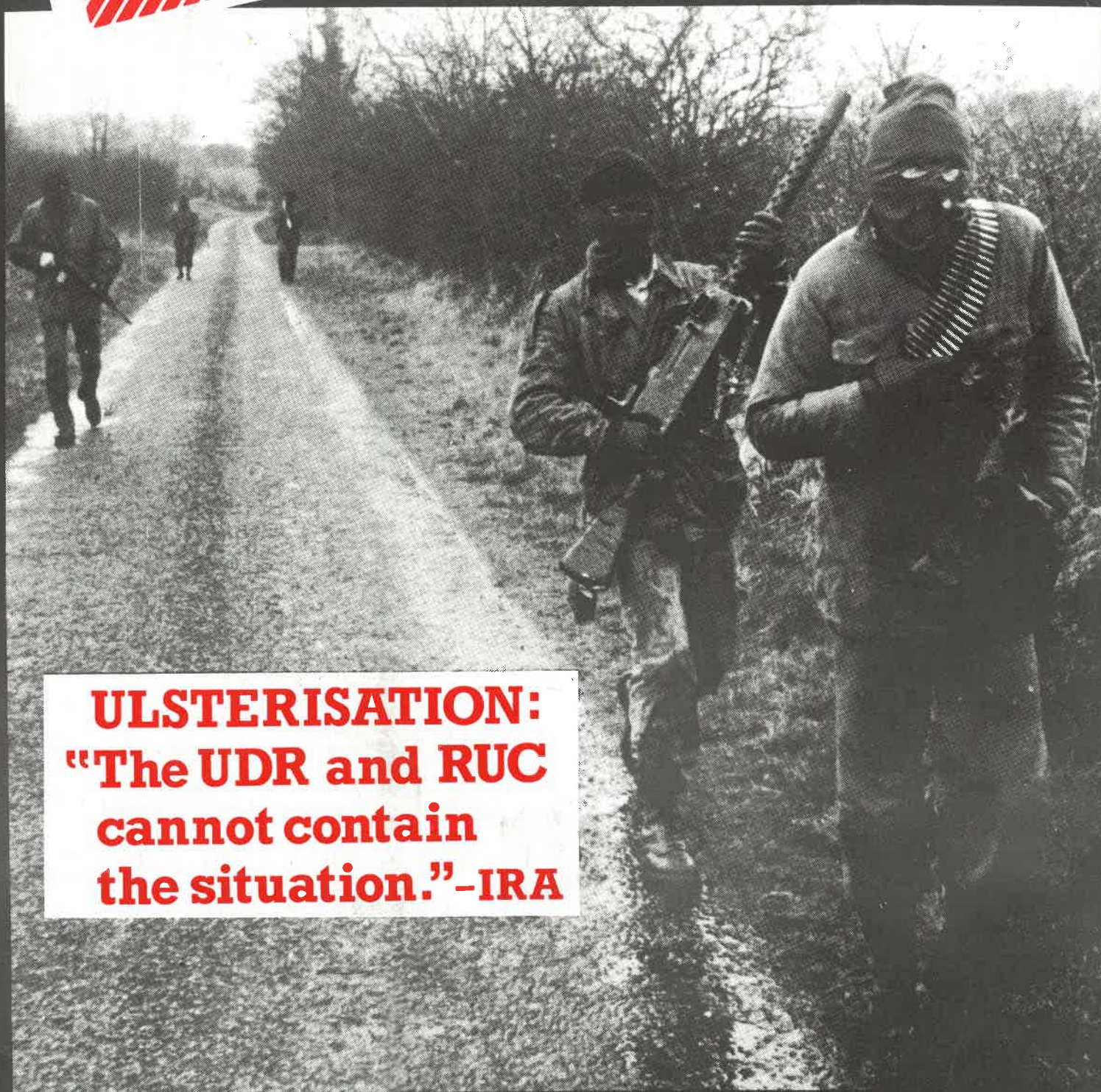


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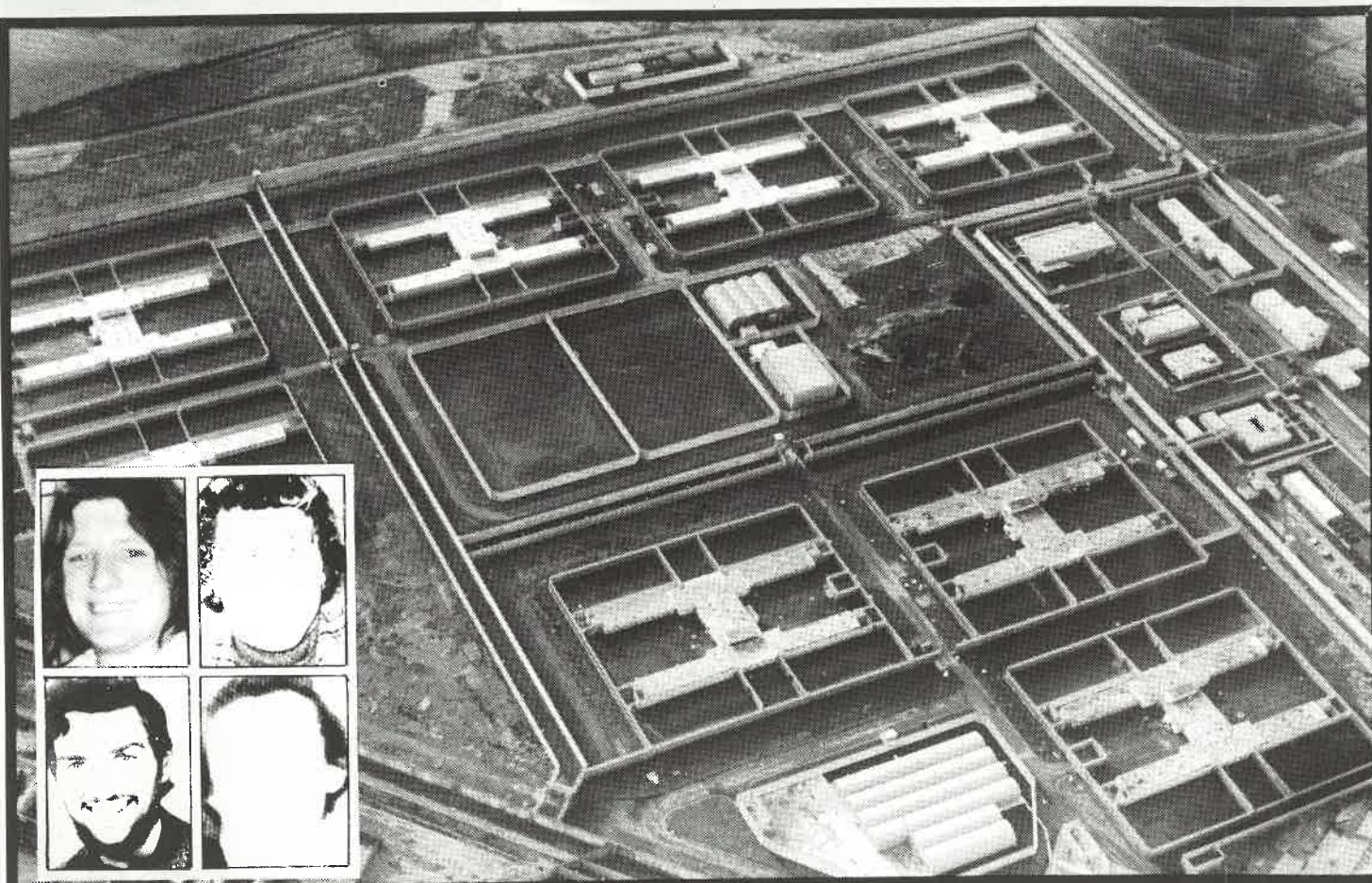


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**ULSTERISATION:
"The UDR and RUC
cannot contain
the situation."-IRA**

INSIDE: Exclusive interview with GHQ staff IRA



EMERGENCY APPEAL

H-Block Hunger-Strike Fund

WITH H-Block hunger-striker Bobby Sands physically weakening, and being joined by Frankie Hughes, Raymond McCreesh, and Patsy O'Hara, there is an increasingly urgent need to mobilise nationwide, from the sound organisational base which has been built up over the past few weeks, the widespread massive public displays of support for political status for republican prisoners which will be necessary to break the stonewall of British intransigence.

The best means of mobilising the necessary degree of public support is through a massive publicity campaign: leafletting, postering, picketing, and sending speakers throughout the country (and abroad). But this obviously costs an enormous

amount of money. An estimated £100,000 is needed to finance this hunger-strike publicity campaign and to sweep away the barrier of silence and mis-information erected by the British and Free State governments and media.

If the commitment from the prisoners' supporters is there — make no mistake — the lives of these determined H-Block hunger-strikers can be saved and their demands won. But the campaign on their behalf must be built and steadily escalated now!

All donations, which will be gratefully acknowledged, should be sent straightaway to the H-Block Appeal Fund (Tel. Belfast 23214), 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast. Your donation can help save the lives of Irish republican political prisoners.

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Introducing IRIS

AUGUST 24th 1968 saw the first protest march by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. The route was from Coalisland to Dungannon in County Tyrone. The issue, paltry though it may seem to some now, was discrimination by the Unionist-dominated local authorities in the allocation of housing.

Few in Ireland at the time, let alone the outside world, realised the ramifications which subsequent such marches and the long established, almost statutory intolerance of the Orange State to such dissidence would bring; the clear irrefutable evidence that the six-county state was irreformable.

Its very existence depended on discrimination and the whole gamut of repressive legislation, institutions and paramilitary forces which implemented it.

There was a realisation, even if only by a respectable minority, that the discrimination of the Orange State was merely a symptom of a greater discrimination: that of the British government against the right of the Irish people, as a whole, to self-determination, as it maintained British political, strategic and economic interests.

This realisation was compounded by the absence of any passive democratic alternative and by the conditions created by the brutality, arson and murder of the combined forces of the unionist-controlled para-military RUC and 'B' Specials and brought popular resistance.

WESTMINSTER'S INTEREST DECLARED

The initial resistance of a risen, nationalist people, armed only with stones and petrol bombs, nevertheless forced the British government to overtly declare its ongoing imperialist interest in the dismemberment of Ireland and its people by the reintroduction of the British army onto the streets of Derry and Belfast on August 15th and 16th 1969, to replace the defeated para-military state forces and bolster the tottering civil authority of Stormont.

The activities of the British army through 1970 - raining C.S. gas on the inhabitants of Ballymurphy and curfewing the lower falls area in Belfast, killing five people in the process, further enhanced nationalist awareness of the nature of British imperialism, and culminated in the reorganised IRA coming off the defensive and on to the offensive with the launching of this phase of the centuries-old struggle for national liberation.

As in earlier colonial wars in which imperial Britain found itself confronted with liberation forces, a euphemistic title for its colonial war and a *raison d'être* for the British forces of occupation had to be found.

In Malaya, Kenya, Aden and Cyprus in similar circumstances we had "Police Actions" against "terrorist gangsters" and 'communist subversives'. So, from the outset, with regard to the war in Ireland, the imperialist power at Westminster successfully portrayed the conflict, both on the island of Britain, and on the international scene generally, as 'a religious war' in which the role of the British occupation forces was portrayed as a "peace keeper, keeping the warring factions apart".

It took a full nine years to finally bury that lie, with Pope John Paul II's declaration at Drogheda in September 1979 that, whatever the nature of the conflict, something which he



Increasingly it becomes obvious to the world that what it is witnessing . . . is a war of national liberation on the part of the Irish people.

himself scrupulously omitted to define, it was not a "religious war".

But by that time however it was really largely irrelevant as Westminster's political and military innovations after the Ulster Workers Council strike in 1974 and its consequences had generated a whole new range of euphemisms; 'Mafia type organisation', 'Godfathers', 'Normalisation', 'primacy of the police', and 'Ulsterisation', become the Brit-inspired terms and phrases which assumed the mantle of deceit under which Westminster attempted and still does attempt, to undermine the national liberation struggle, tighten its colonial grip on the six-counties and maintain the necessary all Ireland stability which its political, strategic and economic interests dictate.

More and more it is becoming clear that the conflict in Ireland cannot be viewed in the simplistic terms which the British government projects. Increasingly it becomes obvious to the world that what it is witnessing is a colonial war on Britains part; a war of national liberation on the part of the Irish people, which in terms of modern history finds its roots in the partition 'settlement' of sixty years ago.

Its implementation in 1921 meant the immediate division of the national resistance, culminating in the defeat of the Republican forces by the British-backed Free State forces of the new neo-colonial twenty-six county state between June 28th 1922 and May 24th 1923 in the second war in defence of the Republic established in 1916.

EFFECTS OF PARTITION

As designed by the British government of the time, the ensuing years saw the truncation, the gradual diminution, in fact, of the Republican Movement in Ireland. The division of loyalties created by partition saw genuine nationalists and socialists as well as the opportunists pledge their allegiance to Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Irish Labour Party in the twenty-six counties, and to the Nationalist Party in the six-counties.

In the six-counties, of course, the predominant political influence, because of the very nature of the state, was to be the monolithic Unionist Party which like its Zionist and South African counterparts maintained sway over all classes in the unionist population.

But the contradiction remained. Contradictions which in their heightened form of the past decade have allowed elements in Fianna Fail to declare that British soldiers of occupation are 'legitimate targets' and which undoubtedly assisted the present Fianna Fail premier in coming to power, and which also have allowed elements in the Unionist pop-

ulation of the north to redefine their loyalty; from loyalty to the British crown to loyalty to themselves, their position of marginal privilege and the six-county state which maintains that privilege.

Diminutive though it may have become, the Irish Republican Movement still maintained in its ranks men and women of unbending principle and commitment to the implementation of the Republican ideal.

Their republican experience, in some cases running back as far as 1916, enabled them to 'seize the time' when state reaction to the valiant but futile attempts to reform the irreformable Orange State in '68 and '69, created conditions suitable for the re-launching of the national liberation struggle.

REPORTING THE STRUGGLE

Responsibility for reporting and analysing that struggle was devolved to '*An Phoblacht*', the national organ of the movement and '*Republican News*', the Belfast based republican paper founded by veteran republican Jimmy Steele. Even in this area the effects of partition did not leave the movement unscathed.

For while '*An Phoblacht*' was officially the national organ of the movement, its distribution was for the most part limited to the twenty-six counties because in the north its sales were eclipsed by '*Republican News*' whose sales dominated in the war-zone.

Such a division, in fact, led to an imbalance in overall Republican analyses and general awareness of our supporters vis-a-vis the struggle, even if only because readership of the two papers was for the most part restricted to the boundaries of the two states.

This imbalance was redressed in February 1979, when the two papers fused.

Another serious defect in the publicity and analysis of the struggle, has been the lack of a regular analytical periodical. Belated as it is, it is nevertheless hoped that '*Iris*' will to some degree fill that vacuum now that it has been changed from the weekly commentary of 1973-80 to a quarterly Republican analysis of contemporary developments and events, as well as feature articles and general information.

The belatedness of the publication of such a magazine poses the problem in this its first issue, of how properly and adequately to deal with the past twelve years. The scope nature and size of '*Iris*' obviously precludes the analytical review required of that period, a task which, whilst necessary, would require a book of considerable proportion.

We would ask you therefore to bear with us and tolerate the somewhat disjointed format and content of this first issue.

Ag labhairt leis an Uachtaran

Ruairi O Bradaigh

In this major interview with Ruairi O Bradaigh, the President of Sinn Fein, we get a comprehensive view, both current and retrospective, of republican attitudes. The interview examines Sinn Fein's views on the current Thatcher-Haughey talks, Loyalism, the Workers Party, the H-Blocks campaign and many other issues.



IRIS: Media speculation about the exact nature of the Haughey — Thatcher talks and the intent of the study groups set up in their wake has been rife. Haughey's emphasis on the 'totality of relationships' section of the communique, Thatcher's firm 'no change' regarding the six-counties position and Paisley's cries of 'sell out' have all added to the many and varied interpretations of the meeting. What is Sinn Fein's view?

R.O.B.: Well, of course it has been said that the interpretations in London and in Dublin of what took place in Dublin Castle on December 8th 1980 between Mr. Haughey and Mrs. Thatcher are deliberately ambiguous.

I have in front of me an editorial from the *Manchester Guardian* of December 10th, where it says "Somebody is being badly deceived. It could be Mr. Charles Haughey. It could be the House of Commons. It could be the Ulster unionists. It is unlikely, however, to be all three at the same time." Then it makes a joke saying, "Was the communique drawn up in the Gaeltacht and unfortunately mis-translated from the Irish (a notoriously romantic tongue)? Or does Mrs. Thatcher (it would not be characteristic) do good by stealth and blush to find it fame?"

All this needs is to be seen in the context of the changing nature of imperialism in the twentieth-century. And it's as well to say now, that Ireland was Britain's first colony; her first direct old-style colony eight centuries ago. And, that it was the Irish uprising of Easter

1916 that put the first crack in the British Empire, from which the whole process of alleged decolonisation has followed.

In the twentieth-century the concept of neo-colonisation came to the fore. That is, that the imperial power would withdraw its physical presence; its army and its flag and give the natives a nominal freedom but retain cultural, social and economic domination.

And in the settlement of 1921, in the face of the mass uprising of the Irish people, the twenty-six counties of Southern Ireland became one of the first neo-colonial situations, while the old-style colony was retained in the North. That is the pattern we've had to this day.

Now, when Thatcher and Haughey met last December it is important to realise that this was their second meeting. At their first meeting on May 21st 1980 in London they signed a communique which said that they both agreed that any change in the constitutional status of the six-counties could only come about with the consent of the people of the six-counties and not with the consent of the majority of the people of Ireland. In other words, Mr. Haughey accepted the ground rules laid down in 1920 and 1921 by the British Government of Ireland Act. Anything which follows from that first meeting has to be seen in that light.

It would appear that what is actually happening is that Mrs. Thatcher's government is finding it embarrassing on the international scene, to be faced with an ongoing, long drawn out war of national

liberation in Ireland, with the direct involvement of British troops. 'England's Vietnam' it has been called. And she could possibly be thinking along the lines of loosening her grip on the north of Ireland and tightening her hold on all of Ireland. In other words this could possibly mean 'Ulsterisation' along the lines of 'Vietnamisation'; greater 'Ulsterisation', that is, pulling back more regular British troops, up-arming the local loyalist forces like the RUC and the UDR, while Mr. Haughey, for his part, brings the twenty-six counties back, not forwards, but backwards, in under England.

We've heard talk about voting rights for English citizens living in Ireland; about a joint Anglo-Irish Economic council; a joint Anglo-Irish energy council. And, in particular, it looks as if the traditional 'neutrality' of the Free State in international affairs is to be thrown overboard and that there would be a mutual defence pact between the Dublin government and the London government. This could possibly be extended later to

include the EEC, and later again America could be brought in on it.

In other words, England may well be considering changing and updating (by making more acceptable and more presentable to the world at large) her grip on the north of Ireland. But in doing so, to tighten her hold on the whole of Ireland. To have all Ireland securely in the English sphere of influence and in England's pocket.

This, of course, would be very much a step backwards. But it would be characterised by Mr. Haughey as 'movement'. We would be moving backwards but he would be calling it 'progress'. And Mrs. Thatcher would sell it to her supporters as securing western imperialism.

The presence of Lord Carrington at the Dublin meeting is perhaps an indication that the relationship between London and Dublin was being seen in a worldwide context.

Paisley is saying that the sectarian state of the north of Ireland is under threat; that the old imperialism is being attacked and that those who gained their privileges and their power from that situation feel themselves threatened. In other words, they have been pawns in the game, too; that is the imperial game.

Well, I don't think that really matters too much to Thatcher and the imperialist forces which are dominant in British policy. What matters to them, is that they secure their ill-gotten gains for the foreseeable future. What we may well see is a changing around of the scenery. But basically the position of domination, imperialism and exploitation in Ireland will remain and the Irish people would not become supreme in their own country; would not secure the decision-making process in their own country; would not achieve the control of the wealth of their own country and would not be able to determine their own future.

HAUGHEY'S 'REPUBLICANISM'

IRIS: Mr. Haughey has gained a lot of support from fundamental nationalist Fianna Fail rank and file members, particularly as a result of the much documented alleged 'gun running' activities he was supposed to have been involved in. Does the 'Republican' image which the media has given him enhance whatever new innovation he and Thatcher are engaged in, in maintaining the basic status quo?

R.O.B.: Well of course it has been said that Mr. Haughey is modelling himself to some extent on Mr. De Valera in the past. In other words that he will talk as a republican. That he will engage in verbal republicanism. But on the ground he will act as part of the imperialist forces. And it is important that people should watch, not what Mr. Haughey says, rather what he doesn't say. And in particular that they should watch what he does.

We see on the ground, since Mr.

Haughey came to power on December 7th 1979, a great increase in the collaboration with the British occupation forces. The activation of the procedure of extra-territorial jurisdiction for trying people in the twenty-six counties before non-jury courts for alleged actions committed against British rule and British occupation in the north of Ireland — a procedure unknown anywhere else in the world between two jurisdictions.

It is important to emphasise what he is actually doing rather than what he is saying. Because, to give an illusion of movement in what appears to be a stalemated situation can often be represented as an 'initiative' to people. Even if it is a movement backwards!

THE LOYALISTS

IRIS: In a narrower perspective now; London, let alone the Dublin government, must pay attention to the likely loyalist reaction to any imperialist innovation which it may attempt to implement and which doesn't fully gratify the loyalist position. Paisley's reaction to the Dublin Castle talks has been to assemble five hundred loyalist 'gun holders' in County Antrim, with further demonstrations in the pipeline. Overall, on a superficial political and tactical basis at least, the unionist monolith seems deeply divided; the unionist aristocracy opting for full 'integration' with Britain, Paisley insisting on a return to 'Stormont rule' and a section of the disaffected loyalist working class, the gunmen of the paramilitary UDA opting for 'six-county independence'. How do you view the loyalist position generally and Paisley's reaction in particular?

R.O.B.: It is important first of all that people realise the nature of loyalism. What we have here is a right wing privileged class. Even at the level of the ordinary people they have marginal economic advantages and privileges; in jobs, housing, political patronage and so on.

Analogies have been drawn between the poor whites and the blacks in the Southern states of America, and the loyalists and nationalist working class communities in the six-counties.

It is also important to realise that the armed manifestations of loyalism, both officially, through the UDR and the RUC, and unofficially through the UDA and kindred organisations are analogous to the secret army organisation, the OAS in Algeria in 1954 — 62. They also bear a certain resemblance to the right wing forces in El Salvador which are really an extension of the government junta there.

What we are witnessing, with regard to Paisley and the UDA, is the convulsions of an outdated imperialism trying to come to terms with the new arrangements for a new and more sophisticated imperialism. Paisley, of course, wants to be 'top dog' to be 'number one', and he feels that his display of drilled men in County Antrim will help him in the local government elections under British auspices in

May 1981, where he is attempting to complete his advantage over the Official Unionist Party, which he first secured during the EEC elections in 1979.

But there is more to it than that. He is completely unscrupulous in making a bid for any kind of power. He is modelling himself on Carson. People talk about history repeating itself, sometimes as a farce. But there isn't anything farcical about this. It's very very serious. And it's important that people should take it seriously and realise the amount of conflict and suffering that can result from this posturing by Paisley. The option of an 'independent six-counties' which he has as his second alternative, and which the UDA has as its first alternative to direct British rule, is a very dangerous one.

It would mean the institutionalisation of division, of politico-religious Sectarianism; religion being used as a badge in this case to recognise people, to identify them, separate them, divide them and exploit them.

It's a recipe for future conflict. It's no solution. It would go beyond even what James Connolly said, when, in speaking about what would happen if Ireland were partitioned, he projected that there would be 'a carnival of reaction'. And this is the further development in that ongoing process of reaction.

IRIS: It is interesting to hear your comparison of the *pied-noir* in Algeria with the loyalists and the OAS with the UDA. Bearing in mind that republicans have always appeared to be conciliatory in their attitude to loyalists, in their desire as stated in the Proclamation "to cherish all the children of the nation equally", do you really see anything short of an Algerian solution to resolve the loyalist problem in the north?

R.O.B.: First of all, to be historically and factually correct, the so called 'Algerian solution' is a misnomer. It was not an Algerian solution. It was a *pied-noir* solution dictated by the OAS.

Irish republicanism has never envisaged this type of solution. It has never envisaged the driving out of the descendants of the colonists of three hundred and fifty years ago. It sees at present the division of ordinary people and the giving of a marginal advantage to one section of people over the other while the ruling classes, the old aristocracy and the big commercial interests, continue to exploit both sections.

Because there is no desire to drive out that section of the inhabitants of Ireland who are born here — and we regard everyone born in Ireland as Irish people — it has often been interpreted that the Republican Movement is very conciliatory. What it is doing is, if one likes, holding the door open, keeping the lines open towards them, and assuring them that they have a worthwhile place in the new Ireland.

But first the power structure must be broken. And first the privilege and the advantage of one section over another

must be destroyed. The dominance and the exploitation by the ruling classes must be banished forever. So that given all these situations and all these necessary processes, which must first be gone through, then in a situation of full equality between Irish people, and a situation of a Democratic Socialist Republic for all Ireland, with the complete separation of church and State, the removal of the colonial and neo-colonial states north and south, with the maximum decentralisation of power; then, there is the identity of interest; of the common interest of people living together on this island, of the common interest of working people in all parts of Ireland. This would assuredly bring people together. But first, the foreign presence must be removed. The British army of occupation, the British administration, the foreign body which is keeping the Irish wound open and bleeding; it must first be removed. And it is important to get our priorities right in this matter.

The power structure which this imperialist presence in Ireland has set up and maintained, north and south, to feed it must also be destroyed. And in the context then of wiping the slate clean, and starting afresh and building a new Ireland; then there is a place and then people can come together.

I would sum up like this. As I said publicly in Belfast at the Easter Commemoration there in 1979, the nationalist people must liberate themselves, and in doing so they will liberate also the loyalist people who are caught in a trap of history and are unable to liberate themselves.

I might add, that in doing this work of Irish liberation, the Irish people will also be liberating the ordinary people of England from a centuries-old imperialism which is exercised in their name by the ruling classes of England.

THE HUNGER-STRIKE

IRIS: The British government has repudiated the promises of concessions made to the hunger strikers in the H-Blocks on December 18th 1980. Internationally the last hunger strike seriously embarrassed them so why do they think they have created the confrontations which have made the second hunger strike inevitable?

R.O.B.: I am not sanguine at all in my expectations with regard to the British and their promises. I have recently been in Canada and while there, listening to the United States media, on talk shows they were asking, "should the United States honour its agreements with Iran now that the hostages have been released?" There is a parallel situation here, where the British have been asking themselves should they honour their agreement made on December 18th with the hunger strikers now that the hunger strike is over?

And, of course, what has happened? They have reneged. They have gone

back on their agreement. And every effort that was made to have it implemented, even in a step by step manner, has been frustrated.

We know that international pressure gravely embarrassed the British at the time, so people will be inclined to say "why don't the British want all this buried and forgotten about? why don't they settle?"

Well, I think that an important point to remember is that the struggle in the prisons in just another front in the ongoing war of liberation in Ireland. And the British feel that if they can inflict a defeat, particularly a psychological defeat, on the Republican movement in the prison struggle, that it will assist them very much in the overall struggle.

Another point is that I think that any close observer of the Irish situation would see that the operations of the Irish Republican Army were toned down considerably during the hunger strike so as not to divert attention from the main issue at that particular time. So, the British, being aware of that, may well consider that another round of the hunger strike would give them perhaps another two months of respite on the military front which they would welcome.

This, of course, is just speculation on my part but it is a factor, I believe, in the situation as well.



IRIS: British propagandists have been consistently saying that the H-Block/Armagh issue is the only remaining rallying point for republican support, that without it the Republican Movement is politically denuded. What is your view on that as well as the overall advantages gained and losses made during the hunger strike period?

R.O.B.: First of all it is necessary to realise that at no time is the part greater than the whole. The part in this case being the prison struggle, and the whole, the overall liberation struggle.

The pluses in this regard were that over a four and a half year period we had

the high moral standard of protest set by the prisoners who were naked in their cells and in solitary confinement. For the last two and a half years of that time they have had to live with their own body wastes.

This courage in the face of extreme adversity was indeed an inspiration to their comrades outside and to people in general as a high point of self-sacrifice, endurance and commitment to an ideal. So there was great inspiration in the actions of the men and the women in the prisons.

Also the mobilisation outside, of the people behind that struggle and in the last year and a half the construction of a broad front in support of that was very much a plus, as was the involvement of youth. And we believe that just as many young people who were first brought into contact with politics and with the national struggle through the great civil rights movement of 1968 and '69, so too, many young people of the rising generation have been brought into contact with the national struggle through the H-Block/Armagh campaign.

It's up to the Republican Movement to move forward from that position and to interest these young people whose attention they have secured; to interest them in the entire national struggle and to gain their support. This would be a great source of strength to the Republican Movement.

On the other hand the total involvement of the movement on prison issues has diverted it from its normal work, its normal involvement in the issues of the day; the day to day struggles of the people; on the ground building its organisation and has diverted it almost totally onto one front and one aspect, the H-Blocks and Armagh, the prison struggle.

Now that is not welcome. And if it goes on over long periods it could be very bad organisationally for the movement. So while we've had gains we've also had some losses in that regard. This is one reason why we did not welcome a renewal of the hunger strike. So it is not true to say, as our enemies have been saying, that the prison struggle was the only thing we have going for us.

There is the struggle on the military front, the political front, the social, economic and cultural fronts; and very important in the international sphere.

IRIS: Media projection, rather than speculation this time inclines to the view that mass mobilisations by the people for the renewed hunger strike is unlikely. In view of British intransigence and duplicity at the conclusion of the last hunger strike and the obvious heightened awareness of that duplicity by those who are participating in the present hunger strike, how do you view the likelihood of a death and the media's projections on support?

R.O.B.: The mobilisation may well, on this occasion, be slower and it may be

nearer to a crisis point before the full mass mobilisation takes place. But I have no doubt that mobilisation will take place; at home in Ireland and also internationally.

And I would say from the reports that have come back to Ireland, and also from having been abroad myself in recent weeks, on the continent of Europe and in north America, that there is a far, far greater awareness of Ireland's struggle for national independence and socialism. There is a far deeper appreciation of all aspects of the struggle including the prison struggle. All this can be built on but it may be a slower mobilisation.

As to whether anyone is going to die? Well, again that depends on the British government and that in turn depends on the amount of pressure that is mobilised against the British government. The experience of the last hunger strike has indicated that of course the tens of thousands which demonstrated on the streets and brought pressure to bear at every level at home in Ireland were very important. But a decisive factor was international pressure.

We want to see a quick build-up of that international pressure again so that we can defeat this whole criminalisation policy by Britain; I mean her attempt since 1976 to criminalise the prisoners and through them the whole Irish war and effort for national liberation. We have to get this criminalisation policy reversed once and for all and to move on then to the broad struggle, towards the full freedom in every aspect for the Irish people.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

IRIS: Does the stress and emphasis which you put upon the international aspect of the prison struggle hold also for the national liberation struggle generally?

R.O.B.: This opens a very wide question. It concerns the type of Ireland which we wish to achieve. It concerns the chances of survival of that new radical Ireland in a situation of world imperialism. It has to do with other parallel struggles and with support from the ordinary people throughout the world.

This is an essential dimension to the Irish struggle. Whatever about the past, in view of the fact that we are now in the last quarter of the twentieth century; in view of all the forces of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and exploitation of workers throughout the world, it is essential to mobilise international support for the Irish struggle. In the short term to bring about the victory of the Irish people, and in the long term to ensure the survival of that victory; that the gains made can be maintained. And also that they can be extended to the other struggling peoples throughout the

world; not just in Europe, but in Africa, Asia, Latin America, throughout the Third world and the world in general. So that similar struggles can be successful and that we can build the only type of world that is safe for humanity and that is an entirely new world.

