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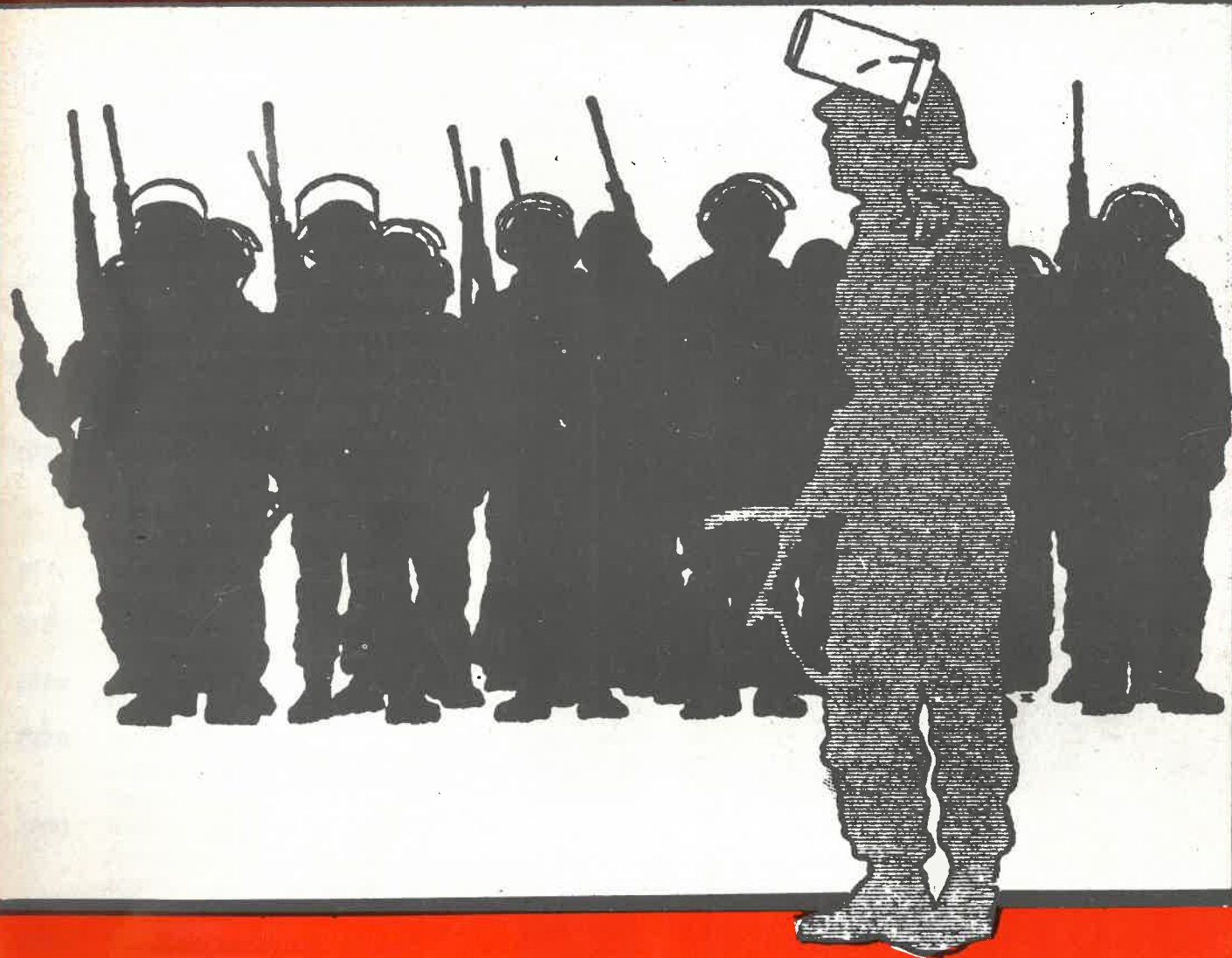
NUMBER 13

IRIS

the republican magazine

SPECIAL EDITION

INSIDE : A photographic history detailing 20 years of courageous resistance against British rule in Ireland



20 YEARS

OF STRUGGLE

VICTORY TO THE IRISH PEOPLE!



RESISTANCE TWO-STEP

You step
backwards;
I pursue

trying
to break the
rhythm

of the rifle
trained
on me.

I look
through you
looking
through the sight

see what you see:
a possibly hostile
native
walking free.

The antenna of your master's voice
quivers with each thick thud
of your bover boots.

You spin on command,
recalled to the toy box,
remote-controlled,
sinister action man.

Though you stalk our streets,
you are not there,
or we are not there,
or the streets are not there.

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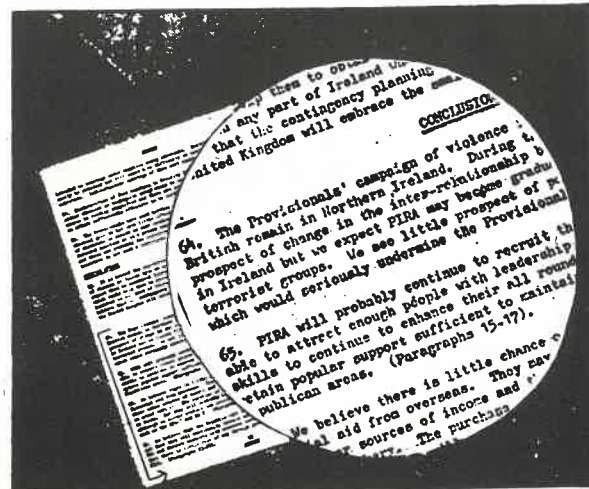
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An extract from the conclusions of the intercepted report

Document 37. See page 37.

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We are going to be free!

IT went from protest, to truncheons, to water cannon, to baton charge, to riot, to pogroms, to gunfire, to resistance, to torture, to prison, through escapes and hunger-strikes, through life and death in country lane, in city street, in prison cell — a struggle heroic and breath-taking in its twenty-year scope.

Looking back it is unbelievable, incredible, the sufferings and indignities our people came through, the pressures they survived, the selflessness of the individuals, the tenacity of communities terrorised, the resilience of the Irish Republican Army.

In the following pages we can but glimpse at what the past two decades encompassed. Awesome authority was met with defiance. Resistance stood up to repression. Courage defeated intimidation. Ingenuity brought down prison walls. Humour, song and poetry kept us sane. And sacrifice kept it going.

Sacrifice, the fuel of all successful struggles. Sacrifices from Kerry to Carrickmore, from Ballymun to Ballymurphy. A struggle paid for in every minute.

Today, in August 1989, we do not 'celebrate' twenty years of British troops on our streets —

a silly accusation with which some of our detractors have tried to slight us. No.

We are instead *commemorating* twenty years of resistance to British rule, to its troops, and to its laws, commemorating act upon act of open defiance, year after year, which nobody — not least ourselves! — thought a community capable.

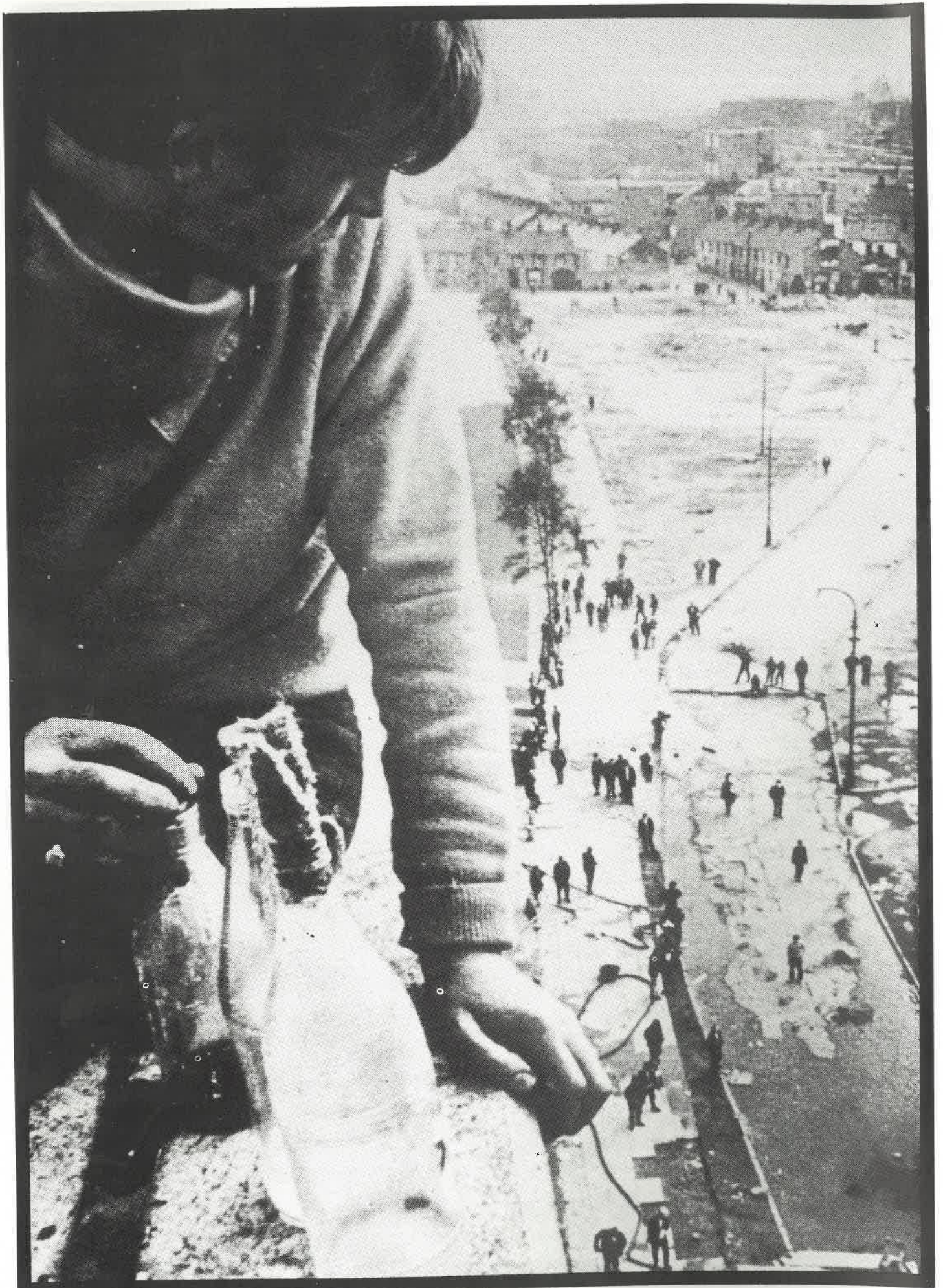
But there is a momentum behind this struggle which cannot be broken, there is now a culture of resistance which cannot be appeased except through the concession of freedom.

Stepping into the 21st year the tables turn against Britain. In 1971 British Home Secretary Reginald Maudling claimed they had "*the IRA on the run*". In 1978 Roy Mason claimed to be "*squeezing the IRA like a tube of toothpaste*". And in 1981 Mrs Thatcher claimed that the H-Block hunger-strike was "*the IRA's last card*".

They may recruit more lies for their campaign of attrition but what cannot be evaded is that 1989 undoubtedly represents 20 years of British military and political failure in Ireland.

From that we draw satisfaction, from our own recent past we draw strength, from the sacrifices of our comrades we draw inspiration.

We are going to be free!



1969

Battle of the Bogside

ON August 12th the Apprentice Boys were allowed to march triumphantly along the walls of Derry which overlook the Bogside. Rioting erupted and nationalist youths, fearing yet another RUC invasion similar to that earlier in the year which led to the death of Sammy Devanney, erected barricades.

The Battle of the Bogside raged for several days with the defeated and demoralised RUC eventually being withdrawn. The British army came onto the streets of Derry on August 14th at 5pm.

“WHEN the Apprentice Boys were marching by they were shouting abuse down at us. A few people exchanged insults and then a few stones were let fly.

“The RUC then made a baton-charge into the Bog’ and we fought back with bricks and bottles. We remembered what had happened to our homes when they got in earlier in the year and this time we were determined to keep them out. They were just as determined to get in.

“It was the first time I’d ever seen a petrol-bomb! The



Preparing to throw petrol-bombs on the invading RUC

cops threw stones and fired tear gas. It was bad on the ground but not so bad up on the roof, the ‘ninth’ floor of Rossville Flats from where we hoisted the Tricolour. We pelted them with rocks and petrol-bombs and made our own gas masks with hankies soaked in vinegar, which weren’t much good! But we stopped the advance of the RUC along Rossville Street.

“We fought from four on Tuesday, right through the night, all the following day and night. On Thursday I felt fresher than on Tuesday! Everybody was together, old women making petrol-bombs, and fellahs cheering us on.

“We defeated the RUC that day — the day they sent in the Brits to replace them.”

— Derry youth

RUC men with weapons drawn attacking the Bogside defenders



1969



'B' Specials standing at the ready

The Pogroms

DURING the Battle of the Bogside the Civil Rights Association organised demonstrations in Coalisland, Strabane and Newry and other towns, aimed at tying down the RUC and preventing reinforcements being sent to Derry. On Thursday, August 14th, the 'B' Specials were mobilised.

It was that night that Belfast nationalists bore the brunt of the full sectarian wrath of the Six-County state.

* * *

"THAT THURSDAY night I left our daughters Cathleen and Elizabeth to the boat; they were going to my sisters in London for a bit of a holiday," recalls 66-year-old Archie Livingstone.

"When I got back to Divis Street I could see there was trouble. I was stopped from getting to our house in Dover Street by my son Pat who was then about 16. There was a barricade across Dover Street and young people were fighting off a large number of loyalists which was gathered at the other end. Pat said, 'there's a couple of shots after being fired down the street, Da. Follow me and we'll get to the house.' He brought me to the back of the house via Boundary Street. Bernadette, my wife, had the front door barricaded and the kids were terrified.

"We went upstairs to look out the window. The loyalists had invaded the nationalist end. They were led by the 'B' Specials and by Councillor Johnny McQuade, Paisley's man, who was in the middle of them giving orders.

"The Sarsfields GAA Club was the first to go up. Then they started to break the windows. There was 16 of a family in Tohill's next door to us. Their house was fire-bombed. Then they broke our parlour window and in came petrol-bomb after petrol-bomb. Nothing could have put the flames out.

"Bernadette and I and the kids fled for our lives over the back wall which was covered in glass. Julie was then aged two. We got into the old council yard. Several times we tried to get across the road into Divis Flats but the RUC



Divis Street in flames

1969

from Hastings Street Barracks were out and were firing up the street. So we had to dodge our way across the street to get to the Flats. We lost everything, our home, all our clothes.

“And that was the start of the Troubles.”

In 1971 Archie's sons Pat and Martin (who was 15 and still at school) were arrested and interned for being republicans. After their release they were again arrested, Pat in South Armagh whilst on active service, and Martin in Belfast, and were sentenced to life imprisonment and 25 years' respectively. They are both in the H-Blocks.

In May 1981 Archie's daughter, 14-year-old Julie, was shot dead by a plastic bullet fired by a British soldier. Two other sons, Billy and Robin, have also been shot and injured by plastic bullets in separate incidents.

AT the United Nations the Dublin government's ambassador, Patrick Hillery (now President Hillery), formally asked for the introduction into the North of UN forces.

By the time the British army took over responsibility from the RUC for patrolling nationalist areas eight people had been killed, including nine-year-old Patrick Rooney, shot dead by the RUC as he lay in his bed in Divis Flats. Hundreds of nationalists had been burned out of their homes.

First British soldier to be killed was Trooper McCabe, from nationalist West Belfast. He was home on leave and was shot dead by the RUC whilst he defended Divis Flats.

First RUC man to be killed was Constable Arbuckle, shot dead by the UVF on the Shankill Road in October when loyalists rioted at the proposed disbandment of the 'B' Specials.



The remains of Bombay Street after being torched by loyalists

IRIS 20 YEARS OF STRUGGLE



1970

Attack on St. Matthews

THE British army billeted in schools, in mills or alongside the disgraced RUC in their barracks. At first welcomed by many nationalists it was discovered that they were on the streets to quell protest and were an instrument of the Stormont government.

'Snatch squads' were used against stone throwers. CS gas was fired into rebellious nationalist ghettos. One teenager was sentenced to six months' imprisonment when caught painting on a wall, 'No tea for Dad's Army'.

In 1969 long-simmering differences within the Republican Movement came to a head due to the failure of the leadership to defend nationalists. The IRA split and a 'Provisional' Army Council began reorganising. (In 1971 the first republican to be

killed in an internal feud situation in over 50 years, Charlie Hughes, was shot dead by the Sticks.)

On June 27th 1970, loyalists attempted to attack the Short Strand district in East Belfast. The IRA came to their defence.

* * *

"I CAME HOME from work, had my dinner, went out with my mate who told me we were babysitting for his sister and brother-in-law in Comber Street, which ran at right angles to where I lived in Bryson Street. It had become by 1969 a buffer zone between loyalist East Belfast and nationalist Short Strand.

"It was a mild summer's evening; the youth of the district were out flirting at the street corners; the children were playing their endless games and a few adults were standing at their doors, or sitting on window sills. There wasn't a hint to me of trouble although earlier that evening the local grapevine had carried news of an outbreak of rioting in Ardoyne between loyalists and nationalists.

"At ten o'clock that night a commotion in Comber Street woke up one of the children we were minding. Vigilantes had tackled what they thought was a loyalist but the man was a nationalist.

"I sat on the window sill and watched the crowd disperse slowly, most to their homes, the vigilantes to the corner of Comber and Bryson Street. Night-time was



1970

wrestling with summer's daylight and the haze and the street incident created an air of apprehension. A pall of smoke rose in the sky from the direction of the Albert-bridge Road and the Short Strand and in the still of the night indistinguishable noises, that resembled voices, could be heard in the distance, but close enough to know that bother was about.

"I gave my mate a shout. He came out and stood beside me. Lights from the houses and street lights cast a glare on the street, the vigilantes waved to a shadowy figure in an entry close by. He emerged, carrying an object, which looked like a rifle of some sort. He walked awkwardly to the corner of the street like a man not used to carrying such lethal weapons. Excited and shocked by what I was watching my brain registered these events and for a split second I was recording in slow motion my first ever encounter with a man carrying a gun.

"He had hardly passed me 'till the screech of gunfire tore the tranquil evening apart. Rapid bursts of gunfire, then screams of "Fenian bastard", which in turn elicited, "Orange bastard"... then more bursts of gunfire. Torn

between fascination and fear I placed one foot in the hallway and another on the street and watched.

"Rumour piled on rumour; loyalists had razed the Short Strand; dead bodies were strewn in the grounds of St Matthew's Chapel, some impaled on the railings; thousands of loyalists were invading the area from several points; the district would be levelled by the morning; some local people were shot in the Chapel grounds.

"I crept, hugging the walls of the houses for safety, to the end of the street where I joined two snipers with their faces blackened who regularly fired at people as they petrol-bombed the Chapel precincts, or menacingly ran past a street junction 100 yards away. Two loyalists walked coolly into the path of their gunfire. I watched them casually light a petrol-bomb and hurl it over the Convent



Rioting in Ballymurphy on June 27th

1970

book in the district's history where similar events had been enacted on many occasions, in those same streets for over 50 years."

— Jim Gibney

wall before walking back into Duke Street. The snipers, numbed by their audacity, paused momentarily but then fired at them as they disappeared, unharmed.

"The grapevine brought more news. The British army had arrived in armoured vehicles. In the distance the drone of their engines cleared their path as the district's defenders melted in obscurity only to re-emerge at their posts when the vehicles passed to resume the battle. As the night wore on to morning the prolonged bursts of gunfire gave way to sporadic bursts, followed by single shots... A new day painfully restored yesterday's normality; the snipers returned to their roles as husbands and fathers. Me and my mate went home to our houses to catch up on lost sleep.

"A scene of devastation greeted the bleary eyes of Sunday morning Mass-goers; burnt out buses zig-zagged across streets; pubs, the centre of community entertainment for decades, smouldered in heaps of rubble; the sexton's house a few yards from the Chapel lay in ruins. The Chapel's doors bore scorch marks, testimony to the intensity of the battle. A local man Henry McElhone was dead, another, Billy McKee, an IRA man, was badly wounded.

"I later learned that I was a witness to a chapter in a

The Curfew

ONE week after the Short Strand attack, and long before offensive military actions had been directed at the British military, 3,000 British troops curfewed the Lower Falls in West Belfast, carrying out house-to-house searches for arms which were badly-needed for the defence of the people.

They shot dead three local men and a free-lance journalist from London. Hundreds of homes and a local school were wrecked. People were prevented from going to Mass.

The curfew was broken when thousands of women, pushing prams and carrying groceries, marched down the Falls Road, swept aside the barbed-wire barricades and 'liberated' the people of the area.



West Belfast women 'liberate' the Lower Falls

1971

Internment



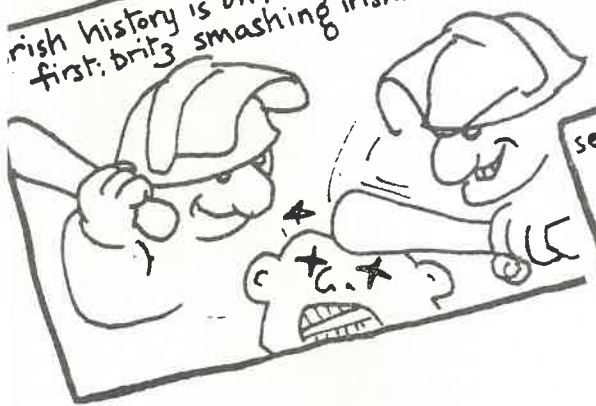
FOLLOWING the curfew an official government policy of harassment and aggression was pursued. Support grew for the republican demands that the British government must renounce its territorial claims over the Six Counties and its support for the loyalist veto, and that Ireland must be allowed to democratically decide its own future.

Support also grew for republican methods — urban and rural guerrilla warfare. On February 6th 1971, the first British soldier to be killed on combat duty in Ireland since the Tan War was shot dead in North Belfast.

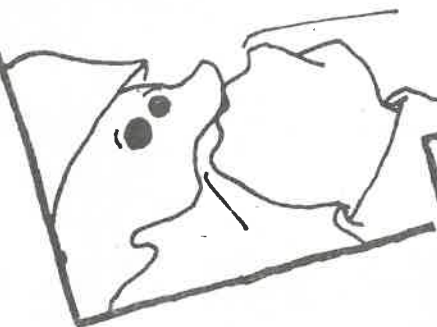
The British and Stormont governments saw the combination of continuing civil rights agitation and armed struggle as a threat to colonial rule and responded by introducing internment on August 9th 1971.

Those rounded up included student leaders, councillors, civil rights activists and republicans. Internment was introduced brutally, 22 people

Irish history is divided into two parts
first: brits smashing irishmen (and women)



second; irishmen & women fighting back



readers of the press
& watchers of tv. will
recognize the first as
keeping the peace,
the second as terrorism



1971

being killed within the first four days.

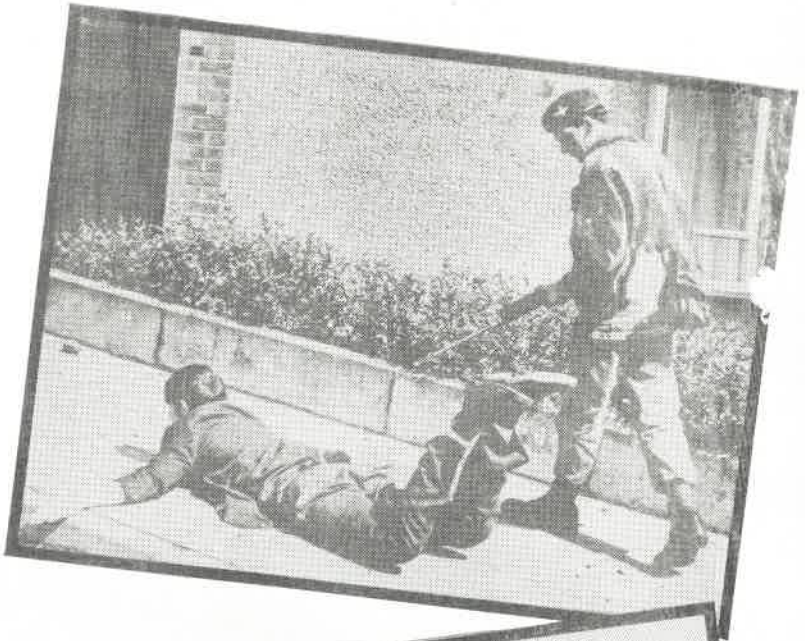
The European Commission on Human Rights later found the British government guilty of torturing those who were beaten for eight days and who became known as the 'Hooded Men'.

"5AM KNOCK at door. Got up, opened door. Soldier there: 'You have five minutes to get dressed.' Marched to army jeep, drove round in circles for about one hour. In Ballykelly interrogated.

"Heard helicopter coming overhead. Landed in field nearby. Could see helicopter and about six plainclothed men in the distance. Plainclothed men also beside us. Four blue bags produced and put over our heads. Short of breath because of bag. Then released from handcuffs which connected one to the other and hands handcuffed to front, individually. Then run across field to 'copter. Landed, did not know where. Lorry backed up to 'copter. Taken out and thrown into back of lorry, like sack of potatoes. Lorry smelt of cow dung. Driven in lorry for about 100 yards. Pulled out of lorry (bag still over head), marched into some sort of building. Stripped naked, examined by doctor. Bag still over head. Put lying on bed, examined. Army overalls (I later discovered) put on me, taken into room. Noise like compressed-air engine in room. Very loud, deafening.

