach to the silent and the selfish self-seeking and the cynical. We are not criminals. We sought, and fought to liberate our country, to make it a place fit for the people if we possess a fault then it must lie in the excess of love we bear for the Gael, as Patrick Pearse described it.

We do not want pity. We know what conditions are like here. We don't need Bishop Daly nor S.D.L.P. representatives, after their flying visits, to pity us or use our plight as an excuse to make political capital. We already know all about our terrible conditions. We unlike the V.I.P.s have to live here. And conditions here are damnable. But it is useless to talk of conditions. Talk of the system which perpetuates them. Long Kesh is the Six County's in microcosm. We are all of us, the people of the Six Counties engaged in a huge concentration camp. Break the British connection and you break Long Kesh.



LONG KESH HELL HOLE

ine 1972 by imprisoned Republicans, been made to have some form of programme accepted by the prison made on the grounds of security, was instituted until February 1974 started. A very limited number of only through strenuous efforts by the hard work by the Open University passed and almost bullied into giving

undergone, the use of a 'Study Hut' the prison gymnasium and football field daily, depriving the students of the active study. Even so, this had to be education available in the Compound cage men like animals, with little educational facilities.

University is an external organisation had to be 'forced on the prison forms of education. Repeated requests nature and of City and Guilds the help of visiting, professional,

ation was turned down immediately, s, it would present severe security cation was set aside, being 'looked into' achers, etc.

y the authorities, we asked them to education system ourselves, including ing to spend some of their free time

of course This was also immediately rent on security' grounds, even I have been done, anyway) that all in history scrutinised = by the author-suggestion, the authorities 'hired' objects in different Cages, amounting ally, welcomed this innovation and but we were soon brought back st of these teachers had been previously tried to teach similar subjects, in a similar tually, this failed (through no fault re primarily, engaged under false preten-gression, as very few of the inmates in of this low standard, but require some-

we have been promised = another, with In the meantime, all men seeking y through correspondences courses, most = and those that have are finding diff- and background reading from the esimations, lately to cater for those. ions in industry — even if the work is ight direction. 'Promises' have been but, as usual, nothing is forthcoming schemes that are being looked into, g educational = facilities. A library bly section of educational facilities. main (out of 450) are attending the es allocated for any more) and a espondence courses. Voluntary lec- of education, by giving up some of ve lectures."

mitted Educational facilities allowed e are hundreds of men eager tion courses and the Administration them. So again, conflict is needlessly

We have two football pitches to cater end of the camp. Two football oth Everything is determined by football pitch. This is the one available end look twice at a screw here the foot-

ing aspects of the hell-hole of Long oner is entitled to a 30 minute visit you consider the surroundings. Before wait for periods of up to 5 or 6 hours in car park, with little chance of food - are dirty, filthy places where no privacy bled over with = obscenities painstaking- mitted screws. A table divides the

TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT

Editor,
Republican News, 170A Falls Road,
Belfast, Ireland.

Dear Friend,

We very much regret your decision to print without comment an attack on the Troops Out Movement in your edition of 24th August.

The article "Neither Fish Nor Fowl" was presented in "The Republican News" as an authoritative and independent analysis of the Movement. In fact it was neither. You failed to point out to readers that the article originally appeared as a partisan attack on the Troops Out Movement in the June issue of "Workers' Fight" — a small British revolutionary group which, for reasons of its own, has been consistently critical of the T.O.M. Consequently this article can in no way be taken as an accurate account of the aims, policies and achievements of the T.O.M.

The whole basis for their attack is that:

1. The Troops Out Movement has not made its position clear on the question of self-determination for Ireland.

2. The Movement has achieved little and that "if the pro-withdrawal M.P.s were to go so far as organizing some action, then the T.O.M. would largely be by-passed."