IRIS: In practical terms then what is Sinn Fein's view of a future democratic socialist Ireland's position on the world generally?

R.O.B.: To begin with, since we live in Europe, on the western fringe of Europe we would like to see, one, the other Celtic countries, Scotland, Wales and Brittany, free, independent and socialist. And we would see a cultural relationship between Ireland and them. This of course pre-supposes the breaking up of the so-called 'United Kingdom'.

Two, we have also support and have links with the struggling nationalities within Europe; the Basques, the Catalans and the Corsicans, etc. Allied with their struggle on the periphery we wish to link with all the struggles of the workers at the centre of these states in Europe for control of their own lives and their own futures. This again pre-supposes the breaking up of the EEC which is a coming together of former colonial powers to consolidate their gains and to erect another super power in the world.

Sinn Fein's objective then is a Europe of peoples rather than of States. In opposition to the E.E.C. Sinn Fein is an active participant in the 'United European Opposition Platform to the EEC' and has subscribed to their manifesto along with more than twenty left-wing political parties, radical organisations and national liberation movements throughout the ten member states of the EEC and the two applicant states, Portugal and the Spanish State.

Furthermore, with regard to the world at large we are opposed to the power blocs, east and west, political, military and economic. We wish the new Ireland to be non-aligned. We look forward to membership of the Non-aligned Nation's Movement and we regard the Organisation of African Unity and the 'Group of 77' at the United Nations as progressive forces in the world.

THE 1969 SPLIT AND AFTER

IRIS: Eleven years on how do you view the split which occurred in the Republican Movement in 1969 and 1970 and what generally is your view of the evolution since then of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party?

R.O.B.: Well, of course, there were five basic reasons given at the time for what happened in 1969 and 1970. Really, all of these hung together. It was another reformist manifestation within the non-conformist intransigent, radical, revolutionary Irish Republican Movement, which never accepted British rule, which never accepted the modern man-

ifestations of British rule, in the form of the colonial north and the neo-colonial south.

What those who now call themselves Sinn Fein the Workers' Party sought to do was to abandon the armed struggle, seek the constitutional road through these imperial, colonial and neo-colonial parliamentary institutions in London, Belfast and Dublin and so to take what was then a Stalinist line in western Europe as opposed to armed revolution.

This involved maintaining the puppet government in Belfast (Stormont), and attempting to democratise it, which of course was impossible and which now has been abolished because of the struggle of the Republican Movement.

Allied with that was the internal methods they were using at that time foisted this type of programme on a movement which by its very nature, basis and history was bound to reject it. And that's what happened.

Since then the Workers' Party have continued down along the road of reformism. At first they paid lip-service and made a token involvement in the question of armed struggle and then they formally abandoned it in May 1972. They have become more and more involved in the mechanisms of the colonial and neo-colonial states. They have distanced themselves completely from the national struggle. They have moved almost towards a 'two-nation theory' for Ireland, an idea so beloved of Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien.

Within Ireland they have almost turned themselves upside down over the past ten or eleven years.

They have abandoned their opposition to the EEC and in one of their recent policy documents they have stated that they regard multi-national companies as, and I quote, 'progressive forces' unquote.

IRIS: You said earlier that, at least in the tactical sense, they were espousing a 'Stalinist' line. How do you see their ideological position today?

R.O.B.: They seem incapable of maintaining any ideological position. They keep slipping down the road of compromise. Once they started they seemed to have no basic principles or philosophy at all. Now they have come around to the position where they appear to be almost indistinguishable from the left-wing of the reformist and social democratic twenty-six-county Labour Party.

EVOLUTION OF SINN FEIN

IRIS: How do you view the evolution of Sinn Fein in both the organisational and policy contexts during that period.

R.O.B.: At the first meeting of the caretaker executive following the breaking of the constitution by the people who now call themselves the Workers' Party, there was a statement issued, headed 'Where Sinn Fein Stands' dated the 17th Jan-

uary 1970.

It restates the basic Republican position which is well known, rejecting the existing puppet parliaments and so on, as well as indicating the views at that time on social and economic questions when it said, "our socialism envisages the nationalisation of the monetary system, commercial banks and insurance companies, key industries, mines, building land and fishing rights; the division of large ranches, an upper limit on the amount of land owned by one individual, the setting up of worker-owner co-operatives on a wide scale in agriculture, industry and fishing."

In other words, important socialist objectives were set from the very start which were followed on in the **Eire Nua** 'Social and Economic programme' which was brought out a year later. In the summary at the beginning of that booklet there were ten points which indicated clearly the direction in which Sinn Fein wished to lead the Irish people, both with regard to the situation in Ireland and also abroad. One could say that it was a rejection of the individualist capitalism of the west and also of the state capitalism of the east in favour of a more direct democratic participation by the people and the workers at their places of work. By the people in their communities getting as near to a direct participatory democracy as possible; by decisions being taken at the lowest possible level, as near to the base as possible. And also by the workers owning and controlling their places of work.

What has happened since has been a building, a development on that basis, and an extension from there. In 1972 we had a policy document on structures of government, a decentralised governmental structures together with a draft charter of rights plus a reissue of the ten points' summary of the social and economic programme. This was followed up in May 1973 by the 'Quality of Life' policy document, which dealt with the environment, the control of technology, pollution, advertising and consumer protections. It was particularly concerned with the relationship with third world countries and opposition to the multi-national companies which are the instruments of economic imperialism.

The following year, 1974, we brought out the document 'Mining and Energy' which dealt with two issues; the control and development of Ireland's mineral resources and also with the energy crisis which had taken place towards the end of 1973. In 1976 we had the Foreign Affairs' resolution at the Ard Fheis which set out clearly our opposition to all forms of imperialism and stated that:

"Sinn Fein recognises that the only realistic future for Ireland in relation to the world at large lies in disentangling our people from political and economic power blocs and possible military alliances such as the EEC and NATO; and joining with the post-colonial and non-aligned countries of the third world of Africa, Asia and Latin America in their



"We are a movement that is anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and not simply a movement to get the Brits out of Ireland."

struggles against all forms of imperialism and their endeavours to build a new international economic order.

"That we declare our support for those engaged throughout the world in struggles for national liberation and invite their explicit support for the struggle in Ireland.

"That we educate our members and followers in these matters especially in the proposed new role of the future new Ireland in world affairs and that a Foreign Affairs Bureau be established to implement this resolution."

Now, that was simply formalising and institutionalising attitudes and policy directions that had already existed since 1970. That was a most important development.

Then in 1977 we had the 'National Offshore' document which dealt with the ownership, development and protection of our offshore resources; in resistance again to exploitation and the attempted dispossession by the EEC and the multinational companies.

This in turn led, when policy development came round again, to the updating at the 1979 Ard Fheis of the original **Eire Nua**; that document was called 'Eire Nua, the Social and Economic Dimension'. The original ten points

were refined, clarified and extended. They now cover fifteen points and also developed and made more realistic the economic resistance direction.

Furthermore, just last autumn we had the Sinn Fein policy document on **'Women in the New Ireland'**; against sexism and stereo-typing, and dealing with equal pay for equal work, violence against women, family law, attitudes to contraception, abortion, illegitimacy, marriage law and child care. As a result we now have a Women's Department of Sinn Fein. Trade Union and Youth departments have also been created.

The Youth department which held its first conference last year is developing and is now attempting to take full advantage of the situation brought about by the H-Blocks/Armagh campaign which attracted a lot of young people.

Side by side with all this development of a definite radical and alternative way, we had a political education programme within the movement since 1973 which has been geared clearly to indicating that we are a movement that is anti-imperialist anti-colonial and not simply a movement to get the Brits out of Ireland, but to erect here a specific type of Ireland; that we are of the ordinary people, of the working class, and of the small farmer

and fishermen and that our attitude is quite clear in this regard.

The thrust and the development of the movement over the past eleven years has been very clear and its direction has not been ambiguous in any way. Because of the propaganda of those who took the reformist line, and have ended up performing political gyrations, because of the misrepresentation by the British, the loyalists and the Dublin government it was some time before our real and actual position on all these matters got through on the continent of Europe and indeed in the wider area of North America, Africa, Asia and Latin America. But we are satisfied more and more that this is getting through clearly now.

We had a meeting of solidarity groups from Europe after the last Ard Fheis in November 1980 which was very successful and again indicated just how clear our position is recognised. The hunger strike campaign abroad helped in this regard also.

It's important to realise that in our anti-EEC struggle we subscribe to and adhere to an anti-EEC platform which embraces twenty two parties, liberation movements and radical organisations in all the states of the EEC and in the applicant states. We are still taking part in an ongoing process with them for an alternative Europe; against the Europe of the bosses and big business, and for a workers' Europe, a Europe of peoples' and workers' control.

So clearly, our dimensions and parameters have been getting across clearer and clearer in this way, with the passage of time, the hard work our members have engaged in, the policy developments, the internal political education programmes and the initiatives which have been taken.

IRIS: Would it therefore be a fair assumption that the points contained in the Economic Resistance Movement document is the tactical means and the strategic objectives which Sinn Fein sets itself in the period between now and the gaining of political independence for all of Ireland?

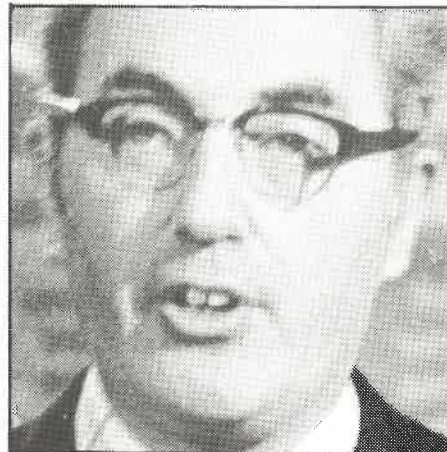
Furthermore, how major a role do you envisage for Sinn Fein's Trade Union Department in all this in view of the sad state of the position which the Irish Congress of Trade Unions holds on the national question generally and more particularly the positions held by the Northern Committee of Congress which has not only opted out of an active role against repression but can actually be seen to be actively abetting it, by at various times having a sitting member on the RUC's advisory committee?

R.O.B.: This is very important because Sinn Fein is not just a support movement for the armed struggle against the British presence. It is necessary to be seen to be implementing these policies in the interim period and therefore the setting up of the Trades Union Department and its following on the lines of economic resistance as indicated as far

back as 1970 and updated in 1980, is of prime importance. Within the Trade Union movement, within bodies such as the Land League, fishermen's organisations, tenants bodies, popular organisations of the people, this can be done.

The initiative has been taken by the Trade Union Department in this regard and is very welcome. But they have a difficult task ahead. As you have said, the organised Trade Union movement has not a good position on the national question. Nor indeed has it on the class question because it seems to fulfill a role through its leadership of class collaboration rather than of class struggle.

It's a question of imperialism and people's attitudes towards it. In our analysis of the situation in the north we've talked about the different levels of exploitation and indeed about what has become known as the 'aristocracy of labour'. And we find a loyalist domin-



ation in some of the unions in the north which has meant that the all-Ireland trades union movement has been reluctant to take a firm anti-imperialist position and so has betrayed its' founders; people like James Connolly who were very clear on this question.

Within the six-counties the Northern Committee of the ICTU is almost autonomous. This is not a good position at all, and is in fact a contradiction of the national position.

We have seen this collaboration with the colonial state in the north. We have seen their condoning of the repression and torture which has and still does go on. Indeed, as you have stated, they have gone so far as to have a representative on the advisory body of the the militaristic, British subordinate police force in the north. These are all areas where ground needs to be made up.

We have the question of the trades union movement in the south taking part in so-called 'national' wage agreements and understandings and supporting the capitalistic, exploitive system in that way.

So there is much to be done.

It's important that we take part with

the people in their day to day struggles and that people see us, again, for what we do. It is important that they assess us not alone by what we say but by what we do and by our attitudes on the ground and how far we are willing to take part with them.

We cannot presume that they should be concerned about our movement and its objectives, its national liberation struggle, if we are not concerned for them and if we do not have a coming together of all the struggles at all levels.

The success of the imperialists so far in Ireland has been that they contained the national struggle in one watertight compartment, the social and economic struggle in another compartment, and indeed the cultural struggle in a third compartment. They have managed to keep them separated, sometimes in an antagonistic manner. Whereas the strength of the whole position lies in bringing them all together. As James Connolly saw, they are not contradictory, they are complimentary.

THE ARMED STRUGGLE

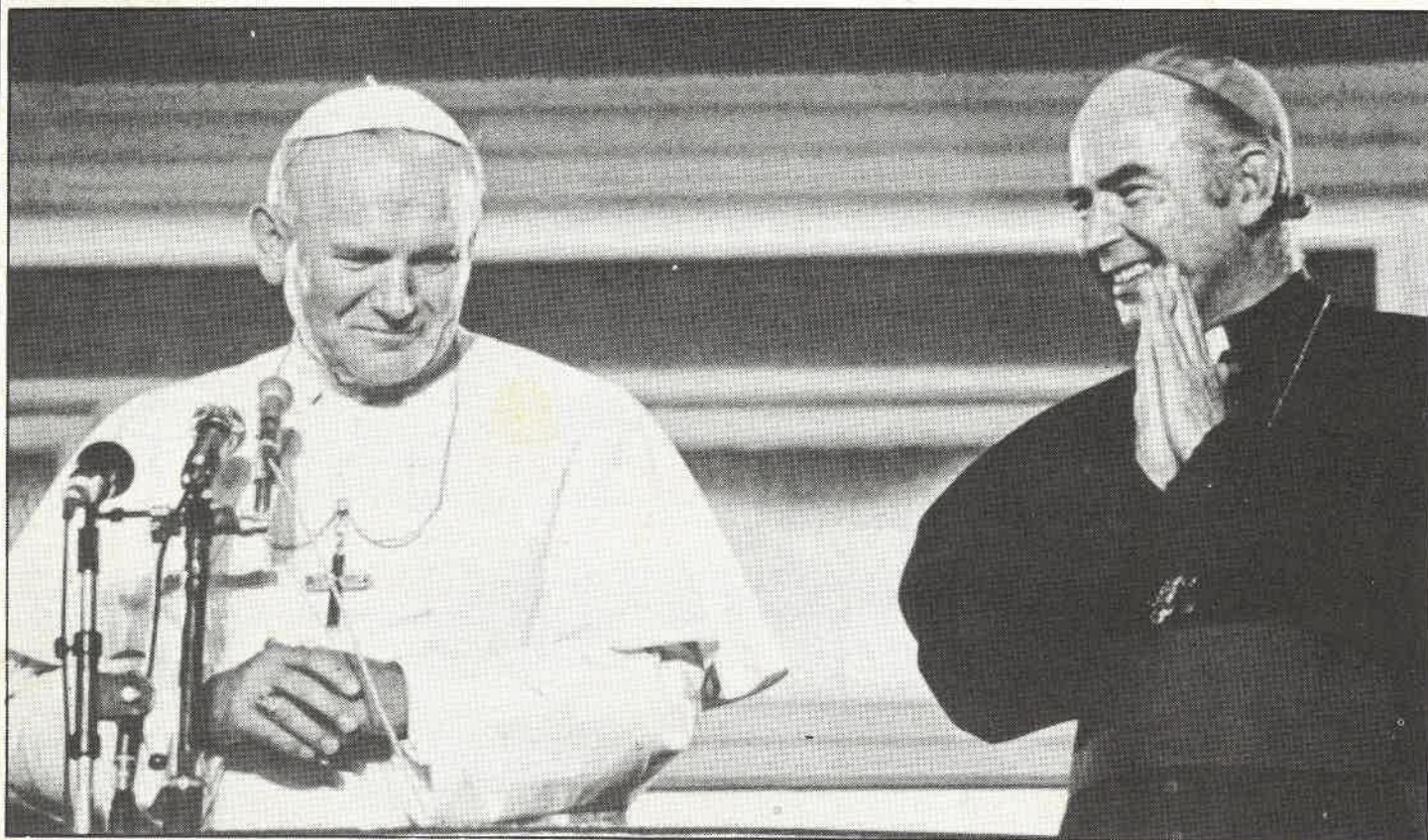
IRIS: That, of course, raises the whole question of Sinn Fein's support for the armed struggle. One of the highlights of life in Ireland in the past several years was the visit by Pope John Paul II in Ireland in 1979 when it seemed that the entire world media had assembled to hear him "IRA bashing." In view of that and in view of the fact that the large majority of the Irish people are practicing Catholics, how inhibitive has the Pope's condemnation of the IRA been on Sinn Fein which supports the armed struggle?

R.O.B.: I'm glad that this point has been raised because we have found it of interest elsewhere. We have found Latin American liberation movements and, indeed, others near home where there is a firm support from populations which are Catholic. We've discovered great interest in our attitude in this regard.

First of all, let me say that in all of Ireland, approximately seventy five per cent of the people profess to be Catholic and ninety per cent of those are reckoned to attend Mass every Sunday. So this gives some indication of the impact and influence of the Pope and of the Vatican in Ireland.

I would say that the Irish Republican Movement regards a person's religion as his or her own private and personal business; that one is of course completely entitled to go about one's worship and practice one's religion in one's own way. And while Republicans do not impose their views on other people, they expect other people not to impose their views on them in this purely private and personal matter.

However, it's important that this be seen in its historical context. Ever since the Penal Laws by the English government against the Catholic religion in Ireland were relaxed towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Catholic



hierarchy and the Catholic church in Ireland moved more into a position of identification with the established power and the established order. And so, for nearly two hundred years now the official Catholic church has ranged itself not alone against the national liberation struggle but against such progressive movements as the Land League in the land war of the 1880s and so on. In fact, there was a condemnation from the Vatican of the plan of campaign in the land war just as there had been a Papal Rescript issued in 1870 by the First Vatican Council against the Fenian Movement. None of these things are new to the Irish people and they are quite aware of them.

For those who have been engaged in the national liberation struggle and who know their history its just another chapter in the same story. They are well aware of it and just disregard what they see as interference by the church in the national politics of Ireland.

The coming of the Pope to Ireland in 1979 was, of course, a new departure and we were glad to see that the Pope himself stressed that the conflict in Ireland was not a religious war.

But what he did not acknowledge was that it was a war of national liberation and that there was a national question here. The question of national independence and national identity was ignored and one would expect more coming from a man like Pope John Paul II who is of Polish origin and should be very much aware of foreign occupation, partition and the attempt to obliterate Poland from the world map.

He talked about justice and he talked as if he was addressing himself solely to

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a social movement or a movement of social liberation which was seeking justice in an existing set-up.

He ignored totally the question of Ireland's national independence, the question of British imperialism, the direct involvement of the British government through its administration, through its actual armed soldiers in full war kit on Irish streets terrorising and brutalising Irish people.

Sinn Fein listened very respectfully to what the Pope had to say at Dublin and Drogheda. It also listened to what he had to say at Limerick later on where I think that ordinary members of Sinn Fein would feel that he was very conservative in his attitudes which reinforced existing situations. For instance, he called on the people of the south to retain the prohibition of divorce in their constitution. So it is necessary to see other aspects of

the Pope's visit.

But coming back to the point which directly impinges on the national struggle; having heard the Pope, having listened to him very, very carefully, the Sinn Fein National Executive met and considered the situation. It drew up a studied, carefully worded, respectful and courteous reply to the Pope where it stated firmly that of course Sinn Fein wants what the Pope called a true peace founded on justice. But it said that the major responsibility for establishing a just and lasting peace rested with the British government whose denial to the Irish people of the right to self-determination was the root cause of the conflict. It contrasted the attitude of the British government with regard to Ireland and its attitude to the struggle in Zimbabwe and the ongoing negotiations which were then taking place in London

with the leaders of the Patriotic Front. And finally it said that the Pope's intervention helped to raise the Irish struggle onto the international plane. But that this struggle for national independence required urgent resolution and towards this end, "Sinn Fein would welcome an opportunity for direct contact with Pope John Paul."

This major statement was delivered to a huge press conference in Liberty Hall Dublin on the day following the Pope's departure from Ireland. It was attended by 101 journalists, including 17 radio and eight television stations, which was highly satisfactory to Sinn Fein.

Subsequently, the Director of Sinn Fein's Foreign Affairs Bureau and I, paid a visit to the Papal Nuncio, the Vatican's representative in Ireland. We gave him copies of the statement, drew his attention to the last paragraph asking for direct contact with the Pope towards resolving the Irish conflict against Britain. We requested that the statement be sent to the Vatican and their attention drawn to this last paragraph.

That was a year and a half ago and so far we haven't received as much as an acknowledgement from the Vatican bureaucracy, let alone from the Pope.

I think that this was a very important development and we have seen that it was watched very carefully throughout the world.

In our private and personal lives we have our own attitudes and we are quite clear in our situation that we stand very firmly in opposition to an incomplete and faulty analysis of the situation in Ireland, from which of course flows a sound solution.

BRITAIN AND THE REPUBLICAN STRUGGLE

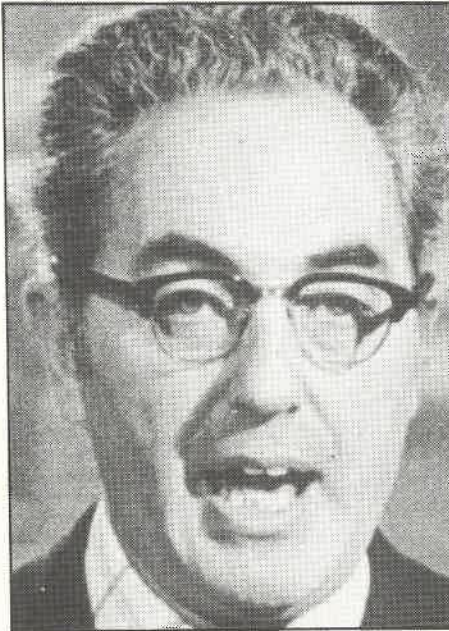
IRIS: What are Sinn Fein's attitudes to the British people, the British left and the Troops Out Movement?

R.O.B.: Well, of course, to be very clear Sinn Fein does not see the people of England, Scotland and Wales glorying in the domination and exploitation of the Irish people. They in their own way are the victims of English and world imperialism, just as are the Irish people. So that, as we said earlier, we look to the breaking up of the United Kingdom. We look to the people of Scotland and Wales asserting their national independence and we look to the people of all three countries achieving true social, economic and cultural liberation as well.

So there is no animosity against the English people. When Sinn Fein talks about England and when the Irish movement for national liberation down through the centuries talked about England, it is not the ordinary English people that is meant. What's meant by the expression "England" is the English ruling classes, those who have dominated

and exploited the Irish people, and indeed much of the world in their time, and have also exploited their own working people as is clear for those who wish to study it. Therefore, we feel a fellowship with the ordinary working people of England.

One has only to recall for instance, two or three years ago at an Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein when a lot of foreign visitors came onto the dais and were introduced as fraternal delegates, that the biggest and warmest reception was reserved for an English girl representing the Troops Out Movement. This shows that quite spontaneously from the rank and file, and not just from the leadership; that



the ordinary Sinn Fein members could reach out instinctively to English people who were anti-imperialist.

Within the English left there are, of course, elements who support Ireland's right to self-determination and indeed there are also some small elements who would also support the armed struggle. But within the British labour movement in general there is much ambivalence on the question. They are quite opposed to imperialism and facism in Chile and places ten thousand miles away. But when it comes to their own doorstep in Ireland they have a different attitude.

We would hope to encourage the growth of an enlightened attitude within the broad labour movement in England and would like to see the surveys of public opinion that have been taken within the island of Britain from time to time (where we see a growing demand for British disengagement from Ireland) take a more active and positive form.

And so the Troops Out Movement is to be welcomed because in all the anti-imperialist wars of national liberation that have taken place throughout the world since 1945, a key element in their success was the accompaniment of an

anti-war movement in the imperial country itself. The situation of Ireland and England cannot be any exception in that regard. So we're very glad to see the Troops Out Movement. We're glad to see former British soldiers who have served in Ireland speaking from platforms against the war in Ireland. We consider this to be a vital ingredient and wish to encourage it in every way possible.

With regard to the revolutionary left we don't espouse any particular grouping or form any special relationship with any of them. As we have said in our Foreign Affairs Resolution we invite their explicit support for our struggle. We believe that they can only be true to themselves in recognising the Irish struggle for what it is. They cannot be anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist with regard to Africa, Asia and Latin America and be pro-imperialist and pro-colonialist with regard to Ireland and indeed, if it comes to the point, with regard to Scotland and Wales as well.

IRIS: As leader of the British Labour Party, Michael Foot is now a potential Prime Minister. With his allegedly favourable views on a united Ireland would you see the next Labour government being favourably disposed to settling the war in Ireland.

R.O.B.: It's important to realise at all times, that people, however well meaning, and I hesitate to say that Michael Foot is well meaning, that they move into established situations and they inherit various pressures so that it would appear that the machine, as it were, the established order, becomes master of the man, or the men and women, rather than the men and women masters of the machine.

Therefore, I would not have great expectations nor would I pin them on particular leaders. Sinn Fein would place much more reliance on the development of a mass movement among ordinary English people and among ordinary Labour supporters and trade unionists, mobilising and compelling people like Foot to take the correct attitude towards Ireland as happened in America with regard to the Vietnam war. I think this is much more important than elevating one particular leader over another; that irresistible pressures must be built up within Britain as a whole against the war in Ireland and the British presence in Ireland. I think that this is a far sounder basis on which to build. I don't think there are any short cuts in this regard.

IRIS: Does that attitude hold for Mr. Tony Benn also?

R.O.B.: With regard to individual persons and leaders I think that Sinn Fein would regard the attitude of Mr. Benn as a lot more healthy than that of Mr. Foot. But again I would say that it is the groundswell that is the most important thing. If that exists, leaders will have to take note or alternative leaders will be found who will take note. ■

The iron fist in the velvet glove

THE UNIONIST PARTY's stewardship of Britain's political, strategic and economic interests in the Orange State of the six-counties of 'Northern Ireland' had by August 14th 1969 proved to be both inadequate and inept.

It was inadequate in that Stormont's state forces, the RUC and the 'B' Specials, had been fought to a stand still and its civil authority seriously in danger of collapse. It was inept in that, for Britain, the unwelcome attention of the world's media had been attracted to a part of the "politically sophisticated, democratic and liberal United Kingdom" to focus its attention on discrimination, police brutality, general repression and state inspired bigotry and sectarianism practiced in the name of, and with, the full approval of the Westminster government for forty eight years.

In the twelve years since then the entire British establishment, political, economic, legislature, army and police have gradually combined their joint resources to formulate a pacification programme, the two main threads of which have been reform and repression; 'the iron fist in the velvet glove'. That cohesion of resources, however, was a gradual evolution which took place over a period of approximately six years culminating in the joint politico-military strategy of 'Ulsterisation'. A policy which in comparative terms rapidly evolved after the mis-named Ulster worker's Council (UWC) strike or 'constitutional stoppage' in 1974 — a strategy which has predominated to the present day.

While British policy in the years preceeding the 'Ulsterisation' policy also contained the twin threads of reform and repression there is a qualitative difference about both the political objectives and the nature of the repression in that period to those pursued under 'Ulsterisation'.

THE EARLY REFORMS

Even before the onset of the crisis in August 1969 the then Unionist Prime Minister had already begun a process of reform, albeit more illusory than real, under pressure from the Civil Rights Association (NICRA) and at the behest of the British government. This process was to be continued for a time by his successors, Major Chichester Clarke and Brian Faulkner.

On May 9th 1969, only eleven days after Terence O'Neill's enforced resignation Clarke managed to get agreement in principle in favour of "one man, one vote" (the rallying call of the civil rights association) from the Unionist Party Standing Committee. This position was concretised on May 21st by the announcement from Harold Wilson, the British Prime Minister, that the next local elections in the six-counties would be held under that system. A further four years elapsed, in fact, before that did actually happen on May 30th 1973.

But in May 1969 Wilson's announcement created at least the illusion of serious reform of such sufficiency as to win a temporary halt to NICRA demonstrations.

The reform strategy was given great impetus from the

crisis created by Stormont's handling of the situation, by its traditional means of repression, culminating in the debacle of August 14th and 15th 1969.

On August 19th Wilson announced the "phasing out" of the 'B' Specials; a committee to investigate the re-organisation of the RUC; and a tribunal to investigate the widespread riots. On August 26th, James Callaghan, the then Home Secretary, was despatched to Belfast and Derry to announce three joint working committees of Whitehall-Stormont civil servants to study ways of dealing with discrimination and employment as well as the future intention of appointing a Minister of Community Relations by Stormont.

On September 12th the Cameron Commission, set up by O'Neill, confirmed discrimination against Catholics and reported that the RUC were involved "in serious breaches of discipline and acts of illegal violence" during the Civil Rights' campaign. It also described the 'B' Specials as "a partisan and para-military force recruited exclusively from Protestants". October 10th saw the appointment of Sir Arthur Young, a London police chief as an 'impartial' inspector general of the RUC, and the publication of the Hunt Report on the RUC, recommending the disarming of the RUC, the disbandment of the 'B' Specials and the establishment of a local part time military force (the Ulster Defence Regiment — the UDR).

Morally vindicated and temporarily satisfied with at least the illusion of reform the Civil Rights Movement and the nationalist population were relatively acquiescent.

But the contradictions remained. The six-county state was created and maintained on the basis of loyalist supremacy. Loyalist reaction to what they viewed as an erosion of that supremacy was immediate and violent. On the night following the Hunt Report loyalist gunmen protesting against its recommendations engaged the British Army and the RUC in a night long gun battle which resulted ironically in the death of one RUC man and two loyalists. This began a cycle of events which ultimately would lead the British government and its army from a position of postured impartiality to open support of the Unionist supremacist position as the only viable means of maintaining British interests.

ORANGE TRIUMPHALISM

Symbolically, those events and the evolving clarification in the minds of the nationalist people of the real role of the British army, initially revolved around the triumphalist marches of Orangeism in 1970.

Quite deliberately such marches for decades had been routed either through or past nationalist areas to show just exactly who was boss. One such Orange parade on March 31st 1970 led to four days of rioting between nationalist youths and the British army in Ballymurphy in Belfast, demonstrating as far as nationalists were concerned, in this their first major clash with the British army, its role of maintaining the Unionist ascendancy with its attendant triumphalism.

Loyalist reaction again asserted itself on June 2nd and 3rd

1970 in two days of rioting on the loyalist Shankill Road in Belfast as the result of the re-routing of an Orange march away from the nationalist Ardoyne area in north Belfast to prevent a recurrence of the Ballymurphy riots. The desired result was effected. Chichester-Clarke would have no more bans or restrictions on Orange marches.

SPLIT IN THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

In the interim period a schism took place in the Irish Republican Movement.

The reformist leadership and their adherents in both the IRA and Sinn Fein had been ousted in late 1969 and early 1970 respectively as a result of opposition to both the reformist political policies being pursued and the corresponding run-down in the IRA which left nationalist areas virtually defenceless during the August 1969 pogroms. The combination of events during 1969 and subsequently led to the rapid re-organisation and expansion of both.

Organgeism marched on. On June 27th 1970, having earlier successfully asserted its right to march wherever it pleased, by instigating the riots of June 2nd and 3rd, Orangemen paraded through or past the nationalist areas of Clonard, Ardoyne, Unity Flats, and the small isolated nationalist enclave of Short Strand in East Belfast. Rioting and shooting broke out with the Short Strand coming under a full-scale onslaught. The British Army refused to attempt a defence of the Short Strand preferring to block off the two bridges which provided the only means of retreat or reinforcement for the inhabitants. It was, however, successfully defended by a small unit of the re-organised IRA. One IRA Auxillary, Henry McIlhome, was killed and the O/C of the Belfast Brigade of the IRA, Billy McKee, wounded. The respective roles of British Army and loyalists on the one hand and the IRA and Nationalists on the other were clarified.