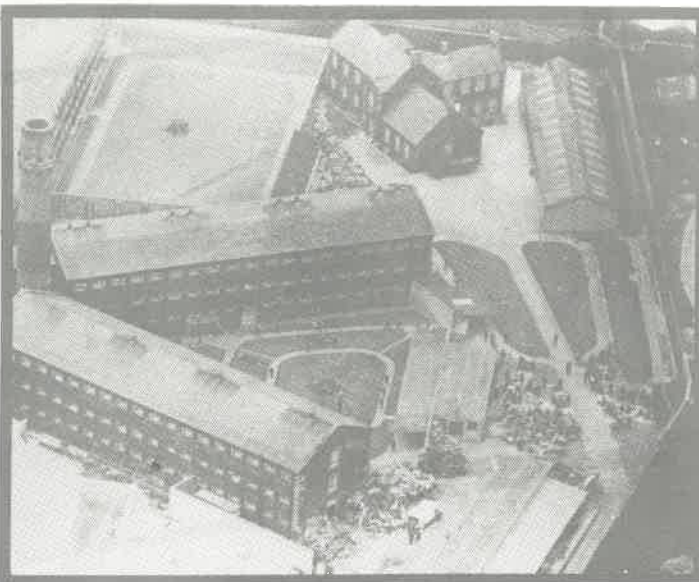
"Hands put against wall. Legs spread apart. Head pulled back by bag and backside pushed in. Stayed there for about four hours. Could no longer hold up arms. Fell down. Arms put up again. Hands hammered until circulation restored. This happened continually for 12 or 14 hours, until I eventually collapsed. Thinking how that Paisley had seized power in some way and that I would be executed or tortured to death. Started to pray very hard. Mouth dried up. Couldn't get moisture in mouth. Pulse taken. Thought of a youngster who had died at six-months old. Started to pray that God would give me strength, that I would not go insane. Fell down several times more. Slapped back up again. This must have gone on for two or three days. I lost track of time. No sleep. No food. Knew I had gone unconscious several times, but did not know for how long. One time I thought, or imagined, I had died. Could not see youngster's face but felt reconciled to death. Felt happy...

"Hunched and made to run over something like corrugated iron. Head beaten against wall. Scurf over my lips from lack of water and of thirst. Must have looked terrible.



IRIS 20 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

1971



Crumlin Road Jail

I tried to speak. Could only manage to whisper, 'Why did you do this to me?' Man behind me holding bag pulled my hair back, said, 'Speak up can't hear you'. Bag pulled over my head again. I was pulled out at running pace. Run about 50 yards. Thrown into back of lorry again. Seemed to be police or military in the back. All punching me in the ribs and knee caps. I could see what appeared to be army or police boots by toe caps. Got a heavy crack at side of face. Passed out.

"When I came to I was in the helicopter again, heading I knew not where. Lorry backed up again. Taken into noise room. Same room where I had been before. Same treatment. Hands up — feet apart. Getting weaker. Did not feel hungry now but had nothing to eat for many days. I had lost count of days. Hands hammered until blood came back again. Collapsed. Hands taken up loosely as I lay on the floor. Let drop again to see if I was out.

"Sat on backside in straight position with protruding pipe at floor level cutting into spine. Arms, legs and knees now numb and stiff.

"Taken into room. Bag taken off head for second time. Detective of Special Branch there before me, with a cup of water sitting on the desk. Men who had taken bag off my head slipped out the door behind me. My voice was nearly gone. Told me to take a drink of water. I drank a mouthful — my first in about four or five days.

"Started asking questions. Could not answer. No voice and half hysterical. My lips sticking together with scum. He got angry and told me to speak up. Began asking questions about IRA activity and arms dumps around Toome. I did not know what he was talking about. I had no knowledge of anything. After about half an hour he said, 'I am going to send you in there again,' which he did..."

— Patrick Shivers

IN Belfast on November 16th nine prisoners escaped from Crumlin Road Jail during a football match by climbing up rope ladders thrown over the outside wall.

ON December 2nd three more prisoners escaped from Crumlin Road Jail. During exercise they had hidden in a drain below a man-hole before escaping in darkness during a thick fog.

1971

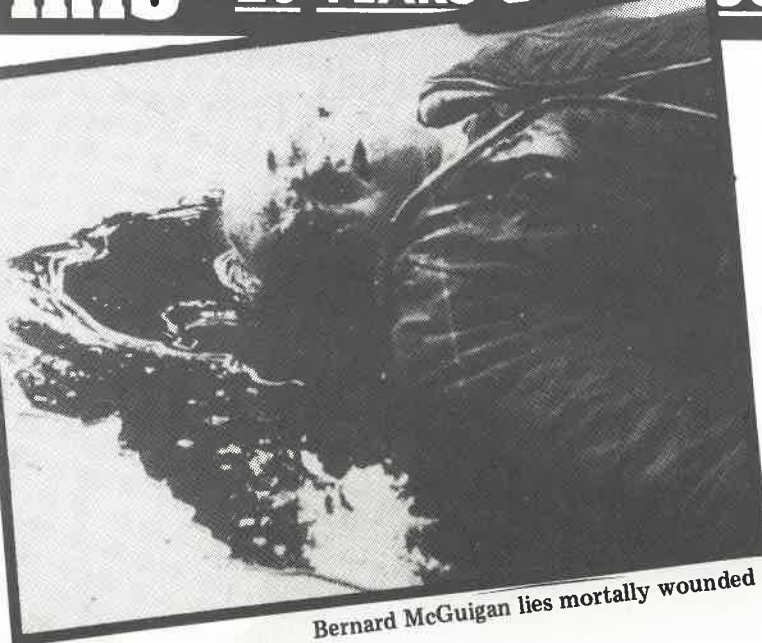


FIFTEEN men, women and children were killed by loyalists when a 50lb bomb exploded in McGurk's Bar in the nationalist North Queen Street, Belfast. The objective of the bombing and other subsequent gruesome attacks which have continued to this day, are to intimidate and demoralise the nationalist community to the extent that it will give up demanding its national and democratic rights.



The massacre of McGurk's Bar

1972



Bernard McGuigan lies mortally wounded

Bloody Sunday

BY January 1972 it was clear that the introduction of internment had failed to stem nationalist resistance. The civil rights protests continued and the Civil Rights Movement was now demanding an end to internment.

At one such march in Derry on Sunday, January

30th 1972, British Paratroopers were sent in to take on the marchers. They shot and killed 14 people, and wounded 12 others. Colonel Derek Wilford, the officer responsible for the massacre, was later decorated by the British Queen.

“THE MOOD seemed almost ebullient, with mothers wheeling prams, children weaving here and there, laughing, joking, playing pranks on the television men and generally adding to an air of a Derry carnival.”

— Simon Winchester, the *Guardian*

4.17pm — the shooting started. It lasted for 20 minutes.

OF the 13 who died during those 20 minutes (another victim, John Johnston, was to die six months later from his wounds), James Wray, Gerald McKinney, Gerard Donaghy and William McKinney were murdered at Glenfada



1972



Demonstrators set fire to the British Embassy

Park, where they ran to escape the hail of bullets down Rossville Street. Their escape route was cut off by other Paratroopers firing down from the corner of Frederick Street.

Wray was wounded twice and lay, unable to move, in the open, as others tried to reach him. His father remembers:

"One man saw him move and knew my lad was only injured. So he made an attempt to get out to him, and as he approached, the army opened fire. His body was lying there as a trap and anybody who went to save him was going to be shot. Minutes later, as Jim looked up, they shot him, from a distance of nine feet, in his back as he lay in the gutter."

As others continued to flee, Gerald McKinney stood holding his hands above his head when a soldier approached him and shot him at point-blank range in the chest. Kevin McElhinney was on his hands and knees. Paddy Doherty had gone out to pick up one of the wounded when he himself became a target. The same with 17-year-old Michael Kelly and 41-year-old Bernard McGuigan. Michael Kelly's father recalled:

"My young fellow saw a man of about 50 years getting hit, and he ran to see what he could do for him. As he ran towards him, he was shot in the stomach. It was his first time at a march in his life."

Bernard McGuigan held up a white handkerchief to walk out to save Paddy Doherty when he was shot in the base of the skull. When 19-year-old William Nash was shot at the barricade along Rossville Street, his father Alex went to his aid. Alex Nash was shot twice in the chest whilst bending over his wounded son, shouting at the soldiers to stop. Not far away, 17-year-old John Young was dragging himself, wounded, in the shelter of the barricade towards the door of the Rossville Flats with people screaming from the windows, "Come on lad, come on, you're nearly there."

But John Young never made it.

ON Wednesday, February 2nd, thousands of demonstrators set fire to the British Embassy in Dublin.



From left to right: Tommy Tolan, Jim Bryson, Peter Rodgers, Tommy Kane

SEVEN internees escaped from the prison ship *Maidstone* by swimming across Musgrave Channel and hijacking a bus.

Of 'The Magnificent Seven' who escaped Jim Bryson was recaptured but escaped again, this time from Crumlin Road Courthouse. He was shot and killed in disputed circumstances in 1973 involving Workers' Party gunmen and British Paratroopers. Tommy Kane was killed in a road accident in July 1976. Tommy Tolan was shot dead by Workers' Party gunmen in July 1977. Peter Rodgers is serving 40 years in Portlaoise Prison and made an unsuccessful bid for freedom in November 1985.

1972



IRA Volunteers in the Bogside

ON June 26th the IRA declared a truce and on July 7th a delegation from the leadership of the Republican Movement was flown to London in an RAF plane for secret talks with William Whitelaw of the British government. On July 7th the truce broke down when the British army used armed force to prevent nationalist families moving into homes in Lenadoon Avenue which had been allocated to them by the Housing Executive. Gun battles erupted.





Seamus Twomey facing British troops during the truce (*Below*) British troops move into Lenadoon



1973

The Claudia

OFF the Waterford coast in March the 298-ton *Claudia* ship was intercepted carrying rifles, small arms, mines and explosives, destined for the republican struggle. Veteran republican Joe Cahill was arrested on board:

"THE FIRST time we approached Ireland it was dark and a heavy storm forced us out to sea again so we took shelter for eight hours off the coast of Wales until it blew over.

"We came back the following night and made contact with the IRA at Helvick. We rendezvoused with a small launch which confirmed that everything was ready — the crane and the lorries. It was great to see the coast of Ireland after being away so long and having been sea-sick for quite a while. We felt a great sense of achievement.

"The launch headed in. We were to give it half-an-hour before we moved in. There were a few small boats anchored around the bay but there was nothing at sea. The ship-ment was in the hold, tied in small bundles, ready to hook on to the jib. We were talking away when suddenly from nowhere several armed men appeared on the deck of the ship. They had silently crept up in another dinghy and we hadn't seen a thing.

"I felt sick, really sick. So shortly after the feelings of elation. We threw overboard a small parcel which the Free State navy spent several days diving for.

"I went off to jail but there was one small consolation. The navy couldn't find the parcel and later the IRA recovered the package from the sea floor. It contained £40,000."

IN Mountjoy Jail, Dublin, a hijacked helicopter landed in the prison yard. Three leading republicans J.B. O'Hagan, Seamus Twomey and Kevin Mallon scrambled on board and escaped. 120 republican POWs were subsequently moved to Portlaoise Prison.

"I REMEMBER that Hallow' Eve very well" said one of the escapees Joe B. O'Hagan. "I was on my way to the exercise yard at about two o'clock. I made sure to appear just as I always did, so as not to alert the Screws. I was stopped and

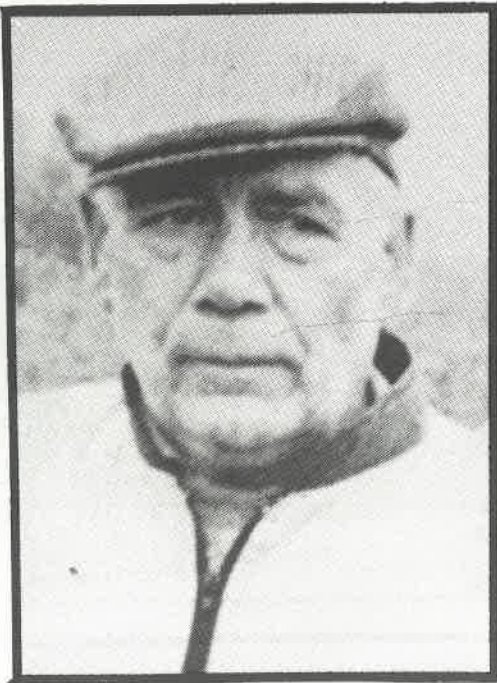
An Phoblacht

FREEDOM GUNS

1867 Erin's Hope 1916 The Aud 1914 The Asgard 1973 The Claudia

MEN FOR TRIAL

- Joe Cahill Belfast Republican Leader
- Desmond McIntyre Lifford Linnis Co. Clare
- Sean Garvey Cahoon Co. Kerry
- Daniel Whelan Kilmashogue Co. Waterford
- Gerald Murphy Ringfoolagh Co. Waterford
- Gerald Walsh Le Man St. Ungarvan Co. Waterford



J.B. O'Hagan

1973



The helicopter which lifted three veteran republicans to freedom

told that friends had arrived from Lurgan to visit me. The helicopter was expected at 2.30, so I told the Screw that my wife Bernadette was to visit that afternoon and I must refuse the others. They must have felt sore for sure, coming all that distance to be turned away. The radio news bulletin later told them the real story. I heard they all joined in the big cheer that went up all over the country when the news of our escape came across.

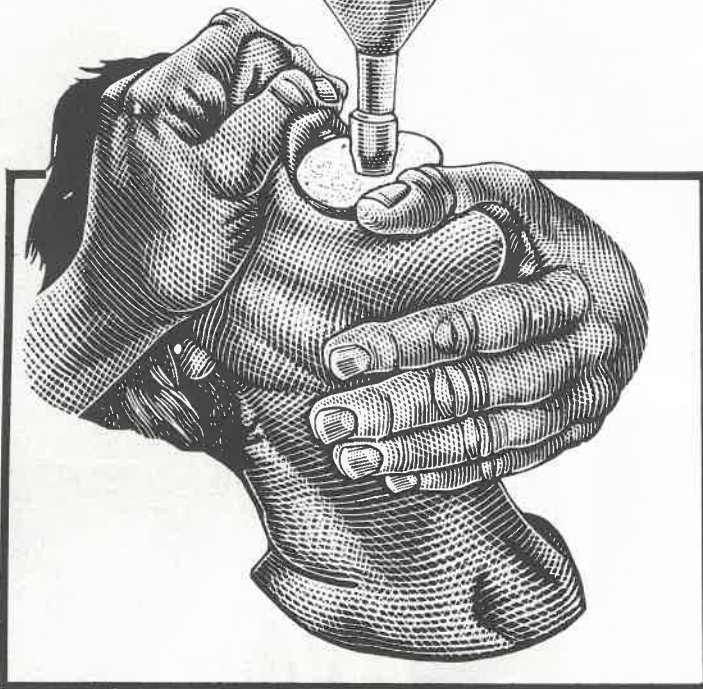
"The Sports Committee had been asked to organise a football match. We were pacing around as usual and occasionally taking the game in. The 2.30 deadline came and passed and some anxious looks appeared on the faces of those in the know. We learned later that the helicopter pilot had arrived with a full fuel tank and that he had to use up a lot of fuel to ensure a successful lift-off with all of us on board. About 3.40 the helicopter appeared to view. I could see the look of amazement on some of our comrades — others were clearly expecting it. It's a pity, I remember thinking, that they couldn't all come.

"Kevin Mallon rushed forward and produced two white handkerchiefs from his pockets. He waved the pilot into

land. Kevin got on first, I was second and Seamus last. I remember noticing a Screw lifting a concrete block and heading towards us. He did not get far. The escape team in the yard blocked him off instead. I held onto the inside door handle. It was not properly closed and I was afraid Seamus might fall out. We were rising now. We could not hear the cheers below for the noise of the helicopter but you could see the men jumping up and down and striking the air with their fists. They were clearly overjoyed. There was one Volunteer in the 'copter with the pilot. The small cabin area was full with the five of us. The trip was short — about ten minutes I would think. The city looked wonderful below — the cars so small and the people were just tiny dots.

"We landed at the old Baldoyle racecourse. We thanked the pilot for the lift and headed off to the roadway and our car, then approaching. It was only later, we three sitting back with a cup of tea in our hands, that we fully appreciated the achievement. It was a real spectacular. However, all the credit is due to those on the outside who planned and carried out the escape. They were the real heroes."

1974



Force-Feeding

"AS DAWNS go the first one of January 1974 was greyer than most. I was lying in bed with the barred window behind me watching the dawn on the cell wall opposite.

"I was being held in G2 Wing of Wormwood Scrubs, a wing which housed mentally-ill patients! Three other comrades, Dolores and Marion Price and Hugh Feeney, and myself had been on hunger-strike for 48 days since we were convicted, along with others, of causing explosions and conspiracy to cause explosions in London on March 8th, 1973. I was given two life sentences and 20 years' imprisonment and we were demanding to be transferred to jails in Ireland and to be given political status.

"The force-feeding began on the 19th or 20th day and the hunger-strike lasted for about 205 days.

"Force-feeding is a process which is not so hard to describe in its physical aspects but difficult to convey in its psychological effects. Six or eight warders would enter the cell, pull the bed to the centre of the floor, surround me and then jump on me, pinning my legs and arms and grasping me by the hair. When they had control of my body they pulled me along the bed and up to the high metal bed-end. At this point my head was forced backwards over the bar by pulling my hair until the neck was stretched straight. I was thus held in a position in which I could make no movement.

"If the doctor in charge was not present during that time (he often removed himself from the scene, perhaps to avoid responsibility) he would then enter with his equipment. He and the warders would then proceed to try to open my mouth. As time went by methods changed a little but at first it was clumsy and crude; pulling my upper and lower lips apart in opposite directions; pressing down on my chin or pushing my nose upwards (this normally led to nose-bleeds); pushing and grinding knuckles into my jaw muscles.

"If this didn't work large forceps were sometimes run violently along my gums to get me to open my teeth. They later discovered a more subtle method by using a thin hard plastic 'ryles' tube which was pushed up my nasal passage. When it hits the back of your throat it makes you want to vomit; once you dry-retch, your teeth part involuntarily; a wooden or metal clamp was violently thrust between my teeth. When I overcame the urge to vomit and managed to keep my teeth closed, they discovered that by moving the



Dublin victims of loyalist car bombs

1974



ryles tube back and forth, rubbing it against the sensitive inner tissue at the back of the nose, they could cause a searing pain. I can only describe this pain as like a hot knitting-needle being pushed in between my nose and eye.

“Inevitably, they succeeded in opening my mouth on most days. They would then thrust in a wooden clamp, which contained a hole in the centre through which a rubber tube was fed into the throat. This part I always found the most frightening and it did not diminish through repetition. It is painful and if the tube goes down the wrong passage it can be fatal.”

(Thomas Ashe, a republican prisoner was killed in this way in jail in Ireland in 1917. Since then the British have not used force-feeding against republican prisoners in Ireland).

“During this process, because you are held as in a strait-jacket, there is no way to communicate. The only part of the body which can move are the eyes and each time there is a complete and total panic. You feel you are about to die.

“At one stage during the hunger-strike we were joined by two other Irish political prisoners held on separate charges, Michael Gaughan and Frank Stagg, who were enduring intolerable conditions in prison on the Isle of Wight. Michael Gaughan died as result of force-feeding after 67 days, as an agreement was reached with the British government on our transfer. Frank Stagg later died on hunger-strike after having been forced on a number of successive hunger-strikes when concessions were given by the administration and then withdrawn again as he regained strength.

“On January 1st I was oblivious to the political significance of the Northern Ireland Executive taking office that day as a consequence of the Sunningdale Agreement. All that we got out of it was bombs in Dublin, Monaghan and Clones which left 34 people dead during the UWC Strike in May. And, of course, the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act under which Gerry Tuite, who escaped from jail in England, and the Crumlin Road escapees, were convicted.

“According to the patchy diary I was keeping I had been vomiting a lot after the force-feeding of the previous day and was experiencing a numbness in my face and, believe me, as frightening a feeling as force-feeding itself.

— Gerry Kelly

In 1977 Gerry Kelly attempted to escape from Long Kesh twice. His political status was withdrawn and he was transferred to the H-Blocks



Funeral of Michael Gaughan (above) in Ballina

where ‘criminalisation’ was the policy. There he joined the blanket protest

In September 1983 he successfully broke out of the H-Blocks in the mass escape.

Portlaoise Escape

IN a cool and brilliantly planned operation in August, 19 republican prisoners escaped from the maximum security fortress-type prison in Portlaoise despite being fired on by troops.

The prisoners overpowered warders in the main cell block, taking their uniforms and keys. They quickly made their way across the prison grounds to the governor’s walled residence where they placed an explosive charge against a gate leading to the prison walls. It was blown open. A second explosive charge was then placed in an iron door-

IRIS 20 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

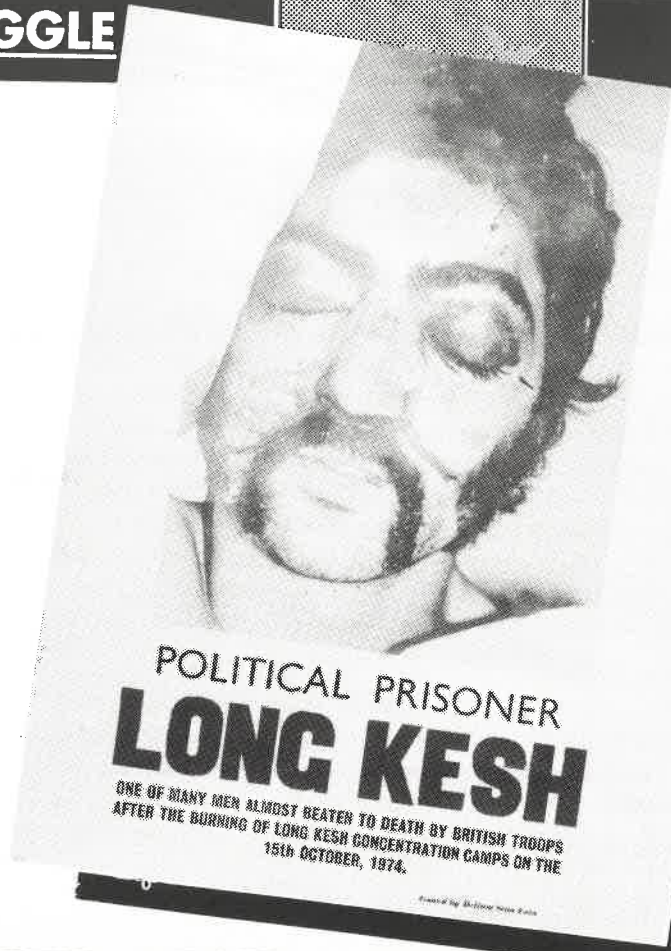
way, detonated successfully, and within seconds the 19 men were outside the jail wall.

AFTER a series of protests in Long Kesh over harassment by warders, assaults by British soldiers on prisoners during raids, and the quality of food, the republican POWs set fire to the camp on October 15th.

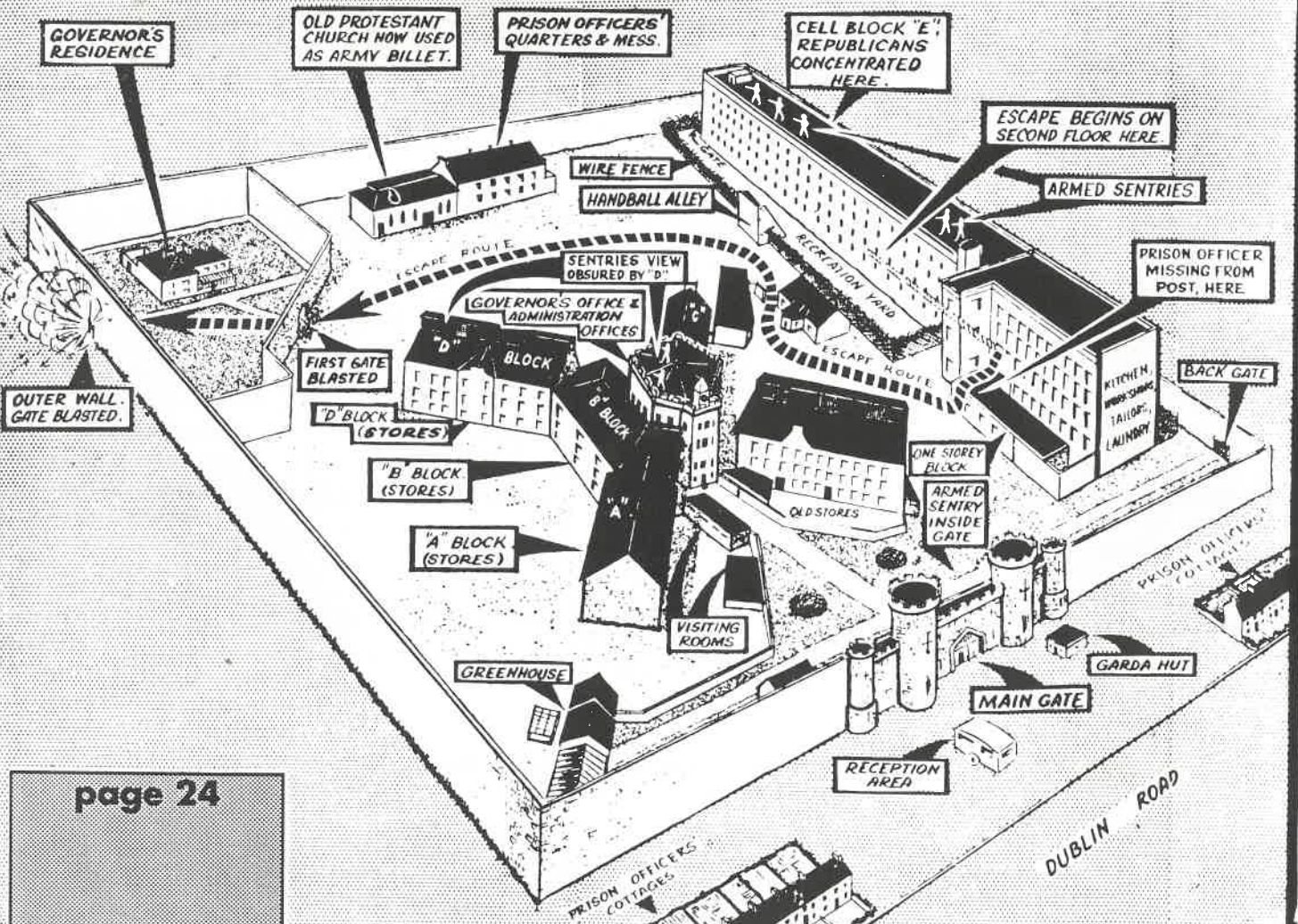
The camp was burned from end to end. While the fires blazed prisoners and internees broke out of their cages and joined up with those from other cages.