On the first point, T.O.M. has made its position absolutely clear time and time again. In our Constitution we make two demands: Immediate withdrawal of all British Armed Forces from Ireland and Self-determination for the Irish People as a whole. We think that is plain enough: we believe that the whole 32 Counties is the unit for deciding Ireland's future. That is the position we have always taken, and always will take.

On the second point, it is perhaps worth saying that T.O.M. has been in existence for less than one year. In that time it has grown from being a single group of people working in West London, to a national organisation with twenty four groups in Wales, Scotland and England. Despite harassment by the police, and despite the many difficulties caused by the notorious chauvinism of sections of the British population, the Troops Out Movement has held meetings up and down Britain attacking the presence and actions of the British Army in Ireland.

Our aim has been to build a progressive movement in Britain, based on British people primarily, demanding immediate withdrawal of the troops on the basis of self-determination for the Irish People — and we believe that such a movement can only be built around the Working Class, and in particular, the Labour Movement. Consequently we were the only British group which, during the last election consistently attempted to make Ireland an issue — particularly for the Labour M.P.s. This we shall be doing again, with even more force, in the current Election campaign.



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Besides all this, in January we held a very successful national demonstration and in May we held a major Conference on Ireland which was attended by more than 700 people (more were turned away). This was the first occasion in Britain when a sizeable body of trade union delegates had been brought into a forum where they could learn about the struggle against British Imperialism in Ireland. It is, perhaps, also worth mentioning that we have had a campaign against Army recruiting, and have supported all demonstration in London against internment and in support of Irish political prisoners in British jails.

We have been campaigning in this way precisely because no independent initiatives have been forthcoming from "pro-withdrawal" M.P.s. As "Workers' Fight" should know, M.P.s rarely do anything without the force of a mass movement to project them forwards. On Ireland that is even more the case.

The only independent initiative in Ireland which has come from the Palace of Westminster is the "Bring the Boys Back Home" campaign of Labour M.P. James Welby. Even the "Guardian" newspaper described the founding meeting of this campaign as "racist", anti-Irish and grossly chauvinistic. In this situation our attempts both to win Labour M.P.s to our position (which we are succeeding in doing), and to build the Troops Out Movement are even more urgent.

It is for this reason that we, together with the British Peace Committee, are organizing a united Left mass demonstration for October 27th calling on Labour to immediately implement a policy of political and military withdrawal from Ireland. The demonstration will be the first national protest after the election, and it has already been sponsored by 5 Labour M.P.s.

There is a growing feeling in Britain to pull out the troops. As the article says "The task remains to organise at least some of the mass feeling for withdrawal — to compress the steam into an engine for use against the Government to play a role of real solidarity by undermining the capacity of the British state to pursue its policies in Ireland". That is what the Troops Out Movement is attempting to do. It is not helped in that difficult task by inaccurate, misleading and muddled articles which can do nothing but cause confusion and lower morale.

Fraternally,
Press Officer ANDREW CARR
National Co-ordinating Committee
Troops Out Movement London NW6
We hope that our publication of Mr. Carr's letter will help to scatter confusion and restore morale. We wish T.O.M. every success with their Mass Demonstration on October 27 — Editor.

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Speakers: R. O'Bradaigh, S. Loughran,
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An invitation has also been sent out
to three Louth T.D.s

Presidential Address to Sinn Fein Ard Fhies

"A chathaoirleach, a theachtai's a chairte,
Fearainn cead failte romhailbh ar fad
ag an Ard-Fhies seo,
comhthionnail na nios mo fos na
cruinnui oll-mhor na bliana seo caite.

RECORD NUMBER OF DELEGATES:

"It is at once my duty and my privilege to welcome you all, both delegates and visitors to this 70th annual Ard-Fhies of Sinn Fein. The steady increase in attendance at each successive Ard-Fhies since 1970 has been maintained and the General Secretaries report a new record in the number of delegates assembled on this occasion.

