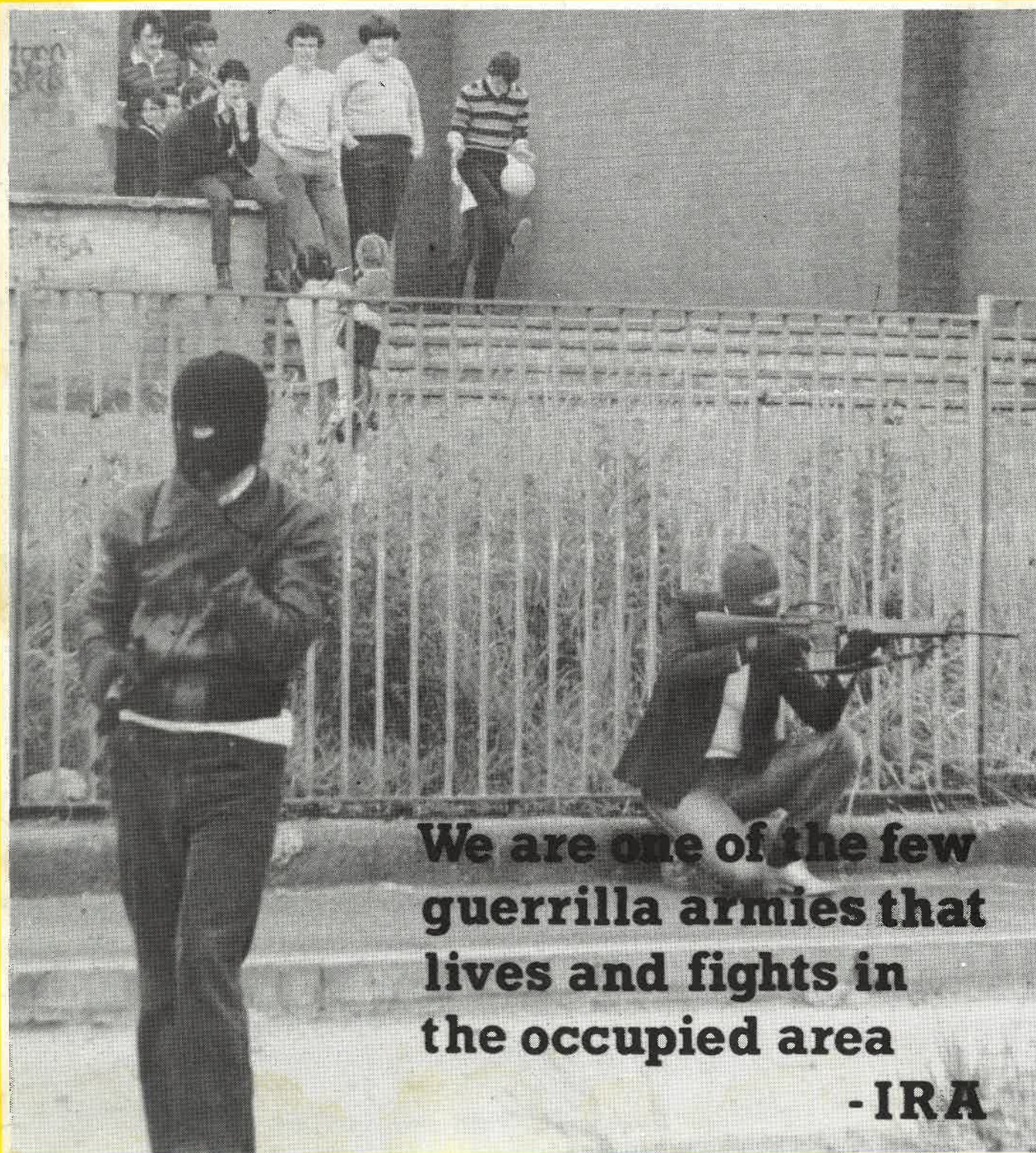


# **IRIS** the republican magazine

JULY/AUGUST 1982

Number 3



**We are one of the few  
guerrilla armies that  
lives and fights in  
the occupied area**

**-IRA**

● *Republicans rely on their own resources and revolutionary will as a guarantor of eventual victory*



# VIEWPOINT

THIS edition of *IRIS*, we are assured, has been awaited by past and potential readers with eager anticipation, or perhaps just with a sceptical disbelief that it would appear at all! But be assured, in future we intend to regularise *IRIS* to a quarterly publication and, progressively, to enlarge its scope from a largely 'foreign affairs' magazine to a publication in which foreign affairs is one element, along with historical, analytical and discussion features, cultural articles and political notes reflecting activities republicans are currently involved in.

The magazine will of course maintain its extensive coverage of the military struggle in the occupied six counties. Additionally, there will be a sizeable portion of the magazine written in Irish, although in this issue — the first under a newly-organised editorial board — there are no Irish articles. Tá bron orainn ach beidh an rud sin go lear i gach iris eile.

*IRIS*, as far as we can ensure, and with the available resources, will be a magazine that reflects every aspect of the republican struggle — *the republican magazine*.

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SEVERAL LESSONS can be drawn from recent international events, both in the Lebanon and 8,000 miles across the South Atlantic on the Malvinas. Even though Irish republicans need no examples or parallels to justify the legitimacy of our own political and military struggle for self-determination, it has nonetheless been a fresh and valuable eye-opener to observe the hypocrisy and the double-speak of two imperialist aggressors in their respective battlegrounds, with all of the lessons that this holds in common for oppressed people everywhere.

Whereas an RPG-7 rocket in the hands of an IRA Volunteer, claiming one or two British enemy lives, is 'evil' and 'murder' in the language of our oppressors, a far more powerful rocket, torpedo or cluster bomb killing scores or hundreds of Argentinian conscripts is an acceptable, and even glorious 'act of war'. Indeed one incident alone, the sinking of the *General Belgrano* (with 368 deaths) outside the British-imposed 'total exclusion zone', and the euphoric impact this cynical butchery had on British jingoists, demonstrates all too clearly just how cheaply these warmongers hold human life. Small wonder then that the death of an Irish child here or there, a skull crushed by the brute impact of a plastic bullet fired at deliberately close range, or the deaths of ten prisoners on hunger-strike, should weigh so lightly on the imperialist conscience.

Brit premier Thatcher's justification of her murderous Falklands war-game extravaganza, when she said that 'you have to be prepared to defend things you believe in, and be prepared to use force to secure liberty and self-determination' is of course clap-trap and hypocrisy coming from her, given the emptiness of British claims on the Malvinas and her attitude to republican force, but it expresses very clearly part of the rationale behind the legitimate pursuit of revolutionary aims by Irish republicans. Republicans will note from all of this, and from the staggering hypocrisy of the Catholic hierarchy in England which remained strangely muted throughout the Falklands affair, that there is no 'crime' in the use of violence against an oppressor, only a flexible manipulation by the ruling class, in its own interest, of 'moral' standpoints.

The hearts and political sympathies of Irish republicans go out to the Palestinians, and to the civilians of Lebanon,



● The sinking of the *General Belgrano* with the loss of 368 lives exposed the hypocrisy of the British towards violence



● The hearts and political sympathies of Irish republicans go out to the Palestinians and to the civilians of Lebanon

caught up in an even more barbarous and expansionist war-game being enacted by Zionist Israel, with an even more scant disregard for life than was shown in the South Atlantic. But the resistance of the Palestinian people and of their political leadership, and the guarantee of continued resistance whatever the short-term outcome in the Lebanon, is an inspiration to us and to other peoples in struggle. Deserted by the bulk of their Arab 'allies' the Palestinians have placed reliance on their own will to resist, their moral superiority over the Israelis, and the muscle of their own youthful guerrillas. It is no coincidence that, in an interview given to *IRIS* by a spokesperson for the IRA and printed inside, it was emphasised that (however welcome all forms of solidarity and support assuredly are) republicans will always, correctly, rely on their own resources and revolutionary will as a guarantor of eventual victory.

And like the Palestinians, republican resistance — whatever the inevitable set-backs and frustrations — will continue, and cannot be defeated by the bankruptcy of British policy, whether it goes by its new name of 'the Falklands factor' or by its more familiar tag of political hypocrisy. ■



# The drift to Paisleyism

*LOYALISTS are divided and confused about their long-term objectives and about methods. A series of crises beginning with the London-Dublin 'summit' in December 1980 and culminating in the IRA's execution of Robert Bradford exposed and widened these divisions. Over-lying it all is DUP leader Ian Paisley's inexorable drive against the OUP for unionist loyalties. On one thing only are the loyalist factions united, their hostility and implacable opposition to the nationalist people. This article examines events and loyalist attitudes since December 1980, and republican responses.*

MARCH 24th this year marked the tenth anniversary of the fall of the loyalist parliament at Stormont, brought down by nationalist resistance, mass street protests and armed struggle. Ten years on, and after at least five major British attempts to devolve limited powers to a locally-controlled Stormont (whose functions Westminster assumed in 1972), the British have failed to create a response from loyalist politicians in tune with modern counter-insurgency pragmatism. Although the loyalist camp remains largely splintered, it does unite at times of crisis and the first aim of all the main loyalist groups remains the restoration of a loyalist-controlled government over the North of Ireland, with responsibility for 'security'.

They reject power-sharing with the nationalist (and from a republican point of view, collaborationist) SDLP, and they reject all ties with the Free State government, from whom they nevertheless

demand greater anti-republican measures, particularly with regard to extradition and patrolling of the border.

In recent years the British government has concentrated on building strong ties with the Dublin government, hoping to obtain from them the all-out repression of republicanism in the 26 counties, and to encourage them to break from their nominally neutral international stance and move towards joining NATO, in return for allowing them a mainly superficial say on the North through the December 1980 Anglo-Irish accord. That accord arose from high-level meetings between the two governments and was meant to devolve into an institutionalised arrangement which would eventually draw upon elected representatives from Britain and from both parts of partitioned Ireland.

### NEO-COLONIAL

Republicans view this process as a diluted variation of British attempts since 1973 to aim towards a neo-colonial settlement favourable to the imperialists, the SDLP and the Dublin regime, one which does not disturb British or US political, economic and strategic interests in Ireland. Indeed, it could even be said that this process truly dates back to the '60s and the historic meeting in 1965 between Northern premier Terence O'Neill and the Free State premier Sean Lemass. In 1973 the British set up a power-sharing government in the North with a nominal 'Irish dimension' (an arrangement for elected representatives from the North and South to sit on a 'Council of Ireland') but that was torpedoed by loyalist opposition in May 1974. Having failed on that occasion, the British have kept tinkering with this initial blue-print but have always met with the hurdle of loyalism (which is unapologetic in its desire for sectarian domination).

Loyalist opposition to the political designs of its creator — Britain — has taken many forms, and can be traced in its most outrageous form in the struttings of Ian Paisley, the self-styled pastor of the Free Presbyterian Church, and for over twenty years now engaged in a campaign to assume the political leadership of the fragmented 'unionist family'. A fragmentation for which he bears much responsibility.

Loyalists also watch British government attitudes in other political areas with what amounts to paranoia, constantly searching for evidence of a political change that could have repercussions for them. Thus, the religious fanatic Paisley accuses Britain of weakening the monarchy and the British ethos by establishing diplomatic relations with Rome — severed since 1533 — and entertaining the Pope on a visit; and Official Unionists back imperialist adventures in the Falklands/Malvinas with a particularly jingoistic intensity.

However, loyalist fears about the process instituted by Britain through the



● When Terence O'Neill (centre) met Sean Lemass (right) in 1965 it was the first-ever meeting between the two heads of the partitionist states



● Paisley sees himself as the potential leader of an independent loyalist six-county state

Anglo-Irish accord produced a period of intense activity and insecurity in their ranks, and marked another milestone in the fortunes of Paisley who moved more and more towards a position of advocating an independent six counties, in the event of not achieving a return to Stormont.

He deliberately incited Protestant sectarian hatred, and from February 1981, when in the dead of night he paraded 500 masked and uniformed men (whom he called the Third Force) on an Antrim hillside, through the tense seven months of the hunger-strike, through the political crisis which followed the IRA's execution of Official Unionist MP Robert Bradford, and right up until the defeat of his candidate in this year's March by-election for a Westminster successor to Bradford, Paisley made all the running in the loyalist community, after throwing into disarray the OUP who he is continually challenging for hegemony over the loyalist people.