On October 16th British helicopters dropped CS gas into the camp, then moved in in force firing rubber bullets. The prisoners were eventually driven onto one football field where they courageously resisted the final assault of the troops. Many were badly beaten.

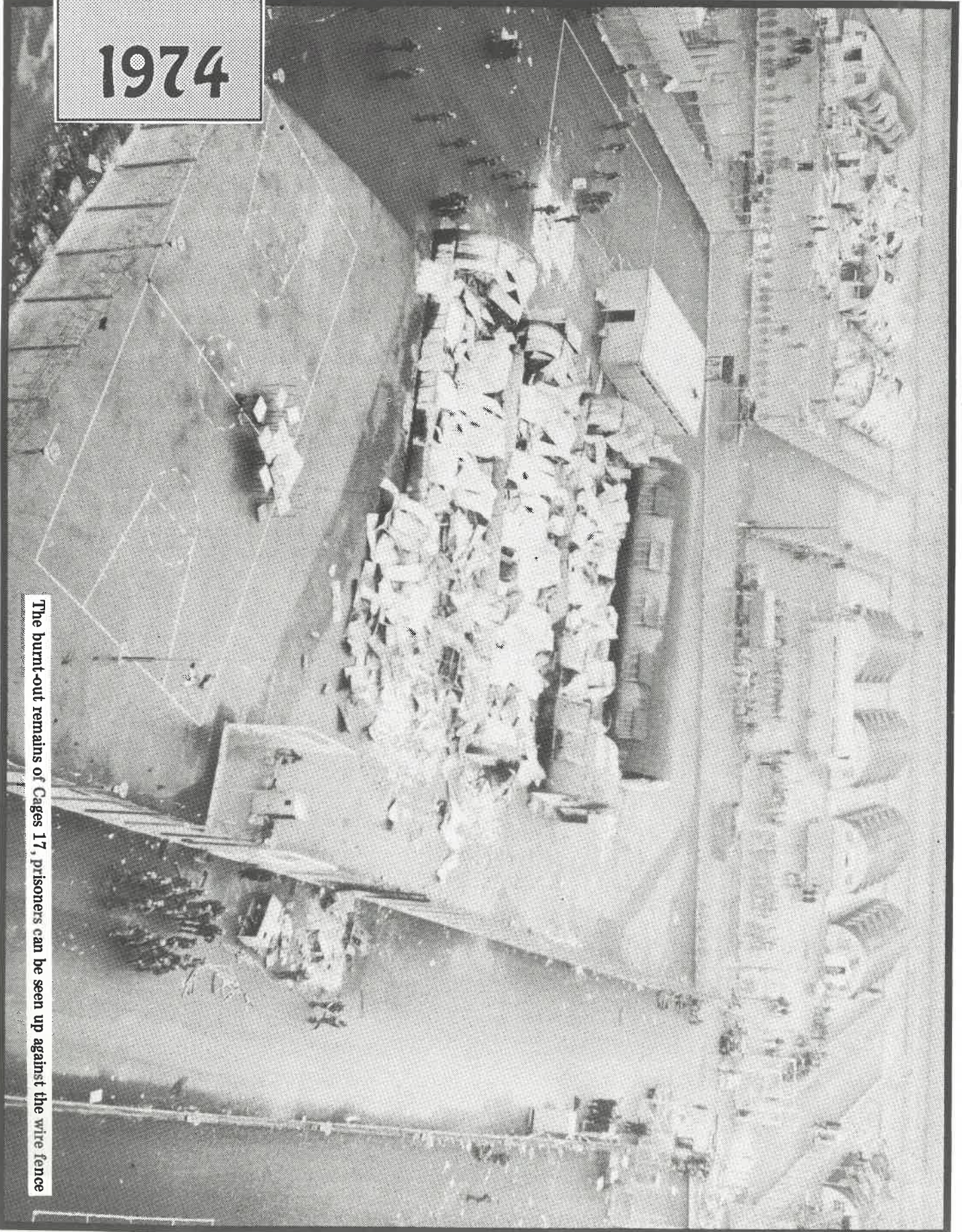
Afterwards the POWs slept on the ground, in makeshift shelters, one blanket between two men. A flu epidemic broke out and sanitary arrangements were non-existent.



Portlaoise Prison escape route



1974



The burnt-out remains of Cages 17, prisoners can be seen up against the wire fence

1974



Hugh Coney, charged with no offence, faced no trial, shot dead by a British soldier

INTERNEES held in the ruins of Cage 5 begun digging a tunnel which ran for 65 yards and on November 6th 33 prisoners broke out, 29 being recaptured within a few yards. During this escape 24-year-old Hugh Coney was shot dead by a British soldier.

“WHEN I GOT OUT of the tunnel I crossed the short patch of grass, the first road, and got into a trench on the side of the road. There were a lot of lads in the trench. Then we started to move one by one towards the second road. We got through the first row of barbed wire and then I heard a jeep pulling up behind me. I turned round and saw two Brits getting out, one with a flashlamp. He shone the lamp into the trench. He ran back to the jeep and got his rifle, and then he said: ‘Right, you two, out.’ We hurried up and moved on to the next row of wire. We were starting to cross the second road, and we just got across it to the next fence when we heard a Brit shout: ‘There’s some at the far fence.’

“Then I heard one shot and a few seconds later, a second. Brendan Shannon shouted: ‘I’m hit,’ and we shouted back to the Brits: ‘There’s a man hit here.’

“The Brit shouted: ‘Get up, you bastards.’ Then Sean McClorey and Tommy Taylor shouted: ‘There’s a man lying in the wire here; he’s bad.’ We shouted: ‘Get a medic.’ Willie Johnston shouted; ‘You don’t need a medic; get a priest; he’s dead.’

“Then the Brit shouted: ‘He doesn’t need a fuckin’ priest.’ Then the Brit shouted: ‘All you bastards lie face down in a star shape on the ground; you know what I mean.’ Then a van-load of Brits came and they pulled us and beat us over to the side of the road and made us lie face down again, but with our hands on the back of our heads. They started shouting: ‘There is a stiff lying here.’ They sent for soldiers with dogs and six came.

“They put the dogs on us lying on the ground and they shouted: ‘There’s only six dogs here, so if you make a run for it one of you will be lucky and get a bullet.’ Then jeeps and saracens started coming and one Brit said: ‘Run that jeep over that stiff there,’ and they let the dogs bite at the dead body.”

— Brian Maguire, Long Kesh POW



1975

Tom Smith

ON St Patrick's night IRA Volunteer Tom Smith was shot dead by troops in Portlaoise Prison during an unsuccessful escape bid by inmates.

There were violent scenes at his funeral in Glasnevin Cemetery when riot-clad gardai baton-charged mourners.

IN March, Long Kesh prisoners being tried for attempting to escape from the camp after the fire in 1974, broke out of Newry Courthouse. Ten got away.



The remains of IRA Volunteer Tom Smith



The armour reinforced lorry used to smash down the gates of Portlaoise during an unsuccessful escape attempt from the prison on St Patricks Day 1975

1975

Brixton Brigade

AFTER a gun attack on a Belgravia restaurant "frequented by the rich" London police chased and cornered a four-strong IRA active service unit in a flat in Balcombe Street.

After a six-day siege the unit, known as the Brixton Brigade, one of the most successful and effective to have operated in Britain to this time, gave themselves up. At their trial in January 1977 three of the Volunteers announced that it was they who had bombed two English pubs in October 1974 frequented by British soldiers in Guildford and Woolwich for which four innocent people had been framed and sentenced to life imprisonment. These three were Joseph O'Connell (Ennis, County Clare), Edward Butler (Castleconnell, County Limerick) and Harry Duggan (Feakle, County Clare). The fourth man was Hugh Doherty (Glasgow/Donegal).

In a statement read from the dock Joe O'Connell said:

"MEMBERS of the Jury:

"There has been an attempt by this court to isolate certain incidents which have been called "crimes". These incidents have been put completely outside the context in



Innocent Irish people arrested and framed by British police for IRA bombs in soldier-pubs



Above: Armed SPG officers during the siege. From the left, Doherty, O'Connell, Butler and Duggan.

1975



British imperialism of which this court is an integral part.”
— Joe O’Connell, Eddie Butler, Harry Duggan, Hugh Doherty

which they occurred in a way that is neither just nor consistent with the truth. The true context is that of the relationship between this country and our country — Ireland. That relationship is one of a state of war against the occupation of Ireland by Britain. No mention has been made in this court of the violence suffered by the Irish people; of the use of internment without charge or trial in the Six Counties; of the conviction before the European Court of Human Rights of the British government for the torture of Irish people, nor of the many brutalities of British colonial rule. The Judge has attempted to restrict the reference to bombings and shootings to “terrorist” offences. We would like to ask the judge whether the bombing of Hiroshima and Dresden were terrorist offences? Whether the torture carried out by British soldiers in Aden and Cyprus and Nola Camp Kenya were acts of terrorism? Whether the British were guilty of terrorism when they forced thousands of civilians into concentration camps in South Africa where thousands of them died?

“We say that no representative of British imperialism is fit to pass judgement on us, for this government has been guilty of the very things for which we now stand accused. This government carries out acts of terrorism in order to defend British imperialism and continues to do so in Ireland. We have struggled to free our country from British rule. We are patriots. British soldiers in Northern Ireland are mercenaries of British imperialism. Yet none of them has ever been convicted for the murders of unarmed civilians which they have committed in Ireland.

“We do not wish to insult the members of the jury when we say that they are not our peers. An English jury can never be the peers of Irish men and women. We will be judged only by our countrymen. Any verdict or sentence from this court is nothing more than the continuation of the hypocrisy of British rule in Ireland and the injustice it has inflicted on our country and its people.

“We admitted to no ‘crimes’ and to no ‘guilt’ for the real crimes and guilt are those of British imperialism committed against our people. The war against imperialism is a just war and it will go on, for true peace can only come about when a nation is free from oppression and injustice.

Whether we are imprisoned or not is irrelevant for our whole nation is the prisoner of British imperialism. The British people who choose to ignore this or to swallow the lies of the British gutter press are responsible for the actions of their government unless they stand out against them.

“As Volunteers in the Irish Republican Army we have fought to free our oppressed nation from its bondage to



Republican POWs in English jails took to the roofs on a few occasions to demand POW status and repatriation to prisons in Ireland

1976



IRA hunger-striker
Frank Stagg

Frank Stagg

ON February 12th Frank Stagg died on hunger-strike in Wakefield Prison. When his body was being returned to Ireland it was hijacked in midair and brought to Shannon Airport on the orders of the Fine Gael/Labour coalition government who carried out the interment amid tight security. His coffin was buried below four feet of concrete and Garda patrols kept round-the-clock watch on the cemetery to prevent the dead man's last wishes being honoured.

However, on the night of November 5th/6th in torrential rain the IRA broke open the concrete tomb, exhumed the remains and re-interred Frank Stagg alongside the grave of his comrade Michael Gaughan in Leigue Cemetery, Ballina.



1976

Criminalisation

THE British Labour government's strategy, 'The Way Ahead', consisted of 'criminalisation', 'Ulsterisation' and 'normalisation'.

Any person charged with a politically motivated offence after March 1st 1976 was to be denied political status and treated like a criminal — forced to wear a prison uniform, do prison work and accept the authority of the administration as being supreme. The IRA was increasingly referred to in British propaganda and by a servile media as 'criminals', 'mafia' and 'godfathers of violence'.

Under Ulsterisation the primacy of the RUC was emphasised and the UDR replaced the British army in a number of areas. This allowed London the advantage of presenting the struggle as an internal, sectarian problem and also meant that casualties would be increasingly borne by the "Protestant" RUC and UDR instead of British soldiers whose deaths directly affected British public opinion and turned sentiment against involvement in Ireland.

The thrust of this military strategy would be supplemented by an injection of capital, new housing programmes and the building of leisure centres, which was meant to emphasise that 'normality' was returning.

The Dublin coalition government fully supported British strategy, introduced the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act, and declared a State of Emergency which led to the resignation of the President and which actually led to the coalition's election defeat in 1977. It was a time when the 'heavy gangs' were let loose and when incidents of brutality in interrogation centres and frame-ups increased.

Ambassador Killed

ON July 21st the IRA executed the British ambassador to Dublin, Christopher Ewart-Biggs. As he travelled to the embassy in a



The remains of the Jaguar car after the landmine which killed Ewart-Biggs

Jaguar car, accompanied by a civil servant from Stormont and the Permanent Under-Secretary at the NIO, Brian Cubbon, a culvert bomb was detonated.

Ewart-Biggs was a senior figure in British intelligence who had served in Cyprus and the Middle East and was attached to Century House, the base of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS).

Maire Drumm

MAIRE DRUMM, vice-president of Sinn Féin, who led many of the street protests and who typified courageous street resistance



Maire Drumm, vice-president of Sinn Féin to British rule, was assassinated by pro-British agents as she lay in the Mater Hospital in Belfast.

Peace People

IN August British soldiers shot dead IRA Volunteer Danny Lennon at the wheel of a car, and wounded his comrade John Chillingworth. The vehicle careered across Finaghy Road North in Andersonstown and crashed into Mrs Anne Maguire and her young family, killing three of her children.

A spontaneous mass organisation was borne on a wave of sympathy towards the Maguires and the 'Peace People' was founded. It was immediately supported by the British government, the establishment media and the Catholic Hierarchy, who all saw an opportunity to attack the Republican Movement.

Although it lasted several years and was a serious hindrance to the building of a movement against criminalisation (the blanket protest started in September), its contradictions became apparent almost immediately. At one of the marches down the Shankill Road a 'peace person' carried a banner which read 'Falls Says Sorry'. Within days a British Paratrooper shot dead 12-year-old Majella O'Hare in South Armagh as she came out from confession. No protests were directed at this.



Religious leaders threw their weight behind the pro-British 'Peace People'

"DANNY AND I were travelling down the Stewartstown Road. It was about a quarter to three. He was driving and I had an Armalite rifle in the front passenger seat. Brits jumped out on us, tried to stop us, but we drove on and they fired about 30 shots after the car, hitting the side of it.

"At the junction of Stewartstown/Andersonstown Road we turned left and four jeeps came speeding out of the slip road at Silver City Fort to try and cut us off. They opened up on us and I returned fire. Danny took a sharp right turn up Finaghy Road North and within seconds the first jeep was right up our bumper. The soldiers were firing all the time. Danny was killed instantly, hit in the back, the lungs and kidneys, and collapsed over the wheel. I was wounded in the back and in the leg.

"The car careered out of control and I got down under the dashboard waiting for the impact of the crash.

"It crashed into Anne Maguire and her kids Joanna, John and Andrew at high speed.

"I got out of the car and reached for the rifle. The Brits opened fire again and I collapsed after about five yards. They then began kicking me.

"I had five hours of surgery and during the weeks whilst I recovered in intensive care the Peace People were organised on the outside.

"Half of the Peace People were probably very, very sincere. At the end of the day the British propaganda machine used them. It happened at a time when we were disorganised, coming out of the confusion of the 1975 ceasefire. All of the wrongs of the British were set to one side and what was singled out as the wrong of the moment was concentrated on.

"It was a very sad occasion.

"I was charged, brought to the Crum' and in July 1977 was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment, serving the first four years on the blanket protest."

— John Chillingworth

1977

Portlaoise hunger-strike

DURING a demonstration in support of 20 hunger-strikers in Portlaoise in April, protestors were viciously attacked by gardai.

IN August thousands of republicans protested against the visit to the North by the British royal family in 'Queen of Death' marches. In Belfast the march was stopped short of the city centre by riot-clad British soldiers who baton-charged the protestors.

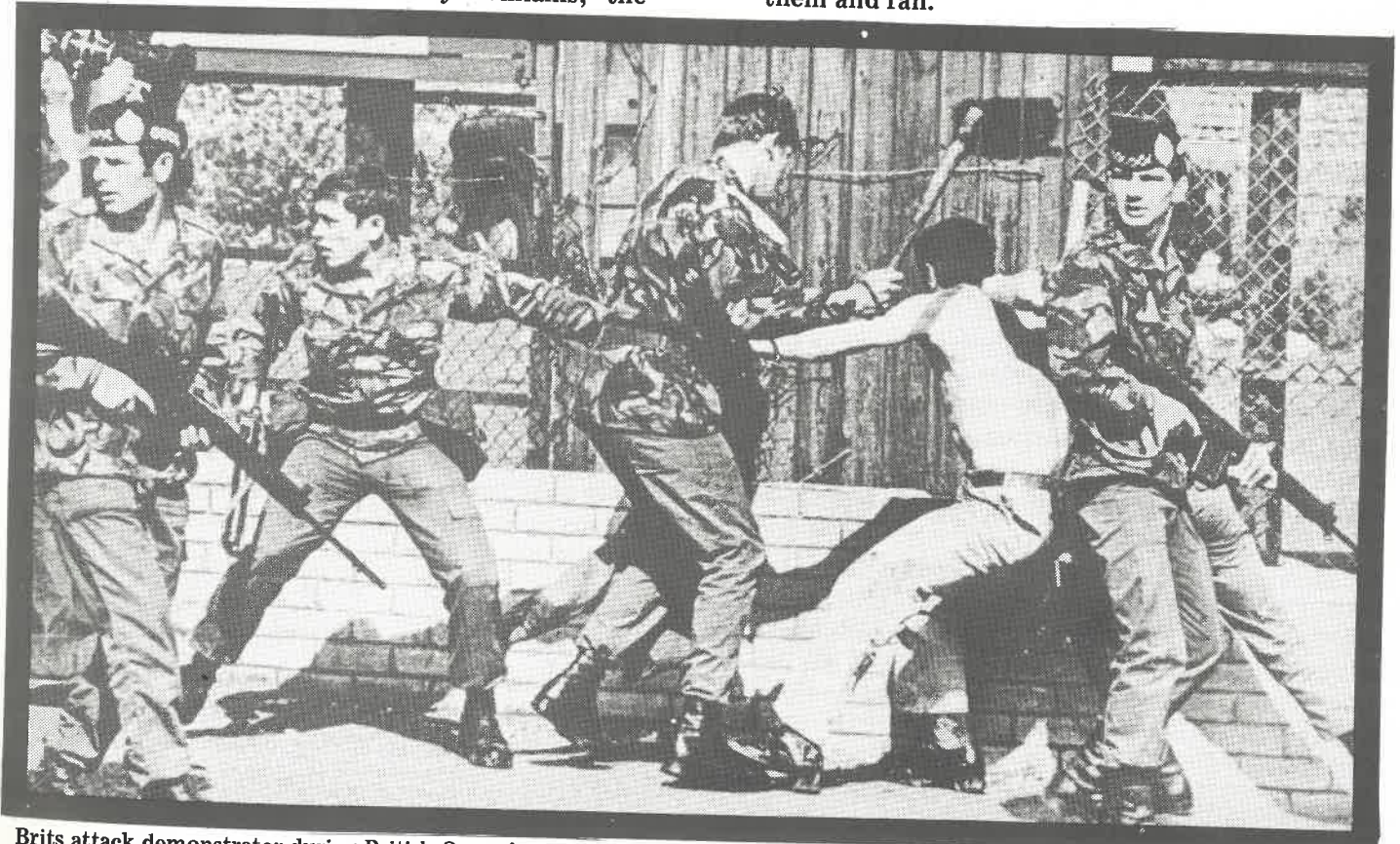
The IRA breached security at one of the venues being visited, Coleraine University, and planted a bomb on a long-delay timing device.

During her visit the British queen hosted a tea for Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams, the



Gardai attack hunger-strike sympathiser

'Peace People' founders, on board the royal yacht moored off the Irish coast. By 1980 Corrigan and Williams were fighting among themselves. They split £80,000 from the Nobel Peace Prize between them and ran.



Brits attack demonstrator during British Queen's visit

1978



Castlereagh interrogation centre

Torture

THE 'Conveyor Belt' system swung into full gear. The British government, despite assurances given earlier to the European Court of Human Rights, once again gave the clearance for brutality and ill-treatment to be used in interrogation centres in an attempt to break republican resistance.

The 'Conveyor Belt' system comprised of seven-day period interrogations in RUC detention centres by specially-trained interrogators in Omagh, Gough, Strand Road and Castlereagh. Detainees were beaten and forced into signing self-incriminating statements. These statements were then largely accepted by the Orange judiciary who agreed to a lowering in the standard of proof. Those convicted were then transferred to the H-Blocks where they were stripped and again beaten in an attempt to criminalise them and thus criminalise their cause.

The Amnesty International mission in 1977 was denied vital doctors' reports but was still able to show that while the Strasbourg Court was examining the 1971 and 1972 torture allegations against Britain, which the European Commission had confirmed, the beatings were still going on.

"... patchy hair loss at the front and back of the head; a swelling of the ring finger; three bruises on his left arm; a large bruise four by three inches at the top of his stomach and an abrasion and bruising on his right knee and leg. There was also extensive bruising along both hip bones and fading bruises on the back of his left thigh..."

— typical victim recorded in doctor's report

British Labour MP Roy Mason was the direct ruler during this period and every Monday morning he presided over security meetings in Stormont Castle which afterwards issued statistics boasting about the rate of arrests.

In 1978 he claimed he was "squeezing the IRA like a tube of toothpaste". He left Ireland in 1979 and since then has been in fear of his life, living in a fortress in Barnsley, Yorkshire, with round-the-clock police protection.

"ACCORDING TO Ministers who attended the Monday morning meetings, the mood tended to be 'gung ho': 'We're beating them, the bastards are on the run, we're scaring the life out of them,' were the kind of sentiments frequently expressed. A Minister told me he sometimes felt like pinning medals on everybody..."

"They (some RUC men who spoke off the record) told me that the atmosphere in the interview room was 'indescribable', and only the Provos knew what it was like, because only they had been through it."

— Peter Taylor, *Beating the Terrorists*

THE only ventilation in the cells in Castlereagh comes through a blast of air delivered from a vent above the cell door. It was from such a vent that the RUC alleged that Brian Maguire hung himself in May 1978. However, the vent was of insufficient strength to support a man's weight and one of those rounded up and interrogated by the RUC around this time, Phelim Hamill, from Belfast, states that the RUC attempted to strangle him with a towel in order to make him sign an incriminating statement. He passed out on a number of occasions as a result of this choking. Also, the Amnesty International report of June 1979 reported that there were fourteen separate allegations of attempted strangulation reported by Castlereagh victims in this period.

EDDIE Rooney, an ex-internee, was thrown out of the upstairs window of Springfield Road Barracks during interrogation. He fell

1978

several floors but miraculously survived and was transferred to the neurological unit of the Royal Victoria Hospital with serious head injuries.

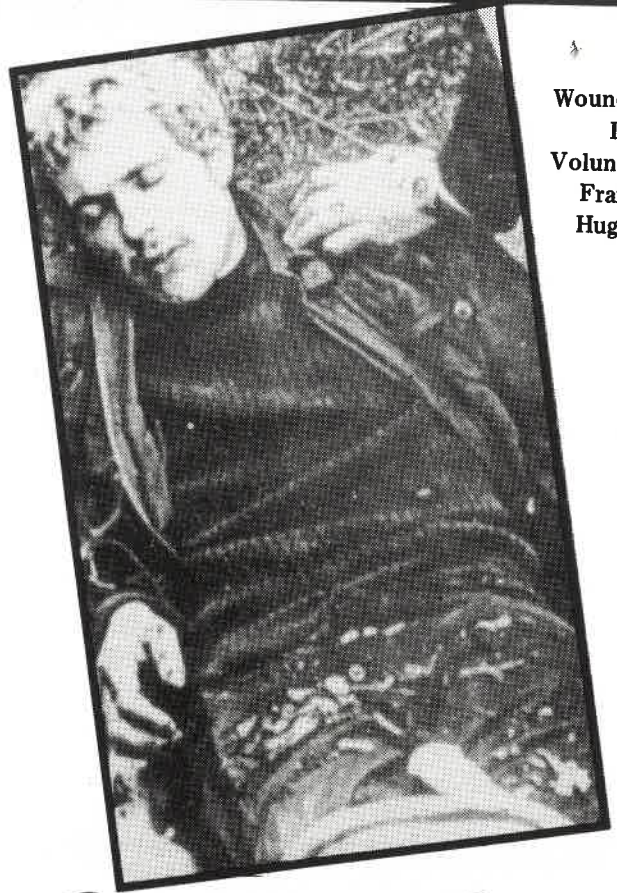
IRA Volunteer Jackie McMahon, arrested by the RUC in January 1978, was never seen alive again. Several months after his arrest his body was recovered from the River Lagan.