"The great struggle in which we of this generation have been engaged has reached a new intensity over the past twelve months. While the heroism of the ordinary people — men and women, boys and girls — in every one of the Six British — occupied counties continued to respond to the worst excesses of the British troops and sectarian killers, the fight was carried to the enemy on a new level by the Republican prisoners within the jails and concentration camps. Within ten days of the close of our Last Ard-Fhies the helicopter escape of three leading Republicans from Mountjoy Jail electrified the nation, next day, however, Father Patrick Feil, Proinsias Stagg and their comrades received long and savage sentences at Birmingham on alleged conspiracy charges and were subsequently subjected to humiliating and degrading treatment well-known to all of you.

VENGEANCE AND FORCE— FEEDING:

"A fortnight later the Winchester prisoners were handed down British justice with a vengeance and O'Learys and Marion Price, Gerald Kelly and Hugh Feeney began their epic fast which had reverberations around the world. Three weeks straight-forward hunger strike was compounded by the barbarity of forced feeding of women and men which lasted for over six months and gathered behind the prisoners the opinions of fair minded people the world over, in support of the simple demand for transfer to a British prison in Ireland to serve their sentences.

"In March Proinsias Stagg and Michael Gaughan joined the strike; 66 days later on June 3 Michael Gaughan became the first to die on hunger strike. In prison in England since Terence MacSwiney's sacrifice in 1920. The tens of thousands of the plain people of Ireland — and indeed of many nationalities — who paid their respects to Michael Gaughan's remains, all the way from his lonely prison cell on the Isle of Wight to the Republican Plot at Ballina, Co. Mayo demonstrated conclusively that Republicans have it within their power to touch the hearts of the Irish people. This was proved again in equally dramatic fashion in August last when a large party of Republican Prisoners broke their way out of Portlaoise Jail and threw themselves at random on the mercy of the ordinary people. Six weeks later all remain free with the single exception of a young Crossmaglen man who was captured only when British bullets stopped him in his tracks in his native district.

REPORT CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

THEN AND NOW

Sir, — With reference to the article by Conor O'Clery entitled "Killings of judge and magistrate indicate ugliness of conflict" (September 21st), may I enquire, firstly, as to whether this implies that Mr. O'Clery believes that there is such a thing as a conflict (i.e., a war) which is not ugly. All wars — because they necessarily involve the loss of life — are ugly affairs, but this does not mean that all wars are unjustifiable.

It is generally accepted by the broad mass of Irish people and political figures — be they Fine Gael, Fianna Fail or Labour — that the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence represented the justifiable attempts of the Irish people to obtain freedom and justice. Mr. O'Clery would also appear to accept this premise, as in his article he attempts to show that the shootings of Justice Conaghan and Resident Magistrate McBride last week underline the difference between the I.R.A. campaign of the 1920s and that being conducted today by the Provisional I.R.A. brigade staff in Belfast.

He continues: "In the early 1920s, the judiciary was not considered legitimate targets for I.R.A. operations." So already he is excluding those who fought on the Republican side from 1922 to 1923, from his analysis.

Normally, one might not attach too much significance to any one particular article on the Northern situation today, but Mr. O'Clery's report is of extreme interest, so far as it summarises a very prevalent attitude in the South, carefully nurtured by the politicians (particularly of the Fianna Fail variety) which can justify the actions and honour the memories of the men who fought against British rule in Ireland in 1916 and 1919-21 (or '23, depending on background) but condemn the Provisional I.R.A. today as "terrorists", "murderers", "anarchists," etc.

Who were considered "legitimate" targets by the I.R.A. during the Tan war?

Writing in the *New York American*, 1922, Michael Collins commented on this very question as follows: "England could always reinforce her army. She could replace every soldier that she lost. But there were others who were not so easily replaced. To paralyse the British machine it was necessary to strike at individuals."