### CARSON TRAIL

Throughout Paisley's campaign — styled as the 'Carson trail' rallies — the British government assured the loyalist

community that the Union was not in danger, and its intransigent stance on the hunger-strike seemed to reinforce this. Nonetheless, Paisley declared that "*Ulster's constitution and British heritage is in imminent peril*" and there was sufficient doubt in loyalist minds for Paisley to mobilise against the 'joint study groups' set up by the Anglo-Irish accord and which were meeting in private on matters of 'mutual interest' and reporting to Dublin and London on progress.

Some of Paisley's speeches were outrageous and undoubtedly fuelled the loyalist paramilitaries' assassination campaign at the time against innocent Catholics. Speaking at his Martyrs Memorial Hall in February 1981 he equated republicans with Romanists and had this to say to his congregation: "*Have you ever noticed how the most atrocious violence was always committed after morning mass? That's because Roman Catholics have an advantage when it comes to terrorism — they can murder and then go to their priests and get a pardon.*"

Some of his antics, however, have often resulted in a bad press for the loyalist cause — a fact that the more pragmatic Official Unionists are sensitively aware of.



● Paisley at a Third Force rally in Newtownards, County Down, flanked by DUP colleagues Peter Robinson (left) and John McQuade

Paisley got himself suspended from the British parliament for five days for calling Humphrey Atkins, then direct-ruler, a liar. In March 1981, he and his supporters entered Belfast's Europa Hotel and there physically assaulted Dublin councillors on a visit to the city. In January of this year, when on a visit to Canada — he had been denied entry to the USA — he was roundly attacked in the North American media. And he was shunned for his childish protests during the Pope's visit to Britain in June.

Nevertheless, Paisley reflects loyalist working-class opinion, and in the May 1981 local government elections his Democratic Unionist Party improved its representation on local councils across the North, though it still lacked the bite to finally push aside the Official Unionist Party, the inheritors of traditional business-class unionism. Paisley also shied away from opposing the Official Unionists in the two Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-elections (which saw the late Bobby Sands and Owen Carron elected) and so splitting the unionist vote.

However, in the by-election which followed the death of Robert Bradford, Paisley's fortunes temporarily waned.

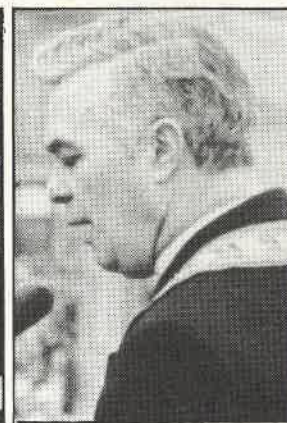
Bradford, although an MP for the Official Unionist Party, was extremely close to Paisley in his intemperate sectarian outbursts, and it was his fuelling of the loyalist assassination campaign which



● JAMES MOLYNEAUX



● ENOCH POWELL



● MARTIN SMYTH

led to the IRA decision to execute him in November 1981.

**INTEGRATIONISTS**

At that stage the OUP was divided into two lobbies. The 'integrationists' (those who favour integration of the six counties with Britain) are led by party leader and incompetent, James Molyneaux; English 'guru' Enoch Powell; and Orange Order leader, Rev. Martin Smyth. At their 1981 annual conference they argued that since a return to Stormont was unobtainable they should instead press for the returning of wide-ranging powers to local councils. Among those in opposition to this lobby, and who successfully defeated the call for integration, was the MP for

Armagh, Harold McCusker, a full 'devolutionist' and at that time a strong rival for party leader.

The annual conference of the DUP was an undemocratic charade and, typically, a one-man affair. Paisley said that if the British government tried to impose power-sharing on the loyalists he would lead armed resistance (*"and when I say fight, I mean fight"*). He rejected outright the attempts by the then Free State premier Garret FitzGerald to woo loyalists with his 'constitutional crusade': *"Even if they got me to write the constitution for them,"* in a new Ireland, Paisley said, *"we would not want to join them."*

The next meeting of the London and

Dublin premiers, on November 6th 1981, was used to fuel further loyalist outrage. At this meeting between Thatcher and FitzGerald in London, the setting up of an Anglo-Irish council was announced (a tier consisting of a parliamentary body of MPs from Britain, the North, and the South). The two leaders went on to formally agree that "any change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland would require the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland" — the loyalist veto.

Earlier in the day Paisley had delivered his own much televised letter of protest to the Downing Street venue of the talks. That night his Third Force set up road-blocks and columns of men marched through two villages. Sabre-rattling calls also came from the UDA who called on unionist MPs to withdraw from Westminster and, like Paisley, muttered dark threats, which ultimately as always resulted in sectarian attacks against Catholics. Paisley announced that the most important rally 'this party in its history has ever convened' would be held on November 23rd, and the onus was put on the Official Unionists for a degree of unity.

But on Saturday, November 14th, the IRA's execution of Bradford injected new urgency into Paisley's call. The crisis caused by this operation sent loyalists on a collision course with the British government and provided Paisley with a more emotive cause for mobilisation against the Anglo-Irish council.

### BRADFORD

The IRA execution was preceded and succeeded by a series of demoralising attacks on RUC and UDR men which caused a loyalist crisis of confidence in the British administration's 'security policies'. There were calls for the further deployment of the SAS and for the setting up of a 'Third Force' (the making official of the one already in existence) which would be the military wing of Paisleyism, and possibly the vehicle of an embryonic rebel loyalist army, unofficially drawing from the RUC and UDR. All RUC leave was cancelled, the RUC Reserve fully mobilised and the 600 troops of the British army's 'Spearhead' battalion were flown in.

Upon hearing of these measures the OUP leader, James Molyneaux, called for a two weeks' postponement of the loyalist 'Day of Action' planned for November 23rd (which Paisley had called without consultation) and was immediately attacked in bitter terms by two party colleagues, and obvious contenders for the OUP leadership, John Taylor and Harold McCusker. They said that "no self-respecting unionist could agree with such short-term measures" as announced by the new direct-ruler James Prior.

After Bradford's death Paisley talked of growing unity within 'the unionist family', but it was he who not only set the pace for the memorials to Bradford but who monopolised the eulogies and



● ROBERT BRADFORD: a bigot who mixed extremist sectarian politics with fundamentalist religion and once prayed for typhoid in the H-Blocks

who pushed for the establishment of an officially recognised Third Force.

Loyalist politicians mounted a boycott of local councils (which crumbled in January 1982) and a boycott of British ministers aimed at securing an end to the London/Dublin dialogue and Anglo-Irish proposals, and at restoring a loyalist assembly at Stormont.

Harold McCusker said that they could never be safe until a loyalist was 'in charge of security for the province'. However, the role of rebel left many of the Official Unionists and old aristocratic unionist families feeling very uncomfortable. The British government reiterated that the dialogue with Dublin would continue, as it did — though at a temporarily strained level at one stage due to Free State neutrality over the Falklands/Malvinas crisis — and the British government's eventual devolution proposals (April 1982) for the North were severely criticised by the new Fianna Fail government in Dublin, further outraging loyalists at this intrusion into their 'domestic' affairs.

Bradford's funeral was used by Paisley for further attacks on British 'security policy' and to advance his own standing among loyalists, relative to the OUP. Direct-ruler Jim Prior attempted to attend the funeral but was punched, jostled and humiliated on his way into and out of the church. Two months later his chief constable, Jack Hermon, was also humiliated when Paisley published the confidential minutes of an RUC Police Federation meeting held after Bradford's death, showing that Hermon had survived a motion of no-confidence by the thinnest of majorities, one vote.

### DIVIDED

But despite the opportunity of uniting after the IRA's spate of attacks, loyalists

remained divided over ultimate goals, means of achieving them, and personality clashes.

The differences between the Official Unionists, the paramilitary UDA, and Paisley's Democratic Unionists, are many. The OUP are suspicious of Paisley (who is also a threat to them) and feel that he is out to break the Union and secretly wants to declare himself head of an independent six counties.

The OUP feel that the defeat of the IRA can be achieved by the crown forces, but only if the 'handcuffs' (political restrictions) are taken off them. (That is to say, they would like to see more military repression of the nationalist people.) It is because they are unionists that they do not wish to stray any further with 'sinister' activities (of the Third Force kind) which they fear could jeopardise the Union. They too fear that the Anglo-Irish accord is leading to a degree of Free State involvement in Northern affairs, but are nonetheless more inclined to accept assurances given by the British government (than is Paisley) that the Union is not under threat.

Paisley, despite winning a north Belfast local government by-election in December, fared badly in the south Belfast Westminster by-election for a successor to Bradford — his candidate coming a poor third in a contest which saw even the Alliance Party poll better and which resulted in the election of Orange Order leader and prominent Official Unionist Martin Smyth.

In January 1982, Smyth had alleged that Paisley had suppressed for six years information he had about the 'Kincora scandal' (a vice-ring involving homosexual offences against boys in residential care) which was then in the media spotlight, but it is unlikely that this was a major factor in the DUP's poor showing in south Belfast.

### CONSEQUENCES

It is also unlikely that South Belfast represents an Official Unionist revival in the drift of unionist loyalties towards Paisleyism. Although, in June of this year the OUP leader, James Molyneaux, was elected unopposed for another year, there is widespread internal discontent at his inability to see the party through any crisis, particularly such a series of crises as the last nine months have witnessed, and there is widespread suspicion of his support for integration.

Faced with this continuing power struggle within the 'unionist family', with the unavoidable sectarian consequences for the nationalist people, the Irish Republican Movement's attitude to the reactionary, pro-imperialist philosophy of loyalism which the Protestants of the North voluntarily espouse, is one of unflinching opposition, with the armed struggle of the IRA oriented to undermining the prop which perpetuates loyalism — British rule and the will of the British to remain in the six counties. ■



● The rough ride Jim Prior received at the hands of angry loyalists during Robert Bradford's funeral last November, promises to be repeated as he tries to set up a six-county assembly

# A RIOTOUS ASSEMBLY?

*A look at direct-ruler Prior's proposals for a six-county devolved assembly*

## The proposals

ON APRIL 5th 1982 Northern direct-ruler James Prior submitted a 'white paper' entitled 'Northern Ireland — A Framework for Devolution' to the British parliament. For several months before, he had ingeniously inspired a press campaign of 'leaks' and speculation on the proposals which had successfully boosted, in media and political circles, both his personal profile and the profile of his subsequent devolution bill.

Only the latest in a long series of British political 'initiatives' on the North

— which have all foundered either on the rock of loyalist opposition or in consequence of the continued nationalist resistance — these devolution proposals represent the most serious, and the subtlest, attempt since the collapse of the post-Sunningdale 'power-sharing' executive in 1974 to find an eventual substitution for direct-rule from Westminster.

### POWER-SHARING

The 1974 executive was destroyed primarily by the loyalists' unified opposition to the concept of 'power-sharing' it involved with the middle-class nationalist SDLP. Since then, the British predicament has been to formulate proposals which, while they do not include 'power-sharing' (which loyalists implacably reject), include sufficient

crumbs to guarantee the involvement of the SDLP, whose collaboration remains a vital factor in the stability of British rule in the North. These enticements are generally held to involve offering them some degree of power in the committees and chamber of any assembly, and some formal acknowledgement of an 'Irish dimension' (that is, the recognition that the Free State has at least a consultative role to play in the affairs of the North).

At the same time, any proposals must have enough teeth to persuade loyalists to work them. This involves the British giving loyalists the absolute maximum of political control consistent with avoiding an outright rejection by the SDLP, and includes some recognition of loyalists' interest in regaining control



of key areas of political life such as 'security' and the statutory bodies.

## RECONCILE

Prior's proposals have attempted to reconcile both these sets of demands (or in his own words to 'narrow' the ground between them) through an arrangement called 'rolling devolution'. Basically, this envisages elections to a 78-seat assembly possessing initially only consultative powers and the power to make recommendations, but not to initiate or pass legislation. As time goes by, however, according to this scenario, and political 'concensus' grows between loyalist and nationalist political representatives, the British government would devolve a degree of political control over six-county affairs to the assembly. This devolved power could increase, or be 'rolled back' to the British parliament, according to whether 'concensus' developed or broke down.