RAIDS against *Republican News*, begun in early December 1977, culminated in the arrest and prosecution of the paper's staff and the printer, a member of the SDLP, on trumped up IRA conspiracy charges. A photo-library, collected over a period of six years, typewriters, cameras and photo-copying machines were seized. The British army and the RUC burgled the Republican Press Centre and threw the telex machine out of an upstairs window and into the back of an army truck. The broken telex, however, was the property of the post office!

After months on remand the charges against the staff were eventually dropped in February 1979 and around the same time *Republican News* merged with *An Phoblacht*.

Further attempts were made to disrupt the operation of republican publicity work but the most serious and damaging act was the introduction of censorship directives by the British government in October 1988 banning Sinn Fein interviews on television and radio. This was more or less a replicate of Section 31 of RTE's Broadcasting Act — the very damaging censorship directive used to keep republicans off the air in the 26 Counties since 1973.

IN the H-Blocks the protests demanding the return of political status was intensified when, after being denied proper washing and toilet facilities, the blanketmen launched the no-wash/no slop-out campaign (which continued until March 1981).



Wounded
IRA
Volunteer
Francis
Hughes

Capture of a freedom fighter

“AT 8PM ON THE night of March 16th an undercover unit of the Special Air Services took up a position on the south side of the Ranaghan Road, about three miles from the little village of Maghera. It was freezing cold, but the sky was clear and there was little wind.

“Lance Corporal David Jones and Lance Corporal Kevin Smyth were watching a farmhouse...

“The two soldiers shifted over to a manure heap on the edge of the field, giving them a view up the drive... At 9.10 Smyth, whose turn it was at the radio, reported movements at the farm...

“There seemed to be two men, wearing berets and combat jackets and carrying guns in a semi-alert position, butts at the right shoulder, muzzles down to the left. In the dark they looked like soldiers. He called out to them.

“One of the men had dyed his hair light blond and darker roots were showing. He had a small badge on the left breast pocket of his Irish army-surplus combat jacket, with the word ‘Ireland’ and a small Tricolour. He was carrying an M14 rifle and two magazines of twenty rounds each taped together. He had a nickel-plated .38 Special in a leather shoulder holster which had been made for him by

1978

a young admirer while staying in a safe house about six months before. The other man was wearing a beret and carrying a rucksack on his back. He also had a semi-automatic rifle, the small, light and deadly Armalite — again, with two magazines of thirty rounds each bound together — and a 9mm pistol.

“There was a tin of sardines in the rucksack, with a couple of apples and bars of chocolate — enough to take the edge off the hunger during the long nights that they were on the move; daylight was reserved for hiding and sleep.

“They were alert, but not really nervous. Half an hour before they had heard a helicopter hovering in the area, which was always a danger sign — it could have been off-loading a patrol. Then they heard a murmur in front of them; it sounded like ‘OK fellows’, spoken in an Irish brogue. Soldiers! And twenty or thirty yards beyond them another group. Simultaneously and without a word the two men swung the muzzles up.

“A bullet hit Smyth in the stomach, just below his navel. The force of it knocked him over on to his back. Jones was hit in the chest and started screaming. Smyth pulled himself to his knees, cocked his submachine-gun and let loose a long burst of automatic fire at the running men. He dropped the Sterling and crawled to the radio. He fumbled, but finally got it working and called for help. Then he pulled himself over to Jones, who was continuing to scream. Smyth tried to open his first-aid kit, but was too weak. Scared of his own loss of blood, he rolled on to his back and tried to press the exit wound into the grass. He could feel it was not working, so he turned back on to his belly, hoping that the smaller entry wound would not leak the precious fluid so fast.

“The two guerrillas were backing away desperately as they fired. The smaller of them felt something warm on his left hand. He thought he had been hit, but it was a blood splash. They both turned to run and the bigger man gave a groan and fell. His companion began to sprint, hoping to draw the fire, and then felt warmth on his leg; this time he had been hit, about two inches above his ankle, but the bullet had gone straight through — missing his shin bone by a fraction of an inch. He zigzagged across the field, head down. He heard screaming and the bullets zipping overhead — it sounded like a heavy machine-gun. ‘I’ll never make it to the end of the field,’ he thought to himself. The blood was soaking into his sock. He scrambled through one hedgerow and then a second, the pocket of his jacket ripping open as he went, strewing ammunition on the ground. About three quarters of a mile from the shooting he stopped, gasping for breath, the rucksack still on his back. He looked back. Headlights showed the reinforcements were arriving. He limped on, his leg getting stiffer...

“The brief gunfight had broken out at 9.16pm. At 9.41 the ‘quick reaction force’ of six men, stationed at nearby Kilrea police station, roared up in two Land Rovers. An

ambulance nearly beat them to it. The injured men were rushed to the Mid-Ulster Hospital, at nearby Magherafelt. Surgeons operated immediately on Jones, but the single bullet — entering between the eighth and ninth ribs on the left and penetrating his stomach and liver — was fatal. He died the following evening from shock and uncontrollable infection. Smyth survived.

“The debris of the gunfight lay strewn in the field at first light. The soldiers quickly found the M14 rifle lying in the grass with seven rounds of ammunition still in it. Empty cartridge cases lay around. They spotted a blood trail going off into a hedgerow in the direction of the Glen-shane Pass, towards the west. Following it they picked up a beret, a pair of gloves, a packet of Gold Bond cigarettes and a tube of Blisteze lip salve, the Smith and Wesson loaded with another six rounds and two more full magazines for the M14. The blood trail ran about 600 yards, across the Ranaghan Road, through three hedges to a water-hole where a leather belt with holster was spotted. An army tracker dog led them across three more fields. The animal lost the scent briefly, but two spots of blood were found on the doorstep of a farm building. The searchers began a sweep, to try and pick up the trail again. One of the searchers, Private Geoffrey Cheshire, came up to an old stone wall and spotted a man’s shape in a nearby clump of thorny bushes. He was sitting, with his legs in front of him wearing a combat jacket, army-style trousers and the ubiquitous Doc Martin boots. His left thigh was covered with blood. Cheshire called out to him twice, asking who he was. The man did not reply. Private Michael Downes joined Cheshire. They cocked their rifles together and the man lifted his hands, saying: ‘You’ve got me.’ Then he put his hands back on the ground behind him, threw back his head and started coughing. Downes asked him if he was in pain. The man looked at him and smiled. Cheshire asked his name. ‘Seamus Laverty’, said the man. Other troops and police arrived at the scene. Detective Denis Murray asked him again who he was and he said: ‘Eamonn Laverty’. Murray said: ‘I think you’re Francis Hughes.’ He spoke hopefully, but with confidence. The man’s face was on notice boards in every police station.

“They were in no hurry to help him, though; they posed him for a photograph before loading him on a stretcher. He shouted ‘Up the Provos’ as they carried him away.”

— David Beresford, *Ten Men Dead*

Francis Hughes was sentenced to life imprisonment. He was on the blanket in the H-Blocks, joined the hunger-strike on March 15th, two weeks after Bobby Sands, and died on hunger-strike 59 days later on May 12th 1981 aged 25.

1979

Document 37

IN a scoop which shattered the thrust of the British government's propaganda on criminalisation the IRA intercepted and published a secret assessment of the guerrilla organisation prepared by the Commander of Land Forces in the Six Counties, Brigadier James Glover. Called *Document 37* — that was the number of the copy which was seized — it said:

“OUR EVIDENCE of the calibre of rank and file terrorists does not support the view that they are merely mindless hooligans, drawn from the unemployed and unemployable...”

“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 lifestyle.”

Brigadier Glover continued:

“The Provisional leadership is deeply committed to a

ONCE I USED TO
THINK THAT THE
PURPOSE OF
NEWSPAPERS WAS
TO TELL US
NEWS!



long campaign of attrition. The Provisional IRA 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...”

The overall conclusion of the document is the most damaging one to the British contention that they can defeat the armed struggle. He said:

“The Provisionals’ campaign of violence 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.”



The IRA — The People's Army — addresses supporters in Casement Park GAA grounds during a demonstration in August 1979

1979

Mountbatten and Narrow Water

IN a major operation which shook the British establishment Lord Mountbatten, former Chief of the United Kingdom Defence Staff and cousin of the queen of England, was killed in a remote-control bomb attack on board his yacht off Mullaghmore, County Sligo.

Four hours later the most successful IRA attack against British forces in 58 years took place at Narrow Water Castle close to Warrenpoint in South Down when a full rifle-platoon of Paratroopers was wiped out in an ambush laid, according to a British army spokesperson, "with enormous skill".

IRA explosives engineers planted a huge bomb and a landmine. A charge of over eleven hundred pounds of explosives in a hay-trailer was parked at the side of the main Warrenpoint to Newry Road. A five hundred pound landmine was also buried beneath the stone gate-post of a derelict lodge.

Both bombs were to be detonated by sophisticated radio-control devices from an ambush position set up by the Volunteers.

On Monday afternoon, August 27th, over fifty British soldiers in a convoy of two four-ton lorries and a Land Rover left their base at Ballykinlar Camp to relieve the garrison in Newry. (Ballykinlar Camp is where people were tortured in 1971 before being interned, and which featured in the Strasbourg Court Hearings).

The soldiers — a rifle-platoon — were members of the notorious 2nd Battalion Parachute Regiment. As the third vehicle of the army convoy passed by the hay-lorry the bomb was detonated by a radio-signal triggered by an IRA Volunteer. Six Paras were killed immediately and two seriously injured. According to the *Daily Mail's* defence correspondent, "the officer in command of the Paras, 35-year-old Major Peter Fursman, did exactly what the IRA had hoped. He drew up the remains of his force in the lodge



1979

gates — alongside the second bomb — and warned his men to take cover from possible sniper fire...”

The Paras radioed for reinforcements. Twenty-five minutes later three Wessex helicopters brought in extra troops from the Queen's Own Highlanders in South Armagh, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel David Blair.

When they took up position an IRA active service unit, which despite all the dangers had waited with great composure, detonated the land-mine killing ten more Paras and two Highlanders, including Blair, the most senior ranking British officer to have been killed up until then.

A twenty-foot crater was torn in the side of the road and the Paras then recklessly opened fire across the border killing Michael Hudson, whose father ironically was a coachman at Buckingham Palace. The Paras also wounded another civilian and shot up homes on the Omeath side of Carlingford Lough, narrowly missing many people.

The Brit fatalities, besides Lieutenant-colonel Blair, and a lance-corporal from the Highlanders, included eight privates, two lance-corporals, three corporals and two sergeants and Major Fursman, all of the 2nd Battalion Parachute Regiment. Two Paras were also seriously injured.

Jailteacht

BA iad na ranganna Gaeilge a ba mhó in Éirinn iad ach ní raibh cailc ná clár dubh ag na daltaí. Ba iad sin na ranganna a eagraíodh taobh istigh de na Blocanna-H ar bhonn laethúil le linn agóid na mblaincéad. Níorbh fhada gur thuill na ranganna céanna agus líofacht na mac leinn an teideal 'An Jailteacht' do phluchóga na Ceise Fada.

'Céimithe' de chuid 'cásanna' na Ceise a bhí sna múinteoirí a b'oilte — Bobby Sands ina measc — agus chuirí duilleoga as leabhair foghlama isteach chuig na scoláirí ciocracha faoi choim — ó tharla cosc a bheith ar aon abhar scríofa, bíodh sé i mBéarla nó i nGaeilge.

Scairtí na focail ó chillín go cillín agus scríobhtaí síos ar na ballaí nó ar an doras iad le gléas géar ar bith a bhí ar láimh. Spreag eiseamláir na gcimí a gclanna agus lucht a dtacaíochta ar an taobh amuigh gur tháinig fás nach beag faoi athbheochan na Gaeilge a bhí ag borradh cheana sna Sé Chontae.

Idir sin is trathas shiollaigh as na ranganna céanna cainteoirí líofa Ghaeilge a bhfuil a bpáistí anois ar Ghaelscoil-eanna, díograiseoirí teanga agus, ar a laghad, údar amháin, Eoghan Mac Cormaic, fear atá faoi ghlas ar fad ach a bhfuil a leabhar crosfhocal Ghaeilge, *Fite Fuaite* — an chéad cheann ariamh as Gaeilge — díolta amach. Sin uilig agus i ina neamhtheanga dár le hÚdarás na Ceise!



No escape at Narrow Water for the British army

1980

UDR attacked

AN IRA land-mine attack just outside Castlewellan, County Down, in early January left three UDR soldiers dead and injured four others. It brought the death toll of the UDR to 101.

many. In claiming responsibility the IRA also admitted that it was behind the bombings against British army NATO bases in 1978 and 1979; the explosion in the centre of Brussels, Belgium, which injured four British army bandmen in August 1979; and the execution of Sir Richard Sykes, British ambassador to the Hague in March 1979.

AN IRA active service unit shot and killed Colonel Mark Coe, a staff officer at the British corps headquarters in Bielefeld, West Ger-

Sykes had carried out the investigation into the execution of Ewart-Biggs in Dublin in 1976, and like Ewart-Biggs was connected to British Intelligence.



IRA land-mine in Castlewellan kills three UDR soldiers

1980

IRA Volunteer Mairead Farrell (above) came through 12 years imprisonment, including the no-wash/no-slop-out protest, to die at the hands of the SAS in Gibraltar in 1988



Armagh no-wash

"TWO YEARS after the no-wash protest had begun in the H-Blocks we were still on a no-work protest. Our no-wash protest started after an incident when male Screws carried out a raid on the wing and beat up some women.

"We were told to move to Association, one at a time in single file. But the male Screws had surrounded us as we moved forward and started beating us. They threw us into our cells and we were locked up for 24 hours. They wouldn't allow us to use any toilet amenities.

"Under European Law we were entitled to one hour's exercise no matter what.

"And they said, 'Okay — we'll give you one hour.'

"So we said, 'Well, leave the toilet facilities open.' This was because in the cell all we had was one chamber pot between two prisoners. They refused this. We were only allowed out into the yard four or five at a time and the male Screws followed us around.

"We had slops in the chamber pots and we had to slop out in the wing which we did. We were then locked up 23 hours a day and we were denied access to books in the library and denied access to the toilets.

"So for 23 hours a day, from February 1980 until March 1st 1981 when Bobby went on hunger-strike, we were on a no slop-out protest with our cells covered in excreta, denied washing facilities, denied dignity..."

— Mairead Farrell

IN an attempt to reach a settlement of the protest for political status the IRA unilaterally called a halt to its campaign against prison warders. Cardinal O Fiaich and Bishop Edward Daly entered into prison talks with direct ruler Humphrey Atkins. When these failed a hunger-strike began in the H-Blocks and ended shortly before Christmas, without loss of life, when the British promised the introduction of a more liberal prison regime.

They quickly reneged on these promises, refused prisoners access to their own clothes, and set the ground for the historic second hunger-strike.

THE BLANKET

We do not wear the guilty stare
Of those who bear a crime,
Nor do we don the badge of wrong
To tramp the penal line,
So men endure a pit of sewer
For freedom of the mind.

Nor do we bend to black clad men
When torture scream is shrill,
They who slight God's given right
Of each to his free will,
So bend the back upon the rack
Of H-Block torture mill...

They tramped us down into the ground
And righteous men n'er spoke,
And in our nude they fixed us good
For freedom must be broke,
What could be done but smear that scum
And Christ it is no joke!...

They sneered and cheered, teased and jeered
At their dirty handy work.
Each dirty Screw knew what to do
Each wore a dirty smirk,
They flaunted hate, these men of State,
And each one went berserk.

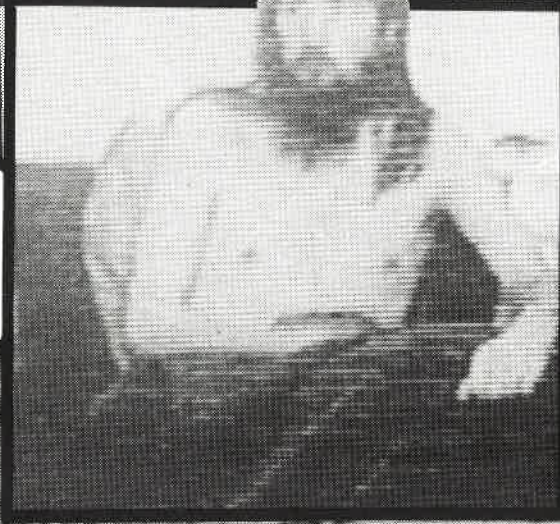
They grab your legs like wooden pegs
And part them to they split.
They pry and spy and even try
To look in through the split.
Both north and south to find your mouth
To try look 'out' of it...

The dirty Screws they stand in two's
Along that tortured way.
Their batons drawn to beat upon
The frantic, screaming prey,
'Tis but a job,' they winge and sob,
And take the devil's pay...

'Tis joyful thing in early Spring
The morning lark to hear,
The mistle thrush on far-off bush
Crooning sharp and clear.
But who may know if lark or crow
With bleeding, busted ear?

Or who may sniff the fragrant whiff
Of daffodils and rose,
The wild green hills in Autumn frills
Awaiting Winter snows,
When worse the course you have to nurse
A broken bloody nose.

We fought back tears and scorned our fears
And cast aside our pain
And to our doors we stood in scores
To conquer their black fame
For loud and high we sang our cry
'A nation once again!'
— Bobby Sands



1981

The year of the hunger strikes

"ON JANUARY 16th Messrs. Watson, Smallwood and Graham arrived on my doorstep complete with sledgehammer, 9mm Browning, and .38 Special, and left my husband Michael and myself for dead.

"Such, however, was the year of the hunger-strikes that the memory of that morning is the least painful of a long year which began in October 1980 and which saw, among others, Brendan Hughes, Mairead Farrell, Tom McFeely, Tommy McKearney, Leo Greene and Sean McKenna on hunger-strike in support of 'the five demands'. John McMichael, on behalf of the UDA, had publicly threatened execution of the leaders of the H-Block/Armagh campaign.

"By the week before Christmas, John Turnley, Miriam Daly, Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little had been assassinated, and Sean McKenna was on his death-bed.

"Suddenly, it was all over, and Christmas came, but the New Year brought the gradual realisation that nothing was really going to change in the prisons. It was a con!

"When Bobby Sands announced his decision to embark on the second hunger-strike, I stood in awe of the decision. It was inevitable, yet the courage and commitment, the human integrity and political clarity embodied in it was frightening. I knew in my heart Bobby Sands would die.

"It was a burden of knowledge we all shared silently. The by-election in Fermanagh/South Tyrone was the only real chance of saving his life, and the people rallied to the task. The prisoner became a member of parliament and we held our breath.

"Our joy was short-lived, however, as it became obvious that the price for any concession was life itself. On May 5th Bobby Sands died.

"Just before 1.45 am we sat in the packed Coalisland H-Block office, tears streaming down silent faces which knew the extent of their loss and the price of justice.

"Maybe now the demands would be met! Still, one by one, Bobby Sands' comrades followed him to the grave, in defence of human dignity. Eight years later, the intensity of emotion of that period still makes it difficult for me to step back from it, and evaluate it.

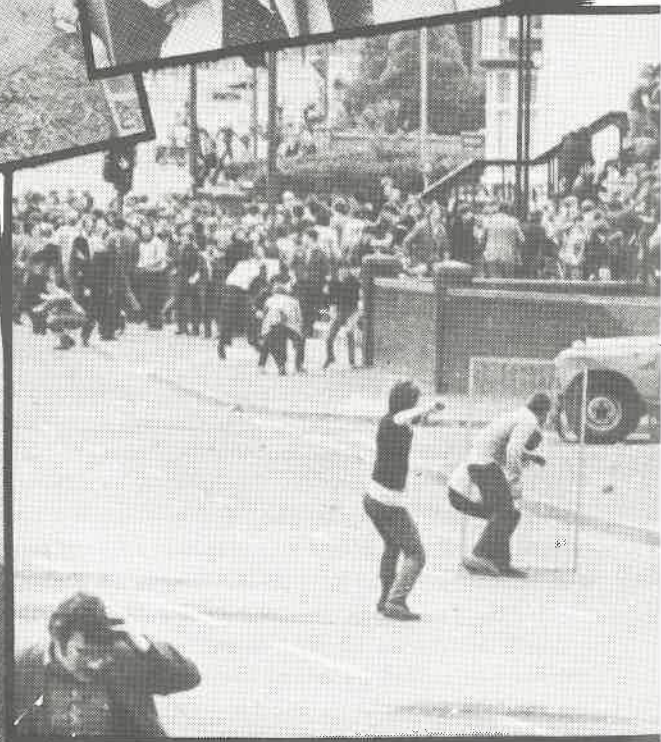
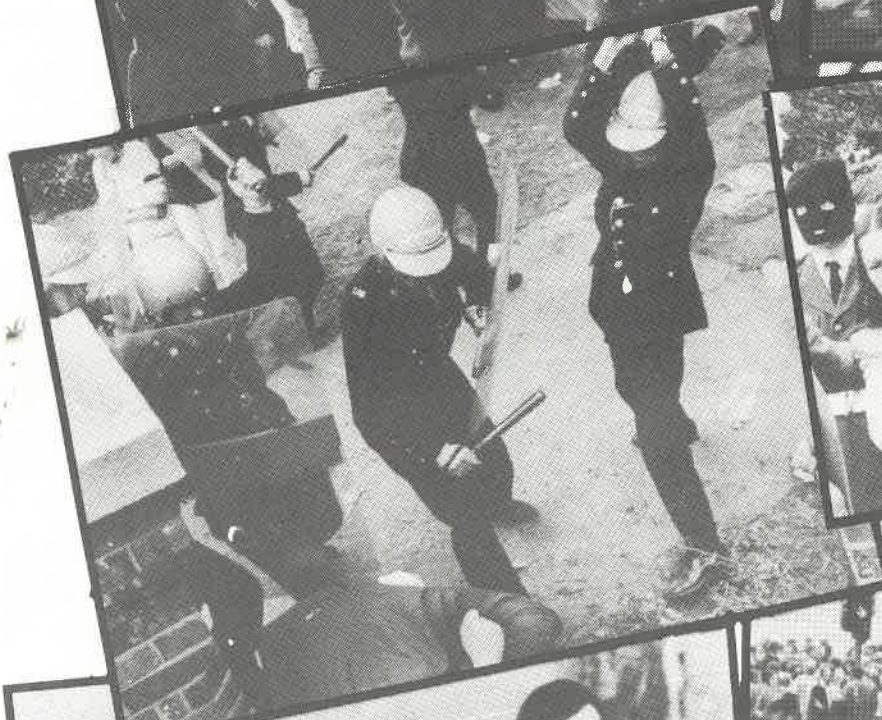
"I only know that the year of the hunger-strikes left a depth of unresolved grief in my soul which cannot be redressed by anything short of freedom."