Nor was this policy confined to spies and informers — 73 of whom were executed between January and April 30th, 1921, alone — but as the case of Alan Bell would indicate, the I.R.A.'s policy was to break the back of British rule in Ireland, and this obviously involved regarding more than the British military as legitimate targets. Alan Bell — like Martin McBride — was a Resident Magistrate, who was involved in the British Government's attempt to discover the relations between

Sinn Fein and certain Irish banks. He was dragged from a tractor in Ballebridge on March 16th, 1920, and shot in the street.

Reporting this occurrence, your paper (*Irish Times*, 27/3/1921) carried a headline — "Shocking crime in Dublin" — and then proceeded to describe the killing as "murder", "a awful crime," etc. In *The Irish Times* (17/9/1974), the shooting of the two judges last week was described — wait for it! — as "murder," "a terrible crime" and so on.

My point is that while your editorial policy today is as consistently pro-British and anti-Republican as it was in 1921, I doubt if you are any more honest than Jack Lynch or Liam Cosgrave (incorporating Brendan Corish) in extending your point of view to its logical conclusion and say that the I.R.A. today are no better and no worse than their counterparts of fifty years ago.

But no doubt Mr. O'Clery would reply to this by pointing to his article, where he states that the killings last week were all the uglier, by virtue of such circumstances as the "witnessing of Judge Conaghan's death by his young daughter, Well, in 1920 the I.R.A. executed 14 British agents on November 20th — many of them not only from the wives of but in bed with them. One included a 70-year-old Cork woman, Mrs. Lindsay, and in May, 1921, a Miss Barrington and a Mrs. Blake were killed when travelling with R.I.C. men whose cars were ambushed.

And should anyone say that the "difference" between the I.R.A. today and then centres around the existence of a democratically elected Dail which endorsed these actions, one has only to point to refusal.

What mandate did Pearse have when he proclaimed the Republic and then began a conflict which resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties? He had no mandate which the Provisional I.R.A. do not have, the mandate of justice and freedom. The Republic proclaimed in 1916 has yet to be re-established and the I.R.A. of today have the same fundamental aims, use the same methods, and therefore must be judged on the same basis as the men of the Tan war, 1916, the Fenians and right back to Emmet and 1798.

So should your editorial policy be to continue references to the Provisionals as being "terrorists", at least have the courage of your convictions and describe Pearse and Connolly similarly — if you think that such would be acceptable to the Irish people. But as honesty and integrity would appear to be sadly lacking in both journalistic and political circles today, I doubt if you will. — Yours, etc.,

GERRY O'DANACHAIR.
25 Harlech Crescent,
Clonskeagh,
Dublin 14.

(Reprinted from the Irish Times)

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SOUTHERN SUPREMOS DISTRUST OWN POLICE

A sensational development following
on the great Portlaoise Prison escape
is causing extreme friction within
the southern Government, police
and army. This is an order given by
the Justice Minister Mr. Cooney,
that all policemen and warders
entering the prison are to be thor-
oughly searched. Reports have leaked
out indicating great unrest and dis-
satisfaction among the police and
prison warders. A strike was threat-
ened for a time at Portlaoise police
station, where hundreds of police-
men have been drafted in. Meanwhile,
the searching of the persons of all
prison guards continues. An indication
that the Government now fears that
even its own men have been 'infected'
by Republicanism.



"WE COULD NOT TRUST THE IRISH NATIVES TO RUN THEIR OWN AFFAIRS."

ENGLISH MUST GET OUT

On Wednesday 25th September 80 people heard Geoff Rooker a Labour M.P. now candidate for Perry Barr and Pat Hickey, U.C.A.T.T. convenor and Birmingham Troops Out speak on the English Governments White Paper on Ireland.

Geoff Rooker started off by saying he viewed with dismay the attitude of the previous two governments and was filled with despair on reading the disgraceful White Paper and on hearing Merlyn Rees:

It was a national issue, a national question and the only thing England could do was to do what she had done in her other colonies — get out.