Repression was on the upswing. A price had to be exacted for the success of the IRA on June 27th.

Within the week the nationalist lower Falls district in Belfast was cordoned off and illegally curfewed by the British Army. Intense rioting and a major gun battle took place. Homes were wrecked, dozens of arrests made and four uninvolved people killed by the British Army. But to clinch the matter two Unionist M.P.s John Brooke and William Long were paraded through the area by the British Army in the finest Orange tradition of triumphalism.

1971

For nationalists, reform of the six-county state was recognised as a pipe-dream by all but opportunists and the middle-class with its vested interest who would dance to almost any future tune the British piper played.

The slide into intense repression was on. Retaliatory action was mounted by the IRA. But though by the spring of 1971 reform was definitely the junior partner in the reform - repression partnership it still managed to surface, blatantly transparent though it was. Even under Brian Faulkner who succeeded Chichester Clark in the hardline, right wing Unionist Party drift. On April 1st he appointed David Bleadkley, the former 'Northern Ireland Labour Party' MP, to the position of Minister for Community Relations.

A more serious initiative was Faulkners scheme launched in June 1971 which would establish three parliamentary committees to advise on legislation for social, environmental and industrial services. Salaried chairmanships for two members of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, (the SDLP was formed as the voice of Catholic middle class interests in August 1970) would be reserved. But against the backdrop of British Army - provoked riots and general repression, and the resulting retaliation by the IRA (which got seriously underway with the shooting dead of the first British soldier in the north for fifty years on February 6th 1971), this proved ineffectual.

Even the SDLP despite all its wishes and inclinations to do so, could not maintain its participation in this phase of the reform strategy because of the growing British Army

repression and resulting nationalist resentment, disaffection and growing resistance.

Faulkner's June initiative was to be the last half-serious reform measure for quite some time. Repression had obliterated any chance of success for such a strategy and was to dominate totally. For a time repression and the full-scale national liberation struggle which it provoked were to dominate the political stage.

INTERMENT

Internment without trial, torture and brutality during interrogation, seal and search operations, mass arrests, indiscriminate murder, attempts to seal off small border roads, mass intimidation, more repressive legislation, retroactive legislation to make state forces illegalities 'legal', official plain clothes death squads, tolerance of and collusion with unofficial loyalist death squads were the means. The ends: to isolate and destroy IRA resistance and to cow the nationalist population generally into acceptance of Westminster's view of how Irish affairs should be ordered.

But intense and indefinite repression as the sole means of maintaining power was an untenable strategy and was recognised as such from the start. The international media, however sympathetic it may be to the Brit cause, could not ignore internment, the tortured victims of interrogations or those massacred on Bloody Sunday whilst peacefully protesting.

Unlike Africa the Middle East or Latin America where inaccessibility to the media allows physical force to be used as the sole means of colonial and neo-colonial control, Ireland's geographic position in western Europe and the Brits' international posturing of a social democratic ideology dictated that intense repression could only be used in the short term to stave off total collapse. And in the long term as a means to soften up a dissident population and make it more amenable to the reform strategy.

Thus within a short time of the inception of the hard repression campaign, the Brits, in recognising that reality, also realised that the Stormont parliament was both ineffectual and unacceptable as the tool for the implementation of the corresponding reform tactic in its overall strategy for pacification and stability in Ireland. Stormont had to go, and it did.

STORMONT PARLIAMENT SUSPENDED

On March 24th 1972 Westminster suspended indefinitely its faithful but anachronistic offspring and assumed direct responsibility for the management as well as the security of its Irish interests.

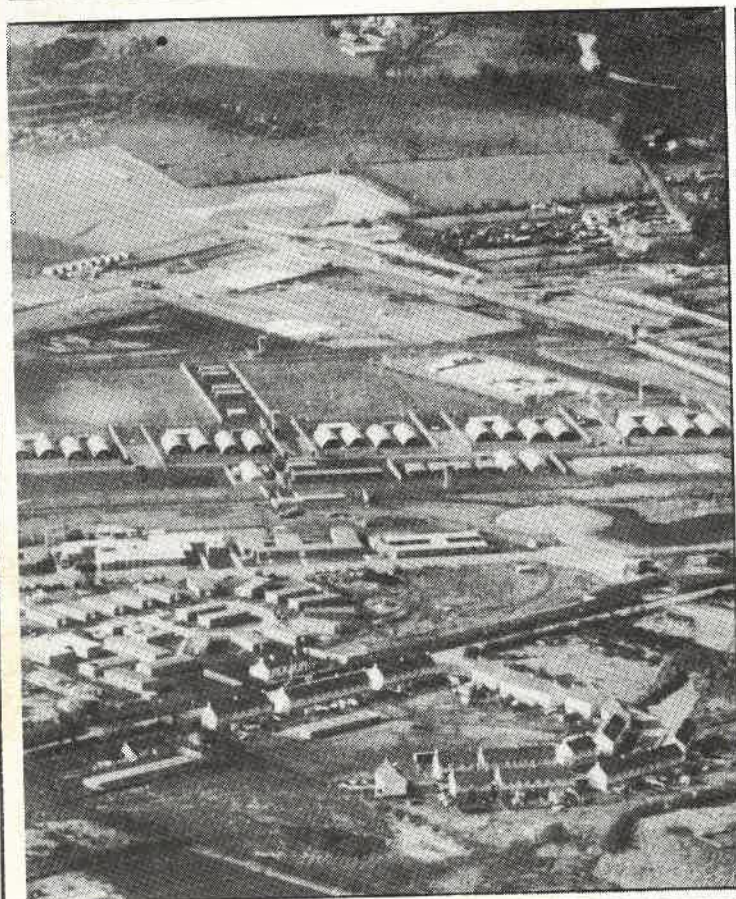
Under that direct management of its Irish colony we witnessed on October 30th 1972 the beginning of a process which was to bring to short lived fruition at the beginning of 1974 Westminster's single major initiative to date to reform the government of its Orange State.

October 30th 1972 saw the publication of a 'Green Paper' (a discussion document) on the 'Future of Northern Ireland', outlining guidelines for its future government. This evolved into the White Paper of March 20th 1973, 'Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals'. Basically what the Brits were seeking was stability and, through it, the isolation of the IRA. (By this stage the intensity of the IRA's liberation struggle had dictated the deployment of 20,000 regular British Army troops plus 15,000 official indigenous loyalist troops of the UDR and the para-military RUC)

POWER SHARING

This they hoped to achieve by a coalition of pragmatic unionists and nationalist opportunists with the support of the Free State government in the twenty-six county neo-colonial state. Three elements were therefore required in the new proposed devolved government. The position of unionist ascendancy had to be catered for. Nationalist aspirations and participation had to be taken into account. And with an eye to the necessary all-Ireland stability required, the Free State government must feel able to give its blessing to the new administration.

Preparations were made with the holding elections for the new assembly on June 28th 1973, the announcement of the



(left) Long Kesh Internment Camp.
 (above) typical Brit arrest.
 (below) Derry, Bloody Sunday, 1972.
 Internment without trial, mass arrests and indiscriminate murder were the means.





Sunningdale — representation of all the reactionary and collaborationist elements.

executive - designate on November 22nd 1973, and a whole series of private meetings culminating in the four day 'Sunningdale conference' beginning on December 6th of that year.

All the elements were represented; the Westminster government, the Unionist Party, the Alliance Party, the Leinster House government of the Free State and the SDLP. The end result, as Westminster and its Irish allies thought at the time, was a neat political package containing the necessary ingredients. In the political sense the position of the Unionist ascendancy i.e. in the ascendent, was to be maintained. Seven of the eleven seats on the Executive went to unionists (6 Unionist Party; 1 Alliance). Nationalist participation was institutionalised with the remaining four seats going to the SDLP, while a Council of Ireland, (despite the fact that its main role would be in the areas of social and economic co-operation) catered superficially at any rate, for nationalist aspirations, and allowed the Free State government to give

full sanction to the new Executive.

THE UWC STRIKE

But the Brits had made a major miscalculation and totally misread the actual nature of the Orange State. It ignored the whole basis of unionist rule from the inception of the six-county state, Orange supremacy. An ideology whose position a handful of co-operative pragmatic unionists would not undermine.

Just as Orangeism had asserted its absolute right in the comparatively minor field of holding its triumphalist marches where it pleased, when it pleased, by the Shankill Road riots of June 2nd † 3rd 1970, so also it would assert its absolute right to supremacist rule in 1974 where erosion of that right was concerned.

Using the Council of Ireland as its most obvious and identifiable target the **majority** loyalist bloc, which had evolved



Strike-Loyalist style; workers locked out by barricades.



the unionist camp, transcending all sections of the by now superficially splintered unionist monolith, set about redressing this erosion. Having successfully isolated the handful of pragmatic unionists around Faulkner, the campaign rapidly switched to a full blown assault on the entire Sunningdale agreement, actually bringing about a condemnation of it in its entirety in the new assembly.

A 'constitutional stoppage' called for May 14th 1974 by the loyalist para-militaries and loyalist worker's elements within their spheres of influence, was quickly supported by the politicians of the United Ulster Unionist Council (the umbrella group of loyalist politicians and parties formed on December 6th 1973, the day the Sunningdale conference began). Three days later on May 17th the UDA deliberately murdered thirty three people in bomb attacks on Dublin and Monaghan. A combination of the loyalists' grip on energy sources and loyalist intimidation brought the six-counties industry and services to almost a complete standstill.

The Brits' response was typical and traditional. A major confrontation with united loyalism was never on the cards. So, however bitterly they may have regretted it the Brits allowed the Executive to collapse on May 28th.

The major contradiction of the six-county colony was exposed to the full view of all. Created against the will of the vast majority of the people of Ireland, out of sectarianism and bigotry, the six-county state through its legislature, institutions and practice, quickly evolved a supremacist ideology of its own. An ideology which had no concept of equality; which could only visualise loyalists on top of a nationalist underdog in the six county state. And of particular consequence at this juncture for the Brits who ignored it, an ideology of such deep-rootedness that it was totally blind to pragmatic political manoeuvres even when they conceded nothing to nationalist aspirations.

Loyalism ruled supreme over Brit strategy, or at least it had the power to veto it in any six-county context. However, smarting though it was, Westminster was not going to allow frustration to vent its rage in doing the right thing; in getting out. Harold Wilson's labelling of loyalists as 'spongers' was the only mild manifestation of that frustration permitted. And even that was reviled and ridiculed by the current personification of loyalism, Ian Paisley; fully aware and cocksure of his and the loyalist position. More importantly for Westminster, the political, strategic and economic interests of the British

ruling class had to be maintained. A new ploy would have to be found and developed.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION 1974 — 76

But where was that ploy to be found? The power-sharing executive represented the minimum which nationalists would accept even though in reality the only thing which had been gained was a few choice salaried positions for the SDLP hierarchy. And that was too much for the loyalists to swallow. And besides, new ploys do not come easily. By the time of its collapse on May 28th 1974 the Executive represented the end product of two years work for the Brits; exposing in the process the political chicanery of its two main trump cards, the SDLP and the Faulkner unionists.

Moreover, psychologically it proved a major set-back for the Brits in their entire thinking about a six / twenty six county solution, as the three elements involved in the Sunningdale agreement were both the minimum required and the maximum obtainable to attempt to bring about stability in a partition set-up via devolved government in the six counties. But still too much for the loyalists.

The continuation of direct rule, direct management of the six county colony was the only option open despite the obvious danger which that posed in eroding to some extent the 'sectarian war' syndrome: the whole public raison d'être for British involvement in Ireland at all, and the inevitable analogies being drawn with the Algerian and South African situations. But with a media oriented more towards sensationalism than analyses that was a minor consideration. And, of course, centuries of involvement in colonialism taught the Brits, if nothing else, how to survive, how to hold on for as long as possible.

With precisely that in mind, to stall for time, a Constitutional Convention was designed. Outlined in a White Paper of July 4th 1974, barely five weeks after the collapse of the Executive it indicated either a previously planned contingency or more likely a hurriedly produced innovation of political necessity. Ostensibly the purpose of the convention was to allow the people of the six-counties to work out their own solution. Even the most politically naive with the barest grasp of fundamental mathematics was aware of what an elected assembly reflecting a head count of the six-county state would produce in terms of a solution. The experience of the fifty three years of the existence of the state and the consistent solution which its undemocratically-created majority consistently produced were ample evidence of that.

And so it was to be again. Having gone through the time consuming and costly charade of elections on May 1st 1975

the Convention allegedly got down to the business of discussing a solution. The reality of it all though was the SDLP seeking a reduced allocation of the crumbs from the unionist table and the UUUC, still full of the confidence imbued by their executive wrecking and subsequent electoral successes, reiterating its demand for a return of Stormont in the Convention report of November 6th 1975.

A further bout of convention verbalising of these respective positions between January 10th and March 5th 1976 when it was finally dissolved gave the Brits a full eighteen months to devise and plot the course of the evolvment of their alternative ploy.

FLEXIBILITY

The essence of that ploy was its flexibility and multi-faceted nature. Over a period of two years (1975-77) it came to embrace the three policies of criminalisation, normalisation and Ulsterisation. All three policies are at once politico-military, co-related and mutually enhancing. And, importantly, they allow the Brits a large degree of political flexibility unlike the clearly defined governmental reform tactic of the Sunningdale agreement which led them into a political cul-de-sac.

CRIMINALISATION

Criminalisation began with the publication of the Gardiner Report, in January 1975, four months before the elections to the Constitutional Convention. Officially entitled 'Report of a Committee to consider, in the Context of Civil Liberties and Human Rights, Measures to deal with Terrorism in Northern Ireland' its practice turned out to be exactly the opposite.

The main drift of the reports' recommendations was the termination of the status of what were overtly in practice as well as in name, political prisoners. This it proposed to do via the ending of internment without trial and the rescinding of 'Special Category Status' for those processed and imprisoned via the juryless, single judge Diplock courts established in 1973. To compensate for the loss of the valuable weapon of internment, the rules of evidence were diluted, reversing the onus of proof of innocence onto the accused, thus facilitating, in Kitson's words "the disposal of unwanted members of the public."

In this context therefore it is reasonable to assume that the criminalisation policy was on the cards as early as 1972 with the Diplock Report to "..... Consider Legal Procedures to deal with Terrorist Activities....." It is a fair assumption that the decision in principle to scrap internment as soon as possible, in favour of Diplock Courts, had been taken in order to neutralise the internal resentment which it had caused in Ireland and the international opprobrium it had created abroad. It would also create the opportunity for the ending of political status which internment had conferred. In a sense also it was a way of reasserting the control of the political wing of the British war machine over the military wing which had proved less than fully co-operative during the 'constitutional stoppage' of 1974. The British army opposed the proposal to end internment. The politicians decided that political dictates required it and overruled the army.

Criminalisation also posed the British imperialist presence in Ireland in a much better light internationally. The 'religious war' propaganda was wearing a bit thin after six years of use and especially because fifty per cent of the 30,000 strong armed forces deployed for the purpose of 'arbitrating' between the 'warring factions' was drawn from the Protestant population! But, more importantly, on the domestic front it provided the SDLP, and the Free State government with a propaganda stick to beat the IRA.

Propagating a 'religious war' abroad was for a time, and to some degree probably indefinitely, all right. But there was little point in trying to peddle it in Ireland. The memories and actual experiences of people throughout Ireland were too fresh for that. But given the whole new phraseology which accompanied the criminalisation policy, 'god fathers', 'mafia type organisations' etcetera, both the SDLP and the Free Staters were more suitably armed as active propagandists of imperialism.

So, armed with the theory of criminalisation, the practice began. On July 24th 1975, Merlyn Rees, the Brit overlord in the six-counties promised to release all internees by Christmas of that year. And on November 4th he announced that 'special category status' (political status) would be phased out on March 1st 1976. All prisoners sentenced for (illegal) political activities carried out after March 1st 1976 would not be treated as political prisoners of war. The first contradiction emerged.

Anyone sentenced for political activities committed on or before February 29th 1976 was a political prisoner. The same offence committed on or after March 1st was a supposed 'criminal act'. No attempt was made to redress that situation until 1980 when persons convicted as of April 1st of that year, regardless of when the offence was dated were to be "criminalised".

But in 1976 the stage was set for the running sore of the H-Block/Armagh protests which have highlighted that contradiction ever since.

NORMALISATION

However, to get back to the initial stages of the implementation of the criminalisation policy. The basis of any 'law and order' programme dealing with 'criminals' is that of course it falls within the realms of the police, the law, and the courts. The law and the courts had been moulded in a grotesque form to fit the role. But what of the police? the RUC?

Where nationalists were concerned it was still considered the discredited sectarian force which was repulsed and rejected from the nationalist ghettos in 1969; still the private army of the unionist ascendancy. A force whose role as interrogator and brutaliser of nationalists in interrogation centres since then and whose undisguised collaboration with the loyalist para-militaries during the 1974 'constitutional stoppage' made it still totally unacceptable.

So, the whole process of illusory reform had to be demonstrated again in order to pose the RUC as an 'impartial' force- 'impartiality' being the minimum requirement of acceptability.

In March 1981, almost twelve years after the publication of the Hunt Report which recommended its disarming, the 'impartiality' of the RUC, which is more heavily armed now than ever, rests precariously on (a) its actions against the unofficial loyalist gunmen of the para-militaries and (b) its handling of the abortive Paisley-UDA 'strike' in 1977. Both those points need to be briefly examined.

The initial moves against the unofficial loyalist gunmen by the official variety was motivated by two things. Firstly, the main purposes of the sectarian murder campaign which got under full swing in 1972 had failed. It had not terrorised those on the receiving end out of supporting the IRA. Quite the opposite. And it did not manage to divert the IRA from its liberation struggle against imperialism into a sectarian war.

Secondly, with the plans for the power-sharing executive on the horizon in early 1973 the murder campaign was proving counter-productive anyway. So the RUC inherited, rather than consciously elected, this measure of 'impartiality' dictated by Westminster's political needs at that time.

Still, it was quite a convenient, if coincidental 'plus' when the criminalisation policy got underway. Since then, of course, its most spectacular and most propagated demonstration of impartiality where the unofficial loyalist gunmen are concerned was the rounding up and subsequent conviction of the 'Shankill Butchers' (loyalist sectarian killers) in 1980. And only the survival of one of their victims ensured that.

The would-be 'productive' murders were, for the most part, the monopoly of the SAS and the loyalist paramilitaries under Brit control and direction through infiltration.

The other alleged litmus test of RUC impartiality was its handling of the 'strike' called by Paisley and the UDA in 1977 when the chummy relationship which existed between the RUC and the UDA during the 1974 'strike' evaporated. The RUC were actively seen in opposition to the UDA's intimidatory tactics by removing road blocks preventing people



(above: left) The hated RUC: (above: right) Brit overlord in the north of Ireland, Roy Mason 1976-79. Mason, pictured above surrounded by Brits did not give much credence to his own 'normalisation' propaganda.

going to work and on one occasion actually baton-charging the UDA and its flabbergasted leader Andy Tyrie. But this event must be seen in its proper context.

The abortive 'strike' attempt in 1977 did not have the unified loyalist support which its forerunner in 1974 enjoyed. Of the constituent parties of the UUUC only Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and Ernest Baird's irrelevant grouping supported the strike. Paisley then did not wear the mantle of the unionist ascendancy which he very nearly wears today. Of the strikes two objectives, the implementation of the Convention report (a return to Stormont rule) and the stepping up of repression, the former was unrealistic and therefore unobtainable, whilst the latter was gladly conceded.

Direct rule and the psychological and physical security which it provided made most loyalists opt out of supporting an objective which they had been told over and over again by the Brits was just not on. A step up in SAS activities catered for the latter.

So, on the basis that if something is repeated often enough it becomes a reality; so RUC 'impartiality' became a 'reality'. The Brits said that the RUC were impartial. The Chief Constable of the RUC said that the RUC was impartial. An obliging media spewed it out ad nauseum. The illusion was created and on the basis of media-created RUC 'impartiality', the criminalisation programme proceeded.

And, of course, being simply a battle between the forces of 'law and order' and 'criminals' (a normal situation in other words) a 'normalisation' policy evolved. The Chief exponent of that normality was to be the distinctly abnormal and somewhat paranoic Roy Mason who arrived in Belfast to relieve Merlyn Rees as Brit overlord in the six-counties in September 1976.

The main theme of that 'normality' was in Mason-speak "the downward trend of violence." The normalisation policy

hinged on the use of the statistics on deaths, injuries, shooting and bombing incidents. In simplistic terms; X number of deaths equals 'abnormality', Y number of deaths equals 'normality'.

What it ignored was that the drop in those statistics was almost totally due to the comparatively low-key loyalist murder campaign brought about by both the Brits attempt to stymie this 'counter-productive' campaign and the consequent reassessment of their own position by the loyalist para-militaries.

What it did not mean was any significant indication of either intent or ability on the part of the IRA to continue the war, despite a period of truce and re-organisation, as the following figures for fatalities in the combined British forces shows.

British Army, UDR, RUC, RUC (R) fatalities 1973 - 1979

	1973	79	
	1974	50	
	1975	30	
Bi-lateral truce	1976	55	(including 3 prison officers)
	1977	46	(including 3 prison officers)
Re-organisation of IRA	1978	43	(including 2 prison officers)
	1979	79	(including 9 prison officers)

But other than its acting in an important complimentary capacity to the criminalisation policy in hardening the illusion of normality there was really little involved in the normalisation policy.

ULSTERISATION

Out of both evolved the policy of Ulsterisation which for a

short time caused some general confusion regarding its intent. But that soon clarified itself.

Ulsterisation is not to be fully equated with Vietnamisation, though media speculation from the beginnings of its implementation and for a considerable time afterwards drew such an analogy. Certainly it has one striking similarity. In both cases it meant the replacement of soldiers of the occupying army with indigenous forces. But there the similarity ends.

In the case of Vietnamisation the United States was withdrawing its troops 'with honour' regardless of the fairly obvious consequences for the South Vietnamese government. In the case of Ulsterisation the reverse was and is the case. The British government, in its gradual replacing of the British army by the RUC and UDR had no intention of relinquishing the six-counties. Rather it was strengthening its grip with several advantages both domestically and internationally as well as organisationally for the British army itself.

Even before the stringent financial cut-backs in the British defence budget during the 1960s with the consequent reduction in the size of the army Britain sometimes fell short of its agreed contribution to NATO because of 'emergencies' in its colonies, even during the conscript army period. That situation with a much reduced army existed for most of the 1970s because of the commitment of large numbers of British soldiers to Ireland.

The very nature of the war in Ireland had serious training and morale disadvantages. For instance, Kitson states, "If, for example, a battalion of the British army of the Rhine is sent to northern Ireland, it not only leaves a gap in Germany but it quickly loses its mechanised skills, and its absence will have an adverse effect on the training of the formation from which it is taken. Furthermore, the married men are obliged to leave their families in some German town which is considerably less satisfactory than leaving them in England."

Playing at soldiers on the Rhine can be fun. But getting shot at, hit, maimed or killed in Ireland in the real thing does not do morale much good either. A reduction in the British army's presence via Ulsterisation thus reduces the attrition rate and the consequent ill-effects on the morale of British soldiers and their families alike.

Likewise, on the domestic front any build up of pressure from public opinion over "our boys in Ulster" getting their comeuppance, recedes with a falling attrition rate. RUC and UDR casualties do not enhance a Troops Out sentiment on the island of Britain. Internationally too it further enhances the 'criminal conspiracy' posture, with the RUC more in the front line than the British soldier. But what Ulsterisation does not mean is any significant reduction in the overall number of armed crown forces to protect British interests as the following graph and statistics clearly illustrate.

REPRESSION CONTINUES

Generally speaking the effect of the three-pronged policy strategy, as stated earlier, was to bring about a qualitative difference in the nature of the repression and the political objectives being pursued, to those which existed prior to the collapse of the executive in 1974.

The repression was more discriminatory, targeting in more accurately on anti-imperialist activists and supporters. But repression it remained nevertheless and despite the fact that its less indiscriminate nature meant more work and more time to expose it, it was again nevertheless exposed. It took years of agony and publicity work to bring about a public understanding of the full implications of the H-Blocks (see the H-Block Conveyor Belt) which to some degree were exposed in the Amnesty International Report of 1978 and the British government's own Bennet Report of 1979.

Probably the best expose of interrogation methods and the line of sanction from the British Prime Minister right down to the interrogators can be found in Peter Taylor's 'Beating the Terrorists' published by Penguin in 1980.

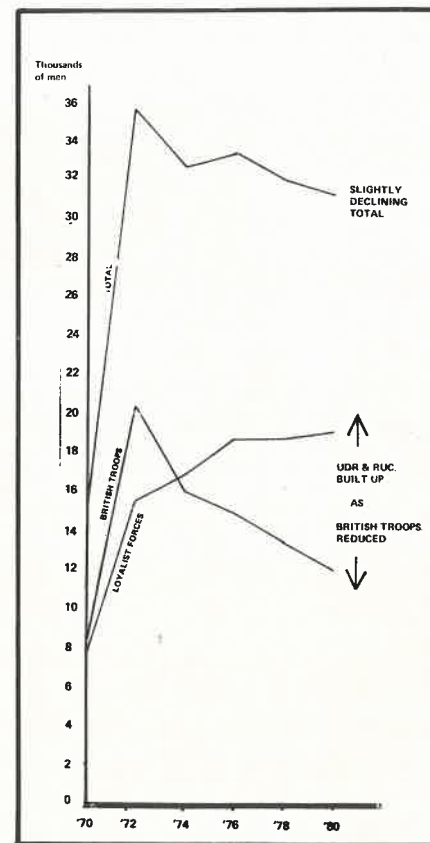
Anti-imperialist activity in the round, both political and military, became the target of the Brits, as was witnessed in the concerted attacks on 'Republican News' and Sinn Féin in 1977/78, in what the Brit military overlord of the time Gener-

	UDR	RUC (& RUCR)	LOYALIST FORCES	BRITISH TROOPS	TOTAL
Aug. 1970	3,600	3,700	7,300	8,100	15,400
1972	9,000	6,500	15,500	20,300	35,800
1974	7,900	8,900	16,800	16,000	32,800
1976	7,800	10,800	18,600	14,900	33,500
1978	8,100	10,500	18,600	13,400	32,000
1980	7,500	11,500	19,000	12,100	31,100

Note:

- (i) these are official figures from the 'Belfast Telegraph', August 30th, 1980;
- (ii) each year's figures are for the August manpower;
- (iii) loyalist forces are the sum of the UDR and RUC (including RUCR);
- (iv) total forces are the sum of British troops and loyalist forces.

Graph (right) and chart (above) indicate that although British troop levels are being reduced, the overall level of enemy forces remains almost as high as ever.



al Creasey, fresh from his terrorist activities in Oman against the PFLO, viewed as the necessary undermining of the 'infrastructure' of the resistance.

Assassinations too were more discriminate, with attacks by loyalist gunmen, undeniably effected with the collusion if not the actual direction of state forces, being aimed at republican and nationalist activists; Maire Drumm, Kevin Hannaway, Mickey Smith, John Turnley, Miriam Daly, Noel Lyttle, Ronnie Bunting and Bernadette and Michael McAliskey being only the more prominent and publicised targets between 1976 and early 1981.

BRITISH OBJECTIVES

In the political sense also the objectives were qualitatively different. The implications and the reality of the loyalist veto which applied to the 1974 Executive dictated that. But that did not mean that the Brits were politically inactive. Rather, their objectives were of a more limited nature; as summarised by Peter Dowling in Republican News, March 12th 1977:-

"So what does 'Ulsterisation' mean in practice on the political front? Since the collapse of the Assembly the Brits have not been pushing any precise formula for a new regime. And although they have apparently been content to await what arises, in fact they have not been passive.

"They have been working to split Orange reaction and cut back extreme loyalist demands..... Moderate public statements

by Unionist politicians are applauded while a deliberate campaign of black propaganda was conducted against Ian Paisley by the British Security Service D15."

The keynote now was flexibility. There were to be no more political cul-de-sacs such as that in which the Brits found themselves in 1974. With a pendulum-like motion the Brits' political objectives varied with the given circumstances of any particular period; now promoting the Unionist Party, now wooing the SDLP, now courting Paisley. **It is in that context, though undoubtedly with the variations caused by outside forces coming into play, that the abortive Atkins' conference of 1980 and the current Thatcher-Haughey talks should be seen.**

But to come back to the general strategy. Even as the policies of criminalisation, normalisation and Ulsterisation were initially being implemented they were riddled with what increasingly became glaring contradictions.

First of all the success of the criminalisation policy depended on the compliance of those imprisoned with their new 'criminal' status. The carrot which the Gardiner proposals offered in this regard (that is, fifty per cent remission on sentences) failed to secure that compliance. The resistance to criminalisation begun by Ciaran Nugent in September 1976 set in motion a process which illustrated the contradictions which criminalisation posed.

Increasingly both on the domestic and international arenas the circumstances surrounding the H-Blocks refuted both normalisation and criminalisation. Its very **special** and abnormal nature were highlighted; **special** surveillance and population control, **special** powers of arrest, **special** methods of interrogation, **special** internment by abnormally long periods of remand in detention, **special** courts, **special** rules of evidence, especially long sentences and the **special** prisons of the H-Blocks.

Over roughly the same period the Brits themselves were refuting both the policies by the use of the SAS which was first officially sent into the 'bandit country' of South Armagh on January 7th 1976, thus instigating a campaign of arbitrary execution resulting in ten murders which were not only claimed by state forces but which were publicly and officially gloated over by the then political overlord Roy Mason. This campaign was hardly inducive to creating an aura of normality other than on the basis of using the South African or the Argentinian models as the 'normal' situation sought after.

Even the attempt to criminalise the Republican resistance in South Armagh by the 'bandit country' appellation is refuted by Brit counter-revolutionary think-tank member Peter Janke who in the Institute for the Study of Conflict report (1979) 'Ulster, a Decade of Violence' refers to the border areas as virtually 'liberated zones'. A refutation which was compounded, to the Brits eternal embarrassment by 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' publication of a 'Top Secret' British army intelligence assessment (see 'Document 37') which extolled the qualities of IRA Volunteers and categorically stated the British army's inability to defeat the resistance.

But, of course, the biggest contradiction is found in the third policy, Ulsterisation, which is the natural involvement of the other two policies. The main thrust of that policy, as stated, is the replacing of regular British Army troops with the indigenous forces of the RUC and UDR. But both forces because of their overtly sectarian nature (see 'Ulster's Disreputable Rogues') which often manifests itself in the murder of Catholics, still remain for the most part unacceptable; general acceptability being the minimum requirement for successfully deploying both forces in the areas which the British Army presently occupies.

In the case of the UDR the acceptability rating is zero — something which the Brits themselves acknowledge in their tactical use of this disreputable gang of rogues and murderers; refusing to deploy them in, for example, nationalist west Belfast, the Bogside in Derry or Crossmaglen. While the progress of the acceptability rating of the RUC remains static and precariously perched on its would be 'impartiality' (based on its handling of the unofficial loyalist murder

gangs and the Paisley-UDA 'strike' of May 1977).

By 1979 the Brits had realised that their 'impartiality' formula was not bringing about the desired general acceptability and in due course opted for securing a more limited acceptability, as a means to gaining access to nationalist confidence by the back door. As exposed in 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' (September 6th 1980) the vehicle to carry them to that limited goal was the would be opinion-makers and supposedly influential strata of the nationalist population, the middle class, in whom the Brits had consistently recognised a common identity of interest (see 'RUC collaborators caught in the act').

But while that limited objective of nationalist middle-class co-operation, has to some degree been secured, it has not resulted in the hoped for snowball effect of bringing about general acceptability. Nor can it. The very nature of the RUC forbids it. Priest-nappers, torturers, child killers and Orange bigots remains the majority nationalist view of the RUC.