Although the SDLP would have no built-in guarantee of committee chairmanships, or a power of veto, and of course no 'power-sharing', Prior's proposals envisage that assembly decisions (unless determined otherwise by the British government) would require a 'weighted majority' vote of 70% of those attending the assembly, instead of a simple majority vote of 51%. This (assuming nationalists did not boycott the assembly) would involve the acquiescence of about 30% of non-DUP/non-OUP members of the assembly, and would certainly require the support of some SDLP members. The British government, however, retains complete discretion on whether or not the 'weighted majority' applies on any particular vote.

The 'Irish dimension' is missing from Prior's proposals (to placate loyalist opposition), though there are various



● Prior's optimism has taken several hard knocks since he arrived at Stormont as Northern direct-ruler on September 15th last year

references to an 'Anglo-Irish council', with no detailed role (as a sop to the SDLP).

## SCALING DOWN

Essentially the proposals are a skilful scaling down of the ill-fated Sunningdale Agreement, giving a little more to loyalists and a little less to nationalists than before, but couching it all in different terms and in reality holding out the prospect of less political power in the foreseeable future.

Paragraphs 14 and 15 of Prior's package guarantee the loyalists a continuation of the Union as enshrined in the 1949 and 1973 British acts of parliament.

Prior's central hope, that the involvement of loyalist and nationalist constitutional politicians in the assembly process would prove irrevocable, and allow

the Brits to concentrate their resources on undermining and crushing non-constitutional nationalist resistance, has been somewhat shaken by the almost total opposition to his proposals by loyalists (aided at Westminster by 26 Tory rebels in a skilfully orchestrated filibustering attack on the reading of the devolution bill at committee stage) and by the somewhat more token opposition of the SDLP.

Nevertheless, the British government has ensured the passage of the Bill, by imposing (on June 24th) a guillotine on further debate and then passing it through the lower chamber of the British parliament. It is now expected to proceed with little further delay and to receive the 'royal assent' at the end of July, with elections to a six-county assembly presently scheduled for October 20th.

## The reactions

THE British direct-ruler's unveiling of plans for a 78-seat local assembly with limited powers to be devolved to it from Westminster, excited a wave of hysterical reaction from Green and Orange political careerists alike; only the Workers' Party and the Alliance Party warmly welcomed the proposals, as might have been expected since at least it offered them another chance, however slim, of making progress from their usual totally irrelevant contribution to Northern political life and gaining a trickle of elected representatives to boost their political *machismo*.

The SDLP attacked the Prior proposals because of the absence of a realistic Irish dimension' (which they have generally argued to be a *sine qua*



● SDLP party leader John Hume (far left), seen here with party members Michael Canavan, Hugh Logue and Austin Currie, will over-rule any internal opposition to the SDLP's participation in the elections

non of any proposals). In fact, what has probably disappointed them most is that the proposed committee and executive structures of the assembly offer them no

real power or self-advancement (which is largely what they mean by an 'Irish dimension' anyway), and thus no opportunities for handing out patronage among



● DUP party leader, Ian Paisley, sees the elections as a way of further increasing his power base among loyalists, and effectively wrecking Prior's assembly

the Catholic middle class on which their support depends.

Rural, and generally more 'nationalistic' elements in the SDLP, concerned at the loss of credibility among nationalist voters because of the party's betrayal of the hunger-strikers, have been exerting pressure on the party leadership against participation in the elections to the proposed assembly, but given the crucial importance of the elections to the SDLP, elections which provide them with their sole reason for being, and their need to reassert themselves as 'the elected voice of the nationalist community', this rural opposition will ultimately toe the line.

**ELECTORAL FRAY**

So John Hume and his cabal will most assuredly lead their followers into the electoral fray, even if they subsequently attempt to adopt a 'principled stand' by boycotting all or part of the assembly's proceedings.

Within the loyalist camp, the Official Unionists and the DUP have almost inevitably taken up opposing attitudes to participation in the elections, their short-term central priority being the battle for loyalist hegemony, with a corresponding need to oppose each other on anything and everything. This battle supercedes all concern for 'political progress'.

Both loyalist parties, however, criticise the proposals on much the same grounds! The 'Irish dimension' (any degree of which they oppose) is too great, the 'weighted majority' (which offers a token safeguard to nationalists) is undemo-

cratic and amounts to 'power-sharing', and the promises of devolved power are too little and too arbitrary.

Paisley's DUP, however, are in favour of contesting the elections and taking part in the assembly. Paisley believes that loyalist opposition can guarantee the assembly's unworkability, either forcing Prior to accelerate the transfer of devolved power (including influence over 'security') or to scrap the assembly altogether. Either option is attractive to Paisley who increasingly appears to challenge the Union, with an eye on setting up an 'independent' loyalist six-county state.

**INTEGRATIONIST**

For their part, the Official Unionists, under the strong 'integrationist' influence of party leader James Molyneaux and Enoch Powell, believe that Prior's intention is to weaken the link with Britain, and is the thin edge of a process (which began again with the London/Dublin summit in 1980) of creating links with the twenty-six counties, leading to some form of bogus 'unity'.

Yet like the SDLP, both loyalist parties will inevitably contest the elections if only because they cannot afford to let their rival get in by default. Prior's crucial gamble, that however unattractive his proposals the combination of factional in-fighting and sheer opportunism would ensure that the assembly elections got off the ground and weren't boycotted, proved after all to be a safe bet.

Prior needs these elections for both personal and political reasons.



● JIM MOLYNEAUX: Official Unionist leader, but for how long?

A 'wet', in the schoolboy jargon of the Tory party, Prior's unsuccessful attack on British premier Thatcher's economic policies led to him being removed from mainstream political life and punished with the comparatively backwater job of Northern direct-ruler. Although his assembly proposals are only the latest modification on an earlier consultative assembly, which Humphrey Atkins piloted and failed to get off the ground, and thus would have been due for unveiling anyway, Prior sees his proposals, implemented amid a fanfare

of media publicity, as a means of retaining his high political profile in the Westminster political scene. Furthermore, should they prove to be even marginally or temporarily successful, it would sufficiently enhance his prestige to keep alive his hopes of challenging Thatcher for the Tory leadership if the opportunity arises.

## FICTION

On a political level, the British need the assembly in order to promote the fiction that the democratic process continues to function in the six counties. Apart from this largely international PR exercise, internally in the six counties the Brits hope to use the assembly as part of their continuous counter-insurgency campaign against nationalists, creating the illusion of **political movement** away from direct rule, giving a role to redundant political parties, and bolstering the SDLP whose collaborative standing has been greatly weakened since the hunger-strike.

Given the British needs, the SDLP's collaboration, and loyalist hostility, two things are certain: the elections will take place and the assembly will fail.

It is on this understanding of the situation, and on the basis of total opposition to Prior's proposals that Sinn Fein has decided to contest the elections, its candidates, if elected, boycotting the assembly.

For many years the SDLP have misrepresented the views of the nationalist people, portraying themselves (and being portrayed internationally by the British) as the 'voice of the minority'. John Hume and the rest of the party leadership blow hot and cold on the British occupation, but whenever the crunch comes (such as the hunger-strike) and the British need a prop from the 'nationalist' body politic, the SDLP have lent their support.

## COLLABORATORS

With the certainty of SDLP participation in the elections Sinn Fein is determined not to leave a clear field this time for these collaborators. The republican view is that, at this stage of the resistance struggle, boycotts of elections (unless they include all 'nationalist' opinion) are not helpful to the overall strategy. This does not entail any change of republican principle but a development of republicans' tactical understanding of how best to oppose British rule.

The British have used such proposals as a plank of their overall counter-insurgency strategy, to lead to a 'reformed' Stormont. It was nationalist resistance, led by republicans, which smashed Stormont in 1972, and republicans are most certainly not going to contribute to any process leading to the restoration of loyalist rule in any guise, whether disguised by 'power-sharing' or 'weighted majorities', or whether just naked Orange majority rule.

Republican opposition to British rule



● Republican opposition to Prior's assembly or any other British 'solution' is unequivocal and is announced day to day by the revolutionary guerrilla fighters of the IRA



● Leading Sinn Fein activists Danny Morrison and Joe Austin (right foreground), seen here at a hunger-strike rally in Belfast last year, will be key figures in the republican electoral attempt to expose the SDLP's collaboration and betrayal of the nationalist people

and to any British 'solution' is unequivocal and undiluted, and is announced day to day in the streets, fields and laneways of the occupied area by IRA Volunteers and by the political militants of Sinn Fein.

## ALTERNATIVES

It is on the conviction that the elections will go ahead that Sinn Fein believes that it is essential to provide genuinely nationalist voters (people who support the resistance struggle, reject collaboration, but nevertheless feel constrained to exercise their 'democratic vote') with a chance to vote for genuine opponents of the British and against the SDLP's craven betrayal of the liberation struggle.

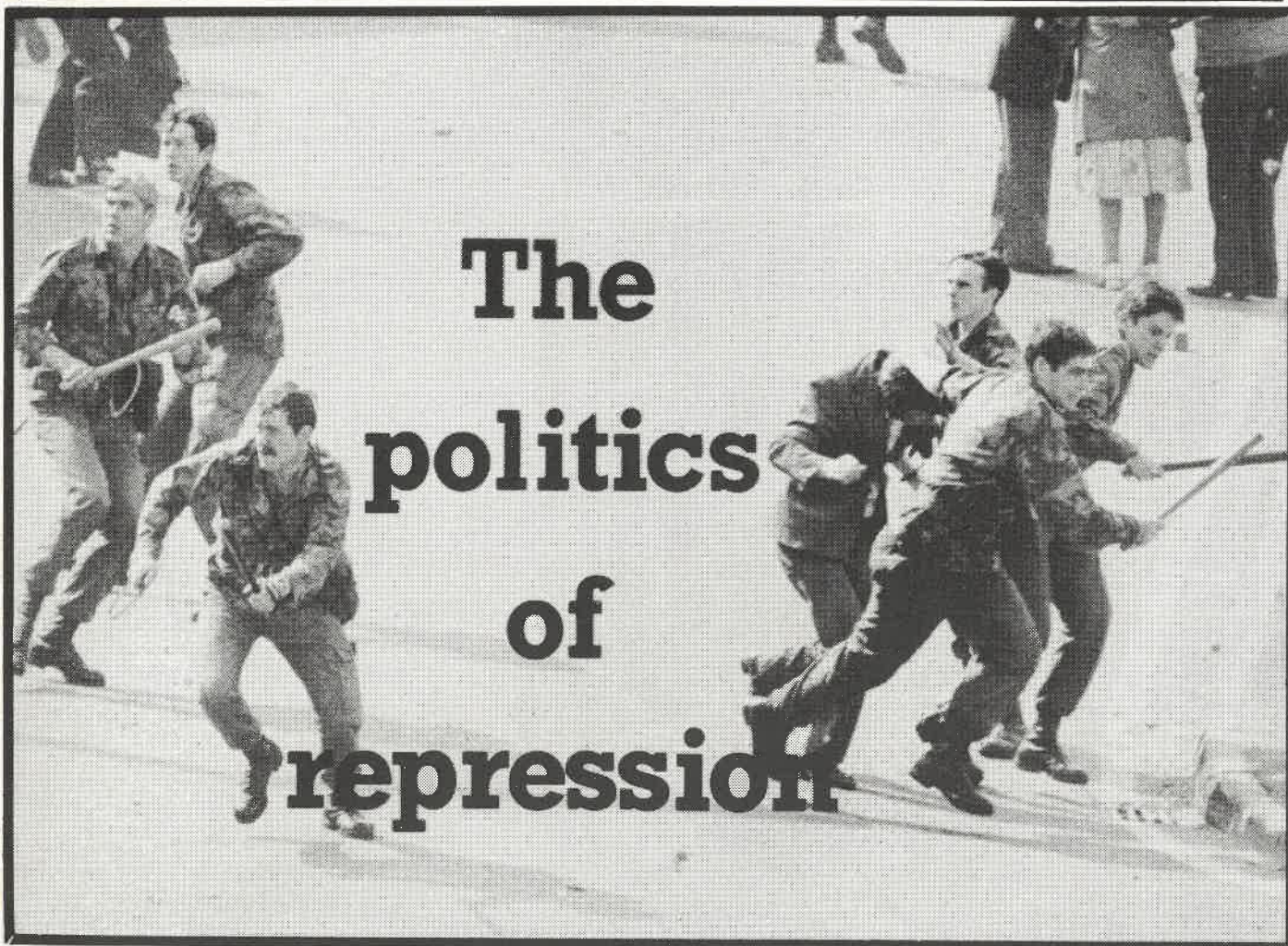
However, Sinn Fein is not contesting elections simply to frustrate the SDLP, or to sabotage any assembly that is doomed to failure anyway. Republicans

will be fighting on the basis of a wide-ranging opposition to British rule and to the manifold injustices visited on nationalists by the British patronage of loyalism and sectarian discrimination.