The army was not playing a peace-keeping role and many army officers relished Northern Ireland as a training ground which could be used against the British working class.

He said he wanted to push for English withdrawal and for the Irish people to solve Ireland's problem themselves.

Pat Hickey outlined Britain's new strategy which was to go for a short term solution by making concessions to loyalism e.g. consultative assembly in which Loyalists had a guaranteed majority.

England was not playing a peacekeeping role and the English presence was the problem. By making concessions to Loyalism, England was increasing the tendency towards a civil war and an old Stormonttype solution. The way to minimise the bloodbath was by ensuring that the Protestants had no place of success in maintaining their privileges via the link with England. The presence of troops was therefore not progressive but was in fact increasing the tendencies towards civil war by giving the Loyalists the possibility of a return to the Protestant ascendancy.

The British working class should support the demands of Troops Out Now and self determination for the Irish people not solely because of internationalist principles but because of the danger from the extreme right. Reactionary Loyalist working class were on excellent base for intervention for such fascist groups or the National Front and racists like Powell. It was in the interests of the British working class to prevent the extreme right from consolidating such a base by supporters the two demands of Troops Out Now and self determination for the Irish people.

JOHN PARKINSON

Publicity Offices,

102 Teignmouth Rd., Birmingham 29, Troops Out Movement.

Desert Labour SPOIL YOUR VOTE

A NATIONWIDE APPEAL TO IRISH
VOTERS IN BRITAIN.

"In the few months since February 1974, the Labour Government, in its dealings with Northern Ireland, has shown itself to be weak to the extreme, dishonest and totally incompetent.

1. They promised to end Internment — the number of internees in Long Kesh has INCREASED; the number of women interned in Armagh jail has DOUBLED.
2. They renewed the tyrannical Emergency Provisions Act, thereby condoning the hounding and abuse of our people.
3. They neglected to protect the Catholics during the U.W.C. strike by allowing the British Army Command to dictate N.I. policy.
4. Not only have they failed to reform the R.U.C. they have now made the alarming suggestion that a 3rd force be recruited. This inevitably means the re-arming of all the old B. Specials who already have a list of 33,000 volunteers.
5. They coldly ignored the plight of young Michael Gaughan, allowing him to die a solitary and terrible death.

"Over the years Labour have been able to take for granted six out of every seven Irish votes. We, the Irish in Britain, have parted with our votes all too lightly in the past. We have been grossly negligent in our responsibility

towards our people's rights. We hereby call on every Irish voter in Britain to UNITE in staging a massive protest through the legal process of the ballot box.

**WITHDRAW YOUR SUPPORT
FROM LABOUR — SPOIL YOUR
VOTE:**

"To withdraw our support from Labour and give it blindly to their opponents defeats the whole object of protest.

A VOTE FOR THE OPPOSING CANDIDATE WILL NOT BE REGIS-
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NORTHERN IRELAND CRISIS'.
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"Irish" at the bottom. Remember
your vote is CONFIDENTIAL, to
SPOIL it is legal.

We especially appeal to those of you who don't usually vote at all. Your vote is ESSENTIAL — SPOIL IT.

issued by Tomas MacCurtain Sinn
Fein Cumann, Harrow.

(It is understood that this statement
is intended for voters in areas which
do not have I.C.R.A. candidates
standing — Editor).

Magorrian Family

Bryansford/Lalrin CIRA have called for the withdrawal of the Marines from the area. They complain that a 16-year-old boy was arrested and taken off to Ballykissadee Camp for refusing to be photographed. On his release four hours later, he had to receive medical attention, the association allege.

They state that the boy was arrested from the car of Mr. Malachy Magorrian whose son, they claim, was murdered five weeks ago by the British Army. They add: "During the protest at the arrest, a local woman, Frances Rice, was savagely beaten about the legs stomach and back. Her doctor had to be called to treat her. During the protest outside the RUC station, a local Press photographer had his camera taken and the film destroyed by the commandos. The military also threatened to shoot a number of children taking part in the demonstration."