THATCHER-HAUGHEY TALKS

It is at this stage having reached an impasse in the Ulsterisation policy in the military sense, compounded by a political impasse as a result of the abortive Atkins' conference in 1980, that in retrospect we can clearly see the roots of the Brit policy shift which have resulted in the current round of Thatcher-Haughey talks (see 'Summit opens up dangerous option'). That policy shift is of course, **the political involvement of the Free State government for the first time in six-years.**

In a sense we are right back in the late 1973 situation with the Brits giving due consideration to all the elements, nationalists, loyalists and the Free State government, whose co-operation is required for the future maintenance of British political, strategic and economic interests in Ireland. But the tactical handling of those elements today is totally different.

Recognising that the unacceptability of the RUC to nationalists, is in part but a symptom of their refusal to accept the six-county state, the **illusion** of attempting to cater for nationalist aspirations has again been created. An illusion which for the moment is quite successful despite the fact that it is more transparent than even the cosmetic basis of the 1974 Executive.

Those aspirations plus the real issue at stake, all-Ireland stability, naturally require the involvement of the Free State government. At the same time loyalist reaction has not been given a clearly identifiable target such as a 'Council of Ireland' to rally round, or an institutional structure to destroy. The flexibility of political options of a limited nature which has dominated for the past six years still dominates.

SUMMARY

In summing up, little has changed in reality since 1969. Partition and the British army of occupation still remain. All British policies to date have been aimed at maintaining British interests in Ireland. **The isolation and defeat of the IRA remains a primary objective.** The **illusion** of reform and the brutality of repression, albeit on an increasingly subtle and refined basis, still remain the means of securing that, and will continue to be the means regardless of what political concoctions Thatcher and Haughey spawn.

As long as we have British occupation and/or the maintenance of the loyalist supremacist ideology the contradictions and their ensuing consequences will remain; whether it be through a re-arranging of the present relationships between the six-county colony and the twenty-six county neo-colony — linking them together on a federal or confederal basis — or through a condominium six-counties ruled jointly from London and Dublin; or on any variation of those which tampers with the sovereignty of Ireland as a whole. All are a recipe for the perpetuation of violence, repression and injustice.

Only the successful pursuance of the war of national liberation and the establishment of a democratic socialist republic based on the Easter Proclamation of 1916 and the Democratic Programme of the First Dail will rid the Irish people of the political, social, economic and cultural injustices which have plagued them for centuries. ■



The H-Block conveyor belt

This article is a reproduction of a pamphlet, "The H-Block conveyor belt" which was issued by the Sinn Féin POW Department in 1979.

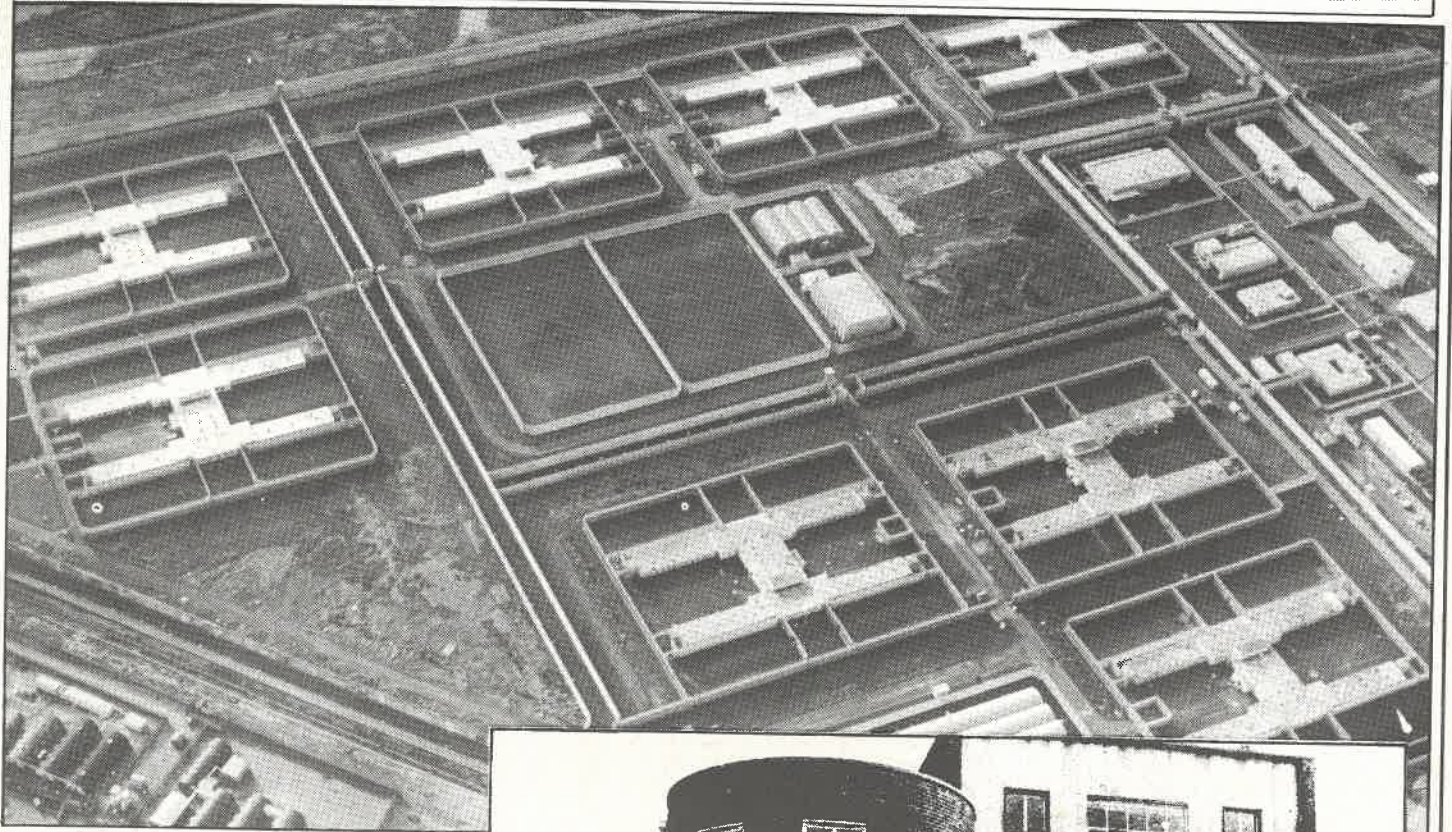
THE H-BLOCKS at Long Kesh are not something isolated, existing on their own but are the end product of the British manipulated legal system geared to the needs of its War Machine in the occupied six counties.

At present 400 Irish Republican political prisoners are protesting "on the

blanket" in the H-Blocks for the return of political status arbitrarily removed by the British government in March 1976. They are supported in their protest by 40 female political prisoners in Armagh jail and 160 Republicans on remand in Crumlin Road jail Belfast, making a total of 600 political prisoners at present on active protest against the criminalisation policy of the British government. . .

If H-Block is the end product then torture centres like Castlereagh RUC barracks is the beginning of what has become known as the legal "shuttle or conveyor belt system". From RUC barracks throughout the six counties political prisoners are processed through a series of stages which for most of them end eventually in H-Block.

These stages are: Interrogation and



torture while held in RUC/British army barracks; Internment by Remand; Arraignment; Non-Jury Diplock Courts; H-BLOCK.

TORTURE CENTRES

Castlereagh is one of the main RUC torture centres in the six counties. It is there that the 'confessions' which enable the 'conveyor belt system' to function are extracted under conditions of sensory deprivation and torture.

It was in these conditions that twenty-seven year old Brian Maguire, a trade union shop steward was found 'hanged' in a cell on May 10th 1978. His death has never been satisfactorily explained by RUC interrogators.

In November 1977 a meeting in Belfast of thirty solicitors handling political offences before the Diplock courts, in a statement to Roy Mason, then the British Secretary of State for the North said *"ill treatment of suspects by police officers, with the object of obtaining confessions is now common practice, and that this most often, but not always, takes place at Castlereagh RUC station and other police stations throughout Northern Ireland."*

In Castlereagh even the most fundamental rules of British common law justice are discarded. For example in England the Judges' Rules, - Appendix B section four - headed *"Interrogation of children and young persons"* states that *"children and young persons under the age of 17 years (whether suspected of crime or not) should only be interviewed in the presence of a parent or guardian, or in their absence, some person who is not a police officer and is of the same sex as the child"*.

But in the occupied six counties a different set of rules apply. For instance



(above: top) last stop on the conveyor belt-the H-Blocks, (above) Castlereagh torture centre.

fifteen-year-old school boy Ciaran Mc Gillicuddy from Strabane, County Tyrone, was held for three days at Strand Road RUC barracks in March 1978. At no time was a 'parent or guardian' or 'someone who is not a police officer' present during the numerous interrogation sessions he underwent. Consequently he signed a confession, and in November 1978, shortly after his sixteenth birthday, he was sentenced to four years imprisonment. The only evidence against him was the signed confession. He is now 'on the blanket' protest in H4-block Long Kesh.

INTERMENT BY REMAND

The whole process of the conveyor belt has been used to replace internment without trial which was introduced in August 1971. Following massive national and international protest over internment the British government was forced to end it having firstly attempted to overcome this protest by changing its name to

detention and introducing quasi-legal representation to give some legal credibility to internment.

The lessons learned by the British during this period have since been used to re-adjust the 'remand in custody' system by the application of impossible bail restrictions which were drawn up by Lord Diplock the principle architect of the British government's 'criminalisation' policy in 1972 (while internment was in full swing).

'Remand in custody' as an integral part of the conveyor belt has given rise in effect to internment 'by remand'. An example of this policy is Robert Fitzsimmons from the St. James area of Belfast. On April 4th 1979 he was released after spending 12 months interned 'on remand'.

At present there are 160 internees in Belfast's Crumlin Road jail. Since October '78 they have been refusing to shave, have haircuts, or clean out

their cells. In response to increased harassment from screws in November they stepped up their protest by smearing food remnants on the cell walls. As a result of their protest, in solidarity with the men 'on the blanket', they have lost all 'privileges' including food parcels, books, papers, radio batteries and evening association between 5pm and 7pm. They are permitted to exercise one hour every other day. Their food rations have also been halved.

'ARRAIGNMENT'

The process of 'arraignment' was introduced in December 1978. Essentially it was a cosmetic gesture to offset criticism of the long periods on remand and was designed to create the impression that something was being done to reduce this. In fact it was simply a process of sifting guilty pleas.

As a result political prisoners were expected to make a plea before the court not later than six weeks after their committal for trial. The arraignment system provided the opportunity for doing deals i.e. pleading guilty to obtain reduced or suspended sentences. Batches of up to thirty men were brought before the court. Those pleading guilty were given a date for their trial while those pleading not guilty were put back on remand.

It is a system designed to induce men to plead guilty with the carrot of suspended or reduced sentences being offered. By this tactic the Brits were obviously hoping to demoralise the political prisoners on remand.

After a given period of increased "guilty" pleas the British War Machine could then quote figures which would suggest that in fact the torture referred to in the Amnesty International Report of June 1978 had never taken place. That the 'confessions' allegedly extracted under torture were in fact completely valid since the men were now pleading 'guilty' to the charge against them.

The arraignment system also helps to slow down the escalating number of men going on the blanket, because those pleading not guilty are often held many more months before being tried.

DIPLOCK COURTS

The Diplock courts are named after the English judge Lord Diplock. They are administered by a single judge without a jury, such as 'Lord Justice' Ambrose McGonigal a founder member of the notorious S.A.S. regiment.

Commenting on the Diplock courts the 1978 Amnesty Report said, "*Between 70% and 90% of the convictions are based wholly or mainly on admissions of guilt (self incriminating statement) made to the police during interrogation, only in a minority of cases is the other evidence — forensic evidence, intelligence evidence or testimony of witnesses — produced in court to secure a conviction.*" Later Amnesty commented, "*The reduction of procedural safeguards regarding the admissibility of statements, the extension of the single judge and the*

absence of a jury enhance the danger that statements obtained by maltreatment of suspects will be used as evidence in court."

MICHELLE BOOTH CASE

As already stated, while the English common law legal system provides some safeguards for the individual in his dealings with the police, in the six counties these safeguards are discarded.

This can again be seen by looking at the Michelle Booth case.

On December 4th 1978 Alan Westlake (30) a dairy worker of Bracknell, Buckinghamshire, England was acquitted at the Old Bailey London on the direction of Mr Justice Hodgson. Westlake had been charged with the attempted murder of Michelle Booth on March 18th 1978 by throwing her from a train going from Reading to Gravesend.

The main legal argument related to the admissibility of a series of statements made and retracted by Westlake after he was arrested on April 27th 1978. The judge ruled the statements inadmissible for the following reasons: lack of access by a solicitor; there were frequent breaches of the Judge's rules; some questions were oppressive in content; the periods of questioning were protracted; and there had been insinuation of "threats". Yet commenting on the access of solicitors to political suspects held at Castlereagh Amnesty said "*The mission found that in Northern Ireland denial of access to solicitors to persons arrested under the provisions of emergency legislation is STANDARD PRACTICE*" (our emphasis). On the Judge's rules, Amnesty said: "*Even the limited protection of the rules has therefore been nullified*".

In its Summary Amnesty said "*Powers of arrest and detention are virtually unchallengeable: The investigation is conducted in an atmosphere of seclusion, aggravated by extended powers of police detention*".

In its Conclusions, Amnesty said, "*The evidence presented to the mission suggests that legal provisions, which have eroded the rights of the suspects held in connection with terrorist offences, have helped create the circumstances in which maltreatment of suspects has taken place.*"

H-BLOCK

The British Government continues to hypocritically argue that there are no political prisoners in the occupied six counties. This argument is central to their 'criminalisation' policy. (It is worth noting that approximately 300 Republicans have political status already, being held in special cages in Long Kesh. Most of these men were sentenced before March 1976. Some have been sentenced after that date.)

In his report in 1972 Lord Diplock said "*terrorist acts mentioned in our terms of reference we take to be the use of threat of violence to achieve political ends*". The 1973 Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act, which im-

plemented the recommendations of Lord Diplock, says "*terrorism means the use of violence for political ends*". The report of Lord Gardiner in 1975, which reviewed the Diplock recommendations, "*amended the definition of terrorism... in the following terms*", *terrorism means the use of violence for political or sectarian ends*". The amendment followed a period of loyalist sectarian assassinations.

Over a period of four years the British government did not possess the political acumen to realise that even in the Acts and Reports which enshrined its policy of "criminalisation" it could not avoid the contradiction of admitting that there are political prisoners.

POLICY OF TORTURE

Havin failed to portray the Republican prisoners as criminals the prison regime began a systematic policy of mental and physical torture inside the H-Blocks in an effort to smash the prisoners' protest.

The tactics have varied from daily beatings by screws, and the use of drugs, to a policy of forced washing in December last and January this year when men were bathed in boiling water and washed with deck scrubbers, had their beards and hair sheared and were painted with a white emulsion disinfectant. This particular exercise was for the benefit of a propaganda visit by three English MPs in February 1979.

Other forms of harassment have included the use of what the prisoners have called the 'noise machine'. This is a compressed air machine used for cleaning out the cell blocks, which is often left on in the cell block for several hours at a time.

The whining noise from the compressed air machine disorients the men in the same way as the 'white noise' did when used against internees in 1971 during interrogation sessions.

Starch and shaving lotion have been stirred into the prisoners' tea and disinfectant put into their drinking water. Food rations have been halved. Parole has been denied to those men whose close relatives have died, and the attempted murder of Ardoyne man Terry Clarke in H6-Block was foiled when he discovered ground glass in a meal.

DETERMINATION

All these tactics however have not weakened the protest but strengthened the determination of the men 'on the blanket' to smash the H-Blocks and the 'criminalisation' policy of the British government.

With the truth about the H-Blocks spreading around the world and Britain once again disgraced internationally over its abuse of basic human rights the "blanket men" draw comfort from the growing national and international solidarity with their protest.

Shouting through their cell windows to a group of visiting journalists on March 15th 1979 they said, "**WE'RE WINNING**".!

POLITICAL STATUS NOW!

Document 37

An assessment of the IRA prepared by, and for, the very highest level of the British state machine



This article first appeared in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, May 12th 1979.

The 'SECRET' British Military report, intercepted by the IRA, is entitled *'Northern Ireland future terrorist trends'*. Its self-declared aim is to "examine the likely trends in the tactics and weaponry of Irish Republican terrorists up to the end of 1983." It was prepared by Brigadier J.M. Glover of the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS).

According to Brigadier Glover the report is designed to sketch the background against which the British "can develop the counter measures that we (the British) will need in Northern Ireland over the next 5 years", that is from 1978 to 1983. (Five years is a purely arbitrary time span and is not the predicted date of British withdrawal or of IRA defeat).

The Department (DIS) which produced the report is the main intelligence service of the British military and is not to be confused with M15 (the Security Service) which deals with counter-espionage mainly within Britain, or M16 (the Secret Service) which carries out espionage, mainly overseas. DIS is part of the Ministry of Defence. It is concerned with the overall assessment and evaluation of intelligence for military purposes.

Brigadier Glover states in a covering letter with the report that it "has been cleared by the Director General of Intelligence on the one hand and by the Vice-Chief of the General Staff on the other".

The Director General of Intelligence is the head of the Defence Intelligence Staff. He is directly responsible to the Permanent Under Secretary of State for Defence.

The report is thus an assessment of the IRA prepared by,

and for, the very highest levels of the British state machine. The Commander of Land Forces and the Director and Coordinator of intelligence in the North of Ireland were both consulted in its preparation.

The report is an up-to-date assessment of the IRA. The report itself is dated 2nd November 1978 and the covering letter is dated 15th December 1978.

The copy intercepted by the IRA and supplied to AP/RN is number 37 of 50 and had been circulated to the Director General Ordnance Services. He is head of the British military department concerned with the supply and maintenance of artillery.

Amongst those who have seen (and counter-signed as read) the particular report in our hands are: The Director General Ordnance Services (and his Deputy); a Lieutenant-Colonel Guy and a Major Owen of the Army School of Ammunition; and a Major Ross and a Major Davies.

According to the distribution list attached to the report other copies have been circulated to British Army Chiefs, including the heads of: HQ in the North of Ireland; Land Forces in Britain; the Rhine Army in Germany; Army training and technical intelligence. Reports have been circulated to the heads of establishments including: the National Defence College; the Staff College, Camberley; the joint defence Staff College; the Royal College of Defence Studies; the Intelligence centre; the joint warfare establishment; atomic weapons research; chemical defence; military vehicles and engineering. Many of the other copies were circulated to internal sections of the various military intelligence departments.

The picture of the IRA which is publicly projected by British Government and army officials through the media is very different to that which is privately held by British military intelligence.

Whilst Mason and other British spokesmen have repeatedly publicly proclaimed that the defeat of the IRA is imminent and have dubbed the IRA as a "criminal conspiracy" without political motivation and without popular support a secret

British Government document (captured by the IRA and supplied to AP/RN) reveals the true British assessment of the IRA.

The report's introduction refers to a previous secret paper (ref. D/DINI/2002/H dated 28th Feb '78) which "assessed that the Provisional leadership is deeply committed to a long campaign of attrition".

The report immediately acknowledges the tenacity of the IRA and its "politically inspired violence":

"The Provisional IRA (PIRA) has

the dedication and the sinews of war to raise violence intermittently to at least the level of early 1978, certainly for the foreseeable future. Even if 'peace' is restored, the motivation for politically inspired violence will remain. Arms will be readily available and there will be many who are able and willing to use them. Any peace will be superficial and brittle. A new campaign may well erupt in the years ahead."

The aim of the report is to examine the likely trends in the tactics and weaponry of the IRA up to the end of

1983, so that the British military will know what counter measures to develop in the North of Ireland. IRA activity in Britain is considered to be outside its scope.

The report correctly outlines the immediate aims of the IRA;

"a) A declaration of intent by the British to withdraw from Northern Ireland.

"b) An amnesty for all "political" prisoners, including the release of all PIRA prisoners in gaol on the mainland.

"c) The recognition of the right of the Irish people to decide their own destiny, free from British interference."

It also correctly points out, with respect to the Republican Movement and the Sticks that "there are fundamental political differences between the two movements . . . and they are unlikely ever to settle their differences."

The report outlines a number of broad political 'options' for the future:

(i) continued direct rule where "government policy would be principally one of containment and the underlying problems would remain unsolved".

(ii) direct rule "modified by introducing another elected upper tier of local government".

(iii) "devolved government", that is, a return to Stormont, "although this seems unlikely".

(iv) six-county independence, "but the two communities interpret the objective differently". (They certainly do. The Loyalists correctly - see it as a way of retaining the Ascendancy, the few nationalists who support it incorrectly see it as a step to a United Ireland.)

(v) described in an unnecessarily complicated fashion, the fifth option is a united socialist Republic which is apparently not on the cards because of "sectarian and nationalistic sentiment" (rather than the real reason - the Brit presence).

The report chooses option (i) as the only one which "offers any real prospect of political calm". Even then it admits to "no prospect in the next five years of any political change which would remove PIRA's *raison d'être*."

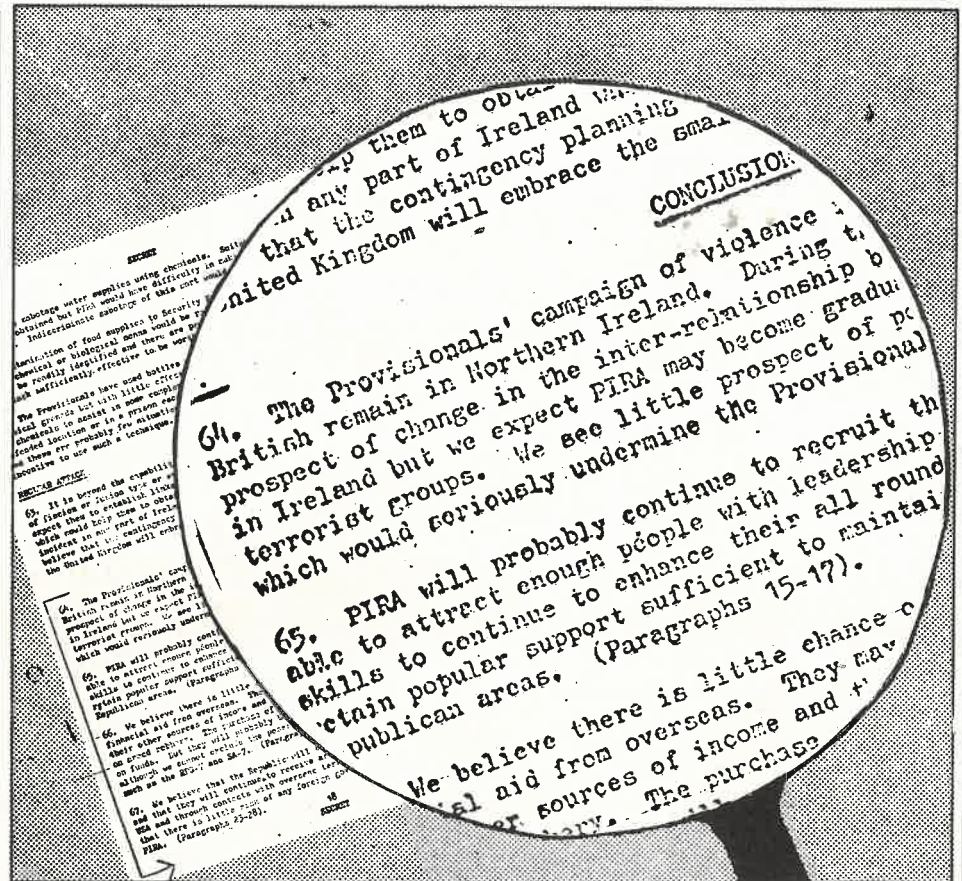
The report continues, the IRA "will probably continue to have the manpower they need to sustain violence during the next five years."

The calibre of IRA Volunteers is closely examined under four headings:

"a) **LEADERSHIP** PIRA is essentially a working class organisation based in the ghetto areas of the cities and in the poorer rural areas. Thus if members of the middle class and graduates become more deeply involved they have to forfeit their life style... Nevertheless there is a strata of intelligent, astute and experienced terrorists who provide the backbone of the organisation...

"b) **TECHNICAL EXPERTISE**. PIRA has an adequate supply of members who are skilled in the production of explosive devices...

"c) **RANK AND FILE TERRORISTS**. Our evidence of the calibre of rank and file terrorists does not support the view



An extract from the conclusions of the intercepted report

that they are mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable. PIRA now trains and uses its members with some care. The Active Service Units (ASUs) are for the most part manned by terrorists tempered by up to ten years of operational experience.

"d) **TREND IN CALIBRE**. The mature terrorists, including for instance the leading bomb makers, are sufficiently cunning to avoid arrest. They are continually learning from mistakes and developing their expertise. We can therefore expect to see increased professionalism and the greater exploitation of modern technology for terrorist purposes."

The report attempts a balance sheet of IRA income and expenditure. In the course of doing so despite the 'criminal conspiracy' and 'Godfather' tags in public, the report admits that the Brits have **no evidence** that Republicans "line their own pockets". It points to firm internal discipline against those members of the community "who act as common criminals". (In not one single sentence does the whole report suggest the IRA is 'criminal'.)

The report incorrectly points to the 'Black Taxis' (the Falls Taxi Association in Belfast) as a fund-raising venture for the IRA and goes on "but police activity is now inhibiting the use of the latter." Thus giving away the rationale for RUC harassment of the taxis.

In concluding the sections on the IRA itself the report points out: "to sum up, a shortage of arms has never

inhibited PIRA and is unlikely to do so in the future." It also recognises the improvement of the IRA's "new cellular system based on active service units" and points out that "the expertise of the ASUs will grow and they will continue to be PIRA's prime offensive arm".

The report deals with IRA strategy and selection of shooting and bombing targets.

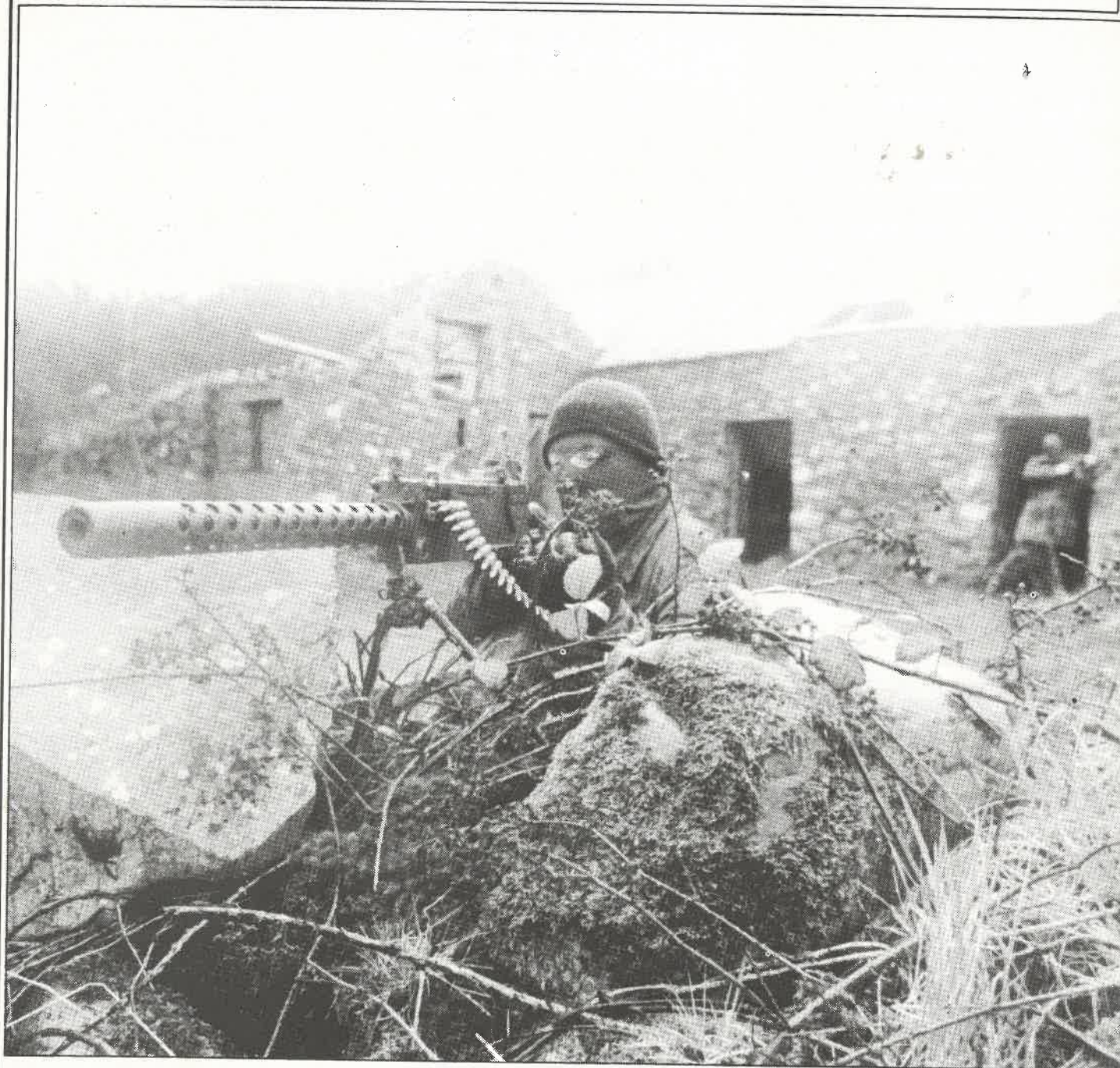
It correctly notes that "there has been a marked trend towards attacks against Security Force targets and away from action which, by alienating public opinion, both within the Catholic community and outside the province, is politically damaging."

It also notes that there is an IRA "military code of ethics" which means "there have, for example, been few attacks on the families of either soldiers or RUC."

The report correctly points to the IRA strategy of sickening the Brits, and thus destroying their will to stay in Ireland:

"PIRA strategy is based on the premise that a campaign of attrition, with its attendant costs in both lives and money, will eventually persuade HMG to withdraw from Northern Ireland. The Provisionals probably aspire to raising the tempo of their operations to such a level that the normal processes of administration and government break down."

The report however underestimates the IRA's intentions of causing the



'the expertise of the ASU's will grow and they will continue to be PIRA's prime offensive arm

British Government political embarrassment at home and internationally (through exposing the 'abnormality' of the six-county statelet).

As the report states, "members of the Security Forces are likely to continue to be the main targets for terrorist attack."

Admiration is expressed for the IRA's tactical flexibility: "PIRA have never yet sustained their attacks for long on any one branch, e.g. the Army, UDR, RUC, RUC Reserve and prison officers," and the IRA will increasingly become "more sophisticated" and "more perceptive".

"Security force bases and installations such as permanent check points and radio re-broadcast stations provide pres-

tige targets..." Also far from being mindless as portrayed by the Brits in the media, "attacks on commercial property... inflict high cost damage and they expose the inadequacy of the Security Forces."

"Meanwhile they (the IRA) will continue to seek forms of attack, such as the bombing of administrative offices, that will embarrass the authorities without causing disruption to the consumer. Government offices will probably also be selected for attack".

Thus the Brits put into context the recent (especially popular) bombings of Belfast Gas Office and Motor Tax Offices.

The report also states:

"Trains and railway lines have been attacked fairly frequently during the

campaign and large numbers of buses have been burned. Attacks of this sort are difficult to counter and involve little risk to life. They will probably continue. Air traffic constitutes a prestige target. The Provisionals would probably not wish to shoot down a civil aircraft but the same restraint does not apply to military aircraft."

So **bomb on** is the message from the Brigadier!

His reports expects "to see a continuation of the general trend towards more precise targetting and greater expertise."

Glover points out that when the IRA through Brit successes is forced into a change of tactics (e.g. the adoption of

improved forms of home-made explosives) "such changes, though born of weakness, can lead to the adoption of improved systems or weapons."