Republicans will be exploding the myth propagated by middle-class nationalists that a better quality of life would emerge for everyone in a six-county context if only the 'extremists' would 'give peace a chance'. There is no icing for nationalists on the loyalist cake.

By openly carrying the banner of the freedom struggle at the election hustings, and by exposing the collaborators, Sinn Fein will ensure that out of the ashes of the assembly the nationalist resistance will arise stronger, more clear-sighted, and even more confident.

Whatever Jim Prior envisaged, his assembly may prove to be even noisier than he thought! ■



# The politics of repression

**REPRESSION** is not just bullets and the knock on the door at dawn. Repression is an integrated imperialist policy to deal with a risen people which encompasses all facets of social and political life. Every single policy executed by the British state in the North of Ireland is geared towards their overriding objective — defeat the IRA and 'normalise' the situation. In other words, we cannot separate 'reform' from repression as though they were the carrot and the stick — both are part and parcel of the politics of repression.

Since British troops were deployed on the streets of the North in 1969 until today, there has been an expansion and refining of military operations against the nationalist people. In a very real sense Ireland has become a 'laboratory of repression' for Western imperialism as a whole — a place to test weapons, surveillance equipment and counter-insurgency tactics generally.

Including its local forces of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Ulster Defence Regiment the British government has 35,000 armed personnel at its command to control a nationalist population of 500,000 — that is a ratio of 1 soldier/RUC man to every 15 people. Every border crossing to the 26 counties is controlled by a fortress-like checkpoint. The inshore coastal zones and Lough Neagh are patrolled by minesweepers and fast patrol boats. Dozens of helicopters equipped with sophisticated surveillance equipment are constantly in the air over nationalist areas, day and night. Phantom jets regularly fly over the whole North-east taking high-altitude photographs which can show up arms dumps, etc.

Every nationalist townland, village or housing estate has a permanent British garrison protected by massive fences and anti-rocket meshes. Armoured jeeps and heavily armoured personnel carriers cruise through the little streets of Belfast, Derry and other nationalist areas. On the border, Saracen

armoured cars, which are more resistant to landmines, are used.

## CONTROL

This vast panoply of armed repression is matched by a series of control measures directed at the nationalist population as a whole. Most adults in the nationalist community have been held for some time by the British forces. Thousands of young men and women have passed through prison since 1969 and for those outside there is a daily round of harassment and intimidation by the forces of the state. Tens of thousands have had their homes raided or destroyed. Most of those arrested have been psychologically abused, brutally assaulted or tortured in the notorious 'interrogation centres'. The intelligence agencies are highly active and the amount of information collected on nationalist areas is quite staggering in its sheer volume and detail.

In this area the new technology of political control is vitally important because it allows the British army to wage a counter-insurgency war within the tighter constraints of a mainly urban European situation quite different from its previous colonial campaigns. A computerised intelligence system is less visible but even more effective than the purely brutal methods employed by the British in their long history of colonial wars. In fact the whole fabric of social life in the occupied area of Ireland has been torn apart. The nationalist people live under a permanent state of siege.

From 1970 (after a brief initial 'honeymoon' period) to 1972 the British government followed a policy of naked repression on the assumption that the IRA could be defeated by a swift blow which would also separate it from its social support. Thus we had the massive internment of the early years and the now publicly admitted torture of internees, the Falls Road curfew of 1970, and Bloody Sunday in 1972 of course. The Bloody Sunday massacre showed the failure of the policy to separate the IRA 'fish' from the 'water' of the



● **BLOODY SUNDAY:** On January 30th 1972 British paratroopers opened fire on a peaceful civil rights march in Derry killing fourteen unarmed demonstrators

nationalist community by these methods. Henceforth a judicious blend of repression and 'reform' would be employed, and great effort was made to groom a respectable nationalist political voice — the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) — which could be used by the British in a counter-insurgency context because, bought off from time to time with a few meaningless 'reforms' it could be portrayed as the legitimate voice of the nationalist people.

The more astute British leaders recognised the need for a more rounded approach to the problem. One military strategist Colonel Robin Eveleigh, in a book entitled 'Peace-keeping in a Democratic Society: Lessons of Northern Ireland', published in 1978, put it like this: "A campaign against terrorist-backed insurrection is not a military campaign alone: it is possible for the military to repress an area into a sort of calm, but the trouble will burst out again as soon as their pressure is reduced. Such a campaign is not only political or only an economic one. Nor is such a campaign a question

of social services, welfare or housing. In a counter-terrorist campaign, the battle runs across every level and every activity of society. Thus the conflict must be seen by Government in terms of co-ordinating the whole social system." Indeed!

## RESISTANCE

Colonel Eveleigh speaks of 'terrorists' but the gist of his argument is that the IRA is the military expression of the resistance will of a whole community. Pure repression is seen as counter-productive and the battle should be waged at every level of society. This turn in British strategy materialised around 1975 when the IRA was engaged in an extended truce. The truce was used by the British forces to collect vital intelligence on the IRA which was to prove the basis for a subsequent 'criminalisation' drive — jailing of freedom fighters on trumped-up charges but through the 'due process of law' to impress international opinion.

This 'due process' involved the full use of the 'conveyor belt' between the brutal interrogation centres where 'confessions' were extracted or concocted, the Diplock courts which sat without juries and convicted on the most transparent of 'evidence', and the H-Blocks and Armagh where 'special category' (political) status had been withdrawn as the final element in the 'criminalisation' of nationalist resistance — a decision which was to lead to the prisons becoming a vital battleground in the resistance struggle.

Hand in hand with this, the British government was trying to weaken and confuse republican resistance by winding down, internment and by vague promises of an eventual declaration of intent to withdraw. This was the beginning of a sophisticated new policy aimed at 'normalisation' of the occupied territories, the British portraying themselves as honest brokers between two warring 'religious factions'. The British were hoping that war weariness could succeed in demoralising the nationalist resistance. The spearhead of the resistance — the IRA — was dubbed a 'criminal' element (the 'godfathers') to be dealt with through a concerted intelligence/military campaign in a renewed effort to isolate it from its nationalist base of support. To remove the colonial war stigma British troops were to gradually withdraw leaving local troops (UDR and



● **DIPLOCK COURTS:** Crumlin Road, Belfast, where the non-jury Diplock courts sit



● 'NORMALISATION': British attempts at bringing life in nationalist areas back to 'normal' by improving economic and social conditions have failed to induce people to forget about the war — this protest took place outside Andersonstown Leisure Centre in Belfast

RUC) in the frontline. This was known as 'Ulsterisation' in an analogy with the 'Vietnamisation' practised earlier by the Americans.

To ensure that life would return to 'normal' in the nationalist ghettos once the 'criminal' elements were removed, the British government made an effort to improve economic conditions. A few factories were set up in nationalist areas, but the international recession of 1975 and after meant that investment was minimal. The last 'white elephant' from this policy — the De Lorean motor company in Belfast — has recently closed down. Houses were built but with over 50% unemployment in nationalist areas most people cannot afford the rent, and increasingly the 'impartial' Housing Executive has been exposed as a tool of British counter-insurgency strategy. Huge 'leisure centres' were built so that the people could while away their time playing squash and swimming (and hopefully forgetting about the war). Social services were modernised and community groups encouraged.

This is not to say that all was milk and honey in the nationalist areas. This was precisely the period (around 1977) when repression was intensified, but it was part of a co-ordinated civil and military management of the six-county statelet. It was in fact an attempt at 'co-ordinating the whole social system' as Eveleigh had said.

## COHERENT

That this 'normalisation' has since failed should not detract from its importance — it is a coherent policy which could be used again both here and abroad to counter an insurrectionary movement in an industrialised urban society where all-out naked repression is not politically viable. The media found this type of repression less news-worthy than the street battles and massive army activity of earlier days, but it is no less dangerous and requires a rounded and cohesive political response from the resistance organisations.

There are several reasons for the failure of the British 'normalisation' policy. Economic conditions did not allow for a full-blown 'bread and circuses' approach to pacify the people. The money was simply not there to provide a substantial improvement in social conditions. The propaganda aspect was also quite weak because the abnormality of the torture centres and the conditions in the H-Blocks and Armagh soon filtered through abroad. The policy, in short, never had

much credibility with the nationalist people themselves who continued their support for the IRA and its aims and objectives.

The 'criminalisation' policy — which involved turning prisoners-of-war into common criminals — was defeated by the 'blanket protest' and then the hunger-strike.

In fact, the brutal degradation it involved not only failed, but actually caused a ferment of nationalist resistance which pulled the struggle out of its relative isolation of the mid-seventies. 'Ulsterisation' probably proceeded too rapidly, for the RUC was left in an exposed position (*vis a vis* the IRA) and the British army had to resume its dominant position. The prisoners, the IRA and the people themselves all combined to defeat the 'normalisation' policy and thwarted the hoped-for defeat of the resistance by the early 1980s. The insoluble contradiction in British policy is that it cannot succeed without repression yet repression only breeds increased resistance. The people have not been 'bought off' by 'reforms' which have been paltry enough anyway. The true colours of British intransigence were brought out fully in their cold indifference to the 1981 hunger-strike deaths.

Today, in the wake of the hunger-strike, resistance continues with a new degree of support which far outstrips that of the civil rights period. A new generation of fighters is emerging, and it is evident to everyone that the only 'British solution' is a British withdrawal. In key areas such as employment, discrimination against nationalists remains at least as bad as was ever the case under the pre-1969 unionist administrations. The six-county statelet is in economic ruin. British troops are still being killed. The murderous use of plastic bullets has again raised international revulsion at Britain's repressive role in Ireland. And the current direct-ruler, James Prior, faces an uphill task as he strives to foist another doomed political initiative on the North. ■

### Suggested reading:-

*The Technology of Political Control* — C. Ackroyd and others, Pluto Press, London 1980

*Northern Ireland: Between Civil Rights and Civil War* — L. O'Dowd and others, CSE Books, London 1980

*Britain's Military Strategy in Ireland: The Kitson Experiment* — Roger Faligot, Zed Press, London 1982



BALLYMURPHY



BALLYMUN

# A common experience

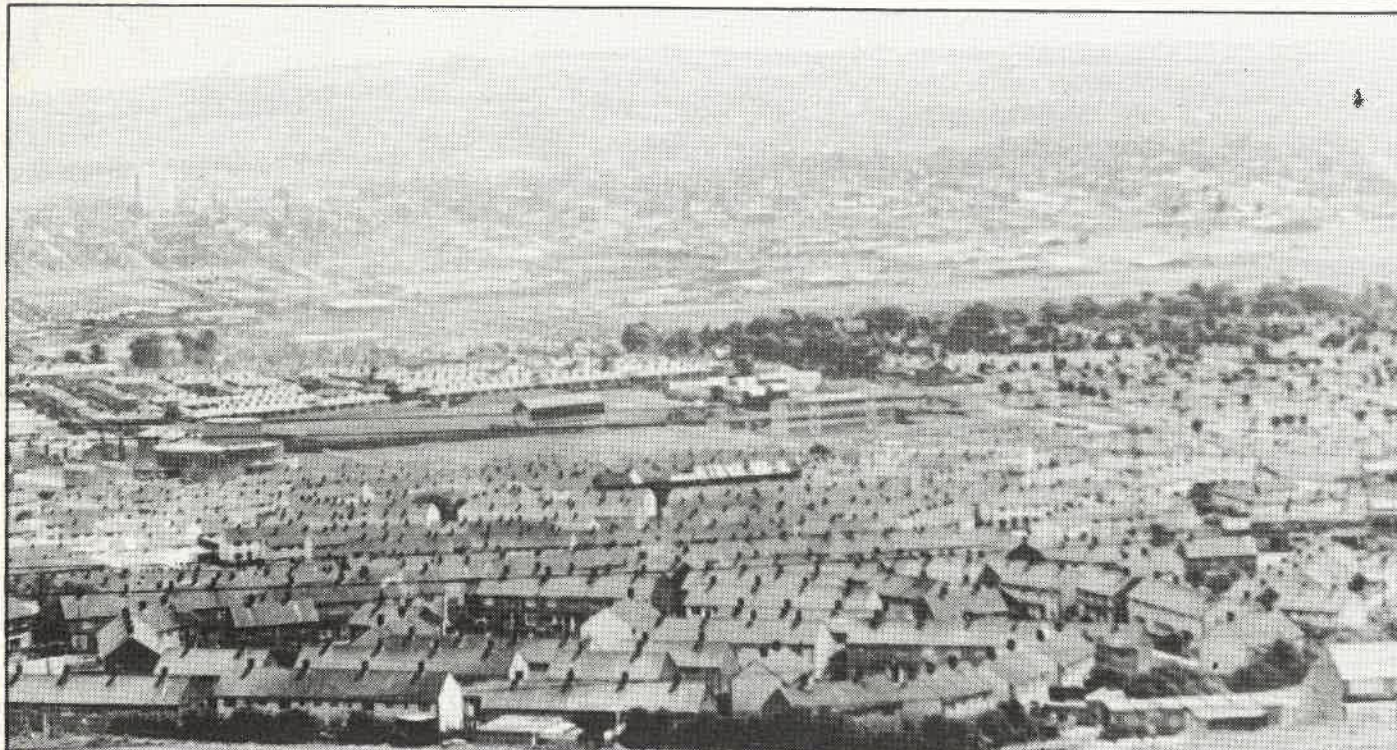
**A comparative study of the history and social conditions of two working-class estates — Ballymurphy in west Belfast, and Ballymun in north Dublin.**