TREATMENT OF CAHILL

(Statement from Gerard McAuley S.F. Cumann)

"The Free State Government moved Joe Cahill from the intensive care unit of Baginbun Hospital back to Portlaoise Prison last weekend. He was moved from the only place which could treat his heart complaint back to the grim prison which not only has no proper medical facilities but has not even a hospital in the vicinity which can treat Joe.

"His wife Annie who visited him on Sunday in Portlaoise said that he was shocked by his condition. She says he is much failed and has to be assisted when walking. The Gerard McAuley Cumann protest at the inhuman treatment of a man whose only crime is that he is the well-known 'defender of the Falls'.

"The Free Staters, pathetic reason for this unnecessary journey across the country in the hostile environment of a heavy escort seems to have been to get him out of Dublin for the Ard Fheis. It is a sign of their increasing insecurity in face of national demands."

Commemoration March

Commemoration March on Sunday 6th October in honour of our fellow Comrades in "Band F" Company, 2nd Batt., Belfast Brigade, Oglagh Na h-Eireann. Parade will assemble at Whiteside Parade at 2.00 p.m. depart 2.30 p.m. to Milltown Cemetery.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Laim McFarland	1969
Patrick Campbell	1972
Michael Clarke	1972
John Dougal	1972
Bobby McGrudden	1972
Paddy Mulvena	1973
Jim Bryson	1973
Paddy Teer	1974.

CUMMAN NA mBAN

Dorothy Maguire	1971
Anne Parker	1972
Anne-Marie Pettigrew	1973

NA FIANNA hEIREANN

Eamon McCormack	1972
Michael Sloane	1972
Michael Magee	1972

CUMMAN NA gCAILIN

Eileen MacGin	1973
Kathleen Gartland	1974.

And in memory of all the civilians killed at the hands of the British Forces of occupation from the 9th August 1971.

BRITAIN'S SECRET WAR

Everyone knows about the war in Ireland, but very few know much about Britain's long-standing military presence in Oman, and her leading role in the struggle against the guerrillas of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFOAG). The present oil crisis obviously gives this British foothold in the area an added importance. Below, in an article condensed from the January issue of the 'Gulf Bulletin', we take a closer look at what the army is up to.

In the last few years Oman has been the only place in the world outside the State borders of the UK (ie Northern Ireland) in which the army of the British State has been involved in live fighting. It is the only other colonial war in which the British intervention in South Yemen (South Arabia and Aden at they called it) in 1967.

In the arrogant jargon of British officers Oman is the 'only place where a young officer can put into practice the training he has received at Sandhurst and Mons'. In terms of the global strategy of imperialism, it is the only place outside Ireland where the young repressive cadre of the British State can implement and perfect their techniques.

The British military presence in Oman began during the Napoleonic Wars and was given permanent form in the 1870's British intervention was based on the strategic need to defend the client Sultanates of Muscat on the Omani coast - both against rebel tribes in the interior and against rival imperialist powers - as a means of defending British interests in India, and predominantly Indian troops were used.

However, a serious uprising in the Omani interior during World War I forced the British to dig in around Muscat. In 1920 the British-offered Muscat Levy Corps was set up, based on the local Arab tribes and recruits from impoverished areas of Baluchistan (now part of Pakistan) across the sea.

OIL COMPANIES

During the World War II military intervention went a stage further: the British fear that Rommel would conquer Egypt led them to build a string of bases through Central Africa, and the link with India went through Oman, where four airfields were built - at Salala, Masirah Island, Azaibah, and Muscat. Though hardly used at the time, they later proved very useful when the invasion of Inner Oman by the oil companies led to full-scale uprising which lasted from 1955 to 1959. Several hundred British troops were sent in, and the Sultan's army was expanded.