(If you're a Brit you just can't win!)

The report suggests how the IRA could improve their selection of short range guns: "The Israeli Uzi, the Czech Scorpion and Polish M63 are useful examples which PIRA could probably obtain with little difficulty."

(We can rest assured they will do their best).

Another useful suggestion is:

"A system for illuminating the point of impact on a target using a helium/neon visible laser is commercially available in Switzerland and could be improvised by PIRA from equipment readily found in technical college laboratories."

The IRA's mortars came in for praise: "The Provisionals have developed a succession of effective improvised mortars, culminating so far with the MK9."

As the report states "the mortar provides the terrorist with the safest and most effective method of attack on hard targets such as Security Force bases and vital areas such as Aldergrove Airport."

In March the IRA mortar-bombed Newtownhamilton Brit/RUC barracks and killing one Brit who was sitting on the toilet at the time!

Because of IRA successes sniping at Brit armoured vehicles there has been an "up-arming of the Saracen and Hunter" (i.e. the Saracen and Pig have been reinforced with steel). The report sees "little scope for PIRA to improve" on its armour piercing rounds. But doubtless we will see!

The report notes that "the M60 machine gun is a potentially useful weapon against helicopters", as Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon-Lloyd discovered to his cost in February 1978 when shot down in South Armagh.

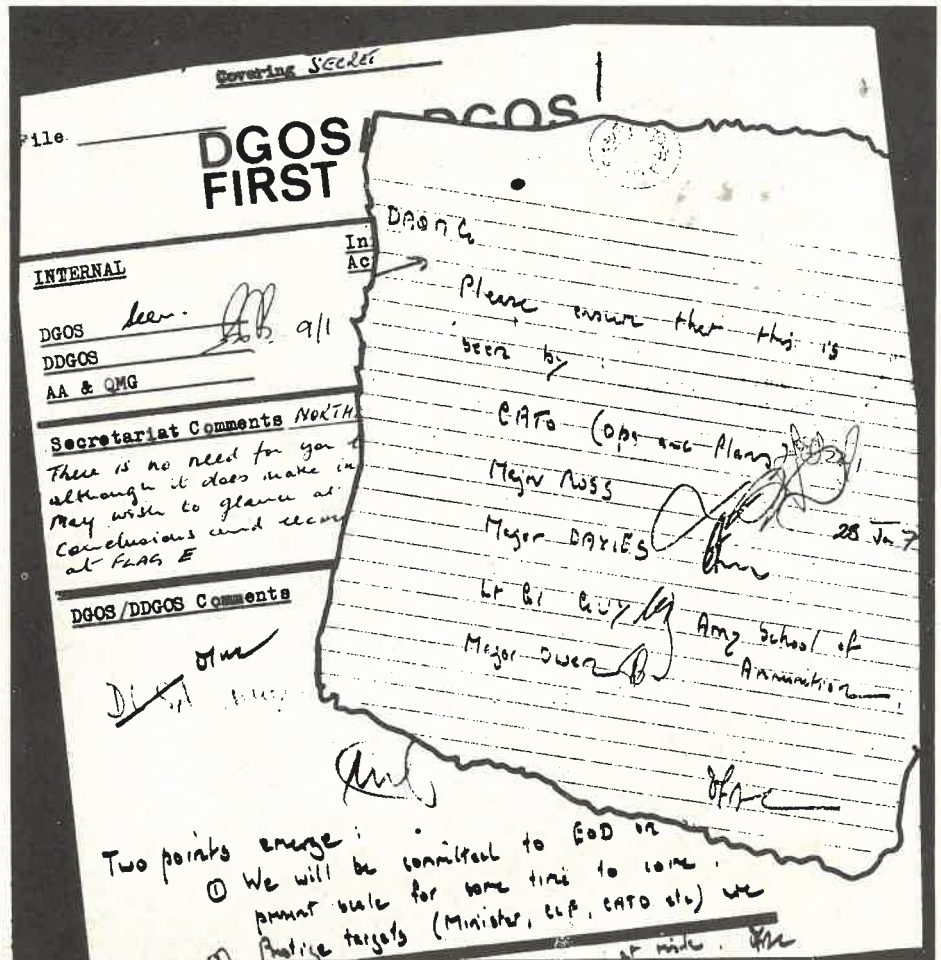
It is predicted that the IRA will get hold of some Surface-to-Air Missiles. "The black market price for the SA-7 in 1976 was £7,000, seemingly within the Provisionals' grasp. Very little training is needed for successful use of SA-7. . . there is the possibility that some SA-7s may reach PIRA's hands."

Let's hope so!

BOMBS

Much praise is lavished on the IRA's bombing techniques especially the tremendous variety of booby-traps to entice members of the occupation forces:

"PIRA have shown much ingenuity in devising victim operated or booby-trap devices. Discriminate attack has been achieved by exploiting some unique or habitual activity carried out by the target or by luring the target into a suitable place for attack. The Security Forces can be attacked by these methods in situations where civilians are unlikely to be endangered. The techniques are too many to list and there is no discernible trend. But as electronic intruder alarms become even more common and



Two of the covering documents attached to the intercepted report.

readily available, new techniques are open to the terrorist. Items of electronic equipment operated by the Army such as search devices could themselves be exploited as triggers for devices."

Turning to attacks against property it is noted that the IRA "has found that fire damage is generally more cost-effective than blast damage particularly against commercial property. The most easily concealed incendiary weapon is the cassette incendiary."

Contained in the report is the first official admission of the risk faced by Elizabeth during her fleeting visit to the Six Counties in August 1977. At Coleraine University which was visited by her, an IRA bomb exploded several hours after she left. Mason claimed it had been thrown over the University perimeter fence at the time it exploded. However, the IRA pointed out that the bomb had a long-delay timer and had been in position several weeks before.

The report admits:-

"Availability of long-delay timers makes it feasible for bombs to be emplaced at a target before suspicion arises, even during the construction phase of a building or at a site to be visited by a VIP. Such bombs were used at the time of HM the Queen's visit to the Province in August 1977."

CONCLUSIONS

The report comes to a number of conclusions:

"The Provisionals' campaign of vio-

lence is likely to continue while the British remain in Northern Ireland. We see little prospect of political development of a kind which would seriously undermine the Provisionals' position.

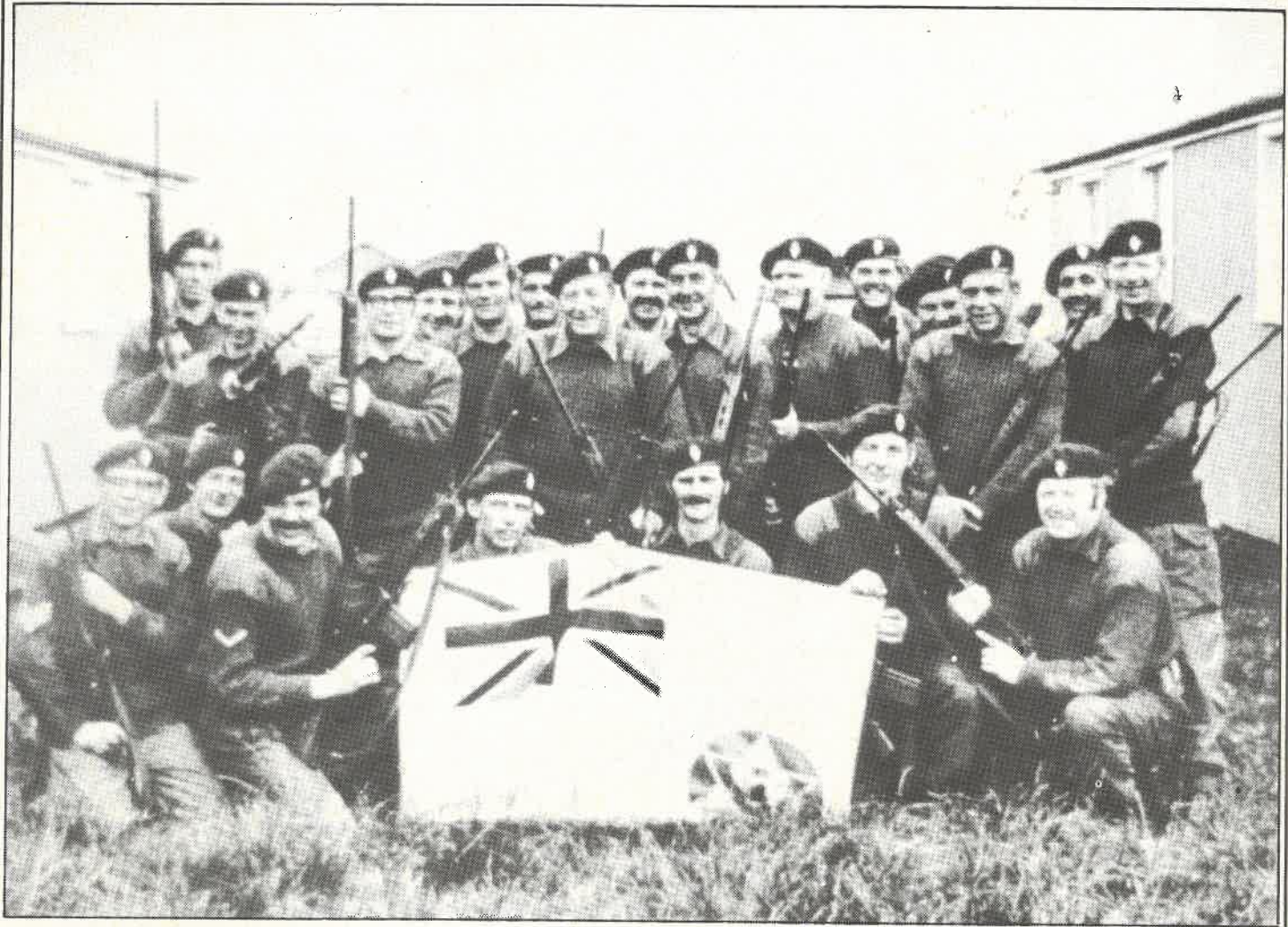
"PIRA will probably continue to recruit the men it needs. They will still be able to attract enough people with leadership talent, good education and manual skills to continue to enhance their all round professionalism. The Movement will retain popular support sufficient to maintain secure bases in the traditional Republican areas.

"The Provisional campaign over the next 5 years will probably be one of attrition rather than one of intense activity, though the tempo of operations will fluctuate as in the past.

"We foresee a continued trend towards greater professionalism and selectivity in targetting. We believe that PIRA will concentrate its attacks on members of the Security Forces and their bases and at the infrastructure of Government including the public utilities.

"The Provisionals are probably content with their current armoury but they may attempt to acquire machine pistols. We expect to see improved sniper techniques using advanced weapon sights. PIRA will continue to use improvised mortars at infrequent intervals and may also endeavour to obtain standard military mortars. There will be a strong incentive to acquire anti-tank and even anti-aircraft rockets."

For the IRA, the sky is the limit! ■



★ The smiling faces of the UDR. Two hundred and fifty of its members have been charged with crimes ranging from murder to rape

Ulster's Disreputable Rogues



THE UDR was first brought into being by a British Act of Parliament on January 1st, 1970. It first became operational, appropriately enough, on April Fools' Day, in the same year. Thus the long suffering nationalist people of the occupied six-counties have had to put up with this heavily-armed gang of loyalist bigots for ten years.

The UDR started with seven battalions.

A further four were raised in 1971—2 and it now claims a strength of some seven thousand five hundred of whom two-thirds are part-time and one tenth female — 'the Greenfinches'. It has its fleet of Shorland cars, and boasts, in its magazine, of having received, in addition to 'first class training in all aspects of soldiering' nearly one-hundred-and-fifty awards for gallantry over the past decade.

What it is less keen to boast about are the following little-publicised statistics.

This is a reproduction of an article by Colm Murray which appeared in An Phoblacht/Republican News, March 29th 1980.

Let us deal first with turnover. At present, the UDR is losing some three-hundred-and-fifty men a year who resign from the regiment. Recruitment figures in no way compensate for this loss. Some resign because of age, some because of fear — after all, one-hundred-and-fourteen UDR personnel have been shot or blown up, but many others are quietly shifted out because of their involvement in loyalist paramilitary gangs and crime.

MEMBERSHIP

Not that membership of the UDA or UVF, nor, for that matter, the UFF, has ever been an explicit bar to membership of the regiment. Indeed, Brigadier David Miller, former Commandant of 5 UDR based around South Derry has admitted that if he sacked a member just because they belonged to a loyalist paramilitary group, he would be left without a regi-

ment at all.

After all, 5 UDR, were the team responsible for the murder of John Bolton and Samuel Millar, the assassination of four (possibly more) Catholics, some twenty odd robberies and the theft of the Magherafelt UDR arsenal in 1975 which was buried in a slurry and then, somewhat shamefacedly 'found' again by the self same people who had stolen the guns in the first place.

PLAY DOWN

No, much more embarrassing to the British authorities who are nominally in charge of the regiment are the so-called 'bad apples'. (Most of the Original recruits came from the already discredited B Specials, and indeed particularly in some country areas the UDR is undistinguishable from the original Specials.)

The 'bad apples' terminology, implying as it does that there are only a very few criminal members in the regiment is, of course, part of a deliberate attempt to play down the full extent of UDR involvement in murder, sectarian assassination, robbery, rape, arson and theft.

This playing down is done in several ways. Firstly, by a partial press blackout. When this fails, unless the case is particularly blatant or gruesome the story is relegated to the bottom of page nine where few actually read it.

Next by the tactic of requiring any UDR man charged with a serious offence to resign before his court appearance. Thus many members convicted of murders etc, appear in court wearing UDA or UVF 'hats' and it is not mentioned that they were, at the time of their crimes, members of the UDR. A good example of this is the member of the so-called 'Sankill Butchers' who was sentenced as 'an unemployed labourer'.

CONVICTED

Yet despite this, over two-hundred-and-fifty UDR men have been convicted of the most heinous crimes in the courts, the most notorious example of which is probably the Miami Showband Massacre, when an entire UDR patrol took part. Even this would never have officially come to light had not two of them succeeded in blowing themselves up in the course of the massacre.

After this the British authorities, suitably embarrassed, made a feeble attempt to strengthen the vetting procedure — for example, between July and October 1976 no fewer than three-hundred-and-twenty-three applicants were turned down, to the wrath and fury of such well-known upholders of law and order as Ian Paisley and the Rev Martin Smyth, both of whom protested vehemently.

THOUSAND

But consider this. If there are over two-hundred-and-fifty UDR men convicted, as UDR men, how many have been convicted as simple loyalist 'terrorists' whose attachment to the regiment has gone unnoticed?

Certainly, with the figures graciously



UDR soldiers with non-British army issue- 'grease gun', armalite and Thompson sub-machine gun-weapons

supplied by Loyalist News back in 1975 we can estimate that that figure should at least be doubled, if not trebled. Then again, bear in mind that with the 'clearing up of serious crime' rate running at less than half and with the RUC obviously much more concerned with obtaining convictions of Republicans rather than their loyalist colleagues in the state forces, we reach a situation where it is probably fair to say that, without exaggeration, over one thousand UDR men have been engaged in serious crime — not just petty theft, drunken driving or the like, but serious offences, ranging from murder to vicious assault, attempted murder and rape.

ULSTERISATION

The British Government, of course, do not want to know about this. For several years they have adopted the policy of 'Ulsterisation' and naturally the UDR is in the forefront of this tactic — they are the cannon fodder in the firing line.

In the very same week in February '78, that two UDR men pleaded guilty to driving drunkenly down Obins Street, in the tiny Catholic ghetto in Portadown and shooting up a house and a parked car, narrowly missing killing three people, Roy Mason made the following speech. He told Brigadier Mervyn McCord, a man who himself had earlier said on TV that 'Catholics in my area are disloyal and therefore fair game', that the UDR members were 'selfless in their service to the community' and that their courage

was 'beyond question'.

The very next day a UDR and UVF man got a **recorded** sentence of twelve years for stealing six rifles, twelve magazines, one-hundred-and-eighty bullets and two radios while he was supposedly guarding Coolkernagh power station. He then further admitted the robbery of a post office at Macosquin with the other UDR men and the 'shooting up' of a Catholic bar in Dungiven.

These are only a couple of cases chosen at random from over two-hundred-and-fifty. What they do is serve to show that the leopard does not change its spots. The B Specials were the armed bullyboys of the Unionist Ascendancy. Their role was, pure and simply, to ensure that the croppies knew their place.

Now the UDR are nominally under British control, but we have seen what that is worth. After all, how many British soldiers have served a day's time for murdering Majella O'Hare, Brian Stewart or Leo Norney. Only last week another three soldiers were given **suspended** sentences for serious offences.

The UDR also have much more up-to-date equipment, better training and pay than the Specials ever did. Ten years ago the people on the streets succeeded in getting the hated Specials disbanded. It is surely not too much to hope that, by whatever means necessary, we can ensure that we do not see another ten years of Ulster's Discredited Regiment. ■

TO BE IN BELFAST

ON THE STREETS OF BELFAST
JOGGING IS A VERY POPULAR
LEISURE ACTIVITY.....

JOGGING!?! ARE
YOU JOKING?



THIS ISN'T
JOGGING! THIS
IS FLEEING!!

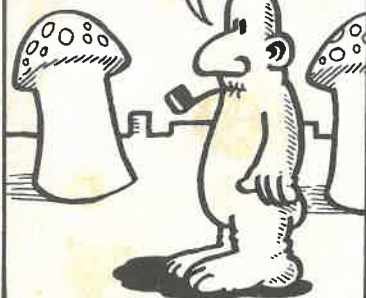


FLEEING FROM
A MURDER GANG!

IT'S THE ONLY
EXERCISE I GET!



BUT THAT'S NOT A
MURDER GANG! THAT'S
THE BRAVE LADS IN
KHAKI!



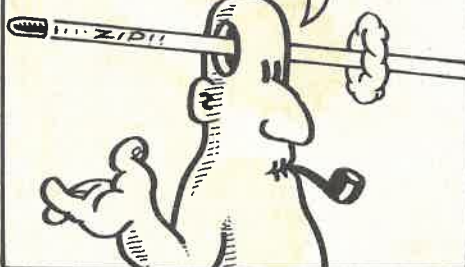
YAHOOOO! LET'S
GET THE FENIAN SWINE!
KILL! KILL! KILL!



CARRYING OUT THEIR
THANKLESS TASK OF
KEEPING THE PEACE
WITH RELENTLESS
ZEAL!



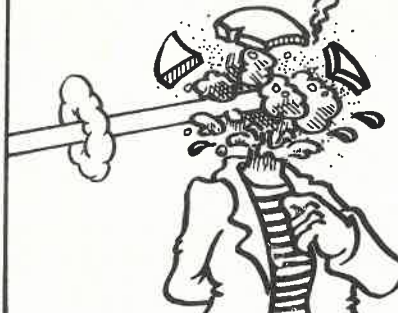
IT'S INEVITABLE, OF
COURSE, THAT THE COURAGE
AND ZEAL OF THE SECURITY
FORCES WILL CAUSE SOME-
TIMES THE ACCIDENTAL
DEATH OF AN INNOC...



AH! A TRAGIC
ACCIDENT! THE YOUNG
SOLDIER INVOLVED SHOULD
NOT BLAME HIMSELF!



THERE IS PERHAPS AN
ELEMENT OF HUMAN ERROR
INVOLVED BUT IT IS ABSURD
TO SUGGEST THAT A SOLDIER



IT MAY BE TIME FOR
THE SPEECH ABOUT YOUNG
LADS BREAKING DOWN
UNDER INTOLERABLE
PRESSURE....



....IT MAY EVEN BE
TIME FOR THE "FEW
BAD APPLES IN EVERY
BARREL" SPEECH —
—BUT PERSONALLY—



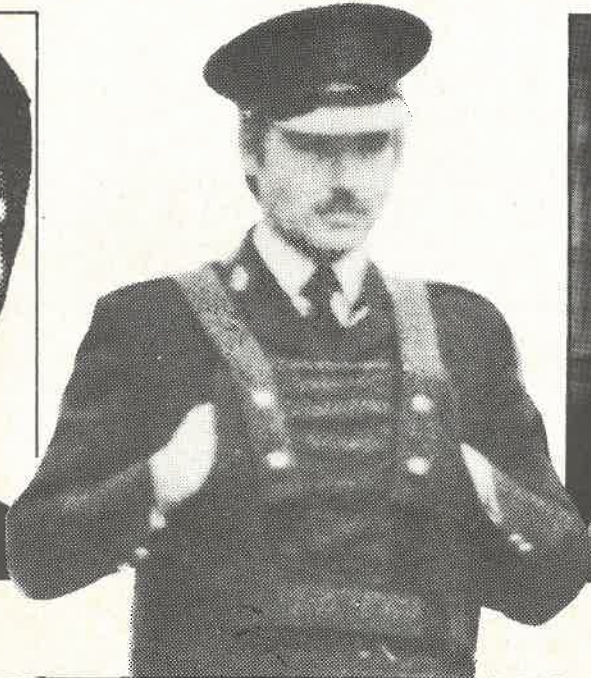
— I THINK IT'S
TIME TO TAKE UP
JOGGING !!



RUC collaborators caught in the act



(above) Sister Genevieve
(below) Bishop Philbin



(above) Paddy Devlin
(below) Joe Hendron



This is a reproduction of an article by Seamus Boyle which first appeared in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, September 6th 1980.



THE RUC DOCUMENT in the hands of the IRA, and supplied to *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, reveals the RUC's desperate intent to gain credibility within the nationalist ghettos of the occupied six-counties and reveals the extent to which leading (and named) representatives of the nationalist middle class are prepared to collaborate in this doomed project.

The document is a report of the first six of seven seminars — held between

October of last year and June of this year — organised by the RUC through their Community Relations Branch. Those invited to participate were six groups of prominent professional people representative of both the nationalist and unionist middle class: clergymen, teachers, trade union bureaucrats, businessmen, doctors and lawyers.

There were seven seminars held in all, one for each of the six different groups, at the Dunadry Inn, Dunadry, County Antrim, and then a final seminar on Friday 13th June and Saturday 14th

June at the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle, County Down.

Like the previous seminars it was a mixture of group and general discussion sessions over wide-ranging topics concerning the RUC, who are now reported to be studying the implications of what they achieved and heard. One outcome appears to have been the recent public expression of support for the RUC by former republican and former socialist Paddy Devlin, who attended both the trade unionists', and the final seminar.

But all six seminars covered in the document had about them an air of

unreality fostered by the obvious — and unsurprising — inability of those present to get to grips with the basic problem facing the RUC: that they are unacceptable to the nationalist people as armed representatives of a foreign occupying power.

This basic credibility gap was covered up, and confused, in the seminars, through the plentiful use of meaningless sociological jargon and attempting to explain away hostility to the RUC because their public relations as a 'modern professional police force' is poor.

Seminar 1 CLERGYMEN

The first seminar, for clergymen, was held on Tuesday 23rd October of last year. It was attended by three representatives each of the Catholic church (Monsignor Mulally, Bishop Philbin's deputy; Father Colm Campbell, Down and Connor; and Canon E. Hamil, a parish priest in Newry), of the Presbyterian church (including Orange Order leader the Rev. Martin Smyth), and of the Church of Ireland; and one representative each of the Methodist and Baptist churches. One notable absentee was Rev. Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian church.

The RUC had eight representatives at the seminar, including five Chief Superintendents, and this was fairly typical of their delegation at each seminar. Because of the obviously sensitive nature of this act of collaboration it was emphasised (at each seminar) that the talks were confidential and that, in any record, statements would not be attributed to individuals.

At this first seminar there was a general consensus that "issues common to Western societies at this period" constituted a problem confronting the churches and the RUC, in addition to the war situation in the six-counties.

Media people — the main profession not invited to a seminar — came in for some hysterical abuse:

"Through the media, 'advanced' people poured scorn on traditional values and standards and we were now witnessing the cumulative effect of this treachery."

On 'authority', it was thought that: *"It was no longer sufficient that a parent, a school master, or a policeman should insist on certain conduct. 'Why?' 'on what authority?' was the rejoinder in effect, though its form might often be a four-letter word"*.

In other words working-class people increasingly standing up for their rights to a decent standard of living and freedom of speech is seen as a horrifying degeneration of society by right-wing authoritarian paranoics, who would much prefer working-class people to have a slave mentality.

The seminar's participants saw the particular six-county problems, which the church and the RUC have to face, as numerous.

The discussion at, and proposals arising out of, the first seminar — involving, for the RUC, the most important amenable influence within the nationalist community — appears to have been the most political and most wide-ranging of all the six groups seminars.

A number of suggestions were put forward.

Firstly *"the need to re-inforce its (the home's) influence in controlling and stabilising the behaviour of young people."*

Secondly, the need to develop 'self discipline' — here the seminar's participants are bemoaning the breakdown of the authoritarian ideological control of the church.

Thirdly, that *"every possible step should be taken to build constructive relationships between police and public.... On new housing estates the police station should figure early in the plans..."*

One Chief Superintendent emphasised the importance of keeping in touch with local Councillors.

Fourthly, *"the importance of impartiality and even-handed justice was stressed over and over again"* — presumably by the Catholic church representatives to the RUC, if the latter want to even begin gaining credibility as a 'police force' in nationalist areas. And, finally, *"some training in social skills and elementary psychology should be given to recruits"* to the RUC to assist them in portraying themselves as ordinary police men.

"Following this a clergymen called for greater support of the RUC by ordinary people and in particular for the ostracising of terrorists; this would include the denial to them of opportunities to achieve propaganda aims through funerals. Measures taken by the Roman Catholic Church to minimise this danger were described."

It was a couple of months later that the body of IRA Volunteer Dee Delaney was barred from three Catholic churches in West Belfast.

Seminar 2 EDUCATIONALISTS

The second seminar, for educationalists, was held on November 20th. Those in attendance included two notable figures from West Belfast, Sister Genevieve of St. Louise's school and Sean Nolan of St. Joseph's training college.

The seminar's participants apparently recognised correctly, that *"political authority in Northern Ireland had been challenged and challenged successfully."* And a strong plea was made for 'rationality' and also for getting away from 'the past'. Of course, in practice, this is a demand for the nationalist people to forget about the history, and current practice, of British imperialism, and for them to turn their backs on the traditions of Irish Republicanism.

There was much discussion on the role of the RUC. Revealingly, *"One or two*

participants openly admitted that they were afraid of the police, and if that was true of highly educated and presumably rational individuals, how could the police hope to be 'acceptable' to ordinary people?"

Further evidence of the RUC's unpopularity is provided:

"In spite of strenuous efforts which included direct approaches to high ranking clergy, it was difficult to raise the percentage of Catholics in the Force." And: *"Impartiality could only be demonstrated by the presence and conduct of the RUC; but their reintroduction into the areas, for normal uniformed patrolling, without military support, raised grave problems and endangered lives."*

The British army was criticised: *"One Chief Superintendent, in whose area the army had ceased to patrol, reported a considerable reduction of unlawful incidents since that happened."*

The RUC was also criticised: *"one member questioned whether there was any good reason for refusing to set up a complaints procedure that was independent"* of the RUC.

In reply, the RUC typically, and ridiculously, stated that the complaints are *"in many cases frivolous or mischievous"* and — by implication admitting that the complaints are not thoroughly investigated — stated that *"a more formal system involving an independent tribunal would be even more burdensome."*

Under the remarkably apt sub-heading 'Collaboration between the RUC and the teaching profession': *"Headmasters spoke highly of the value of the Youth Liaison Scheme carried out by officers attached to the Community Relations Branch. It was reported that one hundred and twenty schools were now involved, in all parts of the Province. Steps to increase the number of Roman Catholic schools served in this way were being unobtrusively taken..."*

"In difficult areas where prejudice against the police had to be overcome the view was expressed that in such areas teachers and other professional people could, by expressing tactfully their support of the police, facilitate the return to normal policing..."

Seminar 3 TRADE UNIONISTS

The third seminar, for trade union bureaucrats, namely the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, was held around January of this year. The ten delegates included the committee's chief, Terry Carlin, Paddy Devlin of the ITGWU, John Freeman, of the ATGWU; and John Coulthard of NUPE.

Four main concerns from the trade union side were taken up in turn:-

Firstly, picketing, and here the collaboration of the Northern committee of ICTU with the state forces not just against republicans, but against trade union militants, is shown up: *"Conclus-*

'THE NEXT DECADE — HOPE OR DESPAIR'

A SERIES OF SEMINARS

*Chairman: Mr. A. S. Worrall,
O.B.E., M.A., B.D., LL.D.*

June 1980

[illegible]

ions that carried a measure of agreement were the confrontations over picketing were not as serious in Northern Ireland as in Great Britain; but every care should be taken to keep it so; and that contact between the senior police officer concerned and the trade union official was essential and very often effective in minimising friction."

Secondly, the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Provisions Act. Assurances were given by the RUC that "only when they appeared to be a paramilitary element involved were these Acts evoked. There was some reluctance to accept this last assurance as true in all cases but there was also from the trade union side a statement that there was no ambiguity in their support for the RUC. In 1977 they had cancelled the May Day parade at the request of the RUC and in the face of considerable left wing criticism."

The third concern of the trade union bureaucrats was the role of the RUC Police Authority and the complaints procedure.

It was stated that "ICTU had agreed to nominate again to the Authority," now that the initial public fuss following the Amnesty/Irwin/Bennett confirmation of RUC brutality has blown over. But the trade union leaders apparently 'forgot' to even mention the death of shop steward Brian Maguire in Castle-reagh RUC barracks two years ago.



Terry Carlin — trade union bureaucrat.

Fourthly, the most treacherous felon-setting concern of Carlin and his fellow conspirators: "Trade union members expressed their concern that the Provisional IRA staged demonstrations, claiming that they were in fact trade union inspired. The recent parade under the title 'Trade Union Campaign Against Repression' was a case in point. IRA leaders were also trying to enrol H-Block protestors in trade unions. The movement needed all the help it could get in resisting these developments. In particular the police could help by careful checking with ICTU officers whenever a demonstration was described as a 'trade union' activity."

The union bureaucrats then made various points on how the RUC could improve its image including that "the

RUC could play an active role in local trades councils; if membership was impracticable, talks and information would be welcome to such bodies."

Apparently, "the meeting closed in an atmosphere of cordiality," no doubt induced by the large amounts of alcohol made available by the RUC rather than by the sparkling nature of the discussion.

Seminar 4 BUSINESSMEN

The fourth seminar held around February of 1980 and attended by fifteen businessmen and two women, included representatives of some of the largest firms in the North, such as Short's Courtaulds', Michelin's and Gallagher's.

One of the prime concerns of the participants was what the RUC would do in the face of another loyalist strike like those of 1974 and 1977, both of which had seriously affected their businesses. The RUC claimed, excusing their collaboration with loyalists, that they cannot "stop a widespread popular movement."

In a discussion on 'industrial relations', 'members warned against complacency' and, in effect, stressed the importance of Orangeism to bind the unionist working-class to their masters: "At present employers and employees had a common enemy in the terrorist and if that situation passed their mutual relations might well deteriorate."

Of the RUC's 'professionalism', or rather lack of it, the business people complained that "the RUC had clearly improved in this respect but it still had a long way to go."

This seems to have been the weakest of the seminars, probably for two reasons. Firstly, the relatively low intellectual calibre and lack of interest in politics of the businessmen; and secondly, there was no element of co-option in the seminar as the RUC would traditionally uphold the interests of the Protestant upper and middle class represented at the seminar.

Seminar 5 MEDICS

The fifth seminar, for the medical profession, was attended on March 25th of this year by thirteen doctors, including SDLP man Hendron.

Whilst the battered condition of many of the doctor's patients after they had been in the RUC's hands, was ignored, collaboration, at a local level, between the RUC and doctors was discussed — an extremely sensitive issue this, as medical records, of course, are not meant to be accessible to the RUC.