— Bernadette McAliskey



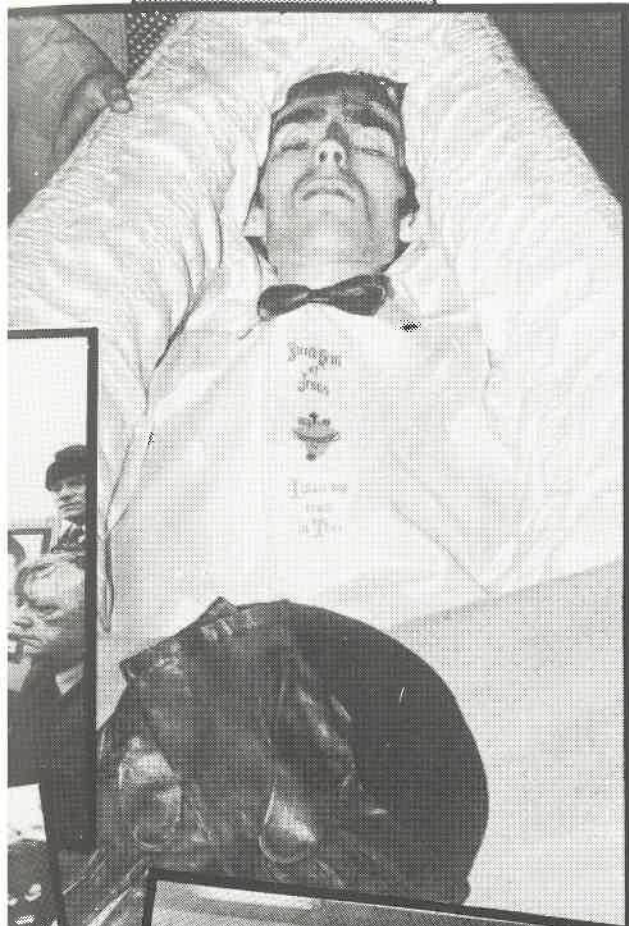
Bobby Sands being laid to rest in Milltown Cemetery

1981

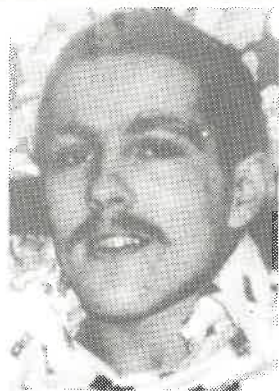


10 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

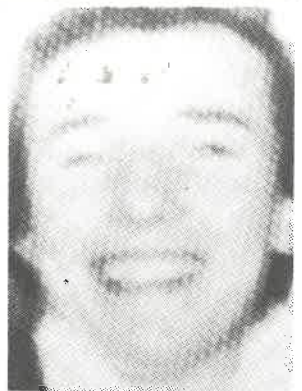
IRIS



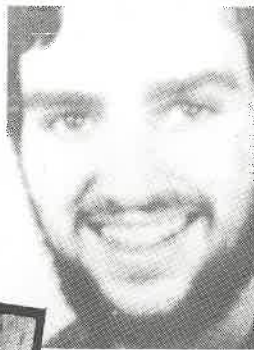
● **BOBBY SANDS**
aged 27, Belfast
commenced fast March 1st
died May 5th
after 66 days



● **FRANCIS HUGHES**
aged 25, South Derry
commenced fast March 15th
died May 12th
after 59 days



● **RAYMOND McCREECH**
aged 24, South Armagh
commenced fast March 22nd
died May 21st
after 61 days



● **PATSY O'HARA**
aged 24, Derry city
commenced fast March 22nd
died May 21st
after 61 days



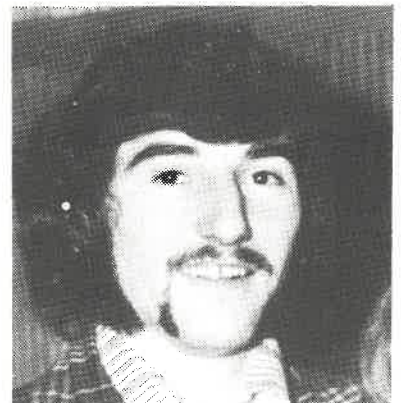
● **JOE McDONNELL**
aged 30, Belfast
commenced fast May 9th
died July 8th
after 61 days



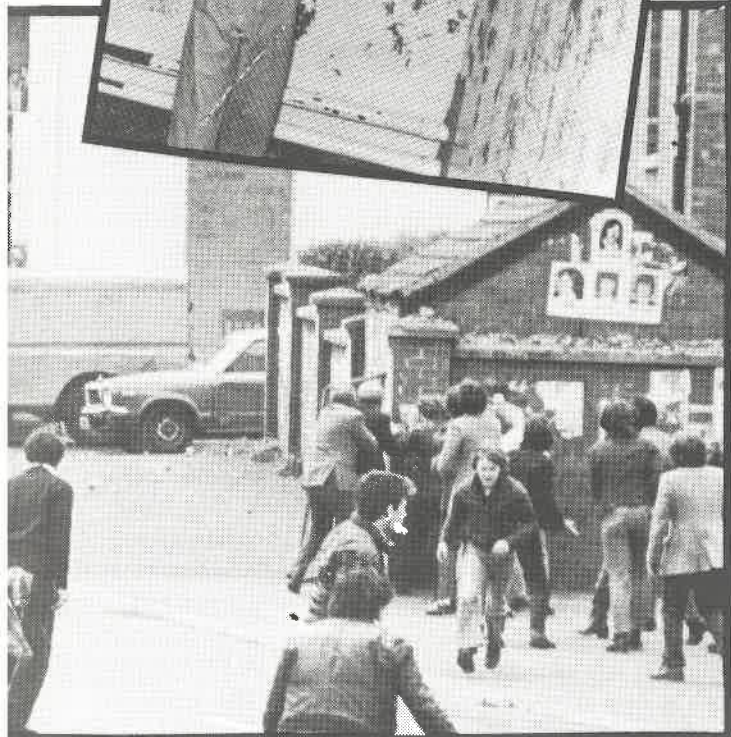
● **MARTIN HURSON**
aged 24, East Tyrone
commenced fast May 29th
died July 13th
after 46 days



● **KIERAN DOHERTY**
aged 25, Belfast
commenced fast May 22nd
died August 2nd
after 73 days



● **KEVIN LYNCH**
aged 25, North Derry
commenced fast May 23rd
died August 1st
after 71 days



● **THOMAS McELWEE**
aged 23, South Derry
commenced fast June 8th
died August 8th
after 62 days



● **MICKY DEVINE**
aged 27, Derry city
commenced fast June 22nd
died August 20th
after 60 days

1981



Eight IRA Volunteers left Crumlin Road Jail through the front door!

Armed jail break

ON the day that the electorate in the 26 Counties went to the polls and elected two H-Block prisoners as TDs, Kieran Doherty for Cavan/Monaghan and Paddy Agnew for Louth, eight IRA Volunteers shot their way to freedom out of Crumlin Road Jail.

Seven of the Volunteers were in on charges connected with the IRA's M-60 team and were charged with killing an RUC man and an SAS Captain. The eighth, from County Tyrone, Pete Ryan, was charged with killing an RUC reservist and a UDR man.

The elaborate, spectacular escape began around

4 pm when legal visits which they had all arranged for the same time had just ended and the prisoners were put in two cells.

When warders came, to bring back one set of prisoners to their wing, one of the Volunteers produced a short-arm, forced them to release the other prisoners and then locked about ten warders in the cell.

They then made their way to 'B' Wing's visiting area and arrested all the warders, visitors and solicitors who were there, before locking about 30 up in a room.

Two warders and a solicitor were ordered to strip and three of the IRA men dressed in two uniforms and a suit, respectively, and calmly walked to the main gate which was opened for them. They then pulled guns on the real Warders in this key security area, and made them lie on the ground until their five comrades ran across a small courtyard to join them.

Directly opposite the jail is Crumlin Road Courthouse which is heavily guarded and as soon as the first group of

1981

men broke through the front gate of the jail, RUC men and British soldiers fired across the road at them. The escapees then ran to one of two waiting cars in the car-park behind the health centre and made their escape.

But the second group were involved in a shoot-out and only escaped when an IRA active service unit (one of a number which was touring the Crumlin Road area as back up) provided cover fire for them.

The escapees commandeered a car and drove into a nationalist area of Belfast where they immediately went to ground.

Soon afterwards, the RUC and British army set up checkpoints on all main roads in Belfast as well as most border crossings. They issued leaflets with photographs of the wanted men but these were soon made redundant when within hours the IRA issued identical leaflets but replaced the photographs of the Volunteers with photographs of RUC men.

As the men made their escape, clearly visible to republican prisoners in cells on the top landing of 'A' Wing, loud cheers went up and makeshift flags were flown from the windows.

* * *

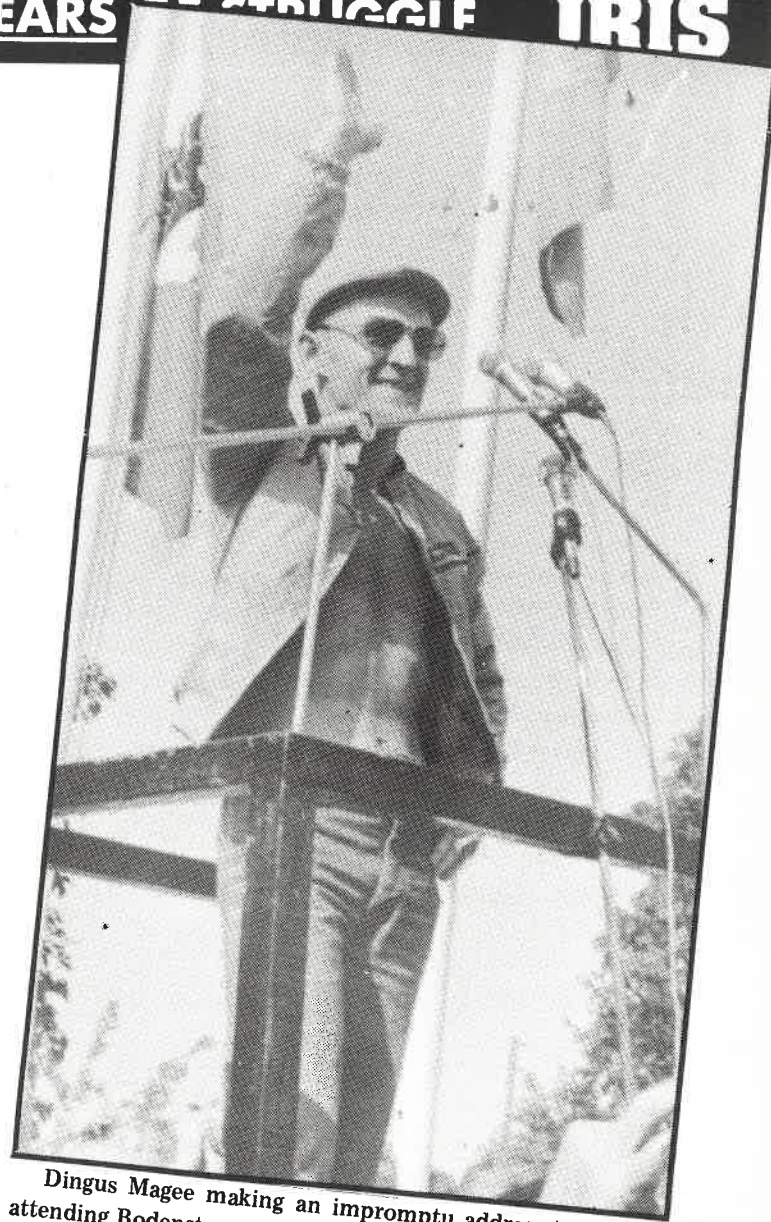
"IT WAS PLANNED that I would drive one of the getaway cars, both of which were parked in the car-park facing the jail. As I bolted across the road I spotted four RUC men in a car parked outside the Courthouse. But I was past them before they realised what was happening. They immediately began firing at the men coming behind me.

"When I reached the car the firing was intense. I jumped into the driver's seat, put the key into the ignition and turned it, but the car wouldn't start. By this time the firing was getting worse and the lads who were to come with me weren't to be seen. I looked over my shoulder and saw Pete Ryan returning the fire. Then suddenly bullets started ripping into my car.

"The back windscreen smashed, then I felt this burning pain in my head and I knew I'd been shot. The bullet had glanced off my head and smashed through the front windscreen, shattering it. I was stunned. I started the car up and this time it took off. I followed the other car with at least three of the lads inside it. I hadn't gone too far before I crashed into a wall, but I reversed quickly and travelled at high speed behind the other car.

"The other lads who couldn't make it to the car dispersed into side streets and were later picked up by republican Volunteers cruising about to provide back-up.

"We abandoned our bullet-riddled cars in a housing estate at the bottom of the Shankill Road before com-



Dingus Magee making an impromptu address to people attending Bodenstown, shortly after the escape

mandeering a car from a man who was shopping nearby.

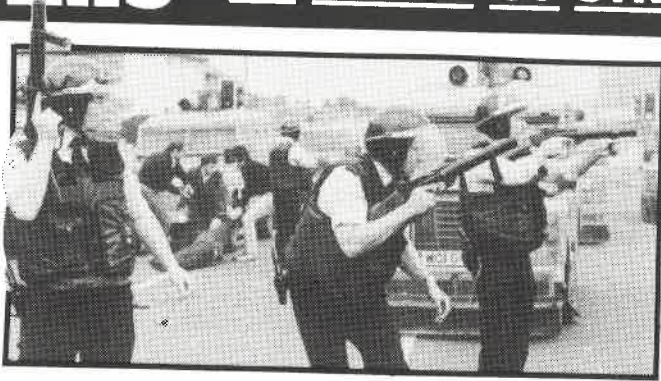
"With the 'clean' car we very quickly made our way up the Shankill Road and down Northumberland Street and onto the Falls Road and 'home'.

"We later discovered the route we took home was the same as the one taken by Jim Bryson when he escaped from the Crumlin Road Courthouse in 1973."

— Dingus Magee

Of the eight escapees, seven were arrested within a year: six were sentenced in the 26 Counties under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act for the escape and upon expiration of their sentences five of them face extradition charges; the other escapee, Joe Doherty, is detained in New York and is fighting for political asylum.

Pete Ryan is the only one free.



Plastic bullets

S EVEN people were killed by plastic bullets in the North of Ireland between April and August 1981 when the street protest movement in support of the H-Block hunger-strikers was at its most intense.

Six others had been killed by plastic and rubber bullets before April, the first was 11½-year-old Francis Rowntree in April 1972.

Hundreds of people have suffered horrific injuries including blindness in one or both eyes, and brain damage.

In the month of May 1981 alone — when the first four hunger-strikers died — 16,656 plastic bullets were fired.



Tobias Molloy (18), Strabane, killed by rubber bullet
Thomas Friel (21), Derry, killed by rubber bullet
Stephen Geddis (10), Belfast, killed by rubber bullet
Brian Stewart (13), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet
Michael Donnelly (21), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet
Paul Whitters (15), Derry, killed by plastic bullet
Julie Livingstone (14), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet

Carol-Ann Kelly (12), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet
Henry Duffy (45), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet
Nora McCabe (30), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet
Peter Doherty (40), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet
Peter McGuinness (41), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet
Stephen McConomy (11), Derry, killed by plastic bullet
John Downes (22), Belfast, killed by plastic bullet
Keith White (20), Lurgan, killed by plastic bullet



Carol-Ann Kelly, 12 years old, killed by plastic bullet

1982



IRA Commandeer boat on Lough Foyle

IRA sink boat

THE sinking by the IRA of a British coal boat in Lough Foyle in February 1982 embarrassed both the British and the Free State governments.

The highly successful raid began when up to a dozen IRA Volunteers, armed and carrying several bombs, occupied the pilot station at Carrickrory pier in County Donegal.

They arrested two pilots and two boatmen, ordered one of the pilots to hand over his uniform and the other to accompany them in the pilot boat out to the Scottish coal boat, the 1,857 ton *St Bedan*, which was then sailing into Derry with a cargo of 1,600 tons of coal. A number of Volunteers stayed on shore to protect their comrades on the operation.

Davin Hinson, second mate of the *St Bedan*, saw what he thought was the pilot come on board: *'But he pulled out a gun and shouted 'IRA! Hands on your head.' I soon realised it wasn't a joke.'* The rest of the active service unit,

armed and wearing balaclava helmets, then herded the ten-man crew and the skipper, Captain Roderick Black, on to the bridge.

'We were told to keep away from the radio, to stop the engines and drop anchor,' said Hinson. *'They asked us if there were any weapons or troops aboard, also if any of us were ex-army or ex-UDR. They promised if any of us were they wouldn't kill us if we owned up...'*

'They then took some photographs of us for American propaganda... They wanted us to shout 'Up the Provos' and we all burst out laughing, so they just took a picture of us all laughing!' said Hinson, who was obviously none the worse for his experience.

Three large bombs were placed at strategic points in the vessel. The crew were warned that other British shipping would be subject to attack.

They were then put into a lifeboat and the active service unit escaped in the pilot boat which was then sent back out to tow the *St Bedan's* lifeboat to shore. About forty minutes after the boat was evacuated a number of huge explosions ripped the bow of the Glasgow-registered boat and it sank in about fifty feet of water.

In February 1981, a similar attack was made on the *Nellie M* coal boat.



Gerry Adams becomes MP for West Belfast, defeating Gerry Fitt 'the Brit'

Rise of Sinn Féin

SINN FEIN decided at its 1981 Ard Fheis, following the success of Owen Carron in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election after the death of Bobby Sands, to adopt an electoral strategy in the Six Counties.

The party contested elections to the Stormont Assembly in October on a boycott ticket, forcing the SDLP to also adopt a boycott position. Sinn Féin took ten per cent of the overall vote and 35 per cent of the nationalist vote, getting five people elected.

In the Westminster elections of June 1983 Sinn Féin took over 102,000 votes, which was 42 per cent of the nationalist vote. Gerry Adams became MP for West Belfast, ousting Gerry Fitt.

As a result of these successes the Irish Establishment set up the Dublin Forum to help formulate a strategy for constitutional nationalists, support the SDLP, and persuade the British of the need to help the SDLP.



Shoot-to-kill in Armagh

FOLLOWING the success of Sinn Féin in the Assembly elections six nationalists in County Armagh were executed in the space of one month by an elite unit of the RUC which had been trained by the SAS. All of those killed were unarmed: three were IRA Volunteers in Lurgan, two were members of the INLA, and the sixth was an innocent 17-year-old youth.

Such was the public outrage that three RUC men were charged in connection with the murders of Eugene Toman, Sean Burns and Gervaise McKerr in Lurgan. The three were acquitted in 1984 by Lord Justice Gibson who said that the three RUC officers were "*absolutely blameless*" and commended them "*for their courage and determination in bringing the three deceased men to justice, to the final court of justice.*"

Gibson's remarks showed that the 'shoot-to-kill' policy was sanctioned at the highest level.

In April 1987 Gibson was killed in an IRA landmine attack at the Killeen border.

John Stalker, Assistant Chief Constable of the Greater Manchester Police, was appointed to investigate the Armagh killings. As he began to unearth the truth, which was that Thatcher, her cabinet and RUC Chief Constable Jack Hermon were involved in conspiracy to murder, he was suspended from duty and eventually had to resign. In January 1988 the British Attorney General amnestied all those involved in the killings and closed the books on the case.

The Armagh killings were only a few out of hundreds of executions carried out by crown forces personnel.

1982

One of a series of IRA bomb attacks in England in which British military personnel were killed, Hyde Park in London



1983

The H-Block escape

were captured several days later after a short siege in a house in County Down.

Those who commandeered the green Mercedes included Brendan 'Bic' McFarlane, who was still dressed as a warder, and Seamus McElwaine. Seamus was later captured by the SAS whilst on active service in County Fermanagh in April 1986. He was tortured and then executed. Much of the material in this account was given by him a week after the escape.

The eight Volunteers drove towards Moira, turned off the main road, taking to small lanes, and decided to ditch the car as early as possible and take over a secluded house.

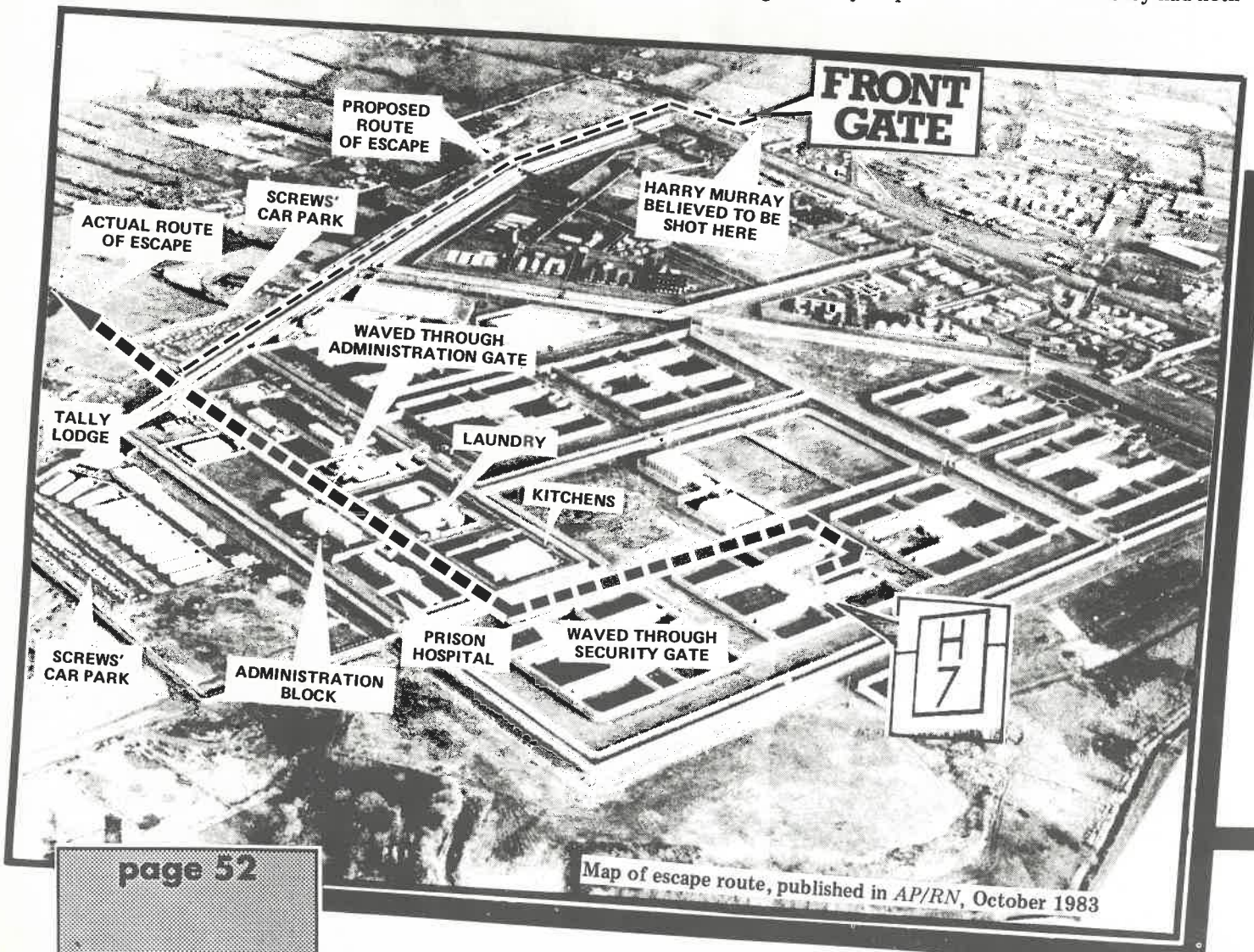
The car stopped and dropped off two men outside the Protestant home of Ian McFarlane (no relation), and his wife Doreen, near Dromore. The men went through the back, arrested the family and the Mercedes returned and drove into the yard a few minutes later. They announced themselves as IRA escapees.

"We apologised for inconveniencing them and said we would go as early as possible. We told them they had noth-

IN the most daring escape in republican history 38 IRA Volunteers broke out of the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, 'the most secure jail in Europe'.

Armed Volunteers took control of H-7, arrested the warders, some of whose uniforms they used, hijacked a food lorry and bluffed their way through a number of security gates before they were discovered and had to fight their way out of the rest of the camp.

ABOUT A DOZEN of the IRA Volunteers who made their way across fields eventually entered a farmyard and commandeered a van and two cars, including a green Mercedes. Some escapees were caught crossing the River Lagan, some were caught at a checkpoint near Banbridge and two others



1983

ing to worry about and if they did what they were told they would be okay. The man was fairly nervous but Mrs McFarlane was quite composed. We shifted a fridge and some cupboards in a workhouse and drove the Mercedes inside so that it would not be spotted by a helicopter."

Volunteers then took up position at windows to monitor the traffic but there was no sign of the RUC or foot patrols and when they quizzed the family they realised that they were only a few miles from the jail and possibly within the first circle of roadblocks.

They learnt that a man was to call to the house for maps — Mr McFarlane is a quantity surveyor — and decided against taking him prisoner, allowing Mrs McFarlane to pretend that her husband was not at home but had left material for the caller. He came and left.

The Volunteers told the family that they could only protect themselves by either taking with them one of their sons — 14-year-old Alan or 12-year-old Neil — or by leaving behind an armed Volunteer, to ensure that news of their whereabouts did not reach the RUC. The family, naturally distressed, agreed and swore on the bible not to inform the authorities for 72 hours that the escapees had stayed there if the Volunteers left without taking any guarantors.

They then searched the house and Brendan McFarlane changed into some of the owner's clothing. They discovered that the two boys were in the Boy Scouts and took a compass, a pocket torch and maps of the area. Haversacks were packed with biscuits and cheese, soda and potato bread, chocolates, bottles of water, and a digital clock.

What was their opinion of the family?

"They were a Christian family and we believed the commitment they gave us but, of course, we could take no chances, so when we were consulting them about the roads we subtly emphasised questions about certain routes which we had no intention of taking, just so that if they did contact the RUC they could still be thrown off. We also put the telephone and a CB radio out of action."

Brendan McFarlane signed an inventory for all that was taken and an hour after the family went to bed the Volunteers left, at 11pm.

"A thick fog had descended and it hampered the probing searchlights of helicopters. We took to small and winding lanes and crossed fields but only managed three or four miles. One of the lads tripped and sprained his ankle and we had to help him.

"At about 5 am we decided to dig in for the day. We found a clump of bushes, overgrown on a lane. We put the radio on for the news and listened to details of RUC activity."

During the day they watched the helicopters criss-cross

the country and were once disturbed by two farmers and a dog in a nearby field. It was while they were here that they heard on the radio of Garret Fitzgerald's assurance to Thatcher that if they entered the Free State they would be hounded.

"Here we were fugitives in our own country. The choppers were looking for us and there were roadblocks everywhere. The food had run out and we were hungry. We don't expect anything from the Free State government but Fitzgerald was absolutely crawling."

At around 8pm on Monday night they picked up any rubbish they had made and took to the fields again. It was a clear night, but, despite using the compass and the North Star, they believe they took the wrong directions a number of times. In fields close to the roads, they saw RUC vehicles on patrol.

"Everybody was in bad form. We were tired and sore. We saw the lights of Gilford and had to circle the town. We were close to the Bann but couldn't cross and then we came upon a manor and a forest where there were four apples which we ate. We were in thick undergrowth but couldn't afford to go past the manor house. One of the lads was constantly throwing up. We had no water and were drinking out of cow troughs.

"We moved further into the estate and came upon a greenhouse. At the side of it was a huge overflowing tree beside a slope. In the undergrowth we made a bed of leaves and made blankets with our coats. We then took two hours turn apiece at resting and sleeping."

The next morning, Tuesday, a man and woman arrived in a car and went into the greenhouse. Shortly after 3pm a man with two dogs also went into the greenhouse. He had an English accent and his dog, a black labrador, kept coming over to the bushes and barking. The owner came over and dragged the dog away but it came back with two more dogs. The woman left the greenhouse and drove off and the Englishman went round the back with the dogs.

"About 15 minutes later an RUC patrol pulled up in the drive. A cop got out and everybody groaned and became agitated. We got our shoes and socks on. Another two cops got out and paced around.

"The first cop approached the bushes and stopped at about 20 yards away and stared at us, but we sat still. They were there for about five minutes and everybody was ready to run but we were told to stay put.

"The cop was smoking, finishing his cigarette, stubbed it out and walked towards the car. They got in and left and we knew we had survived again, although we still thought it might have been a ploy.

"We then broke our very first rule, which was not to move in the daylight hours. We crawled through the undergrowth on our bellies and by this method, over a period of hours, made our way through the estate, cut and ripped by brambles and bushes.