ON the face of it, the only common factor linking Ballymurphy and Ballymun would seem to be a certain similarity in their names. One is a small estate of 600 two-storey terraced houses in the front line of nationalist resistance, constantly patrolled by British soldiers and armoured cars. The other is a sprawling mass of over 3,000 high-rise grey concrete flats and tower blocks in the northern suburbs of Dublin, existing in what passes for 'normality'.

But both estates have been the focus of intense controversy almost from the time they were built, labelled as trouble spots by 'outsiders', and with local people

in both of them demanding a range of remedies to the problems of their estates, including total demolition. The comparisons, however, go much deeper, across a whole range of social conditions affecting both communities, to the responses of institutions in authority to these communities, and to the responses and initiatives of the communities themselves.

When all these things that go to make up the quality of living are weighed up, the people of Ballymurphy and the people of Ballymun — far from being divided by political barriers and social differences — would seem to have much of their experience in common....



● Nestled in the shadow of the Black mountain, Ballymurphy (in the foreground) quickly became one of the most socially-deprived Catholic ghettos in the North

## Building in haste

BOTH estates were conceived, designed and built over a remarkably short period of time, using new and cheap methods of construction, to meet urgent housing needs.

### BALLYMURPHY

The consequences of the failure over the years, for largely sectarian reasons, to build public housing in Belfast (as throughout the North) came sharply to a head immediately after the Second World War. Many people had been left homeless by the bombing of the city, and greatly increased subsidies for local authorities to build houses were made available throughout Britain and the North. Early in 1947, plans to build a 'mixed' Protestant/Catholic estate to be called Ballymurphy, on the western outskirts of the city, were first discussed by Belfast corporation, and a 56-acre site was acquired. Within a year, plans for 436 houses to be built on the lower part of the site had been drawn up.

Instead, after revision of the plans by the ministry of housing and local government, 501 mostly three-bedroom houses (constructed of cheaper 'no fines concrete' rather than traditional red-brick) were crammed on to the site, with a further 159 'orlit block' houses being built shortly afterwards in the upper part of the estate.

By the mid-1950s the estate was complete. There had been no provision made for social facilities whatsoever, there were no open spaces in the lay-out of the estate — only row after row of drab, identical terraced houses. Even the block of six shops, in the focal centre of Ballymurphy known as the 'Bullring', was built a couple of years after the first phase of houses, seemingly as an afterthought. The bus route didn't extend as far as Ballymurphy for several years.

Although in its conception Ballymurphy had been built as

a mixed estate for Catholics and Protestants, and indeed a few Protestant families lived there until 1969, the largely Catholic complexion of the estate was determined from the start when the ministry of health closed down the war-time troop huts, where a number of (mostly Catholic) homeless families had been living, just as the Ballymurphy houses neared completion. Over the next few years, as the estate went into sharp decline, it was usually the Protestant families, who had enough influence through unionist councillors with the sectarian Belfast corporation housing committee, who managed to get rehoused out of Ballymurphy. It became an unmistakably Catholic estate.

### BALLYMUN

Ballymun came fifteen years later and was itself a hurried response to a housing crisis of panic proportions. In the early '60s a 'spring tide' caused by unusually torrential rain which was followed by a period of intense heat caused the collapse or crumbling of inner city tenement blocks throughout Dublin, and hundreds of homes were declared dangerous. At Fenian Street two children died when a tenement block collapsed. To relieve the appalling shortage of houses, the then Fianna Fail minister for local government, Neil Blaney, singled out Ballymun as an opportune site for greenfield building. Blaney's idea was that Ballymun would be a 'model' estate, but he nonetheless went ahead with high-density high-rise flats despite the evidence beginning to come from around Europe of the social problems these presented.

The Ballymun complex of 3,200 flats in eight-storey and tower blocks moved rapidly from concept to completion in three years, the first tenants moving in around 1966. The blocks had been constructed of a cheap high-alumina cement — outlawed in many countries — in pre-fabricated sections (a design that was to cause severe structural problems later on). Yet the 'model' estate concept was apparent in the naming of the seven tower blocks after the seven signatories of the 1916 Proclamation: Clarke, MacDiarmada, MacDonagh, Pearse, Ceannt, Connolly and Plunkett towers. Whatever its original significance, today the 'seven heroes' towers stand as a grotesque parody of the principles of 1916.

The 'model' concept of Ballymun took a knock in its early stages. The Dublin corporation found there weren't





● The 1,000 or so houses scattered incongruously throughout the Ballymun flats complex were allocated to 'ideal' tenants

enough 'ideal' tenants to fill the flats. (These tenants opted for the 1,000 or so *houses* also built in the complex over a period of years.) Parallel to this, the need to rehouse inner-city families in 'low priority' areas such as Gardiner Street and Summerhill, to allow the redevelopment of the inner city as a 'trouble-free' commercial zone, resulted in Ballymun being chosen to do this. Gradually the idea of handpicking tenants for the Ballymun flats was abandoned. It went on the 'open' housing list, a relatively easy location to get housed in. The seeds of indifference which the authorities would increasingly display towards Ballymun, just like Ballymurphy, in terms of housing conditions, jobs and facilities, were sown.

By 1972, when a new campaigning community newspaper, *The Ballymun News*, came into being in an attempt to foster a community spirit and boost local morale, Ballymun already had a general reputation as a 'problem area'.

## Reaping the consequences

BY the late 1950s, according to one sociologist (1), **Ballymurphy** had become a 'sort of clearing house for Catholic Belfast'. Overcrowding; bad housing conditions such as dampness, poor heating and lack of maintenance by the corporation; chronic unemployment and a lack of facilities, all meant that those families who could moved into better 'Housing Trust' homes away from Ballymurphy. There was a conscious Belfast corporation policy to house 'problem' or highly socially-deprived families there, to concentrate the 'problems' in the one estate and forget them.

There were a number of consequences and aggravating factors. In 1957, Dorita Field's survey estimated that only

50% of male householders were working, mostly in unskilled jobs. Officially, in 1971, unemployment in Ballymurphy was put at 27% of male householders (though the Belfast average was *only* 8%). There was serious overcrowding and a high population turnover. The Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP), published in 1969, recommended minimum standards of *no more than* 12 dwellings and 43 persons per acre, and 2½ acres of open space per 1,000 population. Ballymurphy however, with *exactly* 12 dwellings per acre, had (in 1966) 91.4 persons per acre and (in 1971) still 76.8 persons, and *no* open space.

The 1969 BUAP plan recommended the building of a district centre to include Ballymurphy, with a wide range of leisure, social and recreational facilities. It emphasised the need for quick action. Instead Belfast corporation *failed* to approve the plans, though in 1972 the plan for a leisure centre was approved. That started to be built finally, in 1982!

### GHETTO

Despite the fact that the houses were average three-bedroom dwellings, 49% of households in 1971 had seven or more members compared with 7% for Belfast as a whole. Most heads of households were young, with 36% of the population at school age (compared with the Belfast average of 19%), yet there was an almost total absence of recreational facilities.

In short, Ballymurphy had quickly become an almost totally Catholic ghetto, with clearly defined social problems aggravated by overcrowding and by the imbalance in the age structure of the population (2). To those problems it faced almost total indifference from local and British governmental authorities and statutory bodies.

Not surprisingly, as the 1970s approached, Ballymurphy was an estate with no defined community. Over a period of fourteen years there had been an estimated turnover of 12,000 families. Those who left were frequently the most resourceful and socially advantaged. Faced with an overabundance of problems and no 'official' concern, Ballymurphy's morale was low and its public image was lower. The clearest indication of its 'deprived' status, as the '60s closed and the momentous

(1) Dorita Field: *'A Study of Unsatisfactory Tenants'* (1957).

(2) A.E.C.W. Spencer: *'Ballymurphy: A Tale of Two Surveys'* (1971/1973).



● Young children grow up in the 'space city' of Ballymun's high-rise flats, deprived of social facilities

'70s began, was when, like a pack of vultures waiting for the body to expire, the professional sociologists and a plethora of 'charitable institutions' arrived in Ballymurphy and set up shop!

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**Ballymun**, by the early '70s, was facing much the same problems, having been effectively abandoned by officialdom and left to handle the intrinsic problems of high-rise society by itself.

People had understandably been glad at first to come to live in Ballymun, marking as it did a quantifiable improvement in housing conditions over the tenements many had left. The failure to provide service facilities, however, and the obvious problems of living in high-rise flats (especially for families with young children) meant that its popularity waned when new low-level housing estates began to be built, such as at Tallaght. As in Ballymurphy, it was many of the very people who had the potential to help create a community spirit in Ballymun, who had the resourcefulness and tenacity to get rehoused. Ballymun, far from being a 'model' estate, became little more than a transit camp for families desperate to be rehoused, and taking little or no interest in Ballymun as a community.

The working-class militancy of the area, which had showed itself during the 1969/70 rent strike (with 97% local support), was defused, and apathy set in to conditions which were not only bad but *deteriorating*. This process was assisted by the dividing off of the estate into three separate local government areas, ensuring that no unified community political voice could ever present itself as a challenge to official indifference.

## FACILITIES

Promised facilities such as a dance hall, cinema, and bowling alley were simply never built, although local pressure successfully forced the construction of a swimming pool alongside the shopping complex, in 1973. Unemployment was disproportionately high, with no industrial sites adjacent to Ballymun, and an address there was sufficient deterrent to any potential employer. In Ballymun, as in Ballymurphy, job-hunters tradit-

ionally used their parents' or grandparents' address rather than their own in Ballymun.