"One Chief Superintendent described his efforts to maintain regular contact with various sections of the local community, including the medical profession, usually over lunch in the local police

headquarters. Some thought a more neutral venue might be preferable; to use the local health centre could be equally conducive to misunderstanding."

With respect to projecting the RUC as a proper police force its practice of investigating, or rather dismissing, complaints against itself, again came in for some criticism: "some remained unconvinced that police investigation of the police would ever allay public disquiet. That complaints were often motivated by a propaganda campaign made it more, not less, important that they should be impartially disposed of."

In conclusion, "it was generally recognised that everything possible needed to be done to increase confidence in the police in the many non-conflict situations they had to meet and in the variety of service they could offer to the community as a whole."

Seminar 6 LAWYERS

The sixth seminar, for the legal profession, held around April of this year, was attended by sixteen lawyers, amongst whom were eleven Catholics, including SDLP members Rory McShane of Newry and Alban Magennis of Belfast.

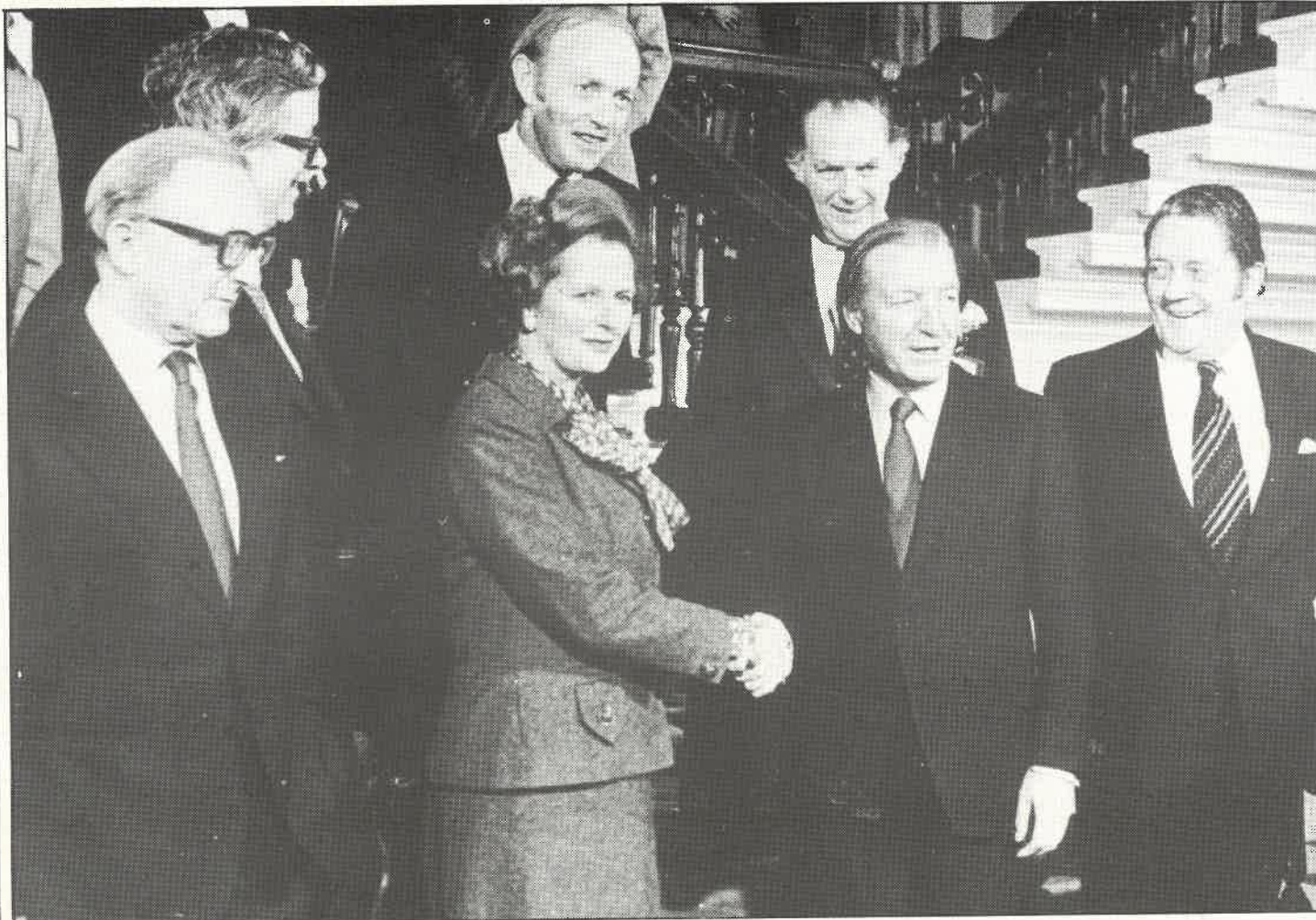
Instead of being concerned with the interests of their clients: "The problems of turning intelligence into evidence were discussed more than once. The difficulty of taking anonymous testimony was accepted but it was thought that some modification of the right of silence would help considerably." In fact, "a strong plea was made for certain changes in the rules of evidence, the right to silence, etc." Such is the treachery of these lawyers.

It was admitted that "both Protestants and Catholics tended traditionally to see the police as the agents of the former" but it was claimed that "considerable progress had been made in overcoming this feeling. (Asked whether he agreed with this, a solicitor from the Republican area said 'five years ago I should not have attended this meeting.')" Nevertheless it was also admitted that "the pattern of commitment that would prove the force to be non-partisan was not being attained."

That there is a war going on is obviously not in doubt in the mind of one RUC man who stated that "he was concerned about the release of known terrorists on expiry of sentence" and asked "ought they not to be held until hostilities ended?"

More generally, "the standard dilemma was stated: that without a political solution the defeat of terrorism is impossible; but that without the defeat of terrorism a political solution is unobtainable."

This dilemma, of course, can only be resolved by the withdrawal of Britain from Ireland and the reunity of the country, but such an obvious solution can not be seen through the Orange spectacles of the RUC seminar. ■



Thatcher and Haughey — Dublin Castle, December 8th 1980 — 'plot' the course of Irish history.

Dublin summit opens up dangerous option

This article was first published in An Phoblacht/Republican News, January 17th 1981.

THE DECEMBER 8TH Dublin summit meeting between British and Free State premiers Margaret Thatcher and Charlie Haughey confirmed the possibility of a major shift in British policy on Ireland, first hinted at some months previously in an exclusive article floated in *'The Sunday Times'* about a possible new Anglo-Irish treaty.

The British have now admitted — as they did previously in their 1973 Sunningdale position — that the Free State government has a role to play in the political structures necessary to undermine the republican struggle. The joint communique issued after the summit puts on the table 'the totality of relationships' involving the two islands.

Thatcher justifies her new stance on the grounds of the 'unique relationship' between the so-called 'United Kingdom' and the Free State, the Irish border being the U.K.'s only land border with another state.

This British policy shift had been a strong possibility ever since the Stormont 'round table' talks, set up last year under Northern direct-ruler Humphrey Atkins, totally failed to find any significant agreement between loyalist and nationalist politicians on a formula for a new 'devolved' six-county administration.

The policy shift involves, at the very minimum, acknowledging that an all-Ireland dimension is necessary (to satisfy nationalist aspirations), whilst maintaining the union (at least for the time being, to satisfy unionist aspirations).

But, more importantly, this shift could

lead in the direction of a new constitutional — or as the Dublin summit communique put it (to avoid drawing too much unionist fire) 'institutional' — arrangement between Britain and the Free State, even, at its maximum limit, meaning a thirty-two county **partitioned** neo-colonial state.

There are a number of significantly different variations on this dangerous option:

Firstly — in its mildest form — the six-counties having its own devolved administration whilst still tied to Britain, but also having an institutionalised 'unique relationship' with the Free State.

Secondly, the six-counties being set up as a 'condominium', which means having its own administration, but with joint overall control of state affairs being vested in both Britain and the Free State.

Thirdly, a confederal arrangement

whereby the twenty-six county and six county states are linked together, and then Ireland as a whole bound to Britain in a 'unique relationship'.

COMMON

What is common to all the variations on this dangerous option is that all involve maintaining the six-counties as a loyalist state with Free State backing. And what is crucially different, and much worse than the 1973 Sunningdale agreement (from the point of view of the beleaguered Northern nationalist people), is that power-sharing within the six-county administration would not be a necessary feature of a new set up. For the British are not prepared to seriously challenge the loyalists in their desire for domination (having learnt better from the 1974 UWC stoppage which brought down the Assembly).

Importantly, current 'Ulsterisation' of the state forces in the six-counties — the UDR and RUC replacing British troops — if carried through, either to its conclusion or to the pre-'69 garrison level of troops in barracks (presently planned for 1982), fits in neatly with this whole perspective.

REITERATED

The British government's new policy direction was reiterated in Belfast last Tuesday, January 6th, by their chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, one of the cabinet ministers who attended the Dublin summit. (Another British minister who attended the summit was Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, thus reinforcing unionist fears of — like Rhodesia/Zimbabwe — a neo-colonial settlement.)

In the luncheon speech at Stormont to Northern unionists — businessmen, politicians and trade union leaders — which must have done little to assuage their fears of a 'sell out', Howe stated, with reference to Britain and the Free State:

"Economically, the close links and the interdependence between the two countries, and between North and South, are obvious. Willy-nilly we are close together. It is in the interests of both that we should reverse the tendency in past years to drift apart..."

"Bilaterally too, we have a lot to discuss. Energy policy is an obvious example. Aspects of transport and communications are another..."

"Of course there is more to the unique relationship between the two countries than is encompassed by economic operation. The joint studies are to look at citizenship and security matters, and at the possibility of new institutional structures — giving formality to the many contacts between various representatives of the two countries..."

But, not wishing to alarm the unionists too much, he did add:

"I stress only that this is not a device for separating Northern Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom. It is simply a way of developing an already close relationship to the advantage of both countries, including, within the

United Kingdom, the advantage of Northern Ireland."

MODELS

However, many politicians and political observers believe that this is not the whole story.

Last weekend, 'Sunday Press' columnist Fergus Hall expressed a commonly held view:

"What Sir Geoffrey did not say, however, was that both governments are moving on to study possible long-term solutions to the whole Irish problem with three continental models coming under the microscope, namely the Nordic Council, Franco-Germany and Benelux. Apparently in Dublin and London the Benelux model is being seriously considered."

"Perhaps Sir Geoffrey did not go into this area of politics feeling that the time is not just right yet."

And, if one has a conspiratorial view of politics — like columnist Fergus Hall — one can even link into today's Tory policies the current screenings of two television series on Irish history.

Hall claims: *"All signs are that Robert Kee's BBC television series on Ireland and Thames TV's five programmes, entitled 'The Troubles', are intending to expose the nature of unionism down the years... The time has come for change. It would appear Mrs Thatcher and her government, backed up by the establishment, are letting some air into their thinking through the medium of television..."*

Perhaps, more realistically, both the Tories' readiness to shift policy, and the simultaneous TV programmes are symptoms of British frustration at their inability to win the war in the North after more than ten years.

STRATEGIC

It must always be remembered, when examining British policy, that in the last analysis British interest in Ireland remains primarily in maintaining — by any means necessary — political stability and thus preventing the establishment of a socialist republic or any hostile foreign power from gaining a foothold.

A week after the Dublin summit a perceptive 'Irish Times' editorial, Monday 15th December, pointed out:

"There is a school of thought which maintains that the strategic importance of this island to Britain and her allies — and her enemies — over-shadows all questions such as these raised between Mr. Haughey and Mrs. Thatcher."

"What, indeed, if all the calculations as to how and when Mrs T. will put pressure on the unionists is so much waste of time?"

"What if the real rub of the matter is not the British government's feeling for the majority in the North, nor even the selfish 'what we have we hold'?"

"What if the only permanent, sustaining prop in the British attitude is what they view as simple military necessity and all the other reasons put forward merely

window-dressing?"

CONFIGURATION

Thus for the sake of 'peace', of stability, Britain would be happy with any suitable constitutional configuration involving Britain and Ireland, including Irish six and twenty-six county confederation or six-county condominium status. Viewed in this light the British guarantee to the unionists becomes only a tactical consideration within broader strategic interest, and is thus dispensable.

Nevertheless, it must be said that despite such considerations and despite the Dublin summit, it remains quite possible that there has been little or no shift in British policy.

Thatcher — in the treacherous traditions of British diplomacy — could be conning Haughey in order to gain his much-needed co-operation in the stepped-up cross-border collaboration which is undoubtedly taking place (and, in the short term, in resolving the H-Block crisis to her satisfaction, by him not promoting the political prisoners' five demands).

HAUGHEY

For Haughey the British policy shift is of vital importance. It provides — in his own terms, and for Fianna Fail 'republicans' — a vindication of the double handed policy he is so vigorously pursuing, of verbal republicanism combined with stern anti-republican measures (especially cross-border collaboration).

Haughey, and the twenty-six county nationalist middle-class which Fianna Fail represents, would be well satisfied with any new constitutional set-up which provides political stability and undermines republicanism, by at least partially satisfying nationalist aspirations.

To achieve this, Haughey whose only firm political principle appears to be promoting his own self-interest — is prepared to go to remarkable lengths. According to his post-summit Leinster House speech he is prepared to consider all structures for a 'solution' short of re-entry into the British Commonwealth.

One might well ask, as did journalist Denis Kennedy in 'The Irish Times', Thursday 18th December:

"Is Mr. Haughey in his dealings with Mrs Thatcher, reversing the main thrust of Irish foreign policy over the past two decades? Is he, in seeking to develop and even institutionalise the links between Britain and Ireland, turning his back on at least two centuries of Irish nationalist tradition?"

The answers are apparently 'yes he is', and journalist Denis Kennedy continues:

"What is more, he is proposing to institutionalise the link, probably in a new Anglo-Irish treaty, that would set up a framework for consultation on trade, security, energy, transport, citizenship rights, and possibly a lot more."

"Most if not all, of these matters are either within the scope of the EEC, or could be appropriately pursued there. The same could be said for the Franco-German Friendship Treaty, which still

seems to be Mr. Haughey's model. But the crucial difference is that that was and is a treaty between two states of comparable size and power, and with complementary rather than conflicting interests in Europe and the world.

"Is Ireland now, having as deliberate policy started to merge the historic, and damaging, bi-lateral relationship with Britain into the healthier context of the Nine, under Mr. Haughey turning around and actually setting out to reconstruct the special and highly unbalanced tie with Britain."

LOYALISTS

Crucial, of course, to any such new constitutional arrangement is its acceptance, however reluctantly, by the loyalists.

Now, while the Union is essentially — in historical perspective — a 'tactic' for the British in maintaining stability, it is also essentially a 'tactic' for the loyalists in maintaining their privilege. The important question for loyalism is not the Union but is the maintenance of Protestant privilege, the preservation of what loyalist leader Ian Paisley calls 'the Protestant way of life' (which, momentarily, he found so embarrassingly difficult to publicly define when interviewed on a recent ITV 'Weekend World' programme).

Thus any constitutional set-up, which maintains partition and the sectarian six-county state, will suffice from a loyalist viewpoint, in the last analysis, even if it means breaking or amending the Union in its present form. Any form of 'independent' six-counties — tied loosely, to either Britain or the Free State, or both — would suit the loyalists, and is the key element of the new-colonial 'option' opened up by the Dublin summit.

Whilst the paramilitary UDA openly favours an 'independent' six-counties, Paisley is — wisely — much more cautious. However, as 'The Irish Times', December 31st, noted, in its 1980 annual review, all the signs are there.

PAISLEY

Journalists David McKittrick and Fionuala O'Connor pointed out: "There are some observers of politics in Northern Ireland who have become convinced in recent months that Ian Paisley is lurching towards a new position..."

"He thinks the days of the Union are over, is how one long-time Paisley-watcher puts it."

Another states: "In the way Molyneux tends towards integration, he tends towards independence and going it alone, but he recognises, deep down that Northern Ireland could not survive as an independent entity. He knows that, in the end, it would have to negotiate various agreements, with the British, with Dublin, with the Catholics." And, in this manner: "Britain would drift away, the Republic would drift in a bit, some sort of federal solution would be worked out with a fair degree of autonomy for the North."

"In other words," journalists McKitt-



(above) Ian Paisley — loyalist demagogue — aghast at the Dublin summit.

(below) Andy Tyrie — smug loyalist para-militarist.



rick and Fionnuala O'Connor explain, "an approximation of the solution suggested back in 1973 by the man who at that stage — and, possibly, at any stage was the strongest influence on Paisley's thinking, Desmond Boal..."

"Boal suggested that Protestants should not wait for Britain to break the link as she would surely some day do, but ins-

tead, should negotiate their own way into a federal Ireland with as much independence as they could keep."

REFERENDUM

Through his recent much-publicised post-summit call for a referendum in Britain (but not in the six-counties) to decide whether the British people want



Enoch Powell was backed up in his vitriolic attacks on Ian Paisley by the Official Unionist Party (whose leader Jim Molyneux is always just behind him). Although Belfast's *'Irish News'* devoted its whole editorial to describing Powell as 'not wise', his utterances contained the essence of truth and accurately reflected the interests of 'integrationists.'

the six-counties to be part of the 'United Kingdom', Paisley — well aware that the British people would vote 'no' — has, in effect, promoted breaking the Union in its present form, whilst appearing to support it.

But he is only cautiously feeling the ground for the eventuality of a move to a new political position, whilst simultaneously his party, the DUP, publicly roundly condemn Thatcher, Haughey and their summit.

Indeed, the party last Friday announced that it is to hold a series of public rallies throughout the six-counties from next month in the first phase of a 'campaign of action' to 'inform the people' of the serious situation that the party now considers the six-counties to be in.

POWELL

Whilst his language is somewhat lurid, one competing unionist politician has been generally on target when attacking Paisley. Official Unionist Enoch Powell — although he has the unfortunate distinction of being an upper middle-class English academic, and an avowed racist — is certainly astute enough not

only to grasp what Paisley is now up to, but also what the British government (under the tutelage of their Foreign Office backroom boys) are also up to.

Powell, aware that Paisley's personal drive for power (as leader of a six-county 'independent' state) over-rides all other political considerations, described him in a much quoted Belfast speech last Thursday evening January 8th, as *"the most resourceful, inveterate and dangerous enemy of the Union"* and stated that he *"has been, and remains a greater threat to the Union than the Foreign Office and the Provisional IRA rolled into one."*

What Powell is saying — petty abuse apart — is that if IRA resistance were to bring the British government to the brink of accepting a neo-colonial thirty-two county 'solution' (as elements within the Foreign Office propose) then the British would still need an Orange king to lead the loyalist people out of the Union in its present form, and Paisley is not averse to consciously assisting this process, and boxing himself off for this role.

In any new constitutional settlement Thatcher and Haughey would need Paisley to sell the 'sell out' to the loyalist people. That is why, apart from the need to up the stakes in the run up to the May council elections, Powell refers to Paisley as *"a burden which Ulster deserves not to have to carry."*

OFFICIAL

This analysis explains satisfactorily the bitterness of the verbal clashes between Paisley and Powell over the last week. And, although last Saturday's Belfast *'Irish News'* smugly devoted its whole editorial to describing Powell as 'not wise!', Powell's utterances contained the essence of truth and reflected accurately his own interests and those of the Official Unionist Party (which acknowledged this by publicly backing him).

As a British politician, Powell is solely interested in the 'option' of integration, and in using his position in Northern politics as an eventual launching pad back into mainstream British politics; whilst the Official Unionist Party, representing the unionist upper and middle classes, is tied to, and totally dependent upon, the British economy, and is therefore most fearful of any break, or even modification, of the Union.

Not surprisingly, the UDA, as vociferous proponents of six-county 'independence', have publicly sided with Paisley in his clashes with Powell. UDA spokesman Glenn Barr, using their 'flag of convenience', the New Ulster Political Research Group, described Powell's speech as *"the greatest load of tripe this country has ever been fed by an English politician."*

LINE-UP

This potential line-up of Thatcher, Haughey and Paisley (and the UDA) for a new constitutional arrangement between

Britain, the twenty-six counties and the six-counties poses sharp dangers.

It threatens the physical safety and well-being of the nationalist people in the six-counties through loyalist pogrom; and it blockades the national aspirations of unity and independence through an institutionalised entrenchment of partition.

To combat any variant of this 'option' an overall republican perspective in both military and political fields will be needed: an **anti-partitionist** perspective based upon a clear grasp of the different facets of British imperialism, particularly a proper understanding of the roots and inherently reactionary nature of the Free State regime and of loyalism; and based upon involving broad masses of people, North and South, being different aspects of the liberation struggle.

The increasingly sophisticated approach of the enemy means that good 'old-fashioned' nationalism and 'pure' militarism will be an insufficient republican response. Political leadership and education will be necessary to combat, in the South, the false 'republicanism' of Haughey's Fianna Fail and, in the North, increasing 'Ulsterisation' of the state forces and creeping 'normalisation'.

The gradual withdrawal of the overt trappings of British military rule in the six-counties — replacing troops in the streets with 'the police' and replacing forts inside nationalist ghettos with a centralised system of strategically sited barracks — dictates an increasingly sophisticated response. The mistaken (if understandable) equation of 'Sticks' with 'politics' needs to be firmly rejected.

MOBILISING

For republicans the armed struggle must remain of primary importance, for without it the British will never be driven from this country, nor will the loyalist monster in the north-east be successfully resisted and finally smashed.

The road ahead must involve mobilising people not solely behind nationalist issues of combatting state repression and promoting prisoners' rights, and of combatting elusive neo-colonial plans, but must involve mobilising people on the bread-and-butter issues which daily effect people on the social and economic plane: housing, unemployment, wages and women's rights, for example.

The Republican cause must be identified today not just with defending the beleaguered nationalist people in the North, but with championing the rights of the oppressed — the workers, the women, the youth, and the unemployed — particularly in the South.

Republican involvement in these issues — through the already proceeding internal discussion, and, more importantly, amongst the people — is no longer a luxury, but an urgent necessity if the Republican Movement is to move forward in the hard years of liberation struggle ahead. ■

H-Block/Armagh: December 18th 1980 – March 1st 1981

Brits renege

On Thursday, February 5th 1981 seven weeks after the end of a fifty-three day hunger-strike by republican prisoners in the H-Blocks at Long Kesh and a nineteen day hunger-strike by women prisoners in Armagh prison, a statement was issued from the prisoners announcing another hunger-strike beginning on March 1st.

The statement ended weeks of speculation that a settlement to the four-and-a-half year long protest was in the offing and confirmed that the British government had reneged on the settlement they made with the prisoners to end the hunger-strike on December 18th.

The date chosen for the commencement of the second hunger-strike is significant. Five years before, on March 1st 1976, the British government arbitrarily began withholding political status from captured republicans engaged in the liberation struggle. This arbitrarily chosen date heralded the beginning of what is known as Britain's Ulsterisation-Criminalisation policy. This policy was coupled with a concerted black propaganda drive to isolate republicans from their mass base of support among the nationally dispossessed people in the six-counties.

To Britain Ulsterising the war has the same meaning as for the Americans when they Vietnamised the war there: a reduction and a redeployment of their armed forces while simultaneously replacing them wherever it is not controversial, with the home grown forces of the RUC and the UDR.

The logical outcome of this strategy is, to maintain their military presence in Ireland with an economy of British soldiers' lives and to portray the situation as an *apolitical criminal conspiracy*. Consequently, using this logic, a criminal conspiracy is handled by a police force, and not soldiers geared with war paraphernalia, and those arrested as a result of the criminal conspiracy must be treated as ordinary criminals while in gaol.

Not surprisingly then it was in the prison camps where republicans are held that the sharp reality of this policy became apparent and was challenged in a unique but not unexpected fashion. The highly political consciousness of the captured republican combatants, many of them veterans of the ten year war, instilled in

them an indefatigable determination to resist prison criminalisation. Those sentenced to periods of imprisonment ranging from three years to natural life refused to conform to the criminal status by rejecting the symbol of an ordinary prisoner – the prison uniform and prison work.

After suffering four-and-a-half years of brutality and degradation, during what became internationally known as the 'blanket protest', the prisoners decided to escalate their protest to achieve political status by embarking on a hunger-strike.

HUNGER-STRIKE

On October 27th 1980, seven male republican prisoners went on hunger-strike, being joined thirty-five days later by three women prisoners in Armagh prison. On December 13th five days before the hunger-strike ended another thirty male prisoners also joined the hunger-strike. (For a brief period six loyalist prisoners also went on hunger-strike for political status, with segregation being their central demand. Typically they ended their strike after being lambasted by the unionist press and loyalist politicians as being 'IRA stooges').

The republican hunger-striker's demand was for political status which was broken down into five subsidiary demands: the right not to wear prison uniform, the right not to do prison work, the right to free association, which includes segregation from loyalist prisoners; the right to full remission of sentence lost as a result of the protest and the right to educational facilities and two visits, letters and parcels per week.

The prisoners demand for such treatment is not outrageous. At the present time several hundred republican and loyalist prisoners enjoy this status in the compounds' system at Long Kesh – a status won by republican prisoners after a prolonged hunger-strike in 1972.

The only difference between them and the prisoners on protest is the date on which they were sentenced. Yet one of the British government's main arguments for not granting this status is because to do so would be unprecedented!

BRITISH APPROACHES

Despite public claims by the British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, her



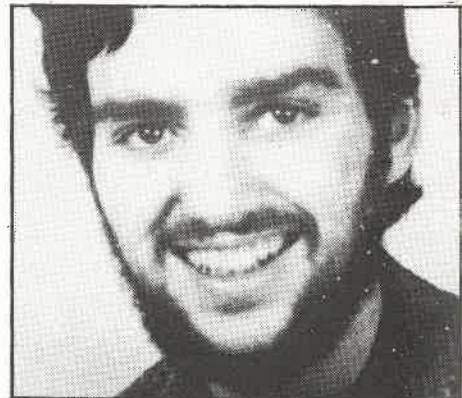
Bobby Sands



Frankie Hughes



Raymond McCreesh



Patsy O'Hara

secretary of state for the north, Humphrey Atkins, and the minister in charge of prison policy, Michael Alison, that they would never confer political recognition on these prisoners, their private actions to end the hunger-strike without loss of human life shows the contrary and also show the shallowness and expediency of their prison policy.

The first sign that the British government regarded these prisoners as distinct from ordinary prisoners was on Wednesday 10th December 1980, some forty-four days into the hunger-strike. On that day a senior member of the colonial Northern Ireland Office, a Mr. Blellock met the seven hunger-strikers and read to them the prison reforms that were then available. The prisoners issued a statement after Blellock's departure stating that the concessions outlined fell short of their demands and that the hunger-strike would continue.

With these approaches rejected the British government made overtures to the prisoners again to end the hunger-strike. On Thursday afternoon, December 18th, as the condition of hunger-striker Sean McKenna rapidly deteriorated the British minister in charge of the north, direct ruler Humphrey Atkins, suddenly and without explanation postponed a statement he had been due to make in the British House of Commons and ensured that it was delivered to the seven original hunger-strikers in the prison hospital, along with a 34-page document which was new to the men and which was a major elaboration of how far the British government had went in meeting the men's five demands.

The fact that a British cabinet minister postponed a parliamentary statement to send it to protesting republican prisoners in order to seek a settlement to the 53-day old hunger-strike was a unique act of political recognition officially begun on December 10th with Blellock's visit to the prisoners. Now, of course, the British are claiming that these gestures were made to explain the situation to the prisoners rather than negotiate with them. But it is not only these two incidents which graphically show how the British government conferred political status on these prisoners.

RECOGNITION

Following the end of the hunger-strike negotiations between the O/C of the IRA prisoners, Bobby Sands, who is presently on hunger-strike, and the prison governor Stanley Hilditch were frequent. The ending of the hunger-strike ushered in an atmosphere of co-operation inside the prison, unseen since the period when republican prisoners had political status.

At 8.45 a.m. on December 19th the day after the hunger-strike ended Bobby Sands was given facilities to meet the OC's of the four other H-Blocks to discuss the terms of the settlement. But this new era of co-operation inside the prison was short lived when on Monday 21st December the prison governor reverted to the traditional stance of not an inch and

demanded from Sands conformity on his terms.

Until Sunday January 11th, talks inside the prison between prison officials and the prisoners broke down. On that day the prison governor and a chief warder named Barr visited Sands in his cell to discuss how best to end the protest. Sands told them that it could only be ended by negotiation, with the prison regime moving and the prisoners responding. This was accepted and Sands was once again given the facilities to meet the other OC's for talks. It was agreed that forty men in H5 would be moved on 12th January from dirty cells to clean cells and that they would not soil their cells.

The prisoners issued a statement saying they viewed the move with *"acute cynicism given the treacherous manner in which the British government has handled the protest since the ending of the hunger-strike."* But the prisoners felt morally bound to explore every avenue to find an honourable situation. The move went ahead as planned, followed by another negotiated move in H3 later that week.

OWN CLOTHES

The men involved in these moves had expected to claim their own clothes from their relatives by the end of that week but the prison governor asked Bobby Sands for a week's grace to give them time to ensure that things ran smoothly. Generously, the prisoners agreed to a week's delay. At 8 a.m. Friday morning, January 20th, twenty men, ten in H5 and ten in H3, involved in the moves to clean cells requested to wash and have their own clothes.

By 11 a.m. when their clothes had been delivered to the prison by their relatives they were still waiting to be let out to wash. They made a second request but there was still no movement. At 2.30 p.m. the men were given the facilities to wash. But when they asked for their own clothes they were told by the governor that they would not be getting their own clothes until there was strict conformity. In other words the prison regime wanted the prisoners to unconditionally surrender.

BRITISH RENEGED

This was the final straw. The prisoners had gone as far as they could without capitulating to the British. In an act of anger and frustration those prisoners involved in the move to clean cells smashed their cell furniture and rejoined their comrades in the no wash protest. A short time later they issued the hunger-strike declaration.

So what was it that actually forced the British government to the point where they were prepared to take a risk and bestow political recognition on the hunger-striking prisoners, appeared to be searching for an honourable settlement only to back-stab the prisoners. The answer is very simple: Ireland north and south was in the political melting pot.

The broad-based National H-Block/

Armagh Committee, formed to spearhead a campaign to defend the prisoners was successful in bringing tens of thousands of people onto the streets of cities, towns, villages and hamlets throughout Ireland. For the first time in a decade, and in some areas for the first time in over half a century, since partition, workers took strike action in solidarity with those struggling for a free Ireland.

SOUTHERN MOBILISATION

Thousands of people from all walks of life marched the streets in admiration of the prisoners' heroism and dedication. The Free State establishment was being rocked to its foundations. The leader of the sham 'republican party' in government in the south, Charles Haughey, was forced to place the hunger-strike high on the agenda in the so-called 'historic' summit with the British prime minister Margaret Thatcher on December 8th 1980.

Despite strict instructions from the leader of the second largest party in the Free State, Fine Gael, to their county counsellors not to vote in sympathy with the hunger-strikers when motions came before the county councils many ignored the ruling and voted favourably. Some Labour Party counsellors did likewise.

While the leadership of the Trade Union Movement had more success in their appeals to workers not to support the prisoners many Trades Councils and many workers supported them.

In the occupied six-counties the middle-class nationalist party, the SDLP, were forced by the overwhelming support there for the prisoners to come out and publicly back the prisoners' demands. Many other nationally-minded counsellors left the council chambers vowing not to return until the hunger-strike was settled honourably.

NORTHERN MOBILISATION

In the streets of nationalist districts in the six-counties tension built up to a point where people began talking about popular attacks on the British forces if a prisoner died. Two bombs exploded in a London suburb and the British government placed its forces in Ireland on 'red alert', cancelling all leave. Ireland was on the brink of an explosion of popular anger the outcome of which was unpredictable in terms of loss of human life. But what was predictable was the consequences to Britain's and the Free State's short term and long term plans for ruling Ireland.