"There was a ford in the Bann but we didn't dare risk crossing it as it was too visible. We were also so hungry that we came out to a lane to pick berries. One of the lads said

IRIS 20 YEARS OF STRUG

that it looked like an area where there would be fishermen and we decided to move back into the bushes. Two young lads carrying fishing rods then came round the lane, saw two of us and turned on their heels.

"We went up the river and waded across it, even though it was deep and fast-flowing. We climbed a hill overlooking the whole area. It was about 5.30 or 6 pm and we then waited till dusk.

"After a long walk in the darkness we reached Scarva, where we earmarked a house which we were going to take over. The family had visitors who left at around midnight. But the way the owner milled about the house and then locked and checked the doors gave one of the lads a sort of superstitious feeling that we shouldn't touch it.

"There was the other consideration that we would be starting a fresh trail and giving the RUC new leads. We were confident that the RUC didn't know where we were and that the Protestant family had kept their word."

Brendan McFarlane had £1.50 in his possession and they considered phoning a safe house in Belfast. But they then decided against it because of the widespread surveillance and the likelihood of massive telephone tapping.

"We walked and walked until we got to Poyntz Pass and saw a signpost for Newry, ten miles away. We went on to the main road, which was a calculated risk, but we wanted to put in the miles. It was close to dawn so we picked a resting spot — a thicket of whin bushes on a small hill.

"We had no food or water but morale was exceptionally high. One Wednesday night, at about 8 pm, we headed across fields, using the compass for south-west until we met the railway line. We walked along it, looking for a siding, but couldn't find it. Way above Newry's lights we crossed the Egyptian Arches and marched on and on until the light lay behind us.

"We used the railway line as a guide but took to the fields and were so close to our objective that we pushed ourselves on, drinking milk out of a creamery can at the bottom of a lane.

"It was dawn now and we had made it. We were free and had beaten the Brits!"

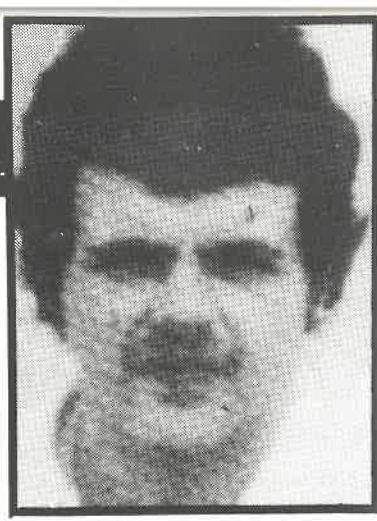
Escapee Kieran Fleming from Derry drowned in the Bannagh River between Fermanagh and Donegal after a shoot-out with the SAS when his comrade Antoine Mac Giolla Bhrighde from Magherafelt and an SAS officer were shot dead in December 1984.

Escapee Seamus McElwaine from County Monaghan was executed by the SAS in Fermanagh in April 1986.

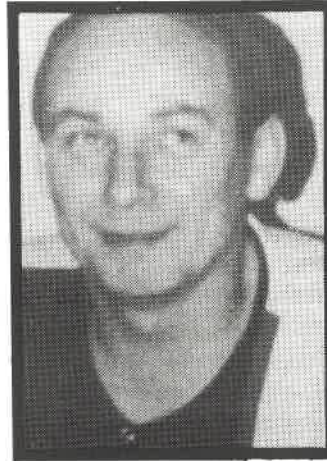
Larry Marley, who played a major part in planning the escape, but who stayed behind in the H-Blocks, was assassinated in his North Belfast home in April 1987 by pro-British agents a year after his release.



SEAMUS McELWAINÉ



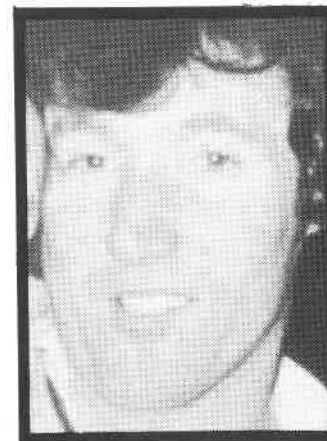
KIERAN FLEMING



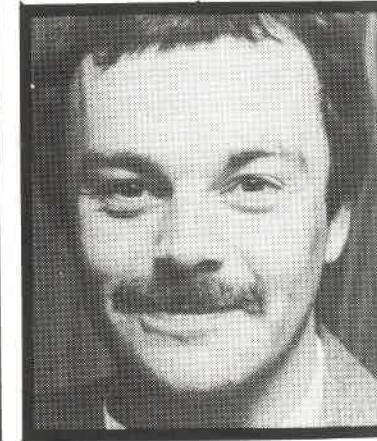
LARRY MARLEY



PADRAIG McKEARNEY



BRENDAN MOLEY



BRENDAN BURNS

Escapee Padraig McKearney was shot dead along with seven comrades and a civilian by the SAS at Loughgall in May 1987.

Escapee Gerry McDonnell was arrested in Britain on active service and is serving life imprisonment.

Escapees Robert Russell and Paul Kane were arrested in the 26 Counties and extradited. Dermot Finucane and Seamus Clarke are in Portlaoise facing extradition proceedings. Brendan McFarlane and Gerry Kelly (since released), were caught on active service in Amsterdam in January 1986 and extradited back to the North.

In February 1988 IRA Volunteers Brendan Burns and Brendan Moley, who had provided military back up for the escapees, died in a premature explosion in South Armagh.

1984



RUC attack peaceful demonstrators at Connolly House

RUC riot

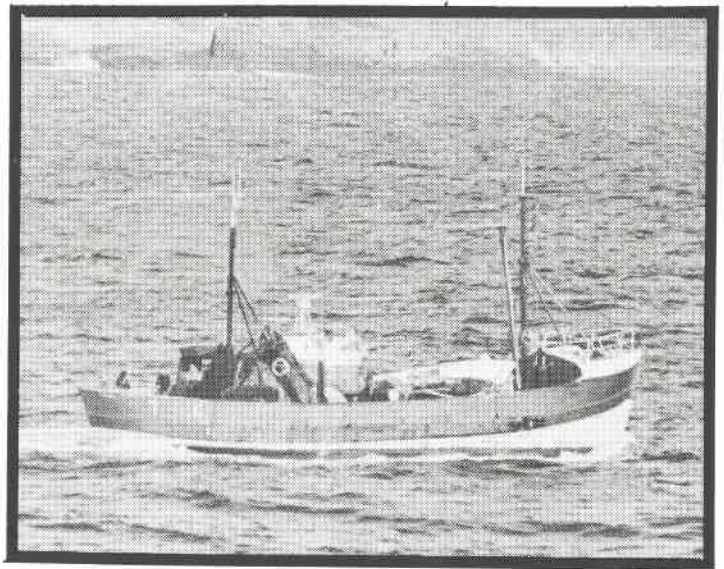
IN defiance of a ban imposed on him by the British, Noraid spokesperson Martin Galvin showed up at the anti-internment rally in West Belfast. When he got on the platform to speak the RUC, which had completely encircled the rally, went berserk.

Times reporter Richard Ford described how the RUC "fired plastic bullets into the air and at almost point-blank range as they ran over the crowd, pulling people out of the way and then began driving hard blows into the screaming and hysterical mass. Appeals for calm went unheard as plastic bullets whizzed around. People cowered on the road, clutching children and trying to cover their heads."

Twenty-two-year-old John Downes, who was married with a baby daughter, was shot dead. Scores of others were injured. Martin Galvin escaped.

Marita Ann

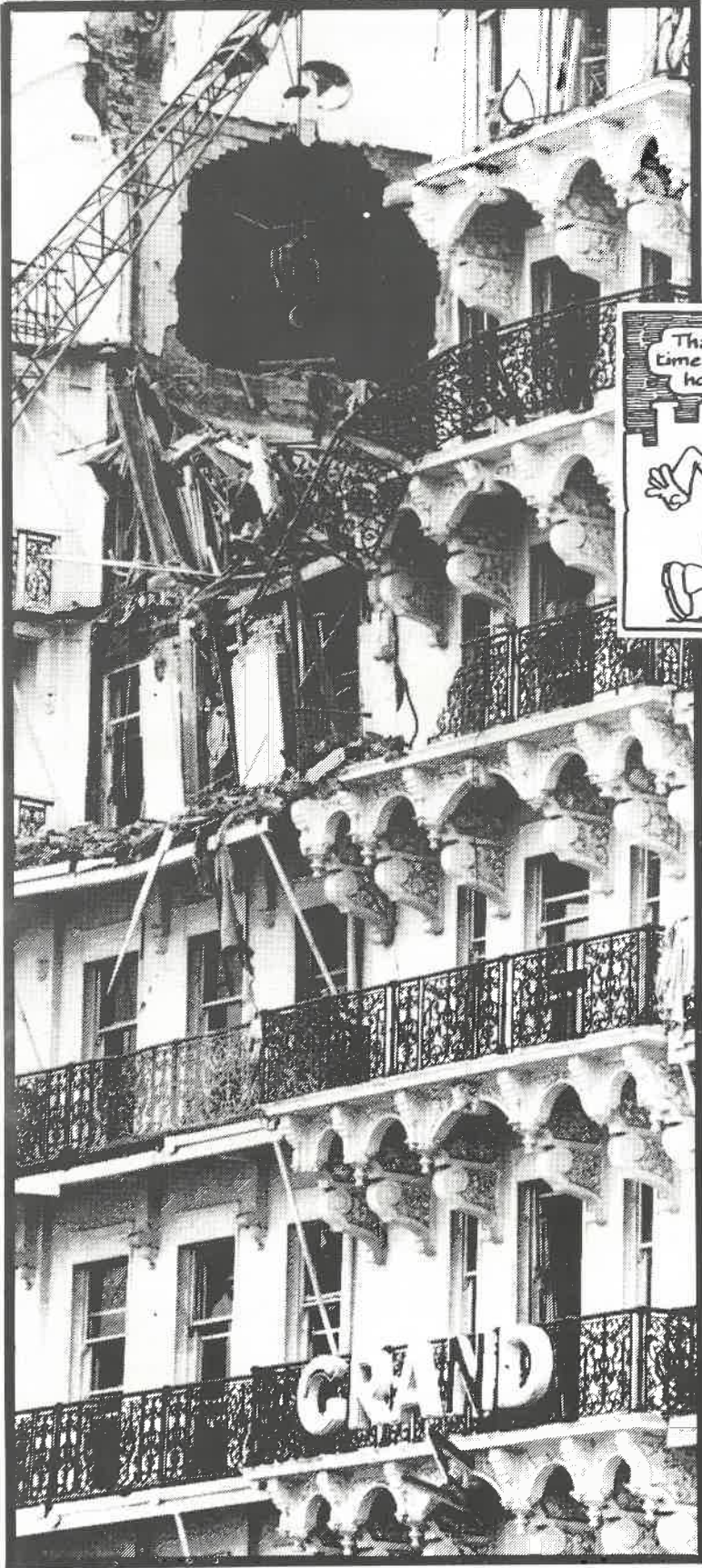
THE *Marita Ann*, carrying a cargo of weapons destined for the IRA, was intercepted by the 26-County navy off the County Kerry coast in late September.



The Marita Ann

At least two of the five men arrested on board, Martin Ferris and Gavin Mortimer, were beaten by their captors. They were handcuffed to the deck of the naval vessel which brought them to shore and, despite high tides and rough seas, both men were kept in this position throughout the 20-hour journey.

1984



Brighton bombing

THE British cabinet, Tory MPs and key personnel in the Tory party were the targets of a 100lb bomb, planted by the IRA, which ripped through the Grand Hotel in Brighton, England, in the early hours of Friday, October 12th, killing five people in, or associated with, the Tory leadership.

The explosion blew out the facade of the four top floors in one section of the hotel, while internally the top rooms crashed down more than seven floors into the basement. Mrs Thatcher's bathroom, which she had been in just minutes before the blast, was also wrecked by falling masonry.

In a statement the IRA said:

"Mrs Thatcher will now realise that Britain cannot occupy our country, torture our prisoners and shoot our people on their own streets and get away with it.

"Today we were unlucky, but remember we only have to be lucky once — you will have to be lucky always.

"Give Ireland peace and there will be no war."

1985



Collaboration—Republicans are being extradited into the hands of the British



One of the victims of increased sectarian assassinations after the signing of the Hillsborough Agreement

Cross-Border collaboration

IN November 1985 the Hillsborough Treaty was signed between London and Dublin. It allowed Dublin and the SDLP to claim they had an ad-

visory role in influencing British government policy and that many reforms would be forthcoming.

British direct ruler Tom King described the Treaty as a *“bulwark against a united Ireland”*. The Treaty allowed Britain off the hook internationally because it could claim that it was ruling the North with the consent of the sovereign parliament in Dublin. In return Britain received unprecedented security collaboration from Dublin and easier extradition procedures. British forces also started building new border bunkers and raised spy-posts on land seized from nationalist farmers and they continued their policy of blowing up small border roads.

Loyalists launched an ‘Ulster Says No’ campaign against the Treaty. Nationalists bore the brunt of their wrath: intensified sectarian assassinations, over 160 nationalist families driven from their homes in Lisburn alone, petrol-bomb attacks on Catholic churches and schools.



Raised spy-post in South Armagh

1985

Newry barracks motared

IN an attack which shattered RUC morale and inflicted the highest level of fatalities on the RUC in any single incident since the foundation of that force, IRA Volunteers, in a combined operation mounted by the IRA's South Down and South Armagh Brigades, killed nine of the sectarian paramilitary force in a mortar attack in Newry, County Down, on Thursday evening, February 28th.

Sinn Féin take Council seats

AT the May local government elections in the North, despite a loyalist 'Smash Sinn Féin' campaign and petty crown forces' harassment, Sinn Féin took seats on 17 out of the 26 district councils.

Among those elected to the Guildhall in Derry was Councillor Gerry Doherty who had served 15 years in jail for blowing up the Guildhall when it was the symbol of gerrymandered unionist power in the nationalist city.

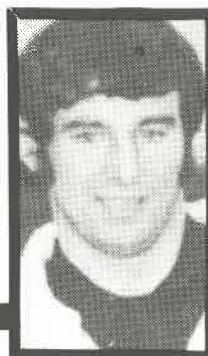
In Belfast Sinn Féin became the largest nationalist party. At the 1989 local government elections Sinn Féin became the second largest party in Belfast, outpolling the DUP.

Raymond McLaughlin

IN a massive show of intimidation, hundreds of gardai in riot gear tried to disrupt the funeral of IRA Volunteer Raymond McLaughlin in Buncrana, County Donegal, in September.



'Newly elected Belfast councillors are welcomed back to the Falls Road. (Right) Gerry Doherty.'



Raymond McLaughlin

1986

The campaign against the barracks

FOLLOWING the mortar-bomb attack in Newry, County Down, in February 1985, in which the IRA inflicted a devastating and demoralising blow against the RUC, killing nine members of that force, the RUC Police Authority, which has overall responsibility for the RUC, announced a massive £200 million investment by the British government in the construction of new barracks, the renovation of older barracks and the general improvement of resources.

In August 1985, one of several warnings was given by the IRA to builders and contractors working for the RUC. The IRA said:

"We are of the opinion that the contractors involved are assisting the British in reinforcing their illegal and immoral presence. They are building fortresses and interrogation centres which are being used to oppress our people and subject them to continuing undemocratic rule."

In the 13 months after that statement was issued, five people were executed by the IRA for providing services to crown forces bases while IRA active service units launched attacks on crown forces installations on 44 occasions. Since June 1985, 17 mortar-bomb attacks, 21 bomb attacks and six gun attacks took place.

Leaving aside those barracks which came under rifle fire or where bombs or mortars were defused or failed to function properly, eight bases were destroyed, nine were extensively damaged and a further 14 suffered lesser damage.

The IRA strategy of "isolating the enemy" has several elements:

- Attacks on crown forces installations;
- Warnings to members of the RUC Police Authority;
- Public and private warnings to firms and businesses providing various services to the crown forces (e.g. building



work, electrical/electronic services, fuel, catering/supplies, etc);

- The execution of specific individuals employing others and profiting from RUC/British army contracts.

Drawing all these elements together into one coherent, effective plan has helped the IRA to inflict a succession of political and military defeats on the British government and seriously undermine the morale of the crown forces on the ground in the North.

Gunfire in O'Connell Street

THERE were incredible scenes in Dublin's city centre on March 22nd as plainclothed and uniformed gardai ran amok in an attempt to impede and eventually re-arrest Belfast republican Eibhlin Glenholmes who had been released earlier by a district court judge on the grounds that extradition warrants against her were invalid.

Gardai followed and surrounded her everywhere she went, even hijacking a lorry and a civilian vehicle and blocking a main road to prevent her leaving the precincts of the court by car.

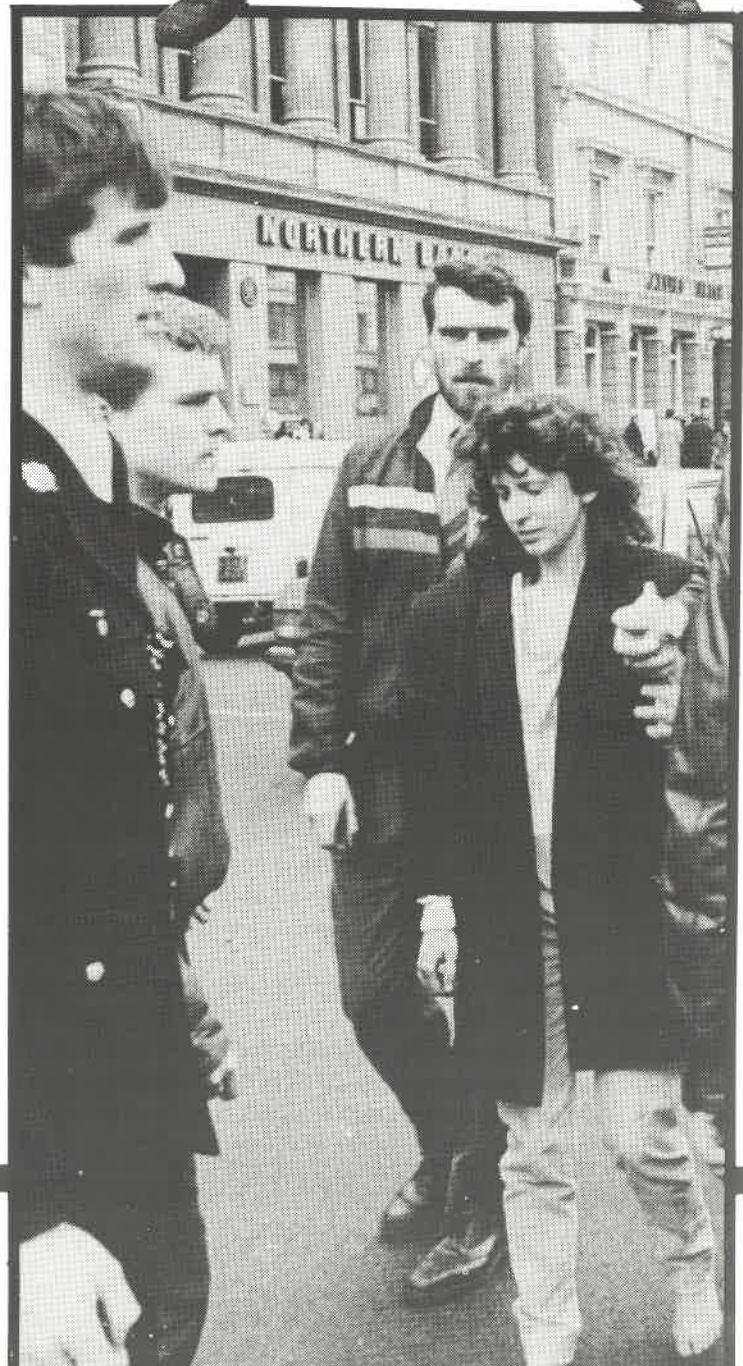
Sinn Fein anti-extradition pickets helped her to make it to Parnell Square where an Ard Chomhairle meeting was in session. It was the aim of the gardai to have Eibhlin in their sight in the expectation that fresh warrants would be arriving from Britain at any moment. Republicans swarmed around the young woman (who had been left barefoot by the earlier scuffles) and marched back into the city centre to appeal to people and to throw off the Garda tail.

Outside British Home Stores in Prince's Street when it looked like she would make a successful dash for freedom a Special Branch man opened fire at the republican crowd and a melee broke out with fighting continuing inside British Home Stores. Eibhlin was then arrested on foot of an allegedly 'provisional' warrant and was brought back to court. However, her counsel was able to demonstrate that she had never been really set free from the previous court and she was released once more to scenes of jubilation.

New warrants later arrived and she has been on the run ever since.

FOR the first time in 16 years the IRA held a secret General Army Convention. The Volunteers rededicated the guerrilla organisation to the armed struggle and adopted resolutions which removed the ban on discussing or advocating the taking of parliamentary seats and on supporting successful republican candidates who take their seats in Leinster House. Following over a year of extensive debate, Sinn Fein took the historic decision to end the policy of abstentionism from Leinster House.

A Special Branch officer opens fire in Princes Street



1987



Loughgall

IN the worst single blow suffered by the IRA since the Tan War, eight active service Volunteers during an attack on the Loughgall British army/RUC Barracks were executed by the SAS.

“LOUGHGALL MEANT little or nothing to me before Friday, May 8th 1987. The village had neither been a venue for inter-county Gaelic matches nor had it any hitherto political significance to earmark it in the manner of Crossmaglen or Hillsborough. Indeed, for all I knew, the place had a peculiar sort of County Down ring to it. Either that or it was somewhere in Antrim or Armagh.

“This indifference and uncertainty was, however, short-lived and my mind, like that of countless others was involuntarily concentrated on Loughgall, County Armagh, on that never-to-be-forgotten Friday evening. The placename and date in question have since been etched indelibly in my mind, and, I suspect, in the minds of everyone driven by that same motive force which drove the Loughgall Martyrs.

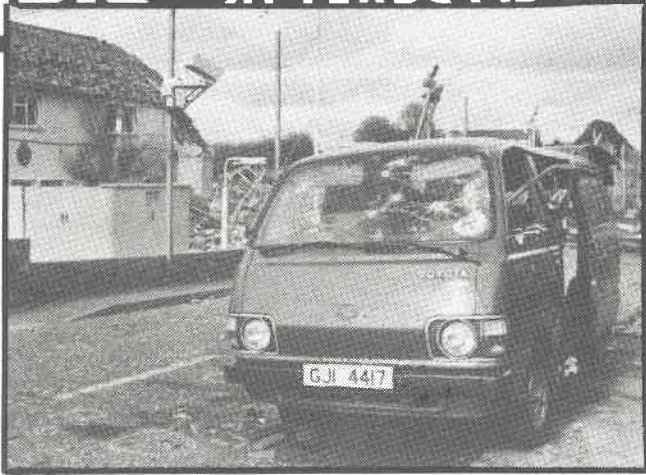
“Nowhere was the impact felt more acutely than among the large republican family in County Tyrone. The Galbally/Cappagh area of East Tyrone especially came under

the spotlight. The four youngest Volunteers to die in the SAS ambush lived within a mile or two of one and other in the various townlands of this small rural community. Seamus Donnelly, the youngest of them all at nineteen, actually lived up the same lane as had the hunger-striker Martin Hurson.

“It is no exaggeration to say that ‘normal’ living was suspended by this entire community for the duration of the wakes and funerals and long after too. Tyrone was numbed and stopped in its tracks and to this day, the legacy of Loughgall remains in many forms. The experience was charged with great emotion and still the names are spoken of with such familiarity and fondness that it barely registers that the lads are gone.

“Visions of those hunger-strike days came flooding back. Mass mobilisation, GAA matches not played, fixtures rescheduled, young adults returning from America (“*work or no work*”), school attendance and exam revision timetables going to the wall. The morgue, wakes and funerals, black flags, Army guards of honour, wreaths and newspaper sympathy notices. A prolonged sense of stress and disorientation that would eventually take its toll on us all. ‘Loughgall’ brought this and much more.

“For me, a necessary ‘release’ came about in the form of uninhibited tears at the first burial, that of Dungannon Volunteer Paddy Kelly. Perhaps these were in some way related to the fact that Paddy had been the only married Volunteer to have died or perhaps the well of tension within began only to overflow at this point. I had begun



The minibus used by the IRA in which several Volunteers met their deaths

to internalise fully the awful nature of this whole tragic business.