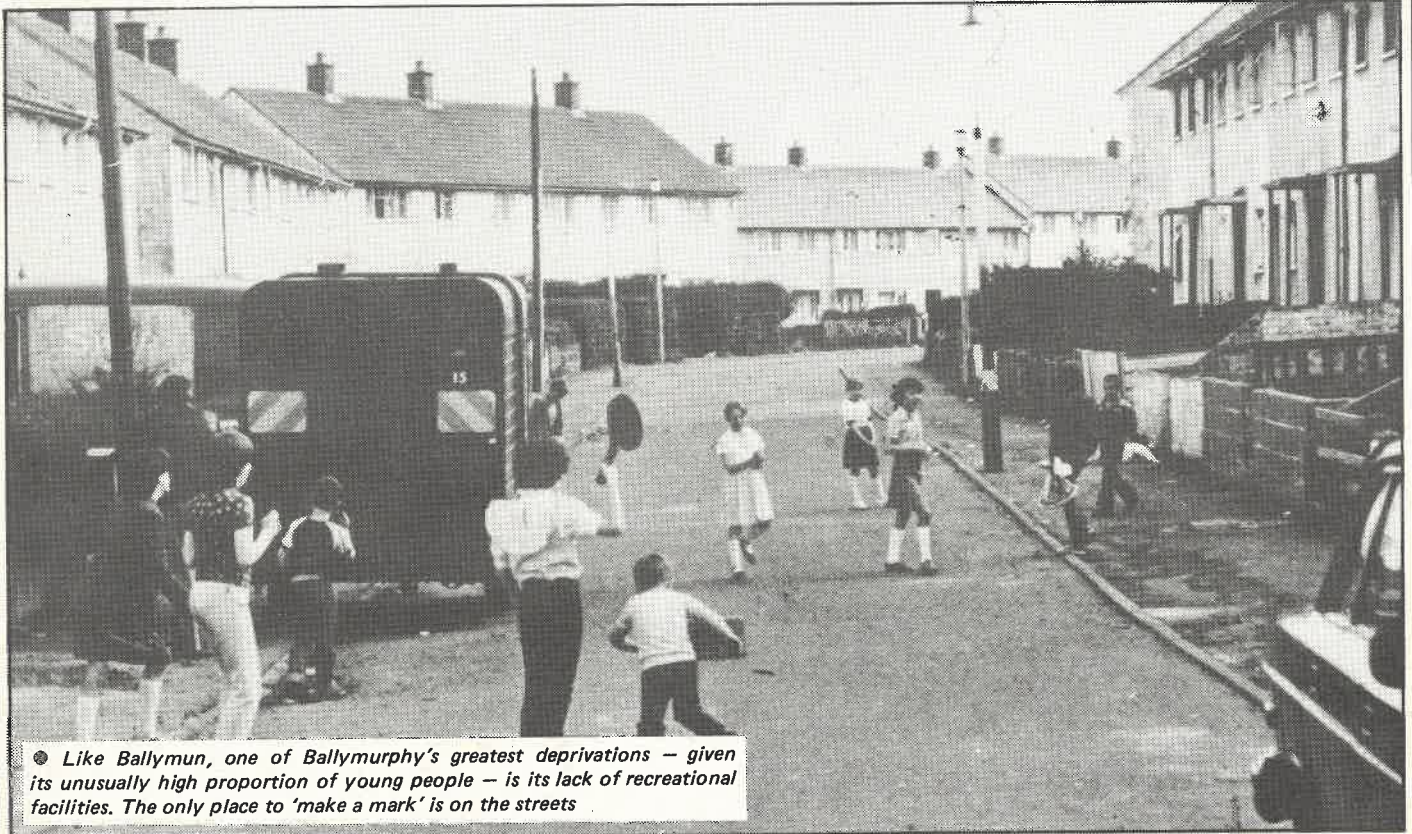
The estate's unpopularity meant that increasingly it was young families, often squatting, who were forced to come and live there. In 1974, out of an estimated 30,000 population, as many as 10,000 were children under ten. The same problems that Ballymurphy faced, teenage crime, joy-riding, vandalism (and more recently drug-taking and glue-sniffing) were the combination of the lack of facilities and the imbalance in the age structure (a disproportionately large number of young people).

Repairs were scandalously neglected by Dublin corporation, and when in 1974 badly constructed walls and floors in the blocks of flats came 'unpinned' and began to move, and when in 1978 all the roofs began to leak, and when all the heating pipes had to be replaced and relagged, the millions of pounds that were spent came out of the **repairs** allocation although they were all **construction** problems caused by shoddy get-rich contractors back in '66.

By 1974, Ballymun — the estate where few wanted to live but which was still overcrowded — was truly, in the title of a local survey that year: *'the experiment that failed'*.

# Towards a community

THE maturing of **Ballymurphy** in terms of social organisation and creating a *sense of community*, even if the process had got off the ground with the foundation of the tenants' association (BTA) in 1963, really began on August 16th 1969 with the arrival in the



● Like Ballymun, one of Ballymurphy's greatest deprivations — given its unusually high proportion of young people — is its lack of recreational facilities. The only place to 'make a mark' is on the streets

safe midst of Ballymurphy of hundreds of Catholic families forced to flee their homes elsewhere in the city by loyalist pogroms.

As refugees streamed into the estate early in the morning there was only good will, but no *organisation* in the area, to help them. The statutory bodies, unprepared for the emergency, did nothing. Local people took the refugees into their homes, opened up the local schools for them, and organised a door-to-door collection for food and clothing. Within 24 hours a complete local relief organisation had been set up, and under newly-emerged bodies such as the Ballymurphy Citizens' Defence Committee (whose initial militancy was to be defused by Catholic hierarchy control) a complete network of welfare, community policing, defence and medical supplies was established for the area.

Although in line with the initial political confusion of all the Catholic ghettos, there was at first little local resistance (and indeed there was some *fraternisation*) to the British troops who arrived at the same time, the Brits' 'softly softly' approach was gradually exposed, largely by local republicans, and their occupying role — once realised locally — met with a resistance of almost unparalleled ferocity.

### RESISTANCE

Ballymurphy constituted the ideal situation for the development of resistance: a combination of RUC and then British army military repression, sectarian discrimination, bad housing and a lack of facilities. In addition, prior to 1969, the growth of community organisations, such as the BTA, had helped local people to become more politicised than in other areas by emphasising the institutional basis of the area's repression and deprivation.

It was no coincidence that on August 9th 1971 and in the succeeding months, it was frequently the **community leaders** that the British interned in a conscious attempt to demoralise the population and leave it leaderless. Instead it served only to heighten resistance (ten civilians were shot dead in Ballymurphy on August 9th alone), to cast up a whole new layer of more militant leaders, and to bond the emerging community links more closely.

It is a process of positive politicisation that has not disappeared, despite the comprehensive 'normalisation' policy

employed by the Brits across the North to do just that. The everyday realities of Ballymurphy life, military saturation and repression, internment, the H-Blocks and Armagh, have in fact presented the focuses around which much of the strong community spirit has been built.

Whatever the chronic conditions of social deprivation (especially unemployment) that have remained a constant factor in the life of Ballymurphy, the other reality is that the last ten years have witnessed a stabilisation in the community, a very low turnover of population (people who have moved out wanting to get back), and a growth of community initiatives and activities. None of this has been any thanks to 'official' bodies, which continue to regard Ballymurphy with traditional indifference, but to the local people alone.

There is a long way yet to go, but in 1982 Ballymurphy is, as one community leader puts it, an estate which has 'pulled itself up by its breech straps'.

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Without the benefits of intra-community politicisation accruing from thirteen years of nationalist resistance, **Ballymun** has not as yet managed to create anything like the same sense of *community identity*, although there have been several valuable initiatives in that direction.

Although a small nucleus of people *identify* with Ballymun, because of the sustained high turnover most do not, and simply want to leave. The migration rate from Ballymun is 30% each year, compared with 12½% in Dublin as a whole. In 1980, according to Dublin corporation statistics, 70% of residents were on the housing transfer list. Part of the problem is Dublin corporation's inability to decide, or failure to reveal, what the future is for Ballymun, whether it will be demolished or not. The other part of the problem, of course, is the estate's appalling social deprivation.

Most community leaders believe that demolition would be unnecessary if a comprehensive rehabilitation of the complex was undertaken, including the replacement of the district heating system and of the lifts (two major bones of contention), and if there was a real attempt to provide social facilities, especially for young people. They also emphasise the need for Ballymun to be taken off the 'open' housing list and a conscious attempt to be made to encourage a wider 'social mix' of population, to reverse the 15-year-old policy of using

the flats as a virtually forgotten 'dumping ground' for families unable to cope and with no assistance to do so.

## POVERTY

Meanwhile, the social reality is an estimated male unemployment rate of over 50%, with no local employment and with a Ballymun address no good advertisement when looking for work further afield. The consequent poverty can be gauged by simple indicators. One is the constantly high level of electricity disconnections by the ESB. On one memorable occasion, on the day before welfare payments were due throughout the estate, the ESB disconnected **200 homes**, in order to pressurise those families into paying their full arrears in a single payment! (In Ballymurphy, where disconnections are harder to enforce because of greater community organisation, the NIES employs similarly draconian methods to impel householders in arrears to enter into ridiculously excessive 'voluntary' repayment agreements.)

Facilities are few and far between, or — as in the case of the Ballymun health centre — woefully inadequate. The clearest example of a need for facilities is for recreational facilities for young people, who as in Ballymurphy form a disproportionately high part of the population. The few youth clubs in existence are generally run by church-organised groups, strictly regulating who can and who cannot take part, and there are no dances or discos anymore. Not surprisingly there is a big drug and drink problem among many young people, glue-sniffing, and a predilection for joy-riding and burning out cars that is more commonly associated with west Belfast.

## FUTURE

But there have also been brave attempts to cultivate an increased awareness of the identity of Ballymun in order to



● **BALLYMUN** — plenty of open space but no facilities

strengthen the political struggle for better conditions. Perhaps the best known of these have been Ballymun's unique all-Irish primary school, Scoil an tSeachtar Laoch (see page 22), the Ballymun Tenants' Association, the community-organised Ballymun Workmen's Club and Family Recreational Centre (now being built and hopefully to open this year), and the *Ballymun News* (now defunct). There has also been, by all accounts, a far less commendable use of the social deprivation, mainly by ultra-left and miniscule political groups, who have been primarily concerned with enhancing their own reputation rather than genuinely working for the people of Ballymun, an experience that has left many bitter and to some extent demoralised.

But on the whole, the future of Ballymun is still in the  
(continued on page 22)

## Ballymurphy interview

**WILLIAM** (64) and **Anne Stone** (55) have been living in their Ballymurphy home since 1954, and have nine children — five daughters and four sons — aged between 35 and 14. The eldest son, 26-year-old **Liam**, has been in the cages of Long Kesh since 1976. By Ballymurphy standards the Stone family have been relatively fortunate in one respect, with William in constant employment. Anne, too, had a part-time job at night in a restaurant, and has been actively involved in the Ballymurphy Tenants' Association since its beginnings.

**On moving in:** "We were allocated a house in Ballymurphy in 1954. We lived with our parents at that stage on the upper Crumlin Road. We'd four daughters. Just where 'Ballymurphy' was I didn't know. We arrived, and the house was in a deplorable state..."

**On facilities then:** "When we arrived in 1954 we hadn't a school, we had one shop for 600 houses, no bus services, we'd nothing. A band of us got together to improve things... organised voluntary subscriptions, jumble sales, ballots and bus-runs, the lot... Ballymurphy was flung up, 600 houses, and it was supposed to have been built for young people with young families!"

**On the early days:** "Anyway we settled in, grateful to get a house. We had our ups and



● **William and Anne** — 'proud of Ballymurphy'

downs... when we came to the 'Murph I never thought you could have bought a stone of coal, and many's the stone of coal we have bought since. We enjoyed life, our social life then was working, work and more work to bring up the family. Our annual holiday was the weekend bus run to the All-Ireland final."

**On August 1969:** "We arrived back in Ballymurphy on the morning of August 15th. We'd been across in England for our eldest daughter's wedding. The place was ablaze. The people didn't know what was happening then. When we moved into this terrace, of the five houses in it three were non-Catholic. No one at first knew where they stood or what they believed in, only those who knew what Irish history was all about."

**On their imprisoned son, Liam:** "Liam was imprisoned in 1976 on a 15-year sentence, the only man from Ballymurphy still in the cages, and the longest-serving prisoner from Ballymurphy itself. What's he going to come

out to? All his mates now are in the hell-holes of the H-Blocks. In 1972 he was working three nights a week in Kelly's bar for pocket money. He was unlucky enough to be there on May 13th 1972 when the bar was bombed in a sectarian attack, and Liam was shot. He was in the RVH for three months and came out on crutches. He had been going to St. Mary's grammar school, but when he came out of hospital he just started going to St. Thomas' secondary. From when he went into Long Kesh our life has been cut in two."

**On conditions since 1954:** "It was a slum until they started doing these repairs recently. It was just used as a transit camp. Right enough, there was mass unemployment and the people sort of lost hope. In some ways Ballymurphy has improved since then."

**On the community:** "We're proud of Ballymurphy. Since the early days we've had every chance to leave it. There's no way we would leave. What I like about Ballymurphy is that it's still part, in some ways, of 'old Belfast'. The people all cling together. For instance, say someone dies in a middle-class place no one worries about them, but someone dies here and there'd be someone round collecting for their family, and letters of sympathy." (However in other ways say the Stones, community spirit has suffered, in particular because of 'the feuds' between republicans and the 'Sticks'.)