So it was a combination of reasons, with fear for the future being the common worry, which forced the Brits to move towards the prisoners on December 18th 1980.

It, is widely recognised that the Brits were concerned with mounting a 'holding operation' which would lead to demoralisation inside and outside the prisons. While their grand plan may have initially worked it is doomed to failure as nationalist Ireland prepares itself for the forthcoming collision with its historic oppressor..... ■

Breaking through the international wall of silence

SINCE THE ratification by the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (congress) in 1976 of the Foreign Affairs Bureau considerable progress has been made. The value of such an international approach was clearly demonstrated during the H-Block/Armagh hunger strike of 53 days from 27th October to 18th December 1980.

Teams of Ex-Blanket men and Armagh prisoners, relatives and Sinn Fein representatives travelled extensively, principally in Canada, U.S.A. and Western Europe. They were helped tremendously there by Irish solidarity and H-Block groups. In conjunction with the tours massive amounts of literature and daily information was sent abroad. The nonaligned and broad based National H-Block/Armagh Committee also did a trojan job in organising the International Petition and informing world opinion on the issue. The result of this combined effort was that the H-Block/Armagh situation, indeed the whole 'Criminalisation Programme' became one of the most unifying causes internationally since the era of the anti-Vietnam war campaigns.

Support for the prisoners demands came from scores of countries and spanned practically every section and strata of society. Major trade unions, political parties, parliamentarians, legal associations, churches, human rights organisations, artists, writers, reknowned intellectuals etc, solidly endorsed the international petition.

Under a tidal wave of protests, via her embassies and to London directly, the British Foreign Office forced the government to negotiate an agreement which ended the hunger strike. Unfortunately once world opinion had been diverted the British government treacherously betrayed its word. Consequently after more than two months of bitter frustration a hunger-strike to death was undertaken.

The international campaign was resumed giving rise to an important move on the 10th March in Geneva at the general assembly of the United Nations Human Rights Commission which is composed of 43 governments, observers from most other governments plus delegates from regional bodies, Non-Governmental organisations, liberation movements etc. Mrs. Maura McCrory, of Belfast who is vice-Chairperson of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee spoke as the mother of a blanket man and on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She was followed by Mr. Richard Behal, who is the director of Sinn Fein Foreign Affairs Bureau, mandated by the International Peace Bureau to address the assembly on the legal

and political backgrounds which give rise to the prison situation which led the hunger strikes. This was a major breakthrough in that it was the first time that Irish people in a non-governmental capacity spoke before such a world body, outlining the facts and calling on the U.N.H.R.C. to institute an inquiry into gross violations of human rights and fundamental rights in Ireland. Both speeches caused great interest among the various governments presented. The British were very worried by this development as were the Dublin government whose policies to date have either been that of silence or abject collaboration with Britain on the entire question of the Irish struggle for Freedom and self determination.

MAURA McCRORY

Mrs. McCrory gave a very moving speech relating first hand accounts of conditions under British rule and family experiences. She spoke forcibly about the harassment of women and children and described the brutality inflicted on prisoners in the H-Blocks and the women's prison in Armagh. She told the assembly that:

"Bearing in mind the principles laid down in the U.N. Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners, it is of urgent necessity that the continuing conflict within the prisons in Northern Ireland which have led to hunger strikes and other forms of protest, in the past and at this moment, should be investigated immediately."

"Previously, the main area of inquiry by various governmental and non-governmental bodies into the ill-treatment of prisoners in Northern Ireland has dealt with the pre-trial period, but we urge at this stage that the post-trial treatment of prisoners, because of the large numbers involved and the well-documented cases of severe brutality, is taking on an emergency character and that it is a matter of international concern that the U.N. Commission on Human Rights make its own inquiry into the matters alleged. The Amnesty International Mission to Northern Ireland in 1978 concluded that maltreatment of suspects had taken place and expressed alarm that 90% of prisoners were convicted on their own confession obtained during interrogation. Their main concern last year was the continued operation of the Special Diplock Courts and the condition of protesting prisoners."

RICHARD BEHAL

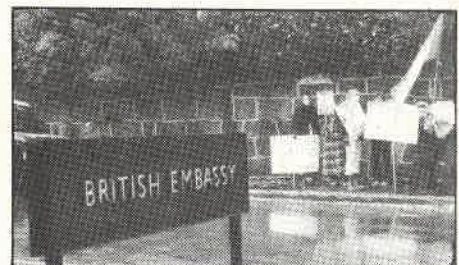
Mr. Behal then addressed the assembly.....

"Mr. Chairman,

"Human Rights are gravely and consistently violated in Ireland generally, however, at this



Maureen Gibson (ex-Armagh) and Kieran Nugent (ex-H-Block) at a meeting organised by CDPPL in France. Support for the hunger strike was mobilised internationally.



Norway



California



Holland



Amsterdam



New York



Paris

Session, the International Peace Bureau shall confine this intervention to that partitioned section of the country known as 'Northern Ireland'.

"Due to limitations of time and the extreme urgency of the prisons issue there, I shall concentrate on that problem principally and the background as to how it arose.

"Basically, it can be traced to the denial of the right to national self-determination, because it is common knowledge that it is the desire of the vast majority of the Irish people, acting as a unit, that Ireland be united in one sovereign state, independent from Great Britain.

"Northern Ireland has been governed since its establishment by resort to emergency repressive legislation. The Special Powers Act 1922" was in force from that date until it was replaced by the present "Emergency Provisions Act 1973" with additional amendments.

"A popular movement which originally began in 1968 as a Civil Rights Movement came under severe repression and ultimately developed into an armed insurrection. The conflict now existing in that area can be rightfully classified as an armed conflict of a 'non-international character' within the meaning of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional Protocols of 10th June, 1977.

"It is within the context of these laws and present conflict that desperate problems in relation to prisoners and gross violations of Human Rights are occurring daily.

"This consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights was clearly demonstrated during the period of internment without either charge or trial from 1971 - 1975 when internees were used as guinea pigs for experiments in "indepth interrogation". Britain was found guilty of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by the European Court of Human Rights. This cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment is still being practiced despite solemn assurances that they would never be used again. Internment only ended due to the international embarrassment it presented, however, a new form of internment has taken its place since 1976, commonly termed the 'Criminalisation Programme'. Unfortunately, the international community has been deceived by it.

"Under the policy of criminalisation, any person charged with a scheduled offence of a political nature which is defined by law as so-called "terrorist-type offences" would on conviction be treated as a criminal. Logic is overturned because the empowering "Emergency Provisions Act" states "terrorism is the use of violence for political ends."

"Allegations of torture during interrogation and subsequent ill-treatment in prisons have been documented and attested to by bodies of human rights workers, lawyers, doctors, and police surgeons. Amnesty International sent a mission to investigate and subsequently in their report of 1978 stated categorically that they had found sufficient evidence to call on the British government for a full and impartial public inquiry. This has never been held. I appeal to the United Nations Human Rights Commission to fill that role.

"Mr. Chairman, everything about the 'Conveyor Belt' system of criminalisation is special and offends against all the various international conventions, ... covenants and fundamental freedoms.

- Special laws, enacted by military forces and RUC paramilitary police
- Special Powers of mass arrest
- Special Interrogation Centres, empowered to interrogate for up to seven days
- Special internment by 'remand in custody' for up to two years
- Special non-jury courts with special rules

of evidence

- Special long sentences applied in a discriminating and sectarian manner against the nationalist community

- Special prisons, notably the notorious H-Blocks.

"It is indefensible that at the end of this 'special process' prisoners are informed that they are not Special in any way and must conform as ordinary common 'criminals'. Naturally, there was resistance and now after 4½ years of non-conformity and protest a horrific situation exists where 450 male prisoners in the H-Blocks and 27 women in Armagh suffer the worst conditions in Europe. There are approximately 3,000 imprisoned in Northern Ireland, mostly from the nationalist community, numbering ½ million people. This is proportionately perhaps the highest prisoner statistic in the world.

"The male protesting prisoners are now existing as follows:

- Totally naked except for a blanket to cover themselves.

- Locked in their cells 24 hours per day, year after year.

- Have no exercise or recreation.

- Have no newspapers, books, radio, etc.

- Are frequently assaulted, ill-treated and grossly degraded.

"To claim that these prisoners have inflicted these conditions on themselves is tragically absurd. It was the British who - for tactical and political purposes, altered the legal process and attempted to remove the established status of the prisoners.

"Tremendous world-wide support in favour of the prisoners' demands for justice was received recently from bodies representing human rights associations, churches, trade unions, legal and medical associations, politicians. The Portuguese Parliament marked United Nations Human Rights Day by voting unanimously, in condemning what they described as "sub-human treatment" and recognised the prisoners as political.

"In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, distinguished representatives, a hunger strike re-started in the H-Blocks on the 1st March, 1981 for justice and human conditions or death. You have the power to save their lives by urgently initiating the necessary procedures for the United Nations Human Rights Commission to investigate this massive violation of fundamental human rights in Northern Ireland and insisting on the full implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"There is a wall of silence surrounding the Irish question and it must be breached.

VISCOUNT COLVILLE

The British spokesman was Viscount Colville of Culross Q.C. who in a right of reply refused to reply to the allegations of Mrs. McCrory and Mr. Behal but waffled on about the H-Block (maze as he insisted on calling it) being the most modern in Europe.

It was left to the Dublin government representative to show how collaborationist they are by attempting to get the British off the hook by stating:

"While there have been instances of violations of human rights in Northern Ireland in the past, and allegations in this area are still made, it is, however, the view of the Irish government and also we believe of the British government that violence should be dealt with by the rule of law. We would hope that redress for any difficulties, relating to human rights, still remaining can be ensured by discussion between the two sovereign governments.

Yes, a breakthrough has been made but that is only a small beginning and much needs to be done. We need your help.



IRA interview

Iris talks to a member of the IRA's General Headquarters staff.

IRIS: Is there any difference in the aims and objectives of the IRA today than those of ten years ago?

IRA: No. It still remains our aim to force a British withdrawal from Ireland and to establish a Democratic Socialist Republic based on the Easter Proclamation of 1916.

IRIS: What has been the overall strategy of the armed struggle?

IRA: To disenchant the British people with their government's involvement in Ireland, to unify forces in opposition to the British presence and to secure a British withdrawal. Towards that end economic bombing campaign and the war of attrition against British armed forces has been conducted.

Attacks on the British army, as they are the most readily identifiable representative or agent of British imperialism, are geared simply to weaken the war machine by inflicting as many casualties as possible. The armed struggle breaks into a number of varying strategical categories, in that attacks are carried out against the armed forces which include the regular army of the British garrison forces and occupation army, Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), which are, respectively, a paramilitary police force and a British army regiment drawn from the loyalist population.

Disruption attacks are also carried out on the transport and communications

systems as well as on commercial and industrial targets; all with the aim of causing maximum disruption and destabilisation.

The six-county state, because it is an unnatural entity depends on outside economic aid to stabilise it and thus prop it up. By attacking the soft underbelly of British investment and by dissuading those who, for purely capitalist reasons, want to invest in the country we hope to undermine the economic viability of the state.

At the same time the bombing campaign has also the advantage of drawing off pressure from the nationalist areas in that the British have to deploy their forces in guarding city centres,

commercial targets, communications etcetera.

UDR AND RUC

IRIS: Your attacks on the indigenous forces, the UDR and the RUC have in the past resulted in the deaths of members of those forces who were quite old and, indeed, in some cases the death of ex-members rather than serving members of those forces. This has brought the accusation that the IRA is involved in a 'genocidal sectarian campaign against protestants'. What is your position on this?

IRA: If the IRA wanted to be involved in a 'war of genocide' against protestant people it could quite easily embark on such a campaign. People who have been attacked by the IRA, with few exceptions, have been active members of the British armed forces. All these organisations are volunteer organisations and those joining them know the dangers involved in becoming part of the British war machine. The IRA has on a number of occasions stated quite publicly that people leaving the UDR or the RUC (or the RUC Reservists) will be taken off the target list if they make in some way public the fact that they are no longer members of these forces.

As for age, it is publicly admitted by the RUC that middle-aged and older members of the part-time armed forces form an integral and essential part of their intelligence gathering forces.

BILATERAL TRUCES

IRIS: Two bi-lateral truces between the British army and the IRA have been arranged in 1972 and 1975. In retrospect how do you view the advantages and disadvantages of those truces? What are the future prospects for another truce?

IRA: There is no foreseeable prospect of another truce or of any cessation along the lines that obtained in the last two bi-lateral truces.

The IRA went through a process at the beginning of this current phase of the struggle, of announcing at least one unilateral truce for a period of two or three days, to show good will, and then involving itself in negotiating bi-lateral truces.

Now that we are over those truces and the situation has rectified itself, I believe that the experience gained has not been lost on us. The army's present position on truces is that it will no longer be involved in any sort of truce; that a ceasefire from the IRA can only be secured by a British declaration of intent to withdraw.

If and when the situation presents itself, as obviously it must at some stage, for negotiating a settlement, the IRA's attitude will be that it will talk and fight at the same time. Previously the IRA negotiated a cessation and then talked. Because the British were not serious or

honest or in any way forthright about their intentions and because they were just trying to divert the IRA into a demoralising and damaging ceasefire situation.

I cannot foresee any circumstances in which the army would get itself involved in that situation again.

LENGTH OF STRUGGLE

IRIS: The IRA leadership has for three or four years now been projecting a long liberation struggle. With the armed struggle now in its eleventh year has the turning point in that long struggle, even been reached yet?

IRA: First of all, while the IRA sees the struggle being a long struggle it does not mean that the IRA has deliberately set itself a lengthy period in which to achieve its short term objectives. The army is doing its utmost to achieve those objectives in the short term.

In the situation which exists in Ireland we went through a process of maximum mass involvement in the struggle; of intense military activity; of counter insurgency by the Brits and of counter-tactics by the IRA. And for a period people did presume that it would be a victory overnight because of the intensity and ferocity of the struggle. The last truce lulled many people into thinking that this first goal of British withdrawal could be achieved in the short term.

The stress of the long term nature of the struggle was necessary to counter any complacency which was creeping in. So, while the army is geared to a long struggle it is not necessarily pacing itself in the long term. It is seeking the complete demolition of British rule by the shortest route possible.

RESTRUCTURE OF IRA

IRIS: How successful do you view the measures taken in 1977 to restructure the IRA? What necessitated the changes and what have been the advantages and disadvantages of the new structure?

IRA: There have been various attempts to restructure the IRA in the past ten years. For one reason or the other, mostly logistical or tactical, this was not possible. The circumstances which existed and the conditions which existed in 1977 made it practical to restructure.

The reasons for the restructuring are very simple and very straightforward in that the war is necessarily a guerilla war but which was being fought on a conventional military structure which stretched back to the IRA's inception in 1916. 1977 simply provided the opportunity to update the IRA's structures and to make the IRA more practical to today's conditions.

The advantages of it obviously are that when one is best organised on a proper basis to fight the war on a cellular type

structure, it means that security can be increased. Security which the RUC and British Army will have greater difficulty in penetrating.

The structure which existed before was basically a command structure based on local areas and comprised of local people who were easily identifiable because our army is not purely a military machine. It has to cope with people's problems. It has to deal with issues in the local area. This part of its work of course jeopardised the military functions. Now we are based on autonomous cells drawn from wherever we choose to draw them, unknown to all but a very small group of people. The chain of supply, command and direction is also contained and limited to a very small and necessary number of people. Security has been reinforced and the Brits have not been able to penetrate the structure.

The disadvantages on the other hand are also fairly obvious, though perhaps only with hindsight, in that the profile and contactability of the IRA where the people were concerned was both higher and easier. With IRA units going more 'underground' this provided a problem where the political nature of the army's work was concerned. This, however, we are in the process of rectifying at the moment.

THE SAS

IRIS: How serious a problem for the IRA was the introduction of the SAS and other 'Kitsonian' type undercover units?

IRA: I don't think that the SAS or the deployment of undercover British military units has presented a major problem insofar as local people can easily identify strangers in our areas which limits them to some extent in their intelligence gathering.

To be successful they actually have to be in the areas. They have to infiltrate reasonably tight-knit communities. They have to put themselves into surveillance vantage points in either derelict buildings in urban areas or dug-outs in rural areas.

Because of the affinity between the local people and the IRA units the presence of British soldiers in any guise is normally brought fairly quickly to the IRA's attention. The SAS have been used publicly since they were sent in by British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. Our intelligence suggests that in some form they have been used as far back as 1972 when a number of middle-ranking British soldiers in plain-clothes were executed by IRA units.

It is a matter of public record that a number of them were implicated in the shooting of civilians or were caught with weapons which were not normal British army issue. For example, Captain Mc Gregor who, was caught with a thompson sub-machinegun after the shooting of a number of civilians in Andersonstown in 1972. The SAS is more a psychological weapon,



more a propaganda weapon in that they can only function when the intelligence to allow them to operate has been gathered. In other words they are only a threat to the IRA when they can catch the IRA. And to do that they have to infiltrate the support areas of the IRA; a most difficult task.

Much more serious and not just for the IRA but for people both unionist and non-unionist alike, is the use of **counter-gangs**. The current assassination campaign against political activists on the anti-unionist side is definitely a campaign carried out by counter gangs on the Kitson model.

We have any number of examples recently of duplication between the UDR and the loyalist murder gangs. We have had attacks on political activists in their homes where the assassins undoubtedly had inside information as to the lay-out

of the house.

The IRA has concrete information indicating that without question the RUC Special Branch were directly implicated in the killing of Noel Little* and Ronnie Bunting* and the attempted killing of Ronnie Bunting's wife*, and in the killing of Miriam Daley*. That there was UDR involvement in the attempted killing of the Mc Aliskeys. That there was RUC involvement in the attempted killing of Kevin Hannaway* and the killings of Mickey Smith's mother and nephew.

That development is not a new development in Ireland. It can be dated back to the 1920s when state forces were involved in murder gangs and so right up to the situation where the Military Reaction Force was a counter-gang within the nationalist community established by British intelligence. We believe that

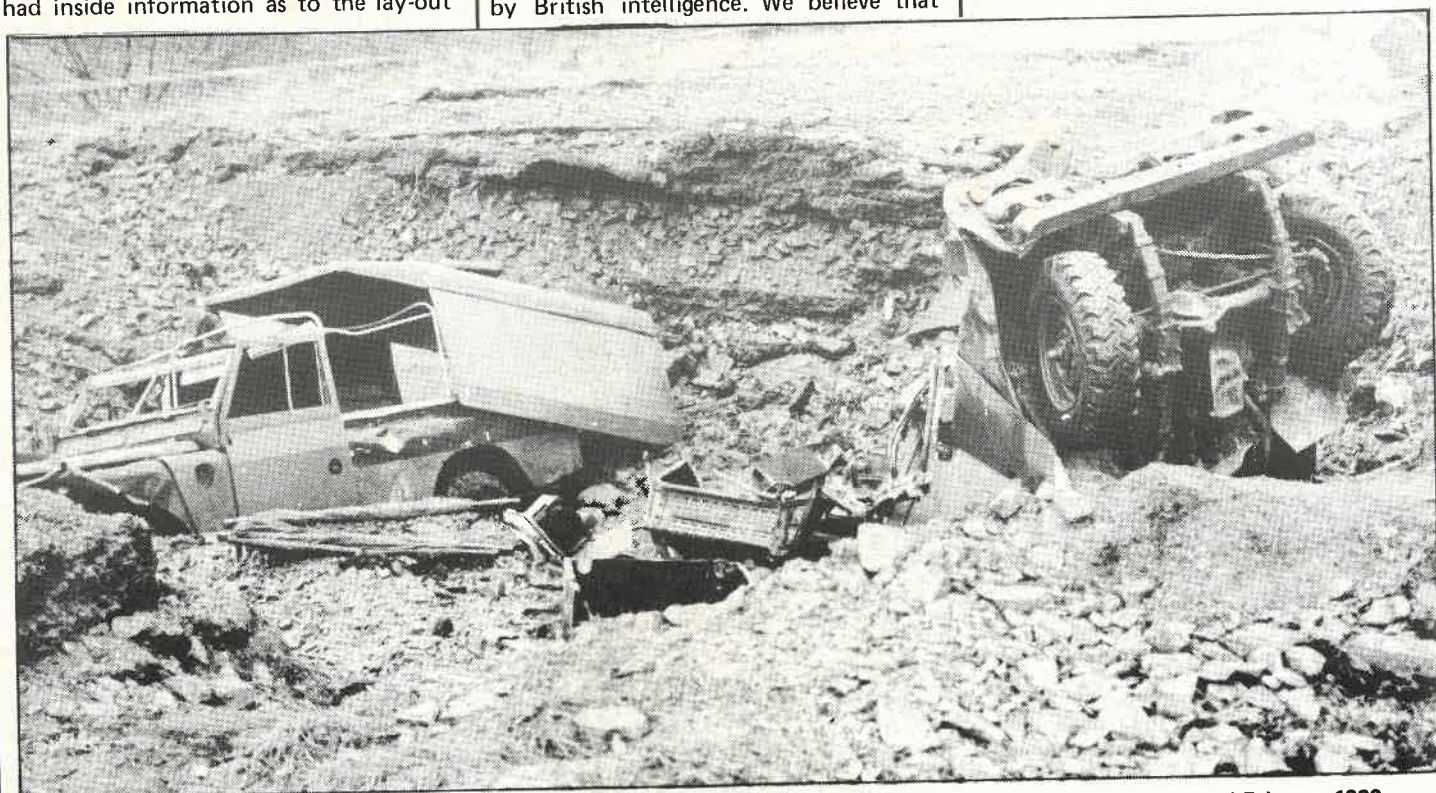
the British have infiltrated the loyalist groupings to such an extent that it is the British much more than the loyalist leadership which is responsible for the overall direction of the murder gangs.

ULSTERISATION

IRIS: Now that the RUC is becoming more and more the frontline soldier as a result of Ulsterisation, how do you propose to overcome the obvious problems which this presents for your attrition strategy?

IRA: The use of the Ulsterisation tactic, that is, the use of indigenous forces in a

* Nationalist activists or their relatives who all came under gun or arson attacks in the north of Ireland.



'We do not believe that the RUC and UDR will be able to contain the situation' (above) scene after IRA ambush of a UDR patrol February 1980

counter-revolutionary role is not new. It has been used in all colonial struggles. But it can only be successful when domestic troops can hold or contain the situation.

We do not believe that the UDR and RUC will be sufficient to contain the situation and in consequence do not believe that Ulsterisation can work. They have not been able to contain the situation in the last decade and pushing them more and more into the role of cannon fodder will not enhance their ability to do so.

Morale in the UDR and RUC Reservists is low as is evidenced in the number of resignations and the statements of loyalist politicians. But at the end of the day the most telling fact is, of course, that the RUC is totally unacceptable to the nationalist people. And no amount of disguise or cosmetic change will make it any more acceptable.

People who are not even Republicans are opposed to the RUC because of its sectarian nature and because of its involvement in the murder campaign. **And particularly because of its use as the private army of the unionist and orange ascendancy.** All of this makes the RUC totally unacceptable to ordinary non-unionist people.

A NEW DEPARTURE

IRIS: The execution of Sir Norman Strong and his RUC Reservist son earlier this year was stated at the time to be 'a new departure' for the IRA by way of reprisal action. Do you see this developing to a stage where it would become a regular feature of IRA policy?

IRA: The decision to shoot these two people and to burn their mansion was motivated by the ongoing assassination campaign against anti-unionist political activists. It has been part of IRA policy to take action against what are essentially the bulwarks of the orange establishment. That these attacks will continue as the IRA sees fit is quite conceivable.

One must recognise the link between the orange ruling-class and the British ruling-class. The bulwark of the unionist ascendancy resides in the landed gentry and the big industrialists who first of all were responsible for the establishment of the state and the division of the working-class into two distinct camps. In Irish terms it is they who get the maximum privilege from the system of partition and division.

And though to a lesser extent currently than previously it is they who to some extent influence and control over the whole fabric of the reactionary paramilitary forces. Attacks against such targets in the future cannot be ruled out.

LOYALISM

IRIS: How seriously do you view the

prospect of an ultimate all out confrontation with armed loyalism?

IRA: There is always, and it is endemic in the situation which exists in Ireland, a threat of direct confrontation with loyalist forces, which is perhaps most inevitable in a post or directly pre-withdrawal period. In that sort of a situation we are not simply talking about the UDA and UVF. We are talking about the UDR and RUC.

This threat is much more tangible at the moment with the efforts by Paisley to establish himself as the unchallengeable leader of unionist politics. He is presently engaged in a campaign aimed at attacking Thatcher's propaganda exercise with Haughey, while at the same time using this as a double-edged weapon against the other unionist parties.

The local elections in May could perhaps see Paisley mopping up and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), becoming the party of orange ascendancy. This presents a massive danger to all sorts of people; liberals, trade unionists, republicans, those who profess an Irish identity through culture and games, are all under serious threat from this phenomenon.

Paisley for the past fifteen years has been building up to a situation and that situation is reaching its climax. And it could well manifest itself in attacks on isolated nationalist areas and in a repetition of the attacks against nationalists generally. Certainly the next nine months will be a very dangerous period for anyone who professes any view at all which does not fit in clearly with the Paisleyite philosophy.

HUNGER STRIKE

IRIS: A second hunger strike is now taking place in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh Prison Camp. How important is victory or defeat in the prison struggle for the IRA on the outside?

IRA: Victory or defeat in the prison struggle would not determine the course of the armed struggle, but would be of more importance to the nationalist people and those who support the prisoners.

Defeat would not affect the IRA as adversely as the British government would presume because while the prison struggle is an integral part of the overall struggle, the resistance to British rule is not based solely upon its criminalisation policy or upon our opposition to that policy.

A defeat would obviously be demoralising for anti-unionist people and this would perhaps reflect somewhat upon republicans.

A victory, because it would bolster the nationalist people and because it is an achievable victory, would, of course be damaging to the British government. It is for this reason that the British have remained so intransigent in the face of international opposition; in the face of the facts of the case; in the face of the

fact that people whether they support the prisoners or not do recognise them as political prisoners.

In fact, the British government recognises them as political prisoners insofar as the legislation which puts them in prison in the first place is defined to be used against those who use 'violence' (sic) for 'political purposes'.

It is a situation which was not created by the IRA. It is a situation which at times was self-perpetuating; which gained its own momentum. And, importantly, it is a situation in which it is very, very difficult to conceive of what a defeat would be, because of the fact that there are so many prisoners both men and women who have withstood the psychological and physical deprivations; who have remained firm and united; who have refused to be broken by any of the methods used over the past four and a half years, providing a rallying call for those who possibly did not understand the exact reasons for republican resistance, and for those who just don't understand why the British government, if it is all it pretends to be, can use such measures against people who are essentially defenceless.

So either way the only people who can lose politically in the prison situation are the British government.

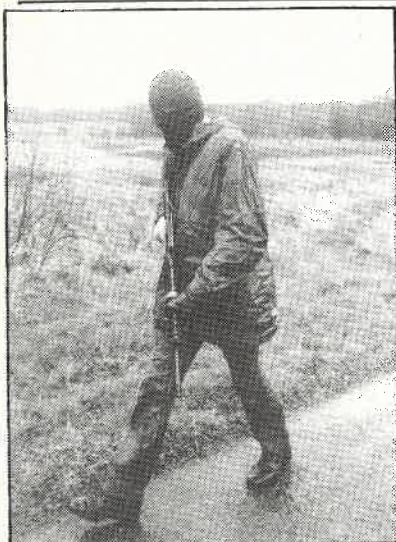
The IRA's position is that the suffering involved for the prisoners and for their families would necessitate a conclusion to that particular part of the prison struggle so that the prisoners can at least continue in a more comfortable position and that their families can be rid of the really intense fear and anxiety which the whole H-Blocks/Armagh situation creates for them.

At the end of the day it is not so important to get the British government to stand up and say "these people are political prisoners". We believe that they privately admit this. But we believe that it is more important to get Irish people and freedom loving people throughout the world to recognise the prisoners as political prisoners than to get Humphrey Atkins or Margaret Thatcher to get up and make such an admission.

RECRUITMENT

IRIS: Eleven years on with ample evidence that IRA Volunteers have been severely interrogated, tortured, imprisoned for long periods in such conditions as obtain in the H-Blocks and Armagh, as well as the ever present possibility of sudden violent death in action, does the greater current awareness of such possibilities, or perhaps probabilities prove inhibitive in your attempts to recruit Volunteers for the IRA?

IRA: Recruitment does not present a major problem for the IRA. One must examine the IRA's recruiting patterns as opposed to the recruiting patterns of the various armed wings of the British





war machine.

The IRA does not engage in an actual or active recruiting campaign and very rarely, except on a person to person basis, approaches people to join the organisation. The lectures and recruiting process, once people have indicated that they want to join the IRA, are aimed at whittling down the numbers and making sure that the people coming in are aware of all the points posed in the question. The people who end up as IRA Volunteers are fully conscious of all the dangers that are before them and are prepared for a life of self sacrifice.

The fact that the state forces generally have to engage in media recruitment via a professional advertising campaign means that the people joining those forces do so with a mercenary or adventurers eye to all the perks and excitement involved, such as high rates of pay and foreign travel.

Essentially, since the 1969 situation there have been no problems at all with getting people to join the IRA. The problem has been in fact in ensuring that those who wish to join are people who come up to the standards that the IRA lays down for its Volunteers.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

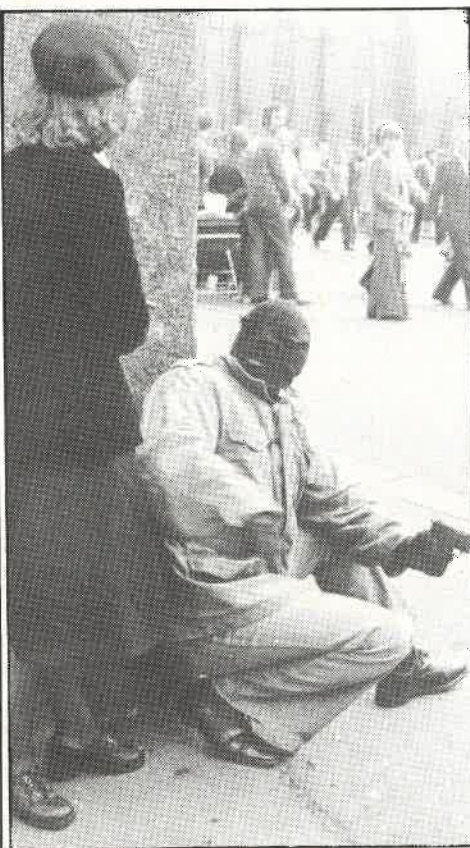
IRIS: What has been the role of women in the struggle generally and in the IRA in particular?

IRA: Membership of the IRA is open to both men and women. Women have played an increasingly important role. In my own experience there have always been women who have been involved directly in the IRA Commands at all levels and who have been involved in all aspects of IRA activity. Women have been deeply involved throughout the history of republican resistance. The units made up of women have been historically the most principled as was evidenced by the women's organisation of Cumann na mBan being the first republican organisation to come out and repudiate the sell-out settlement of 1921 which set up the partition statelets.

In the current phase of the struggle with the men going to prison women had to take on a more independent role which was not in keeping with their traditional downtrodden position within Irish society. From 1971 large numbers of women have been liberated by necessity. They have had to assume total responsibility for their families. They have had to defend their areas against British soldiers.

A growing awareness over the last number of years of the chauvinistic nature of capitalist society and amongst women themselves of their own strength has resulted in women playing a more politically active and conscious role within republican politics.

But all too often gains won by women during the intensity of liberation struggles are lost in the aftermath. It is up to Republicans in general, in conjunction with



“...there have always been women who have been involved directly in the IRA commands at all levels...”

other progressive forces, but particularly it is up to women, to ensure that gains made during our liberation struggle are built on in the post period ensuring complete women's equality and liberation.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

IRIS: How do you view the alleged role of the IRA in the 'international terrorist' syndrome which has been projected by the sensationalist media for several years now?