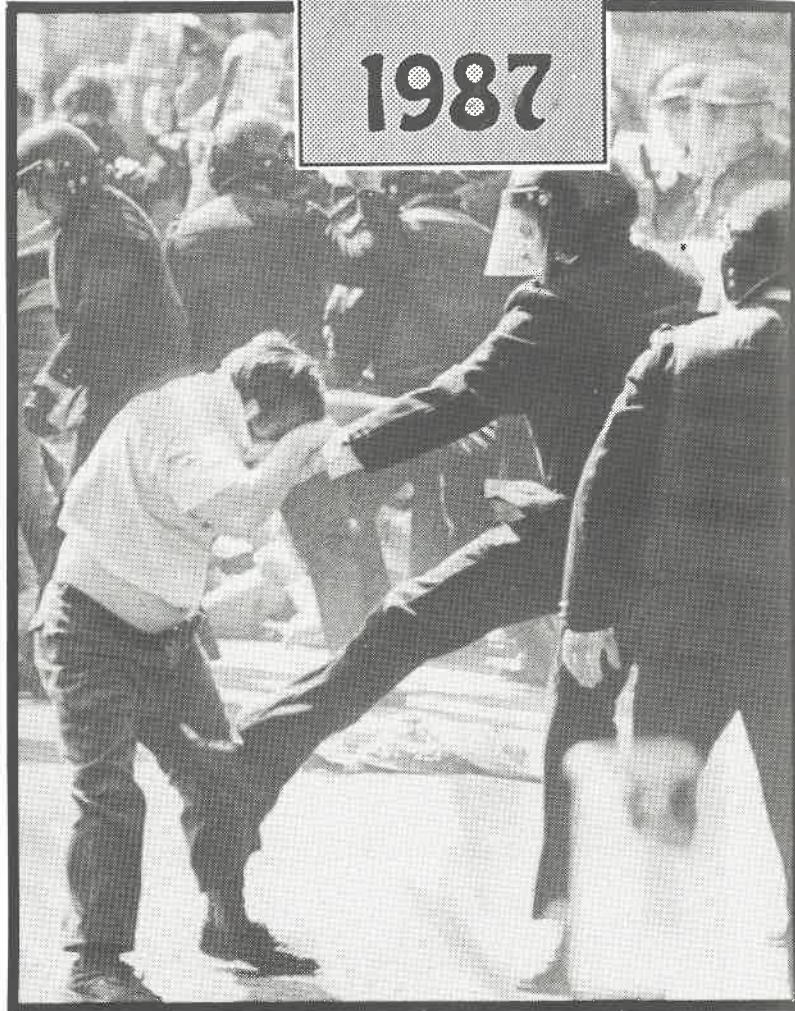
“A television newsflash had been far from clear on that Friday evening. Reports were coming in... heavy casualties. Time passed and successive bulletins were no more than sketchy. There was eight, now nine dead. It was well after midnight when the BBC reporter noted that most of the deceased had been from *“the South Tyrone area”*. The same individual dispassionately recorded that this was *“the worst moment the Provisionals have had since they came into being”*. Tomorrow would bring the names and the arrived-at British version of events.

“Surprise, surprise, ‘terrorist’ was the in-word of those personalityless media spokespeople over the next few days. The accusation was levelled not at those who had killed to the sound of distant trumpets but at those now silenced and voiceless. Fr Faul spluttered the old ‘godfather’ line. In an attempt to decode his ranting, I had always assumed that he equated ‘godfather’ with ‘leader’. Was there any point in arguing that republican thinkers and planners had been the doers at Loughgall, and that the convenient division of labour in this war applied only to the British side? Fr Faul and his ilk choose not to listen.

“I sought the therapeutic comfort of my pen and diary. Did anybody notice that Ireland won the Eurovision Song Contest on Saturday, May 9th. Four Volunteers were laid to rest on the anniversaries of both James Connolly and Francis Hughes, Tuesday, May 12th. The symbolism of the handshake between Anthony Gormley (senior) and Gerry Adams was lost on no one on Monday, May 11th; day one of the burials. Five days later, young Loughmacrory republican Martin Harte wed Briege Mullin from Altamuskin against the background of ‘Loughgall’.

“It is a measure of the times and the environment that we live in that Martin himself, Gerry, his brother and Brian Mullin, his brother-in-law, have since paid the ultimate price for their involvement in struggle, each falling in similar circumstances at Drumnakilly at the hands of the SAS. Many is a tandle lit for all our patriot dead and for their loved ones too.”

— Barry McElduff, Carrickmore



1987

Funerals Attacked

BETWEEN December 1983 and May 1987 over 25 republican or nationalist funerals were systematically attacked by the RUC as a matter of deliberate British policy.

The objective was to drive mourners off the streets so that later Britain could claim dwindling support for republicanism as evidenced by the small numbers attending IRA funerals.

But the exact opposite happened. More and more people came out to defend the remains of republican dead, and the RUC was exposed as being as brutal and sectarian as ever.

The courage of the nationalist people and damaging international news coverage eventually forced the British government to order the RUC to adopt a less publicly aggressive stance.

1987



RUC thugs attack mourners at Larry Marley's funeral

RUC gunmen open fire with plastic bullets at the funeral of Eddie McSheffrey and Paddy Deery in Derry



1988



IN carefully planned IRA attacks using the powerful plastic explosive Sementex, six British soldiers were killed in a mini-bus in Lisburn in June and eight were killed in a coach blown up by a roadside bomb in August at Ballygawley.

In 1988 fatalities for British soldiers, excluding the UDR, stood at 25, the highest annual figure since 1979



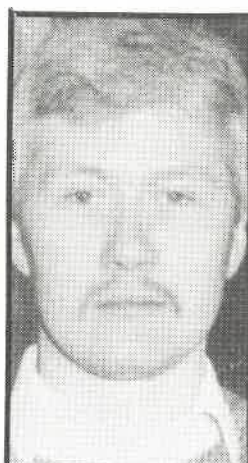
Tailpiece of helicopter shot down by the IRA being removed from South Armagh



MAIREAD



SEAN



DAN

Gibraltar

IN the British colony of Gibraltar three unarmed IRA Volunteers were assassinated by SAS soldiers on orders cleared by the British cabinet.

Huge crowds lined the funeral route from Dublin to Belfast as the bodies of Mairead Farrell (former O/C of Armagh Jail and a former hunger-striker), Dan McCann and Sean Savage were brought home. Just outside Belfast the RUC hijacked the hearses containing their remains and

diverted them away from thousands of sympathisers who had gathered in Andersonstown in the early hours of the morning.

At their interment in Milltown Cemetery a crazed loyalist assassin attacked mourners with hand-grenades and pistols, killing three and injuring over 60 men, women and children.

At the funeral of IRA Volunteer Kevin Brady, one of the three killed in Milltown, two armed and plainclothed soldiers drove into the cortege at high speed causing scenes of panic once again.

After the soldiers opened fire the crowd captured and beat the two soldiers before the IRA intervened and snatched them.

1988



Armed plainclothes soldier emerges from car at funeral of Vol. Kevin Brady in Andersonstown.



THE slayings of three IRA Volunteers in Gibraltar was meant to dissuade other republicans from leaving Ireland and confronting British forces abroad.

It failed.

Within weeks of the Gibraltar assassinations the IRA struck against British soldiers in Holland and West Germany, killing three and wounding four others.

By August the IRA had returned to England and in Inglis Barracks on the edge of Mrs Thatcher's constituency of Finchley, one British soldier was killed and several others seriously injured in a massive explosion.



Príomhchathair na Gaeilge

1989

“CHLUINFEA níos mó Gaeilge i mBaile Andarsan sa lá ná chluinfeá i Foxrock sa mhí”, arsa an Caird-inéal Ó Fiaich agus é ag oscailt Gaelscoile i mBéal Feirste. Ba fhiric í sin a thuig an saol Fodhla de réir mar tháinig bláth iontach ar athbheochan na Gaeilge ó Thuaidh — fás a shaothraigh mórghradam Ghlór na nGael d'Iarthar Bhéal Feirste agus a ba chúis leis an iris AGUS “príomhchathair na Gaeilge” a bháisteadh ar an chathair cois cuain.

Faoi bhratach John Bull a cuireadh tús leis an chéad pháipéar laethúil ariamh i nGaeilge, *LÁ*, foilseachán a bhfuil cúig bliana slánaithe aige i mí Iúil 1989. Phreab comharthaí Gaeilge aníos ag barr gach sráide i gceantair náisiúnacha i mBéal Feirste, Doire agus Port a Dunáin dh'ainneoin go raibh siad mídhleathach faoi dhlí a rith rialtas Stormont, ar mholadh Brian Faulkner i 1949. Ba dóiligh, áfach, srian a chur ar phobal a bhí ag baint pléisiúir as cultúr a bhí folaithe air. I 1984 bhí 54 rang Gaeilge in Iarthar Bhéal Feirste amháin agus bí Scoil Ghaelach Bhéal Feirste an t-aon bunscoil i mBéal Feirste a raibh fás faoina huimhreacha.

Cuireadh tús le réabhlóid teanga i mBéal Feirste le mion-choláistí Ghaeilge — cúrsaí deireadh seachtaine inar múinfeadh suas go dtí 100 dalta — agus roimh i bhfad bhí an SDLP agus a gcomhleacaithe ag léim ar an ‘bandwagon’. Bhí an pobal poblachtach i ndiaidh ceist bheo pholaitiúil a dhéanamh dá gcearta teanga a bhí séanta orthu ag rialtas a mhaigh nach raibh ach teanga amháin a labhairt sna Sé Chontae.

British death squads

A large number of assassinations against opponents of the state throughout the last 20 years have been clearly planned by British authorities.

In 1970 the Patrick Crinnion affair in the 26 Counties (Crinnion was a sergeant in the Special Branch and was caught red-handed passing on information) showed that British intelligence had infiltrated the Garda Síochana. Other allegations made by a former British soldier, Albert Baker, who carried out sectarian assassinations, and by



JOHN GREENE



PAT FINUCANE



JOHN DAVEY



GERRY CASEY

1989

Repression 1989 style- A British raiding party totally ransacked this Turf Lodge woman's home leaving a gaping five foot hole in the middle of her kitchen

the Littlejohn Brothers, who carried out bank robberies in the Free State to create an anti-republican climate, support the contention that Britain has been heavily involved in dirty tricks operations.

In late 1971 David Seaman, a former soldier, claimed that he had been involved in the bombing of the Four Step Inn on the Shankill Road which had been blamed on the IRA and which had led to an increase in sectarian tension.

More recently additional substantive claims have been made by Colin Wallace, former head of the British black propaganda unit at Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn, and Fred Hoylroyd, ex-British under-cover agent, who claims that his colleague SAS Captain Robert Nairac (killed by the IRA in 1977) helped organise the Miami Showband massacre in 1975 and the assassination of Long Kesh escapee and IRA Volunteer John Greene, the same year.

There have been many unexplained assassinations and 1989 has been no different. 1989 saw the deaths of Sinn Fein Councillor John Davey,

human rights lawyer Pat Finucane, and IRA Volunteer Gerry Casey, in circumstances which suggested stated involvement.

Undoubtedly, the Six-County state is the El Salvador of Western Europe.

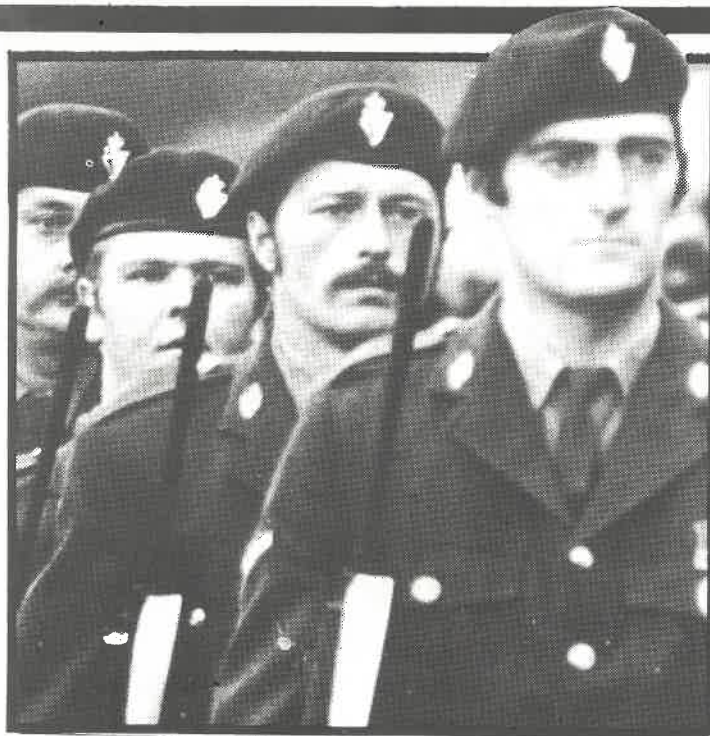
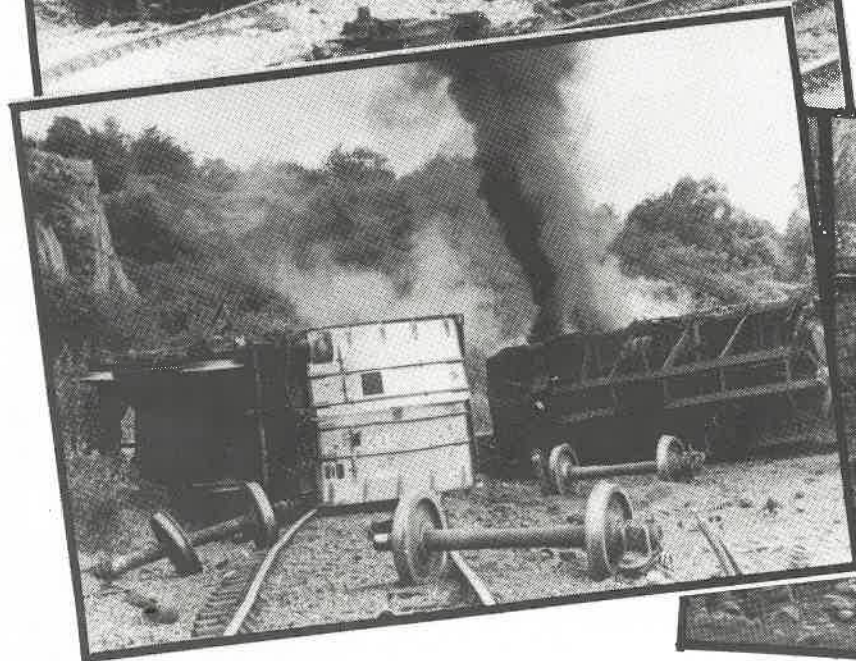
Repression- 20th Anniversary

THREE years after the signing of the Hillsborough Treaty an examination showed that it had failed in almost all of the areas of reform

1989



IRA attacks on cross-border rail-links increased dramatically in 1989



Loyalist mUrDeRers still on the prowl in 1989

promised by its Dublin government and SDLP supporters.

Far from being disbanded the UDR is still on the prowl, raiding their own armouries to arm loyalist paramilitaries and assaulting nationalists.

The Treaty failed to stop summary executions by state forces, failed to get justice for the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four, failed to end the use of plastic bullets, failed to abolish Diplock courts, and failed to rule out further use of paid-perjurers and show-trials. In the first two years of the Treaty twice as many people were arrested under the PTA in the North than in the two preceding years. Homes were raided at the rate of 60 a week.

Attacks on republican funerals reached their peak during the same period and as the twentieth anniversary of the open deployment of the British army in the North takes place there has been a large increase in harassment and raids on homes.

20 YEAR

1989

Rail-Line bombing

IN 1989 the IRA increased its attacks on the cross-border rail-link and later disrupted communications in other areas.

The attacks had a number of advantages, particularly in South Armagh, where large numbers of British soldiers were forced out of their bunkers and spy-posts and had to be deployed to protect bomb-disposal experts in exhaustive operations along miles of track.

The attacks also undermined the credibility of British authority which for days on end couldn't even guarantee the running of trains along the main stretch.

It was to discuss this bombing campaign that two senior RUC Detectives, Chief Superintendent Harry Breen, and Bob Buchanan, secretly travelled to Dundalk Barracks for a meeting with gardai.

As they returned across the border the IRA was



Chief Superintendent Harry Breen displaying the weapons recovered during the Loughgall ambush.

waiting for them, ambushed their car, killed them and seized their documents.

For the IRA to have dealt with Breen was particularly satisfying. He had been privy to the premeditated SAS ambush of the eight Volunteers at Loughgall and had triumphantly posed for the press with the captured IRA weapons.



"YOU CAN nearly tell them by their eyes," the expert was saying. "Something different about them, y'know?"

We agreed. Silly to disagree for the expert was only warming up and we were due a lecture. He had an opinion on everything and, as they used to say, he had no back doors, always up front with his opinions. This was another of his theories, that you could tell the difference by looking at their eyes. I admitted to myself that I had heard the argument before from somebody else and apparently a lot of people believed it. Bad news I know to have such a firm opinion and you just looking at eyes.

"D'ye ever notice it yourself, Ed?" he asked, but without waiting for an answer went on, "*Small black eyes and not too close together, that's the July boys. It was my aul' fella pointed it out to me first and, sure enough, ever since that I've always noticed it myself.*"

"You would," somebody stated, flatly, but left the scene before the expert could identify the voice.

The remark must have stung his pride, for he called out after the retreating heckler, "*Aye, you better believe I would. If, you lived where I lived, surrounded by them, you'd be able to see it too. Smart arse!*"

"Easy on, lads," said Ed, "*Sure the man's entitled to his views.*"

The expert agreed, mollified that nobody else had joined in the attack, and said loud enough for 'that other clown' to hear that, "*People would wonder about your man's eyes whether he was one or not.*"

"So what's the remedy then, Peter?" asked a voice. "*You know, like after you've identified them by the eyes.*"

"Well now, that's a thing everybody would need to sort out for themselves," answered the expert.

I knew he was stalling for time and full attention. He was, I knew, going to give us all his own special remedy whether we wanted it or not and the bit about everybody 'sorting it out for themselves' was just a pawn. It was to leave us on the edge, worried that we hadn't even got a remedy of our own and then he would come in with a tried

eyes

A short story by

Eoghan MacCormaic

and tested solution. The reliable expert. Predictable!

"My solution," says he, "*is tried and tested. The aul' fella was using it for years and any of them I ever come across I used the same method. It never failed.*"

"What method was that, Peter?"

"Thumb the eyes out first," he replied, "*and then give them the works with plenty of boiling water.*"

"Christ, that's awful!" said a voice behind me. I looked round and saw that it was my cell mate, just back from his visit.

"You're a rough case," he called out to the expert.

"What's that?" asked the expert. "*Can you think of any better way of softening them up?*"

"Not off-hand," said my cell mate, "*but I think thumbing their eyes out is going a bit far.*"

"Well, Jesus, you're not going to eat them, are you?" asked the expert. "*And, believe me, the eyes isn't much use to them where they're going. Although mind you, I read somewhere that sheeps' eyes are a bit of a delicacy in some places. Maybe down your part of the world youse eat the eyes, eh?*"

"You're bloody sick!" said my cell

mate, but I said nothing. I was just a listener. "*And I'll tell you better than that, you're a sectarian bigot. I never heard nothing like it, tell them apart by their eyes, thumb their eyes out. You're as bad as them loyalists, they probably do the same with the Murphys.*"

"Probably do, alright," said the expert and I heard a trace of laughter in his tone. Wicked.

"Aye, I hear you laughing," my cell mate called, "*and that just underlines what I'm saying. You're just a sectarian moron and all you think about is religion.*" He paused. No reply from the expert. I knew what was coming but I couldn't avert it — too late. "*So you have no answer?*" crowed my cell mate in triumph. "*Thumb their eyes out, indeed.*"

"Dead right," said the expert, "*and, by the way, it's yourself that has a narrow sectarian mind. If you can tell me a better way of sorting out early and late spuds, or cooking them, I'll be glad to hear it.*"

We all laughed. The expert wins and my cell mate sits down, a misread and mistimed argument.

He just hadn't made a proper analysis.

BOOK REVIEWS

IN ANGER AND AWE

PEGGY DEERY by Nell McCafferty.

Published by Attic Press, Price £4.95.

REVIEWED BY JIM GIBNEY

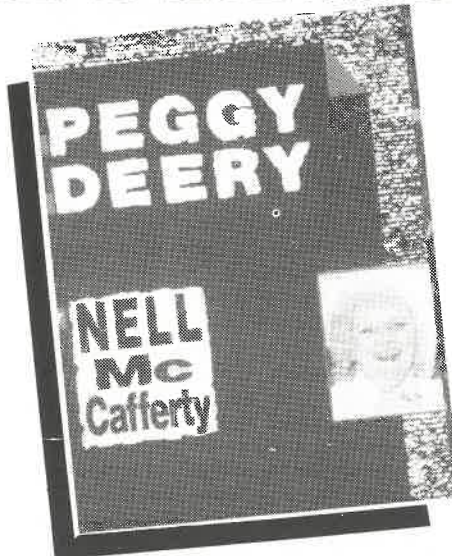
IN THIS BOOK, Nell McCafferty in her familiar, inimitable style, takes the reader on a journey into the heart and soul of the Deery's, a working-class family growing up in Derry amidst the last twenty years of war. The book is a frank portrayal (too frank, apparently, for the shelves of Easons who refused to stock it) of how the Deery family coped.

There are several stories running parallel with each other competing for the reader's attention. They are the story of a mother caught in the cycle of poverty, trying to make ends meet and partially succeeding because of a typical caninness present in most working-class homes; the story of children maturing into adults against the background of war and its impact on them; the story of women's role in society as wife, mother, protector, provider, adjudicator and counsellor; young girls learning the skills of mothering long before their time; the story of a young man maimed by British violence joining the IRA and being lost to life in all its ordinariness. Any one of these stories would have been enough on its own to make an interesting read. Taken together they make compelling reading. The reader is variously in a state of compassion, anger and awe that a woman and her brood could survive so much and remain sane.

Their survival is a testimony not just to their own resilience but to the resilience of working-class people in Derry, or any part of Ireland, because the book's strength lies in the way it reflects how people at the sharp end of the social scale deal with economic and military repression.

Through her portrayal of the Deery family, Nell McCafferty puts a human face on the economic and political history of Derry before and after 1968. We're told of the sterling work done by the unknown (at least to the reviewer) Brigid Bond, "slum dweller extraordinaire", who squatted families in need of a house into vacant homes. Her actions had a dramatic effect on the life of Derry. Before her revolt, the unionist controlled Derry Corporation built 99 houses per year; following their abolition in 1968, the Housing Executive built 840 houses per year.

We relive Bloody Sunday through the eyes of some of those present: Peggy



Deery, in the company of her chums, out for an afternoon's crack, as well as politics, returned home from the march eight weeks late, lucky to be alive but crippled in one leg for the rest of her life, shot by a Para. There is the teenager, Jack Duddy, a smile on his face, unexpectedly pacing alongside his curate, Father (later Bishop) Daly, as they ran for their lives fleeing British bullets. He was shot dead at the priest's side.

At 38 years old, by then a mother of 14 children, Peggy Deery was deeply affected by being shot. She lost her self-confidence and was in her mid-forties before she again wore a skirt, which always fell below her left calf, wasted by the bullet which severed a nerve in her leg. What the skirt failed to hide, the knee-length boots covered. It took an equally long time before she ventured out to a social night with her friends and to achieve this she was also taking on the social norm of the time which deemed widowhood a state of permanent mourning.

This book is a story about ordinary people. You'll not meet the famous names of the last 20 years who have rightly earned a place in our hearts and in the history books. You get a feel from this book for the people who have made up the mass movements for civil or national rights; those who supply the sons and daughters to the ranks of the IRA and Sinn Fein; those whose homes the IRA use daily and without whom not a shot could be fired for freedom. There is one notable exception, Bernadette McAliskey gets mentioned twice — in her usual role as orator and again when delivering a bag of coal to Peggy Deery's in 1968 and collecting money from people on the dole to pay for her electricity bill. It was such poverty which prompted the poet Seamus Deane to write, "Bogside was once a street, now it is a condition".

Since that sentence was penned, Derry has changed, at least superficially. There are now better housing conditions, gerrymand-

ering does not exist, unless you count the recent moves to ban Sinn Fein from the airwaves and the declaration of non-violence (sic). Their equivalent of Belfast's Divis Flats, Rossville Flats, eerily stands, almost empty — a facade of what life was like under unionist rule. Today, the SDLP run the City Council but unemployment has remained constant at 25% since 1972, 5% higher than under the unionists, and in some estates it is 80%. In human terms this registers itself in the fact that only one of Peggy Deery's 14 children ever held a steady permanent job. But in Nell McCafferty's words, "regardless of what has happened since, the people of Derry were in a worse condition before '68". A local doctor diagnosed their condition pre '68 as "apathy". The author believes the Civil Rights Movement put the people on the road to recovery.

Peggy Deery was not the only member of her family to suffer gratuitous violence at the hands of British soldiers. Six months after she was shot, her 16-year-old son Paddy was blinded in one eye when a British soldier fired a plastic bullet at him. Over the years, several of her children, Paddy, Helen, Johnny and Pio, lived in scattered locations in Donegal to escape the attention of British injustice either in the form of 'supergrasses' or the casual arrest and brutality that landed dozens of Derry's youth behind bars for many years and in some cases for life.

Nell McCafferty's treatment of Paddy Deery's attempts to grow out of IRA active service and into a settled husband/father role is an excellent account of the emotional dilemma faced by many men and women of Paddy Deery's age. He started his active service work when the IRA was a mass army, free to roam the streets armed, operating at will. He survived the vagaries of war only to find that life's natural calls demand a change of life-style which cannot be met. For those fighting in a political struggle, particularly the armed section, the very nature of human relationships change. This is seen in the dialogue between Paddy and his wife Collette shortly before he was killed in an accidental explosion. In the conflict of loyalty between the IRA and his wife and children, the needs of the IRA came first. Not because of a fixation with violence, not because of adventure — there is none after 20 years — not because his love for his wife had dimmed but because sometimes the human being responds to the nobler ideals of liberation and the images that that conjures up in the mind often puts ordinary life and its appeals in the shade.

The core of the story is about a woman's life. Peggy Deery was the subject because Nell McCafferty, who has championed the cause of women's liberation for years, thought she embraced all the qualities which proved that woman is as capable as man and should enjoy an equal status. The evidence is in this book to support her views. Peggy Deery reared 14 children single-handedly, nursed a sick

and dying husband, whose illness made him so violent towards her and the children that it drove them onto the streets and into neighbours' homes seeking shelter. She ran to prisons to give her off-spring strength when they most needed it, to hospitals to soothe their pain and in the case of one son Michael, to urge him to live but to no avail. She kept an open house for the IRA and fed and clothed her family long after the time when they were old enough to cater for themselves.