The British, realising that previous arrangements were inadequate, then signed a new agreement with the Sultan: under an 'Exchange of Letters' in July 1958, the British agreed to extend assistance towards the strengthening of Your Highness's Army. Her Majesty's Government will also, at Your Highness's request, make available regular officers on secondment from the British Army, who will, while serving in the Sultanate, form an integral part of Your Highness's Armed Forces'. The British also agreed to provide training facilities and to help the Sultan build an air force.

MYTH OF 'SECONDMENT'

Today the Omani army is based on this structure. All top posts in the army are held by British officers seconded from the British army: the Defence Minister, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Head of Intelligence, Commander of the Air Force

and so on are all officials of the British State. According to official British figures, about 200 seconded officers were serving in the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and Sultan of Oman's Air Force (SOAF) in 1973. But this figure understates the real situation, just as the myths of 'secondment' try to obscure the fact that the Omani 'army and the government of the Sultanate are in reality little more than extensions of the British State.

The real figures are made up of the 'seconded' officers plus several other categories. First, there are the 'contract' (i.e. mercenary) officers, former members of the British armed forces working for the Sultan and formally not part of the British State apparatus, although they are about as independent of it as the US army's civilian advisers in Indochina. Secondly, there are British forces not officially 'seconded' but only 'training' however, the British said that 'if fired upon they would defend themselves', and 'they were seeking realistic training situation. In fact they were an offensive military unit.

Thirdly, there are British personnel allegedly not in action but only 'defending the Salala' base members of the special defensive unit, the RAF Regiment they are again formally excluded but in reality included on the military apparatus of the British State in Oman. Finally (and most numerous) there are British military personnel not directly deployed in the combat area of southern Oman, Dhofar, Such are the RAF personnel on the island base of Masirah - since SAF and SOAF make unimpeded use of these facilities, the distinction has no practical significance.

This partially concealed British military presence is the core of the Omani army, which since the early 1960's has grown from 3,000 to about 10,000 in total strength. But for domestic and international reasons the Omani are reluctant to commit more than a certain number of troops to Oman. Moreover, after overthrowing Sultan Said and installing his son Qabus in his place in 1970, they decided that the best way to legitimise the new ruler was to involve other Arab states.

This led to the arrival shortly afterwards of several Jordanian intelligence officers, specialising in torture and in appeals to the 'Islamic' sentiments of the population against the 'infidels' of the Popular Front. Saudi money was also funnelled in, and some Saudi officers paid at least temporary visits to the combat zone. Pakistan, which provides most of the pilots for the Saudi, Kuwaiti and Abu Dhabi air forces, also started to provide military personnel to officer the SAF. India

meanwhile began to train the new Omani navy. Finally Iran, the new guardian of capitalism in the Gulf sent hundreds of counterinsurgency helicopter personnel into Dhofar to back up the Shah's boast that Iran will not tolerate 'subversion' on the Arab side of the Gulf.

This use of different kinds of local support can be seen in two ways: as a continuation of the old 19th century use of 'native' troops to make up for the lack of British troops and as a version of the imperialist strategy exemplified in 'vietnamisation', where the direct use of imperialist troops is avoided because of the possible political consequences, both in the country under attack and in the imperialist country itself. This latter aspect of the imperialist strategy imperialist country itself. This latter aspect of the problem also has the advantage that some of the other states in the region are implicated in the specific repression: the use of Korean, Australian and New Zealand personnel in Vietnam followed a similar pattern.

COUNTER-INSURGENCY

Overall British strategy in Dhofar can also be seen as a mixture of old and new style counter-insurgency. The central tactic used is that of trying to smash the liberated areas by (a) cutting their supply lines (b) destroying their food sources - cattle, wheat, etc (c) killing or terrorising members of the civilian population until they are prepared to be 'resettled', ie driven into concentration camps under government control. In contemporary jargon this involves 'splitting the people from the hard core' the 'core' being assumed to be 'communists' somehow separate from the native population.