IRA: The most glaring and horrifying manifestation of international terrorism today manifests itself in the continued existence of the racist South African state which is kept in existence by the finance and weaponry of most west European governments and the United States' government.

One example of how that terrorism

works was seen in the butchery of eight hundred men women and children refugees at Kissinga in Southern Angola a couple of years ago by South African soldiers using all the weapons of war which western powers had supplied them with.

The IRA has no role in international terrorism.

IRIS: What is your view of the struggle taking place now in for instance, Euskadi, Corsica, Southern Africa and Palestine to mention but a few? Do you have relationships with any foreign liberation movements?

IRA: Well obviously because we are involved in a liberation struggle against a colonial power and because many similar struggles, some of which you have mentioned, are also being fought, there is a natural affinity between ourselves and peoples fighting those struggles in other parts of the world. For instance, a victory over the South African regime would be a morale booster for those involved in fighting the struggle here as was the victory of the Zimbabwean people. And hopefully a victory for the IRA and the Irish people would provide a morale boost for those fighting liberation struggles elsewhere.

The IRA has no formal links with any of the movements fighting liberation struggles though Sinn Fein obviously engages in exchanges of literature and provides moral support via expressions of solidarity and so on.

But the myth presented by the establishment about such international links is just that, a myth.

We believe that the best way to assist peoples' struggles elsewhere is to win the struggle here.

AREA OF OPERATIONS

IRIS: In the late seventies the IRA expanded its area of operations to continental Europe whilst the campaign in England has been carried on intermittently over the years. Is this likely to continue?

IRA: First of all the IRA has traditionally adopted a policy, in pursuance of its objectives, of attacking British targets wherever they presented themselves whilst at the same time being mindful that we cannot infringe on the sovereignty of other states and must be most careful not to confuse their people.

When the opportunity presented itself during the period you mentioned the IRA did take action and hopefully will continue to take action. It is totally at the IRA's discretion. It is a fairly important factor in internationalising the issues here; in bringing it to people's attention that British soldiers, ambassadors and others are all representatives of a government which is playing a colonial role in our country and while that situation continues these people remain in danger of being attacked. ■

War news



An almost total, undeclared, suspension of military operations by the IRA reigned for most of the critical hunger strike period in late October, November and December and was extended to include the Christmas period of 1980. Only five operations took place throughout that time. One in Brussels, one in London and three in the occupied six counties.

Wednesday December 31 1980

The lull ended at 7.30 p.m. on New Year's Eve. At Bromley-by-Bow in Canning Town, East London, two bombs destroyed two gas holders and damaged a third, containing between them, one million cubic feet of gas.

Nobody was injured in the attack and whilst no organisation claimed responsibility at the time, the British Special Branch speculated publicly about IRA involvement.

1981

Thursday, January 8

Forty British servicemen narrowly escaped with their lives when the Uxbridge Royal Air Force Barracks in west London was bombed.

A 'security patrol' discovered the bomb, surrounded by four plastic barrels containing about twenty gallons of petrol at 5.45 p.m.

The building was evacuated and the petrol removed before the bomb exploded shortly before 6 p.m. causing severe



Uxbridge RAF barracks — forty servicemen escape shortly before IRA bombs explode.

damage to the ground floor of the three storey barracks.

The IRA claimed responsibility in a statement issued through the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau in Dublin,

the full text of which reads:-

"The Irish Republican Army claims responsibility for the bomb attacks on Hammer-smith Territorial Barracks in London on December 2, and

for the gas works, explosion at Bromley-by-Bow on December 31. The Irish Republican Army also claims responsibility for the shooting attack on Christopher Tugendhat on December 3rd in Brussels and for the bomb attack on Uxbridge Barracks on January 8th 1971.

"We have a message for the British government who rule our country against the will of the Irish people: you are only getting a taste of what is to come, for while your soldiers occupy Ireland we are prepared to bring to the attention of the world, and to exact from you, both in England and Ireland and beyond, a cost which in the end will prove too expensive."

Tuesday, January 13

The Belfast Brigade of the IRA claimed responsibility for a successful commercial bombing mission at an electrical goods store in Clifton Street near Belfast city centre during the evening of that day.

Friday, January 16

At 11 a.m. IRA Volunteers from the South Down Brigade shot dead an officer of the UDR. He was a Major and Commanding officer of 'C' company of the UDR in Rathfriland, County Down.

Earlier that morning an RUC patrol had an extremely narrow escape when only the detonator of a 240lbs bomb exploded in a car to which they had been lured by IRA Volunteers of the North Armagh Brigade.

Shortly after 11 a.m. on the same morning three bombs

planted by IRA Volunteers at a commercial target in the Botanic area of Belfast completely destroyed the building. An adequate warning ensured no civilian casualties.

Two other bombs planted at another commercial target in Bridge Street in Belfast's city centre were defused.

Monday, January 19.

At 7 p.m. on that evening a member of an RUC patrol which had been lured to the outskirts of Castlewellsan in County Down was shot in the neck when an IRA Volunteer fired a single shot.

Tuesday, January 20

One British soldier was shot dead and another seriously injured when IRA Volunteers of the Derry Brigade fired eight high velocity shots at a patrol of the Staffordshire regiment at Castle Gate in Derry City.

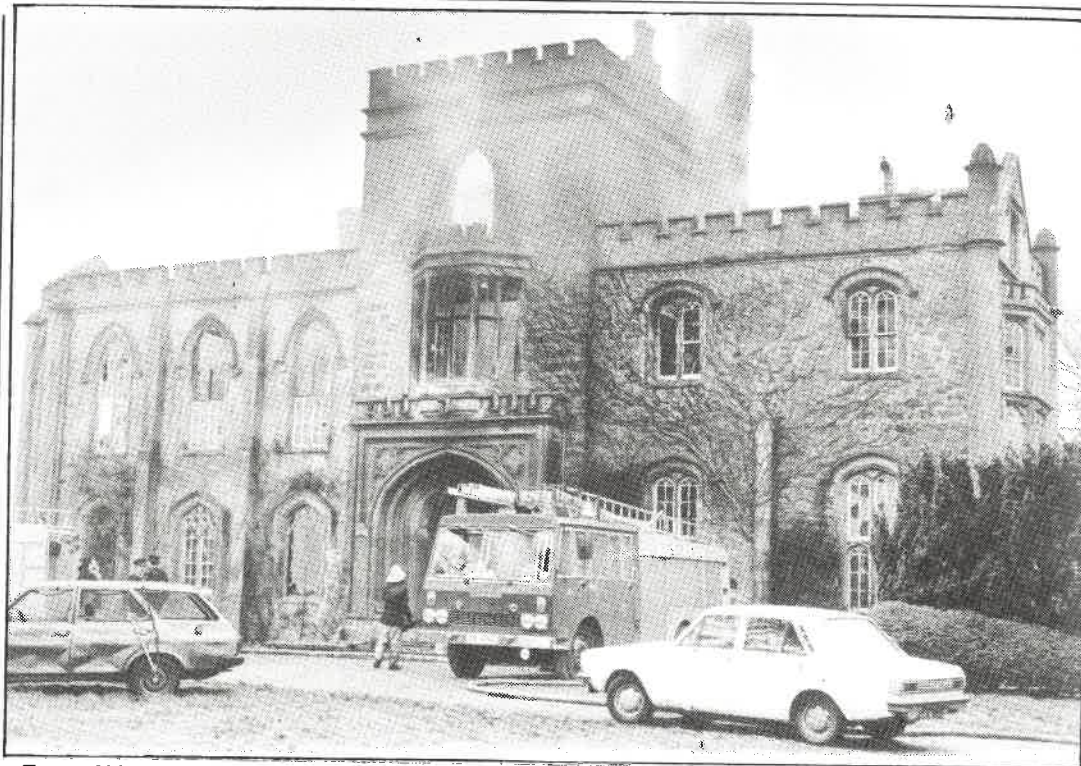
Wednesday, January 21

Two Unionist aristocrats, Sir Norman Stronge and his RUC reservist son, James, were executed by an IRA active service unit late in the evening at their County Armagh mansion Tynan Abbey, near the village of Tynan. The mansion itself was gutted by a fire which engulfed it after bombs, which the unit had planted, exploded.

Four other RUC members who encountered the IRA unit on its withdrawal owe their lives to their armoured vehicles with bullet proof windows. One of these was rammed by a car carrying some of the IRA Volunteers who then alighted and raked the RUC vehicle with gunfire at close quarters but failed to penetrate it. After a further twenty minute gun battle with no injuries inflicted on either side, British reinforcements caused the IRA unit to retire. All Volunteers returned safely to base.

Sir Charles Norman Lockart Stronge, British soldier, leading Orangeman and loyalist politician and upper-class sectarian bigot was speaker of the Stormont Parliament for twenty four years and the British Queen's Lord lieutenant in County Armagh for more than twenty years.

Before it was burnt down on January 21 the Stronge's still employed seven house servants and twenty one gardeners at their sixteen-bedroom Tynan mansion.



Tynan Abbey — the mansion of unionist aristocrat Sir Norman Stronge — bombed and burned by IRA Active Service Unit.

His RUC Reservist son James, was an 'old etonion', ex-captain in the Grenadier Guards, ex-MP at Stormont from 1969 until its collapse, and unionist member to the Sunningdale six-county assembly.

Their executions by the IRA were 'reprisals' for the activities of loyalist paramilitaries. In explaining their position and reasons for the reprisals, the IRA issued two statements: on Thursday January 22 and Friday January 23.

On Thursday the IRA pointed out:-

"This deliberate attack on the symbols of hated unionism was a direct reprisal for a whole series of loyalist assassinations on nationalist people and nationalist activists which has gone on far too long.

"For us the decision to take such reprisals represents a real departure, no matter how sections of the media and politicians have hitherto attempted to misconstrue with a sectarian label, IRA attacks on RUC and UDR men. Our operations against these targets have been based on their involvement in the crown forces, but our decision to take reprisals for the activities of loyalist paramilitaries is being taken on a political basis and the responsibility for reprisals rests full square on their shoulders."

To reinforce its position the IRA issued a second statement through the Irish Republican

Publicity Bureau in Dublin. The IRA said:-

"Let this be understood. The loyalist ruling class have never needed a republican excuse to attack the nationalist cause or the nationalist people. They needed only the support of the British and their motivation is the defence of the loyalist state and the privileges which have flown from it.

"Our action last Wednesday night, we repeat, represents a real departure. The stupid working class loyalists with guns who shoot nationalists are only cannon fodder.

"So if those in the category and class to which the Stronges belonged want to be taken out of the firing line then let them be seen to use their considerable political influence to put an end to the sectarian activities of the loyalist monsters which they have created and which they have to power to stop."

Saturday, January 24

A British soldier from the 1st Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers regiment was fatally wounded when three IRA Volunteers from the Belfast Brigade armed with handguns casually walked into a heavily fortified British military checkpoint in Belfast's city centre. One Volunteer opened fire hitting the soldier several times. More shots were fired at the other British soldiers in the fortification, who dived

for cover. All Volunteers returned safely to base.

Monday, January 26

In a co-ordinated strike, commercial targets in all six-occupied counties were attacked by IRA Active Service Units. Damage to almost one hundred premises was estimated to be as high as one million pounds. The targets were in Belfast, County Antrim, Derry city, County Derry, Omagh, County Tyrone, Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh, Newry, County Down and Portadown, County Armagh. Also in County Armagh, at Meigh, several bombs destroyed heavy plant-hire equipment, as well as twenty lorries and vans, while in the same vicinity a bomb severed the north-south railway line.

Thursday, January 29

At 10.30 a.m. three IRA Volunteers planted several bombs in a commercial target in Sandy Row near Belfast's city centre. The ensuing explosions started a fire which caused severe damage. Adequate warning ensured no civilian casualties.

Friday, January 30

A UDR soldier was ambushed and critically wounded by IRA Volunteers at 5.15 p.m. in county Tyrone near the western shore of Lough Neagh.

Tuesday, February 3

A phone warning at 10.45

a.m. gave ample warning for the evacuation of the multi-storey Bedford House office block in Belfast's city centre. An IRA bomb exploded thirty minutes later.

Friday, February 6

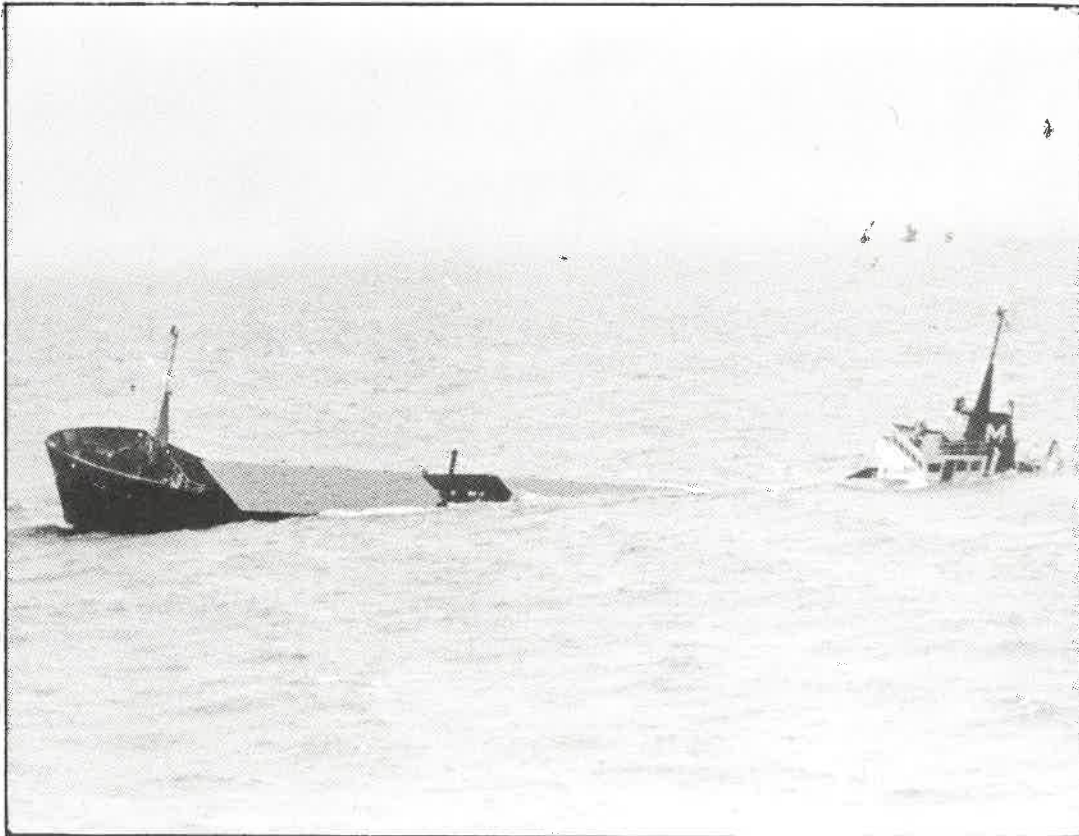
At 8.30 a.m. Volunteers of the Belfast Brigade laid, in the words of an RUC spokesman "a well planned ambush". One full-time RUC Reservist was shot dead and another seriously wounded when an IRA Volunteer opened fire on them in Balmoral Avenue, Belfast, only a few hundred yards from the heavily guarded British Military Hospital at Musgrave Park.

Later in the evening of the same day, twelve IRA Volunteers carried out the most imaginative and daring action since the ambush at Narrow Water near Warrenpoint, County Down in August 1979 (when eighteen British paratroopers were killed), when the 1000 ton British coal ship was sunk in Lough Foyle which lies between County Derry and County Donegal.

Damage estimated at as much as £4 million was caused by this extremely professional commercial bombing which has also caused acute embarrassment to both the British and Free State authorities. The embarrassment centred around a situation where neither authority could agree as to whose territorial waters the ship had been sunk in, especially as the Free State constitution claims sovereignty over all waters surrounding Ireland.

The *Nellie M*, carrying 1,260 tons of coal, was the prestige ship of the Liverpool company Coe Metcalfe and was moored only a few hundred yards from the Donegal village of Moville. The twelve IRA Volunteers arrived at the pilot house in Moville, commandeered the pilot boat, leaving five Volunteers to guard the house, while the other seven with several bombs aboard were ferried to the ship. Armed with Armalite rifles the Volunteers quickly boarded the ship and burst into the Captain's cabin where he and the chief engineer were engrossed in watching a film about World War II on the television.

The Volunteers informed them, "This is the real thing, we are the IRA". The chief engineer agreed to accompany the Volunteers to the crew. The crew were then placed in the ship's life boat while



(above) The sinking hulk of the 'Nellie M' bombed by IRA Volunteers in Lough Foyle
(below) Portadown's commercial centre blitzed in commercial bomb attack



bombs were placed in the engine room.

Re-embarking on the commandeered pilot boat the IRA unit towed the crew to shore in the ship's lifeboat, before making their way back to base. A short time later the first of two bombs, which almost

totally submerged the ship, exploded.

Tuesday, February 10

In Derry City a lance corporal in the UDR was shot dead by Volunteers of the Derry Brigade at Strand Road near the city centre. The Vol-

unteers returned safely to base.

Wednesday, February 11

A British army foot patrol came under fire from an IRA sniper in West Belfast. One soldier was wounded in the



Clogher joint RUC/British army barrack devastated by IRA car bomb

thigh. No enemy fire was returned.

That evening a British army mobile patrol was ambushed in South Derry. In a carefully laid ambush IRA Volunteers from the South Derry Brigade fired forty shots at the enemy patrol. No hits were claimed. All Volunteers returned safely to base.

Friday, February 13

That afternoon IRA Volunteers carried out a bomb attack against the BP oil refinery near Belfast. The bomb placed at the Harbour Estate refinery exploded at 4.30 p.m. causing a small fire. An early telephone warning ensured no civilian casualties.

Friday, February 20

British army bomb disposal experts defused a 150lb car bomb left outside a commercial target in Derrylin, County Fermanagh after working on it for seven hours.

Saturday, February 21

Three cities were the targets for successful bomb attacks by IRA Active Service Units on commercial targets. In Belfast

eight stores, including one in the high security zone, were badly damaged by incendiary devices. In Derry city four stores were damaged and in Armagh city the English chain store of Woolworths was the target. No civilian casualties were caused and all Volunteers returned safely to base.

Wednesday, February 25

A highly successful car bomb attack was carried out against the joint RUC/British Army barracks in Clogher, County Tyrone.

IRA Volunteers placed a 150lb car bomb outside the barracks at 12.25 a.m. The bomb exploded with devastating effect causing permanent structural damage. Unfortunately there were no military or RUC casualties. The barracks had previously been bombed in a carbon copy attack on September 17 1980 with equal success.

Friday, February 27

A British soldier on foot patrol was wounded in the chest when the IRA opened fire on the patrol in the South Armagh village of Crossmaglen.

On the same day the north

Derry town of Limavady was the target for an IRA block-buster bomb. The 300 lbs bomb was placed in a van and parked outside the Northern Bank in the town's commercial centre. Despite efforts by a British army bomb disposal unit, the bomb exploded at 9.15 p.m. damaging over fifty stores, offices and other commercial premises. The cost to the British tax payer will come to tens of thousands of pounds.

Thursday, March 5

Four stores at Glengormly on the outskirts of Belfast were bombed in commercial attacks late that evening. Two were totally destroyed and the other two badly damaged. Thousands of pounds worth of damage was caused.

Thursday, March 12

Two bombs were planted at an office block in James Street South near Belfast's city centre. Extensive damage was caused to a printing works, an electronics firm and another premises. Adequate warning ensured no civilian casualties.

Friday, March 13

Three bombs planted by the IRA in a north Belfast furn-

iture store were foolishly carried out of the premises by civilians shortly before they exploded. The IRA's Belfast Brigade claiming responsibility for this commercial bomb attack pointed out the dangerous stupidity of the civilian action in moving bombs and thereby risking their lives.

Late that same evening a RUC man was wounded in an attack on a mobile patrol by an IRA Active Service Unit in Claudy, County Derry. The IRA unit returned safely to base.

Tuesday March 17

An RUC man was shot and seriously injured in an IRA gun attack in the centre of Derry City. The attack took place at 10.40 a.m. The RUC man had been on foot patrol in Waterloo place when he was hit by a single shot fired by an IRA sniper.

Wednesday, March 18

A drapery store in Newry County Down was badly damaged in a commercial bomb attack at 9.20 p.m. that evening.

Saturday, March 21

Armed IRA Volunteers planted several bombs at an electrical store on the Ormeau Road in Belfast early that morning. A security man who foolishly tried to hinder the IRA units withdrawal was shot in the leg. The bombs started exploding at 10.45 a.m. causing severe damage.

Later that evening an IRA unit planted six bombs in the British Department of Agriculture office block at York Street in Belfast's city centre. The bombs started exploding at 8.00 p.m. causing a fire. A massive blaze caused extensive damage throughout the building which was engulfed in flames.

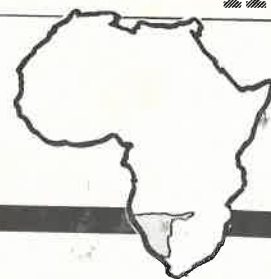
Tuesday, March 24

A convoy of RUC landrovers holding twenty five RUC men had an extremely narrow escape when only the detonator of a radio controlled landmine went off between the second and third vehicle on the Cookstown to Omagh road in County Tyrone.

Friday, March 27

An IRA unit shot and killed an off duty UDR soldier in Cromac Street in Belfast's city centre. The attack took place at 8.30 a.m. The IRA unit returned safely to base. ■

NAMIBIA



South Africa exposed

In January of this year, the Geneva talks on Namibia's independence, which were the culmination of three years of diplomacy, came to a predictable halt. South Africa refused to negotiate seriously on the implementation of a settlement plan which had been worked out by the Western powers with the Pretoria regime itself. The United Nations-backed plan had won the endorsement of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), the legitimate representatives of the Namibian people. Supposedly, only the details remained to be worked out.

South Africa, however, questioned the 'impartiality' of the UN with regards to SWAPO, but this would appear to be a smokescreen for their real motives. First of all, the whole procedure of negotiations was probably carried out to gain time and build up their local Namibia stooges — the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance. Secondly, South African Prime Minister, Pik Botha, probably calculated that given his internal problems a climb-down over Namibia, and a subsequent electoral victory by SWAPO would be too much. Thirdly, the changing international context and the election of Reagan in the USA, probably encouraged the racist Pretoria regime to carry on with a hard line. In this they were supported by General Haig, the new US Secretary of State, who commented that *"it is in our interests that the solution we find should not put into jeopardy the interests of those who share our values — above all, our interests in the broad strategic sense."*

The Western powers were presumably disappointed by the failure in Geneva to obtain a peaceful settlement to the 34-year old conflict over Namibia. Firstly, it was important to uphold the authority of the U.N. in discharging its legal mandate over a trusteeship territory. Secondly, the Namibian issue was seen as part and



SWAPO declares that the liberation war will be intensified. Haig — U.S. strategic interests would dominate in any solution over which he would have influence.

parcel of the attempt to 'rationalize' if not quite reform (which would be impossible) the apartheid regime of South Africa. Thirdly, the failure of the talks have revived demands by SWAPO and others that economic sanctions should be imposed on South Africa. Neither Reagan in the US nor Thatcher in Britain are likely to concede to this, but it is nevertheless an unsettling development. One astute British commentator, Anthony Sampson, notes how *"a successful Western intervention to achieve a settlement could (have) lead to a succession of diplomatic turnabouts (in the rest of Southern Africa). The prospect in Namibia at the moment is bleak. Negotiations in Geneva have collapsed, and the fighting will continue with increasing polarisation."* And this can be dangerous for big business!

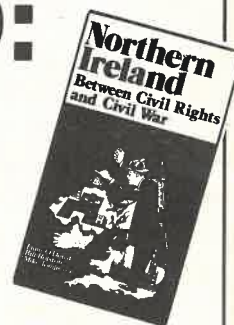
As to the liberation movement SWAPO, they have emerged from

the talks with enhanced prestige. Throughout the talks, they placed the onus on South Africa for the continuation of the war. Even when the talks failed they re-affirmed their support for the settlement plan. They have nothing to fear from negotiations given their undisputed place at the vanguard of the oppressed Namibian people.

But, as SWAPO leaders declared, the war for national liberation will now be intensified and the people will win by force of arms what is rightfully theirs. They rightly refer to the talks as a 'charade' and demand that sanctions including an oil embargo, be imposed on the racist Pretoria regime. The internal puppet parties, such as DTA, cannot block the drive towards real independence spearheaded by SWAPO. Progressive people around the world should step up their support for the Namibian people and their organisation SWAPO. ■



NORTHERN IRELAND: Between civil rights and civil war



It is not often that one comes across a sustained analysis of the six-county statelet since direct rule was imposed by Westminster in 1972. Much of the writing we see concentrates rightly enough on the sixty years of Unionist misrule and systematic discrimination against the nationalist people since partition. But, since Stormont fell in 1972, Britain has made considerable success in presenting itself internationally as a reformer: *"the orange state, is dead, long live British imposed social democracy"*. This book goes a long way to refuting this alleged reformist drive by Britain in the last eight years.

The book begins with a straightforward introduction into the 'shaping and reshaping of the orange state'. We see how class divisions in the North are always cut across by sectarian divisions, so much so that 'normal' class politics have no space to operate. We see that the border, far from being some historical relic of little importance to present struggles, is *"the over-arching manifestation of hundreds of internal sectarian boundaries"*. They avoid the temptation of recurring to the 'two-nations' fallacy to explain this, explaining rather how the history of British imperialism in Ireland itself gave rise to the *'Northern Ireland problem'*. The main bulk of the book is dedicated to a number of case-studies which we now pass on to examine.

The overall theme of these studies is

that since 1968, Britain has carried out a policy of 'compartmentalization'. This is to say, there are a number of discrete compartments — here a 'housing problem' to be resolved through judicious reforms, here a 'terrorism problem' to be resolved through state repression, etcetera. The demands of the Civil Rights movement centred around sectarian discrimination — *"an issue gratefully taken up by the state apparatus, re-defined in legalistic fashion and then conceded"*, according to the authors. But in treating the symptom — sectarianism — the real illness — *partition and imperialist domination* — was left untouched.

The case studies we are provided with are useful and well-informed (covering recent events such as De Lorean, Poleglass, etc): regional policy, local government and housing. Each and every one shows how 'reform' has done precious little to alter the fundamentally sectarian nature of the six-county state. Chapters on 'the limitations of trade unionism' and 'community politics' show how these two movements can do little to change the existing state of affairs, in spite sometimes, of good intentions. The unions are integrated into the state and therefore their claim to be neutral between Republicanism and Loyalism is sheer nonsense. The case against community politics is more complex, but it argues fundamentally against the liberal notion that this will be the path to *"bridge the sectarian divide"*.

The last, and most directly political chapter is entitled 'reforming repression' and goes carefully through the stages

of British military policy in the North, particularly since Bloody Sunday. The much vaunted 'reform' of the RUC is examined realistically, as is the whole policy of Ulsterisation and criminalisation. The overall theme of the book emerges here and in the conclusion: British policy is **simultaneously** about 'reform' and repression, the first being just the gloss to facilitate the accomplishment of the second task. Where the British government have been most successful is in **separating** these two, in the public eye; this book shows how they are inextricably linked, Mason as they say carried out a *"strategy of both more 'reform' and more repression"*.

So, the book is a valuable update on our understanding of the northern statelet and British policy here. It has one fundamental weakness, however. It gives no indication as to the political strategy which flows from their analysis. This fault arises from the academic position of the authors, afraid to draw the logical conclusions from their studies. It is the revolutionary Republican Movement which is working towards the resolution of the so-called 'Northern Ireland problem' in the only possible democratic and just direction: a democratic socialist united republic of Ireland.

And after all, Stormont did not just collapse of its own accord — one would expect some examination of the role of the IRA in a study of this topic. However, faults and all, this book can be recommended to the serious student and activist. ■

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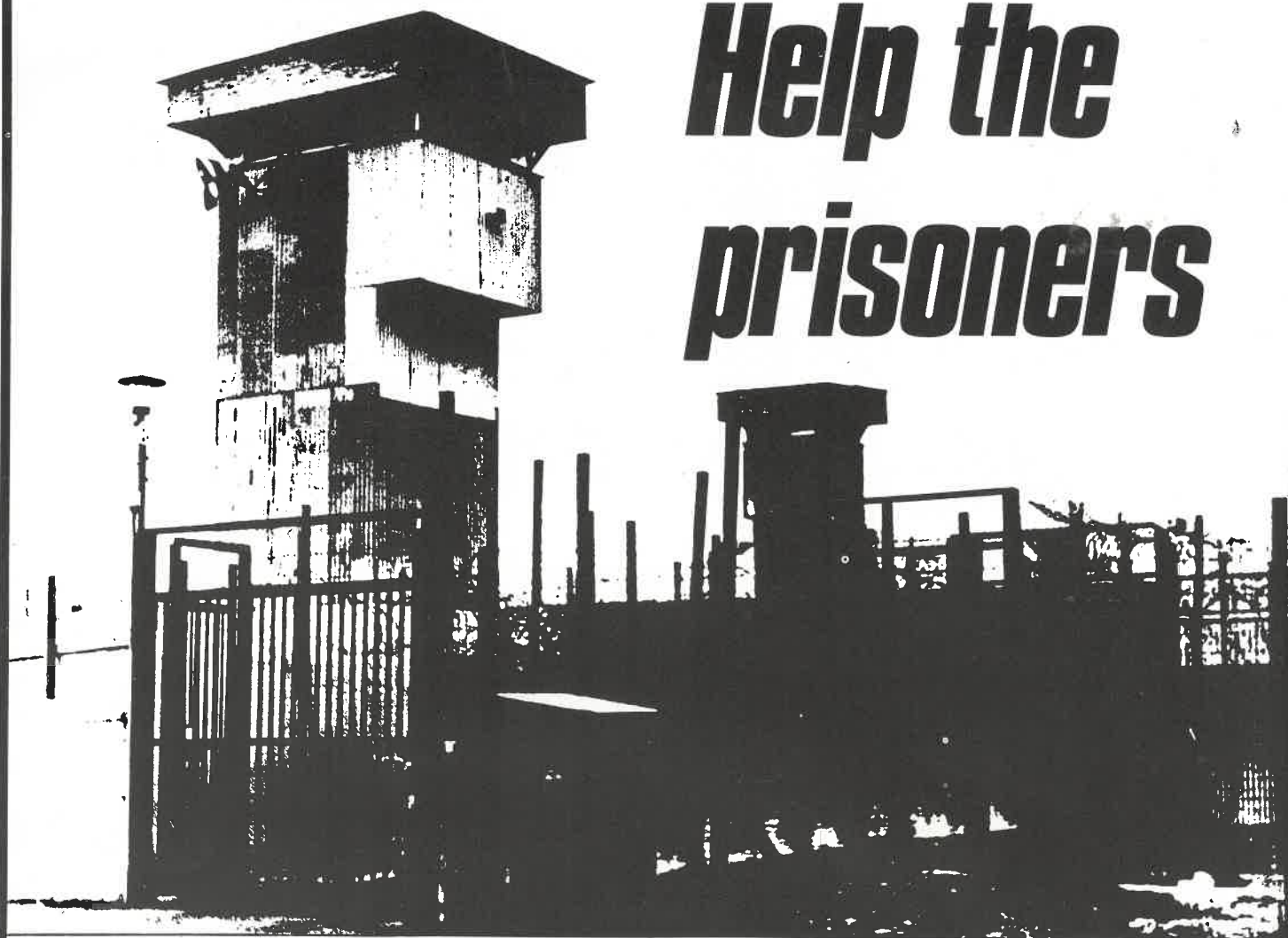
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