I gave the book to my mother who reared ten children around the same time as Peggy Deery was rearing hers. Her view was that the story was sad not only because of the family's hardship but because Peggy dwarfed her children. She did not give them enough freedom, enough independence not to rely too heavily on her. Peggy weaved a web around her children with herself at the centre of their existence. She was the touchstone of their existence; little wonder her son Johnny said a month after her death, "No matter what ever happened to me, my ma was always sent for. That's why I'm fucking lost without her."

There is a humour in the book but it is buried beneath the human sadness and you have to search hard for it.

The futility of the loss of life over the last 20 years is captured in a comment from the father of a British soldier who was shot dead by the IRA in the wake of Bloody Sunday. Mr Frank Munroe, of Clitheroe in Lancashire, wrote to the *Derry Journal*: "Once we had an only son. He was a kindly man with a passion for ornithology and wild-life preservation and a great sense of humour and a basic belief in the rule of law."

There are many who have died over the last 20 years that fit such a description. One wonders how many more will die before the North's bleeding agony is ended.

Nell McCafferty's book will join the growing list of books which concentrate on history from a popular viewpoint. She has done a service to the understanding of how people live under constant military and economic stress and provides a forceful argument for those who want to change the old order.

OUT OF THE MAZE

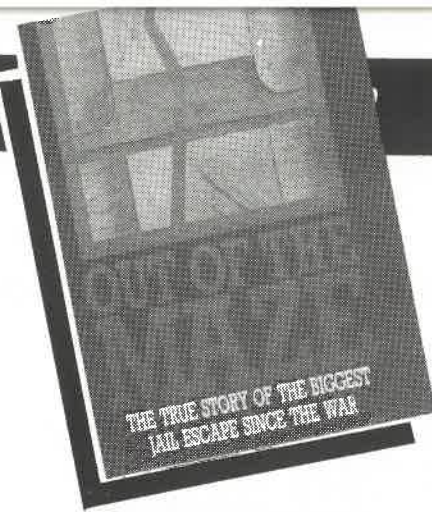
OUT OF THE MAZE by Derek Dunne

Published by Gill and MacMillan

Price £6.95

REVIEWED BY TOM HARTLEY

OUT OF THE MAZE is in many ways a sequel to that other masterpiece on the prison struggle, *Ten Men Dead* by David Beresford. While *Ten Men Dead* covers the period of the hunger-strikes, *Out of the Maze* covers the period following its ending.



Against the backdrop of a planned mass escape from the H-Blocks of Long Kesh unfolds another story, the story of a struggle waged by the prisoners following the end of the hunger-strike. One major element of that struggle was the planning of an escape from "one of Europe's most secure prisons".

After a decade which saw many successful breakouts, republican prisoners focused their collective experience on the organisation of an escape from the H-Blocks of Long Kesh. This experience had been enriched in many unseen ways: by the discipline and political awareness forged in the 'no-wash' protest and the two hunger-strikes; by their own experience of breakouts; by a command structure which had remained intact throughout the years of intense prison conflict; by their sense of camaraderie; and their individual commitment to the struggle for national freedom.

And then there were the individual republican prisoners, coming from different communities and backgrounds, with a wide array of talents and experiences of struggle.

There in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh the plumber, the student, the farmer and the labourer lived together with the republican family. There they plotted to overcome the limitations of the imposed penal environment, bound together in an atmosphere of "treason"... "these felons of our land".

One of those individuals at the centre of this story, Larry Marley, a republican Volunteer from Ardoyne in Belfast, played a central role in the planning of the escape. His story is the story of hundreds of republican activists, who were propelled by the events of 20 years ago to join the ranks of the Republican Movement. Larry Marley was to see the inside of a prison many times, these experiences never deterred his commitment to the republican struggle, nor his determination to break open the prison doors that held him.

Through the pages of *Out of the Maze*, Larry Marley weaves in and out of the conspiracies and intrigues. From the germ of an idea springs the first assessment of the feasibility of a break-out. From the assessment, a picture of the gaps that exists in the prisoners' knowledge of the H-Blocks begins to emerge. As the gaps are filled in, the prisoners turn to the logistical needs of a break-out. Gradually, the idea is made real. This reality touches everyone concerned with the running of the H-Blocks of Long Kesh. Prisoner and guard play their part,

deliberately or unwittingly, in the unfolding drama of the mass escape. To the latter, this only becomes clear in the aftermath of that escape.

Outside the jail, the Movement has to be convinced that this idea can work. Back-up and communication are important, but the walls that hold the republican prisoners of Long Kesh cannot stop the flow of ideas and support into and out of the Blocks.

So, on a quiet September Sunday, the prisoners made their bid for freedom, leaving behind them a dazed and baffled prison administration. Here their story is tinged with sadness. Of the 38 that made it to the front gate, half were to be recaptured within a short period of time. On the outside, their daring came as a major morale booster to the broad base of republican support.

JUSTICE UNDER FIRE

JUSTICE UNDER FIRE by A. Dennings

Published by Pluto Press

REVIEWED BY KATE O'NEILL

THIS IS A collection of essays by some of that small band of civil rights warriors whose fight is waged in law courts and dusty libraries rather than on the streets or in political arenas. Their work is important because, from their elevated retreats (once regarded as safe but no longer, since the murder of Pat Finucane) they can see the more insidious attacks on fundamental freedoms which are obscured from the sight of those most deeply affected by them.

So here we have the catalogue of changes to or abuses of the system of criminal justice, the invasion of the thin-walled 'Northern Ireland' castle of civil rights, introduced in the past 20 years to make of the legal system another weapon of war — to be used, as all such weapons are, when it seems to be in the interests of the user to do so. It so seemed on the foundation of the Northern state. The most enduring of the armoury of repressive laws then used turned out to be the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act, which remained in place until the foundations of the present edifice of repressive legislation were laid.

It is all here, thoroughly researched and lucidly set down: the powers of arrest, and search, and seizure; the amendments (including the abolition of jury trial) designed to make it easier to obtain convictions; the use of violent and unlawful interrogation techniques; internment; and the strange story of the 'supergrass' system, which in one sense could be counted as a

success for the small band of lawyers and others, who opposed it with might and main. For their exposure, in and out of court, of the sheer depravity of this system, ended it. But, as they say, sin seál eile.

That is about the only light in the dark landscape surveyed by this most welcome book. It is welcome because it brings together in one place, and in a very readable form, the facts and figures with which all must be equipped who would go forth and fight the corruption of a legal system, who would wage war against it and who first must be persuaded it is a goodly fight.

And it is. There is nothing at all new in this poisoning of the law in Ireland by the people who introduced it here and claim to be proud of it, when it is expedient to do so. But an Ireland free of outside interference will need a system of justice. The first requirement of such a system is that the people can have full confidence in it. If the British go on pouring poison into the well, no-one will want to drink from it even when it becomes their own. That would be a sad and sorry state to reach.

So those authors fight a good fight. They can win it only if they are widely read — and heeded.

ing treatment meted out to this district by successive unionist and British regimes. That 10% of all those officially recorded as unemployed in the North should reside in the parliamentary constituency of West Belfast is abominable. That British government policies should continue to strip away the remaining jobs available in the area is almost beyond comprehension.

The report, in very readable book form, traces the history of employment in West Belfast from the city's establishment as an industrial base following the Industrial Revolution right through to the present day. We are presented with an economy that has constantly been manipulated and controlled by Britain for its own commercial and political ends. We see how the linen, shipbuilding and associated engineering were allowed to develop only because they posed no threat to existing British industry. We see how, from the beginning, the better-paid skilled positions went to loyalist sections of the workforce while nationalists were relegated to positions in the unskilled and service industries. The authors then trace the decline of West Belfast, heralded by the collapse of the linen industry on which the area was so dependent.

Throughout, we are reminded of the deliberate policies of governments that were determined to ensure that jobs went to the loyal population, thus forcing emigration and deprivation on those who opposed British rule in Ireland. Between 1950 and 1976, 70% of the jobs on which nationalist West Belfast relied were lost, while no attempt was made to compensate for the losses. In the past ten years, monetarism has further eroded the area's economic base by stripping away large numbers of jobs in the public sector, which have included ancillary posts in the Royal Victoria Hospital, one of West Belfast's only remaining employers. Added to this has been the hardship caused by the abolition of many Welfare Benefits, producing a massive and accelerating spiral of debt and further hardship. The results are there for all to see: poor diet; ill-health; heart trouble; premature death; and the highest infant-mortality rate in the North.

The report goes on to outline how, contrary to the usual propaganda, the 'Troubles' have actually created some 19,000 jobs overall by boosting the security and related industries, and how many of the firms forced to close in the past two decades had closed because of the economic, not the political, situation. And how the disincentive to foreign investment is caused by the general political instability inherent in the Northern statelet, not by the armed conflict.

We are then presented with the nature of government assistance to West Belfast, how the area has been deprived of support from the Industrial Development Board, the Local Enterprise Development Unit, EEC funds and the International Fund for Ireland. Some of this has been due to neglect

and carelessness, some to political considerations, the extreme of which have been evident in the transformation of the White-rock Industrial Estate into a military fort, the attempt to destroy the 'black taxi' service, the refusal to invest in the Conway Mill enterprise and the accompanying drive to destroy it, and the political vetting of community groups, resulting in the withdrawal of funds from any group suspected of not endorsing British military policies.

It is only now, when unemployment has moved into the realms of 'security' considerations, that those previously so silent — the Catholic Hierarchy, the nationalist middle class, and the government responsible for the tragedy — have taken an interest in the problem. Yet, even now, while lip-service is paid and great cash figures are discussed, the state and its allies continue to ignore the real nature of unemployment in West Belfast or to support any of the indigenous efforts to tackle it.

The Obair Report is an excellently comprehensive document that forcibly restates what has already been said and adds a wealth of new information for all those who would take up West Belfast's fight against unemployment and discrimination. Its proposals for the future give us light at the end of the tunnel. Its incisive clarity lets us see the exact nature of the tunnel itself. A book to be read by all who would understand the meaning of unemployment in West Belfast.

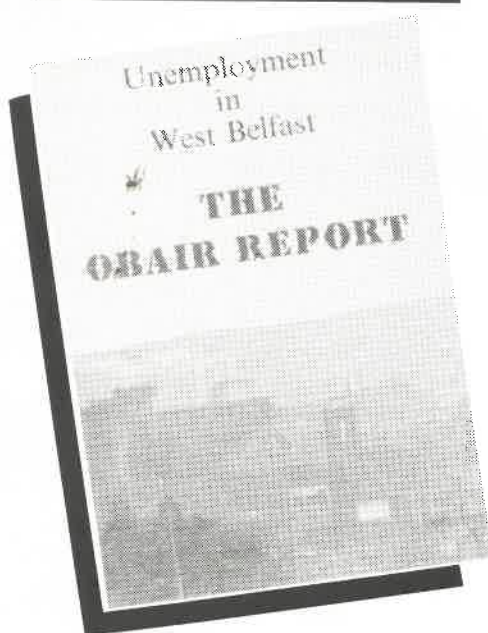
MOTHERLAND

MOTHERLAND by Timothy O'Grady.
Published by Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press, Price £11.95.

REVIEWED BY DANNY MORRISON

MOTHERLAND IS A strange, unconventional novel set in a strange politically ill-defined Ireland where the 'Troubles' and roaming armed soldiers would appear to have engulfed the whole island just as in the span of the narrative they have engulfed the last 800 years.

A grossly overweight, dependent 43-year-old son, who was born with amphibious hands (which gave him a sixth sense) shuffles home to find his mother missing. She lives in the surreal setting of an attic flat coming down with antiques, memorabilia and artefacts, off Dublin's Merrion Square. Here he finds an ornately bound book containing records of the Synnott family, a Norman family who came to Ireland in 1169. He becomes absorbed with translating the manuscripts and is launched into an odyssey in search of his eccentric mother, her connection with the book and one's relation-



THE OBAIR REPORT

REVIEWED BY CIARAN DE BAROID

IN PRODUCING its report, the *Obair* team, and the book's authors, Bill Rolston of the University of Ulster and Mike Tomlinson of Queen's University, have done all in West Belfast a great service. Their meticulous research and detailed analysis have forged a weapon with which to push forward the demands for an end to the appall-

ship with the past and one's country.

Along the way he is joined by an old man, an amateur historian and republican patriot, who insinuates himself into his life to act as his mentor and guide. He tells him: *"It is strange, is it not, the way the past takes vengeance when it has been violated, even upon the innocent?"*

Through a series of flashbacks in the first half of the book — because of our hero's power of extra-sensory perception — we learn about some of the early Norman colonists and how they assimilated with the native Irish. We eventually learn that our three principal characters are all blood-related to the Synnotts. Often, however, one feels unsure of one's ground, of where it is all going. When he is writing of the mother/son or son/grandfather relationships, Mr O'Grady can be brilliant but he is in danger of losing us, particularly with some of the laboured dialectics.

Anyway, complicated though it all sounds the book ends with a rational denouement, less preposterous than some of the ingenious devices and fantastic tales which carry us along.

Motherland is certainly unusual. If you liked the metaphysical sides to *Ulysses*, *At Swim-Two-Birds*, *The Magus*, or *Hawks-moor*, you will enjoy Timothy O'Grady's excellently written first novel.

TELL ME LIES ABOUT VIETNAM:

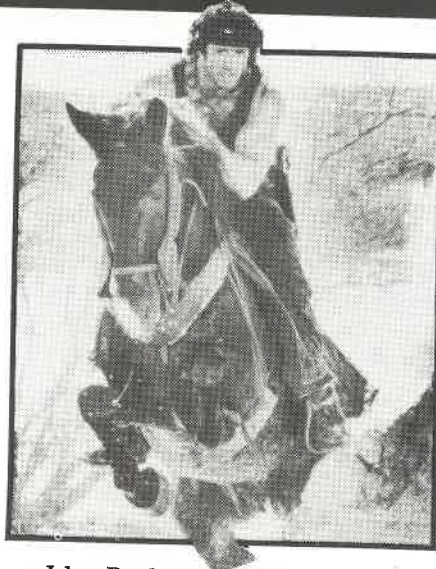
Cultural Battles for the meaning of the War by Alf Louvre and Jeffrey Walsh
Published by Milton Keynes, Open University Press

REVIEWED BY MARY CUMMINGS

"We found out that all the bread we made for Decca was going into making boxes that go into American Air Force bombers to bomb fucking North Vietnam. They took the bread we made for them and put it into the radar section of their business."

SO SPEAKS Kieth Richard of the Rolling Stones, a sentiment that perfectly captures one of the contradictions of popular culture. Just as they took Che Guevara's image and put it on t-shirts to sell for profit, they were able to take Country Joe McDonald's or Gracie Slick's anti-war songs and turn them into big bucks.

Still, as the chapter on West Coast rock (by John Storey) in this book emphasises, at least the opposition had all the best tunes. They also had a lot of good poems,



John Rambo racing imperialism back into the big picture

whether from US soldier poets (see the chapter by W.D. Ehrhart) or British poets (chapter by Laurence Coupe) and cartoons (see the chapter by James Aulich).

The pro-war lobby had a harder time in the cultural representation battle. John Wayne movies did not quite fit the bill for a war whose front line was unclear and whose enemy was often invisible. The film industry during the Vietnam War (as Jeffrey Walsh points out in his chapter) was more likely to produce vaguely or directly anti-war films. But then the bulk of the US filmgoing audience was under thirty.

Immediately after the war, the hawks still had a hard time. Films avoided the issue that the US psyche could not grasp — that they had been beaten by little foreigners in black pyjamas — or at most looked at the topic only in terms of the plight of the returned misfit ex-soldier. But that was all eventually to change. Comics recreated the super-hero (see the chapter by David Huxley) and soon John Rambo replaced John Wayne with a muscle-bulging, narcissistic, inarticulate love of violence that would have made even the Duke wince. The US was back in form — like Reagan — proud to be imperialist once more. Films spelt out the message clearly. One variant was: 'We could have won, if only they'd let us, and we certainly will win the next time'. Another variant was: 'We didn't win, but at least the hero was a wiser man after the event' — remember *Platoon*, *Apocalypse Now*, etc? War was portrayed as a rite of passage for the all-American boy.

Walsh's chapter is good stuff, and there is more in the other chapters on drama, photojournalism, etc — too much to mention here. The only gripe is that there seems an obsession (unfortunately most noticeable in Walsh's thoughtful chapter) with taking something that could be said simply and dressing it up with so much jargon that it becomes quite obscure. Why should accounts of popular culture be written in a way that a lot of people could not understand them?

The book is sound, even if at times inaccessible. But it leaves me with a big

question — one to which I think I know the answer. Alf Louvre and Jeffrey Walsh note that in 1985, ten years after the war ended, five books a week about Vietnam were published in the US. Will it be the same in Britain ten years after our war's over? Probably not. The US has a lot of wounds to cauterize through its popular culture as a result of Vietnam — 55,000 US soldiers died, and at least the same number committed suicide afterwards.

The British collective psyche seems to manage to suppress the issue of its Vietnam so that it hardly even reaches the level of being expressed in popular culture. A *Daily Express* opinion poll last year showed that only 3% of people in Britain named 'Northern Ireland' as the main problem facing their society. There are few anti-war plays, films, poems, cartoons, emerging from mainstream sources there. There may be less to forget because it is forgotten already.

Where is the British Joni Mitchell to write a pro-Irish version of *Woodstock*? Why cannot Sting give us a song on a par with his *They Dance Alone* (about the mothers of the 'disappeared' in Argentina) or Peter Gabriel a song to match *Biko*?

FROM MUSSOLINI'S JAILS:

A CLEAR VOICE

A Gramsci reader by David Forgacs
Published by Lawrence and Wishart

REVIEWED BY CIARAN DOWD

ANTONIO GRAMSCI was an Italian communist who died in Mussolini's fascist jail but his clear voice of revolutionary analysis can still be heard today. Like James Connolly, Gramsci sought to make revolutionary theory relevant to his particular national situation. Thus, he was one of the first communist leaders to put forward a clear analysis of what was involved with the rise of fascism. Much of his writing is fragmentary and even 'coded', as in the famous *Prison Notebooks* which were designed to pass the fascist prison censors. Yet there is something enduring about Gramsci's revolutionary thinking and even an increasing relevance: as with most revolutionaries he was a bit 'before his times'.

One of the most far-reaching ideas developed by Gramsci was that of 'hegemony', which refers to a revolutionary strategy more attuned to the reality of advanced capitalist society than earlier or dogmatic versions of Marxism. Against the cataclysmic vision of the 'storming' of the Bastille or the Winter Palace, Gramsci believed a more organic (but not necessarily reformist) strategy was called for. Essentially this involved the revolutionary classes building

up alliances (broad fronts) and establishing their cultural and moral leadership over society, even before eventual victory. Much as the powers that be establish their hegemony ('coercion and consent' as Gramsci once defined it) over the dominated classes, so revolutionaries must seek to establish their authority over ever wider layers of society.

Gramsci went on to write about a 'national-popular' movement as one in which a fundamental class becomes hegemonic at a national level, and carries out the historical tasks abdicated by the middle class. Parallels with Irish republicanism and the sorry history of the gombeen Free Staters are obvious. Of course, each thinker exists in a particular national and historical context but there could be much to learn from Gramsci's fluid and creative approach. The present collection is an ideal introduction and covers his period as revolutionary leader as well as prison intellectual and his political and cultural writings as well.

CODY'S ARMY: BELFAST BLITZ

by Jim Case

Published by Warner Books

Price \$2.95

REVIEWED BY LARA IRVINE

TO BE QUITE HONEST, this book, the latest in a series of Cody's Army adventures (*Assault into Libya, Philippine Hardpunch*, etc), does not really merit a review. So, unless you are interested in just how bad a recent example of US popular paperback drivel can be, I advise you to skip along to more interesting reading.

However, if you find yourself craving to know what Cody's army, "four top-secret warriors, America's most powerful anti-terrorist weapon, ready to strike anywhere at a moment's notice", could possibly be up to in Belfast, then read on.

Cody's army, it appears at first, has been sent to Belfast to intercept three arms shipments from the US which could shift the balance of power in the war and thwart the signing of the new peace initiative (code-named 'Operation Cornerstone') being negotiated between the IRA and certain prime ministers. I will leave it to you to guess which ones.

As one of Cody's fearless fighters asks, why don't they, "just tell the British where the arms are coming in, and let them handle it?" Cody's response: "The last time we did that, eight Brits were ambushed and blown away." Hence Ronnie Reagan offers to help

out. (Must still have been wanting to save Ireland for NATO.) As one, with deep yawns, follows the fearless yanks from their (fill in the plot) safehouse near Queen's, to the Belfast Docks, to Carlingford Lough and, finally, to an old abandoned farmhouse in the Glens of Antrim, one learns that the loss of all these arms is beginning to upset one man in particular. This man, is Terence Leslie, the number two and bucking for number one, member of the Army Council, alias The Shootist, a "fanatical renegade... who with his own crack paramilitary force plans a bloodbath that will spark a devastating Irish revolt". This is the man Cody's army must stop!

And how do the Ollie North clones get their man — by daring exploits, by brilliant intelligence work? Alas, no. It just happens instead that the only female character to appear in the book, Bernadette, the Shootist's only sister who "worked for three years with Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams and the Peace People campaigns" (I didn't realise they lasted that long) and who "hates the violence and wishes the IRA would stop the killing" gives away her brother's whereabouts to save him and the Irish people from slaughter. Just when you think it could not get any worse, the final shoot-out reads like the end of a bad Reagan western.

While this book is ridiculous, it is not particularly funny in so far as it vividly illustrates what, unfortunately, remains a fairly typical US perception of the IRA as either misled idealists and patriots or fanatical lunatics, and a perception of the situation here as one of warring communities kept at each other's throats by the paramilitaries. The book also reveals what has become US fascination, indeed obsession, with 'terrorism'. No longer are the bad guys the cowboys in the black hats, or the Darth Vaders in black metal helmets, but rather they have become the 'terrorists' in black balaclavas. The Reagan years have definitely had their impact and this work of pure fiction illustrates how deeply Reaganism has permeated even the popular press.

BEYOND THATCHERISM

by Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques

Published by Lawrence and Wishart

Price £5.95

THE HARD ROAD TO RENEWAL

by Stuart Hall

REVIEWED BY GEOFF BELL

IN CASE ANYONE else gets the blame, I admit responsibility for holding these books a long time and for not writing this earlier. I do have, however, a number of excuses. For

instance, part of page nine of *The Hard Road to Renewal* reads: "The analysis offered here contests the idea that each class has its own, fixed, paradigmatic ideology and that ideological struggle consists of the clash between fully constituted and self-sufficient 'world views'. I adopt instead a discursive conception of ideology — ideology (like language) is conceptualized in terms of the articulation of elements. As Volosinov remarked, the ideological sign is always multi-accentual."

Now would you be enthusiastic about reviewing that?

So what are they all about? Well, from the ridiculous language to the sublime, the British left is fucked and it does not know what to do about it. The reason it is in this state is because the Labour Party lost a couple of elections and its prospects for the future are not too bright. These authors, and Stuart Hall in particular, try and figure out why this should be the case. They do so in a most unsatisfactory manner.

Good points are made. The wretched, right-wing history of Labour in office, the cautious empty politics of the Labour leadership, the historical weakness and disunity of the British working class are highlighted by Hall, and, where his over-writing permits, gone into in some detail. The real problems emerge when the discussion centres on the way forward.

Here, impressionism abounds. Whose "greatest success", for instance, "has been to change the national and, to a rather lesser extent, the international political agenda"? Who has ensured that the "Thatcherite vision of the world order and Britain's role in it — has taken a drubbing. Selfishness and greed have been if not eclipsed, then to some extent displaced by altruism and conscience"? Who? None other than our very own Uncle Paddy, Bob Geldof.

Today, Bob is doing TV commercials for razor blades and milk, and herein lies comrades Jacques' and Hall's problem. Their books consists of articles, probably composed over the past ten years and written in haste, but too influenced by yesterday's newspaper. As well as Bob leading the revolution, we have long tracts on the enormous significance and threat to all good people of the SDP. Remember them?

What emerges is not a coherent analysis or rounded perspective, but a set of ideas and suggestions, some good, some bad, some silly, some obvious, thrown together.

The one idea that is missing, somewhat characteristically, is Ireland. The topic is barely mentioned. There are 40 articles in all, not one of them deals with the North, Thatcher's war there, or what the British left should be doing about it. For those who really want to understand about the crisis and failures of the British left, this omission, and not these books, is a good place to start.

Roll of Honour 1969-1989

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Letter to a British soldier on Irish soil

Soldier

You did not ask to come here
We know that.
You obey orders
We know that.
You have a wife
A sweetheart
A mother
We know that.
And you have children
We know that too.
But soldier
Where you stand
There is death.
Where you walk
There is a burning wound.
Where you sleep
There is no peace
And the earth heaves
Through a nightmare of blood.

Soldier

When you die
The dogs will bury you.

When you came to this land
You said you came to understand.
Soldier, we are tired of your understanding.
Tired of British troops on Irish soil
Tired of your knock on the door
Tired of the rifle-butt on the head
Tired of the jails, the gas, the beatings
In dark corners.

Soldier

We are tired of the peace you bring
To Irish bones.
Tired of the bombs, exploding in our homes
Tired of the rubble, growing in the streets
Tired of the deaths of old friends
Tired of the tears and funerals --
Those endless, endless funerals.

Soldier

When you came to this land
You said you came to understand
Is this your understanding?

We dream here.

We dream that this land
Is our land.
That one day
Catholic and Protestant
Believer and Non-believer
Will stand here
And dream
As Irish men and women.

We dream

Of a green land
Without death
A new silence descending
A silence of peace.
And this dream
We dream, soldier, without you.

That is our understanding.

Go home, soldier.
Your presence here
Destroys the air
Your smile disfigures us.
Go home, soldier
Before we send you home
Dead.

BY PATRICK GALVIN