This policy has, however, another side: under the pretence of splitting the people and putting pressure on the 'core' a policy of annihilation is being carried out. Villages have been burnt down, wells blown up, animals killed, crops burnt from the ground and from the air, while long-range artillery bombardment of suspected rebel areas, fulfils a similar function.

The use of air power formed the basis of British colonial control in Iraq, South Yemen, and Somalia and its importance in the armoury of imperialist tactics has most dramatically been shown by the Americans in Vietnam. In Dhofar, air power is used for reconnaissance, flying supplies to outposts, bombing guerrilla areas, and tactical support to SAF positions under fire. The basis of the force are 15 or so Strikemaster BAC-167 fighter jets backed by transport planes (Skyvan Caribou, Viscount) and helicopters. These are flown by RAF personnel

plus some mercenaries and are serviced by Airwork Ltd.

Because of the intensity of guerrilla fire they have, however, had to limit their activities, helicopters now fly at round 9,000 feet to 5,000 feet above the mountains - and the short-range Skyvan transport planes are only able to land for very brief periods at the desert airstrips. Throughout the rainy season - June to September - reconnaissance is impossible because of the thick cloud that overhangs the Dhofar mountains. But it is not inconceivable, though never admitted, that in other periods US spy satellites have been used to photograph the area for additional reconnaissance material.

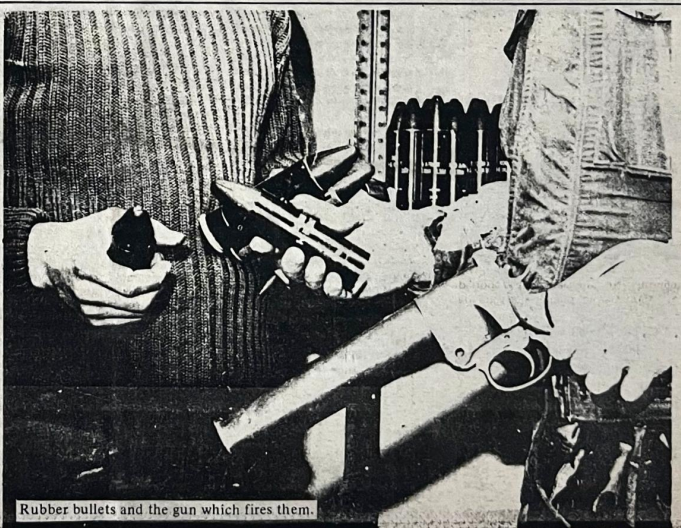
KEY ASPECT

Another key aspect of British counter-insurgency is 'psychological warfare' Salala radio and leaflets dropped over guerrilla areas appeal to the population to surrender, tell them of people who are alleged to have done so, threaten them with death with pictures of graves marked 'This One is For You and so on. A constant stream of propaganda tells of the wondrous doings of the Sultan.

For those who are captured, a different kind of psychological war lies in store: modern interrogation methods including the use of disorientation techniques, sleep deprivation, and mental torture. This set of intelligence techniques was developed by the British in the string of colonial wars after 1945, and has now been well documented in Ireland.

The ideology of the British personnel in Oman summarises the nature of the war: since a majority of the personnel are officers or in the special elite regiments like the SAS there is none of that proletarian cynicism which has marked the presence of the British army in any other colonial areas. Here the dominant world-view is Sandhurst anti-communism, itself a medley of dreams of Empire and modern counter-insurgency. "Helping the Sultan to fight Communist aggression", they started it, we didn't are common justifications.

There is also a personal aspect, derived from the contemporary contraction of the British army: Dhofar offers a kind of experience for the belligerent young imperialists that cannot be found elsewhere. 'Running your own show', the job is the park and 'the only place in the world, where an Englishman is still called sahib' have been quoted as subject aspects of the motivations of British officers.



Rubber bullets and the gun which fires them.