**On changes needed:** "I'd like more amenities for the young people, especially those born since the 'troubles' began. Now, our youngest girl's fourteen, and from 1971 she's been dragged out of her bed thousands of times wrapped only in a blanket, even when she was dying of 'flu on one occasion. These children have seen nothing else, only Brits and peelers coming and dragging them out of their beds during early morning raids."



● The future of Ballymun is still in the melting pot

## Ballymun interview

IN their twenties, with four young children, 'Pat' and 'Mary' have been living in their three-bedroom flat for about four years, and hope to move although they expect to have to wait at least two years. Even then they will have no choice where, Tallaght or Blanchardstown: "you need too many points for the other areas." (Because of past garda harassment they asked that their real names should not be used.)

**On the district heating system:** "The hot water goes off when the heating breaks down. It's always breaking down. The shortcoming of the system was that they didn't give each flat a controller to regulate heat. It just comes up through the floor, if it's on everyone gets it... it's too warm in the winter."

**On the broken-down lifts:** "They've hired a private maintenance company to fix the lifts (instead of replacing them). It probably wouldn't be in their interests that the lifts keep working, you know. It'd put them out of a job."

**On jobs:** ('Pat' has been unemployed for 4½ years): "If you go for a job and give a Ballymun address it's hard. The area has a bad name. You can't get car insurance, it's a high risk area. If you go for hire purchase and give a Ballymun address you won't get it either."

**On shopping facilities:** "There's only one supermarket and so they charge what they like."

**On social facilities:** "There's nowhere for the kids, the flats are no place for the kids... you know, when there was a housing shortage they just put up this place to put all the people. It was just a dumping ground. Most people just live for pay-day and they go out and get a few drinks. During the week most of them just stay in and watch television. The drink is a sort of safety valve for people, it's an escape, isn't it?"

**On the Church:** "The only 'facility' they're building out here is churches. The Church control everything, the youth clubs... They have lackeys running things for them, but they reap the profits. We're all living in boxes, thousands of families, the local priest's living

in a house, he has a housekeeper and a maid. He's running the bingo, or at least his lackeys run it for him. They'll come round and ask us to do things like bake cakes and give them groceries, and they'll have a garden fete or a sale of work and sell the stuff back to us again."

**On the gardai:** "The police treat us with contempt. They smash the doors in here in Ballymun, but they wouldn't do it in Foxrock or Rathgar. They don't give a shit about people over here. Every day they're here, mostly Special Branch."

"People were afraid to go marching during the hunger-strike because it meant that the Branch would pull in people they didn't know afterwards, under Section 30. It kept active support down."

"If anyone forms any kind of radical group they come in for harassment by the Branch. So people don't, they just sort of become robots."

**On Ballymun in general:** "Ballymun is just like any other working-class area in Dublin, or even in Belfast I suppose. It's just that Ballymun isn't houses, it's flats, and people are more isolated in Ballymun than they would be in the other Dublin suburbs, like Coolock, Finglas, Cabra or Ballyfermot. There's probably a higher rate of crime in Ballymun."

melting pot, an appalling indictment of Dublin corporation and 26-county government neglect and unconcern, without even the 'Ballymurphy factors' of sectarian discrimination and an ongoing resistance struggle to *excuse* their indifference.

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Notwithstanding the tremendously close-knit 'Ballymurphy identity' (which for social and historical reasons affects most of the Northern nationalist ghettos to a greater or lesser degree), **Ballymurphy** is still an area of acute deprivation with a total absence of local industry. Male unemployment is estimated currently in the region of 80% compared with a Belfast average of around 20%. The only industrial site in the area (*see inset*) is now occupied by Fort Jericho, a massive British army base situated between Ballymurphy and Turf Lodge. The almost total lack of jobs, with many people not having worked for fifteen years or more and school leavers facing instant and permanent unemployment, is the greatest and seemingly most insoluble of the problems afflicting Ballymurphy. Yet, though it might not make an immediate or dramatic impact on local unemployment figures, there is, as the last thirteen years of community organisation and initiative have shown, enormous untapped sources of local entrepreneurial talent, which given the right finance and outlets could set up numerous local businesses around the area. British government industrial development agencies have made no serious attempt to encourage this.

## YOUTH

The persistence of a very high proportion of young people, combined with the lack of either employment or recreational facilities, leads to an appreciably real level of petty crime, delinquency and vandalism. As one community worker says, *'the only place to make a mark is on the streets'*. That can either be through a **positive** involvement in the republican resistance or through a **negative** involvement in 'hooding' activities which aggravate the hardship of the local people. The response forced upon the Republican Movement to persistent and incorrigible instances of the latter is sometimes, with reluctance, to carry out 'punishment shootings' (incorrectly called 'kneecappings'), generally at the instigation of the community itself. Yet, everyone realises that it is at best an unsatisfactory solution, and that there is a pressing need to consider community *alternatives* and to analyse the whole area of youth involvement in or alienation from the republican struggle.

Currently in Ballymurphy, the drab exteriors and the damp, cold interiors of the houses are undergoing a long overdue partial 'facelift', at a cost to the Housing Executive of around £3½ million, but although this marks a considerable improvement to tenants in real terms, it is by no means 'ideal' and is (literally) a cosmetic exercise which fails to tackle the roots of the area's social deprivation.

## INITIATIVES

However, despite all this deprivation, Ballymurphy's strong community identity has over the years manifested itself in a wide range of involvement and initiatives. Perhaps the best known of these, after the area's **republican** involvement, are those organised or partly organised by the area's radical priest, Fr Des Wilson. Initiatives such as the Whiterock Industrial Estate (now occupied by Fort Jericho), and the adult education classes which involve well over a hundred local people in a range of 'O', 'A' levels and diplomas and whose popularity compares dramatically with 'official' classes run by the Belfast Education and Library Board. There are other initiatives such as The People's Theatre, a well-used resource centre, and about 85 community organisations throughout the area (where before 1963 there were none). One spin-off from the area's intense nationalism, and in particular from the Gaelic-speaking H-Blocks (more especially since the hunger-strikes), has been an enormous escalation of interest in the Irish language. Gaelic



● The new school (right), on the edge of Ballymun

## Scoil an tSeachtar Laoch

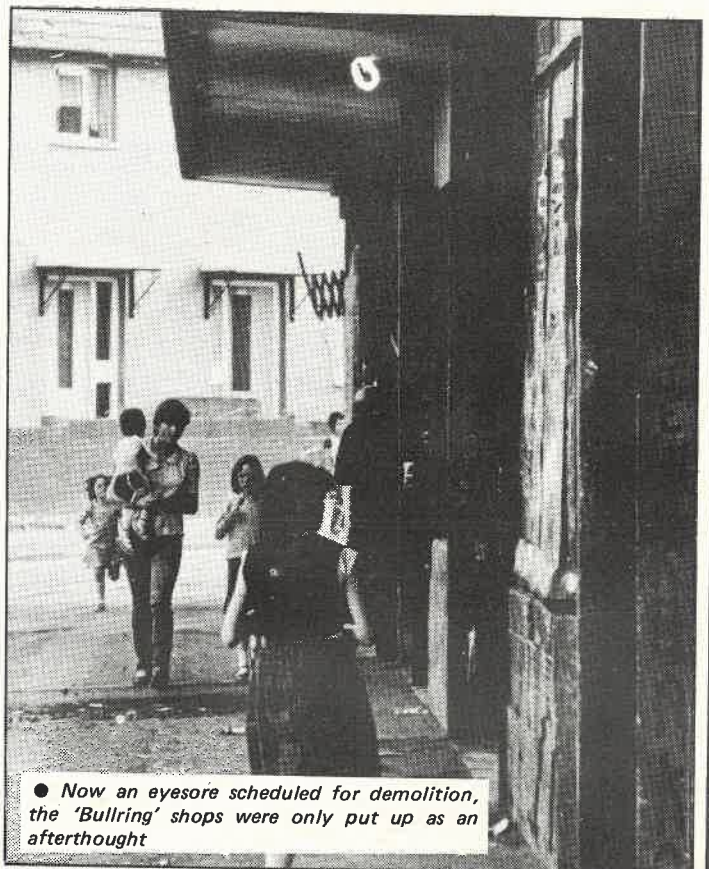
UNIQUE as an all-Irish school set up in a Dublin working-class area (as compared to the middle-class origins and composition of other Irish schools there), the 'school of the seven heroes' was set up in 1973 after fierce fights with the Department of Education who scorned the idea. Fianna Fail minister Pádraig Faulkner predicted that the school would collapse in six weeks.

Starting off with a couple of pre-fab huts, and engaged in continuous bureaucratic struggles, nine years later the school has about 200 pupils in the 5-11 age group and has recently started a pre-school group. Problems such as the

high population turnover in Ballymun, which forces parents to take their children away from the school when they move, have hindered its further development (such as the ability to start a secondary school based on the present school's turnover), but a symbol of the school's permanence on the Ballymun landscape is the new school building which is expected to be finished later this year.

Different from other schools, which are run by a bureaucratic and inflexible board of governors, Scoil an tSeachtar Laoch is primarily run by a democratically elected and responsive parents' committee which meets fortnightly.

In addition to winning the All-Ireland schools' drama slogadh six times out of seven, and winning for Ballymun three annual awards for the area that has done most to promote the use of Irish, the Ballymun school has provided the impetus for a growth in popularity of adult Irish classes, hurling and camogie throughout the estate.



● Now an eyesore scheduled for demolition, the 'Bullring' shops were only put up as an afterthought

## Whiterock Industrial Estate

"THE Whiterock Industrial Estate was set up not only as an industrial project but as part of a whole conception of the way culture, language and work should develop together." (Part of the Ballymurphy representatives' submission to the Belfast Areas of Need report on Ballymurphy in 1980.)

SITUATED on an officially-designated industrial development site adjacent to Ballymurphy, the WIE provided a 'glimmer of hope' to the community of what might eventually be achieved, by local action in creating small industries, to turn back the increase in



● Local people protested in vain, after the Brits occupied this industrial site in 1979 to build a 'fort'

unemployment.

Consisting in its early stages of candle and knitwear factories, and a nearby picture-framing co-op (which still exists), had the project matured it would have been an integral part in the building up process of the community, an impetus for other similar ventures (including, conceivably, in places like Ballymun). It was a morale boost

in an area badly in need of one.

The entire rationale of British rule was telescoped into the events of one day, November 5th 1979. On that day, without warning, hundreds of British troops arrived on the site in armoured vehicles and with earth-movers, closed down the factories, and proceeded to build a massive army base there,

despite outraged local opposition.

The confiscation of the WIE site, the only land in the neighbourhood available for industrial development, was the British government's only contribution to the process of creating *employment* in the area. British priorities were clearly signalled: military repression, not jobs!

sports traditionally have a big following.

Given all of this potential and community involvement — although there is a greater understanding of the need for political involvement than there is of the need for cultural or social involvement — it is not surprising that community leaders have insisted that Ballymurphy, for all of its obvious social deprivation, should be treated as an 'area of development' and not as an 'area of need'.

## Conclusions and strategies

BOTH estates were hastily built to meet urgent housing requirements that were the result of earlier bad planning and neglect. In one of them, sectarianism was a real factor in the choice of cheaper, shoddy construction methods, but both of them illustrated a disregard for the living conditions they imposed on working-class people.

Both estates became 'problem' estates due to conscious social planning by the 'authorities', who were anxious to concentrate their most socially deprived in one area, and then forget them and treat them as being of secondary importance.

Both estates suffer from similar types and levels of social deprivation, and from similar consequences of that deprivation. The only distinct features are that Ballymurphy *additionally* endures the effects of sectarianism, and a higher level of *military* (in Ballymun, *garda*) repression. Both areas have undergone profound social demoralisation as a result of these things, though Ballymurphy (because of its politicisation,

largely during the past thirteen years) has succeeded to a far larger degree in redressing this and creating a strong sense of belonging to a community.

In neither area to date, though their problems are extensively catalogued and publicised, is there any 'official' determination to improve living standards or conditions. In Ballymurphy, in order of priority, the needs are jobs and facilities. In Ballymun, there is the additional need to stabilise the community, either creating consciously a wider social 'mix' of population, or seeing whether (given jobs and facilities) the community will stabilise itself.

In the short-term it is highly improbable that there will be any British government or Free State government efforts to substantially improve conditions. Deprived 'ghettos' like Ballymurphy and Ballymun are a *consequence* of the regimes we live in.

### REPUBLICANS

There is an urgent need for republicans to involve themselves, genuinely, in the social issues involved in areas such as Ballymurphy and Ballymun — not from a purely 'theoretical' understanding, or opportunistically to enhance our image and boost our public profile, but with a solid and *involved* understanding of the problems, and with the *sole motivation* of helping to improve the conditions of the particular community and its ability to organise *itself*.

To do this, republicans should involve themselves in self-education and then strive to create a closer understanding (and appreciation of long-term republican aims) between people and activists.

The experience of the hunger-strike period in Ballymurphy was that previously-uninvolved people came to the fore, showing great talents and organisational ability. An extraordinary percentage of these were young people. Since the hunger-strike many of these people, disenchanted with existing political structures, are at a loose end. The hunger-strike showed that people possess incredible discipline and that they are prepared to work in structures that they can *identify* with.

Republicans must ensure that all structures they are involved in, whether community or political, are flexible and responsive to people's needs, and that where necessary (especially for young people) new structures are established. ■



**SIXTY  
YEARS  
OF  
REPRESSION**

IN JUNE of this year, the 60th anniversary of the formation of the RUC was marked by a series of commemorative events. Articles filled newspapers, editorials and letters from loyal correspondents heaped praise and glory on this force, church services (some attended by well-known Catholic clergy) prayed for its members, and local councils passed motions of support and congratulations in their honour. In short, 'respectable' unionist society paid its tribute to its 'police force', formed in its image.

60 years of brutality, torture, murder and lies were brushed aside as the unionist establishment congratulated itself for the continuing existence of a paramilitary force which had maintained and safeguarded its rule over the turbulence of those years.

There were of course no prayers for young Michael McCartan, gunned down in cold blood in July 1980 by a plain-clothes RUC man while painting 'Up the Provos' on a gable wall near his south Belfast home. Nor, doubtless, did any clergyman pause a moment in memory of 9-year-old Danny Rooney, shot dead by

*An outline history  
of the RUC*

RUC men in August 1969 in his Divis Flats home; or in memory of 42-year-old Samuel Devenney, beaten to death in his own home by those same 'guardians of peace' in April of that year.

**CASTLEREAGH**

There were no newspaper editorials, either, recalling the hideous murder of trade union activist Brian Maguire at the hands of his RUC interrogators in Castlereagh in 1978; or the 'disappearance' of Jackie McMahon on January 18th 1978 after his arrest by the RUC, and the finding of his drowned body in the River Lagan months later. The columns of the *Belfast Telegraph* were empty of condemnations of the RUC killers of young Julie Livingstone in May 1981, and of

those other nationalists murdered by the plastic bullet weapon which British rulers have equipped their RUC 'peace-keepers' with.

And the local councils omitted to mention the torture centres such as Castlereagh and Gough barracks, or the Bennett report, or the Amnesty International report, or the European Court of Human Rights' condemnation of torture techniques in 1971. The 'conveyor belt' from the nationalist ghettos to the H-Blocks and Armagh, in which the RUC play an integral role with their trade in torture, blackmail and perjury, was totally ignored.

The black history of the RUC was shrouded in a cloak of lies and false platitudes.





● RIC and military during an eviction

## THE BACKGROUND

ALTHOUGH the Royal Ulster Constabulary was founded in June 1922, nonetheless its roots and political nature can be firmly traced back to the force which was established to maintain British rule in Ireland before partition.

The Constabulary (Ireland) Act, 1836, passed by the British government, created a constabulary of some 8,500 men. By 1846 this was extended to 13,500 (with, in addition, a large number of auxiliaries) specifically to protect the property of absentee landlords and to squeeze rent (or seize property in lieu) from impoverished peasants in the Famine period.

The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) as it was known, effectively acted as the strong-arm of the landlords and mill and factory owners, carrying out evictions against tenants who defaulted on rent payments (as the RUC have done against squatters), and breaking up strikes (as during the 1913 Dublin lock-out) and trade union demonstrations.

### COMMISSION

The Northern RIC was almost entirely composed of Protestants. A British 'royal commission' reporting on the 1857 pogroms against Belfast Catholics found that this overwhelmingly Protestant force had behaved in a sectarian fashion, and had actually led attacks on Catholic homes and businesses. (Just as at Burntollet in January 1969, and in the lower Falls in August, it was out-of-uniform (and uniformed!) RUC men and 'B' Specials who co-ordinated the attacks on Catholics.)

The commission recommended that 'a total change should be made in the mode of appointment and the management of the local police'. 112 years later, the Hunt Report commissioned by the British government was still tinkering along the same lines of 'reform'. But just as in 1857, so in 1969... nothing changed in the essential sectarianism of the RIC, and throughout the 19th century, attacks on Catholic homes and property continued unabated.



● BELFAST, 1922 — RUC repression as visible then as in 1982

## 1922 - 1969

ON December 6th 1921 the so-called Treaty was initialled, soon to be ratified by the dominant Free State faction in the South, and Ireland was partitioned.

In the twenty-six counties the implementation of the new status was undertaken by Free State forces using British arms and equipment, and employing brutally repressive measures. In the six counties the job of 'pacifying' nationalist opposition fell largely to the RUC.

A departmental committee set up under the Stormont government to enquire into the organisation of a force to replace the old RIC, recommended (on March 31st 1922) that a new force, the RUC, be set up comprising 3,000 men. Nominally, this force was to include one-third Catholics in its number, but because of loyalist sectarianism and the force's political role in defending partition, it was from the outset an almost exclusively Protestant and loyalist force.

The first priority of the newly-formed RUC was to eliminate the republican forces who still enjoyed popular support in the nationalist areas of the North. To achieve this, the Constabulary Act (Northern Ireland), 1922, incorporated the already established 'Special Constabulary' fully into the RUC. This 'Special Constabulary' had been set up in 1920 by the British administration to combat the increasingly effective IRA forces in the north of the country. The unionist lead-

er, Lord Edward Carson, had organised it, and it was composed almost entirely of former units of the Ulster Volunteer Force from the 1914 gun-running era.

### 'B' SPECIALS

Within a year of its formation the 'Specials' ('A', 'B' and 'C' classes — although only the 'B' Specials lasted long) numbered more than 30,000 men, and at the end of 1921 the Stormont administration assumed control over them from the British government. By the end of 1922 when they were incorporated into the RUC, the 'Specials' numbered 50,000 well-armed men.

Both the 'Specials' and the RUC proceeded to wage a terror campaign against the nationalist people, indulging in the widespread pogroms of that period. Reports of atrocities poured in between 1922 and 1925. The 'Murder Gang' (a 1920s version of the 'Shankill Butchers') was composed of ex-British soldiers, UVF men and RUC/'B' Specials, and typical of their atrocities was the 'MacMahon murders' on March 20th 1922, in which all the male members of the MacMahon family and a man employed by them were killed. In another incident around this time, two elderly sisters were killed when 'B' Specials threw a hand-grenade into the bedroom of their Thompson Street home in east Belfast's isolated nationalist ghetto of Short Strand.

Perhaps the most sadistic killings took place in Tyrone in 1924. Four IRA Volunteers were captured by a large platoon of 'B' Specials and shot on the spot. Their genitals were cut off and placed in their

mouths. Obscenities about the Pope were written on the road with blood from their entrails. At the inquest, the 'B' Specials' commander defended their actions by stating that they had 'seen action in Palestine'.

## GUARDIAN

In the intervening years the RUC came to reinforce its position as the institutional guardian of Orange sectarian privilege in the six counties, periodically (as in 1932 during the Outdoor Relief strikes) repressing nationalists by extreme brutal force. Its importance in that institutional repression can be gauged by the fact that the RUC, through its advice and intelligence reports, were instrumental in operating the internment of nationalist opponents of the state, not just in 1971 but in every decade since the foundation of the state in 1920.

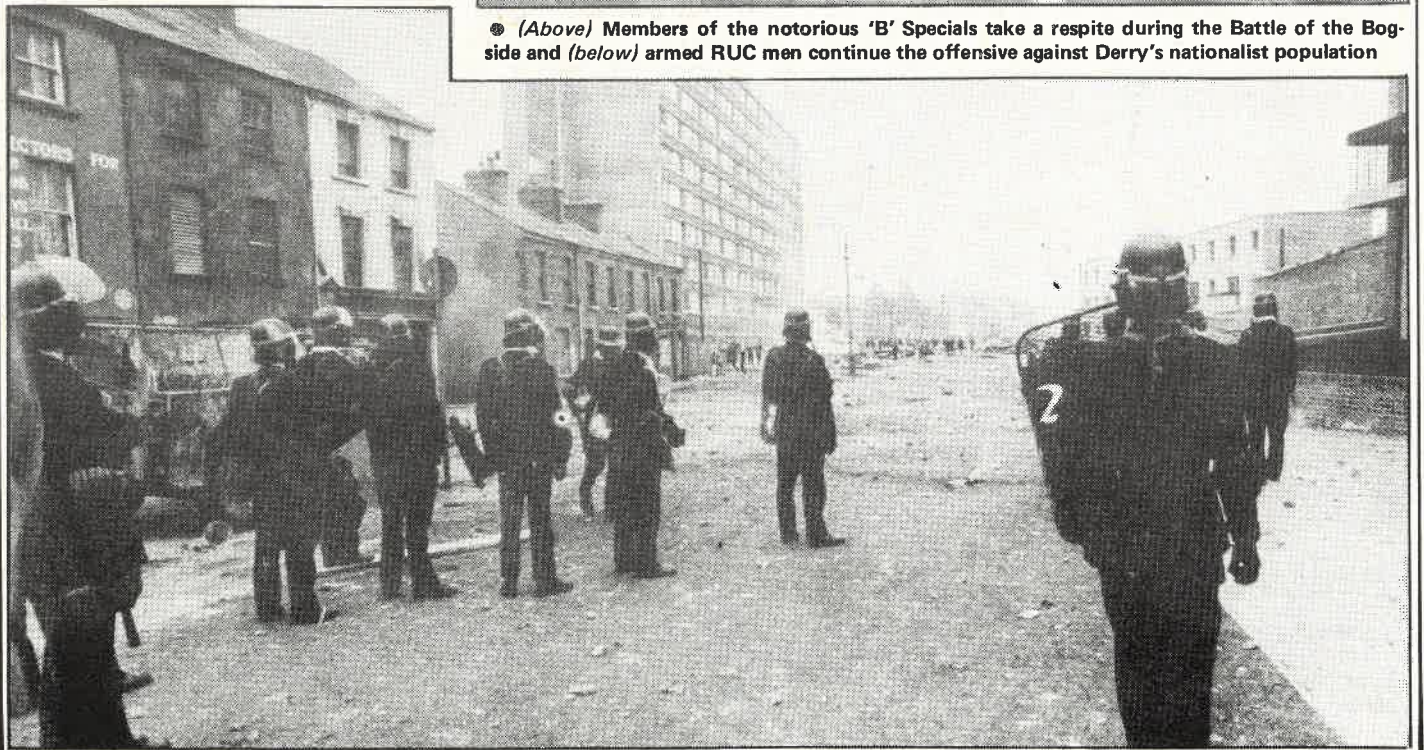
The late 1960s saw this repressive role emphasised again, as RUC thugs batoned civil rights marchers to the ground, first on October 5th 1968 in Derry, in full view of the television cameras. Despite the outcry no investigation took place.

When on August 14th 1969 the RUC finally admitted defeat, faced with the undaunted nationalist resistance of the Battle of the Bogside, and British troops entered Derry and then Belfast to safeguard the *status quo*, the 'B' Specials gave full vent to their anti-nationalist spleen, shooting dead a bystander in Armagh and Francis McCloskey in Dungiven, while in Belfast 'B' Specials and RUC men led loyalist mobs on attacks into nationalist streets.

When the first flames died down and the nationalists counted the cost in terms of human tragedy, the British summoned Lord Hunt to prepare a report on the RUC. Like subsequent reports it was essentially a whitewash.



● (Above) Members of the notorious 'B' Specials take a respite during the Battle of the Bogside and (below) armed RUC men continue the offensive against Derry's nationalist population



## REFORM ?

AUGUST 1969 had revealed to the world that the RUC was a sectarian paramilitary force, and the British felt pressurised to act. Typically they summoned an academic, Lord Hunt, to prepare a report which essentially would salvage the credibility of the force.

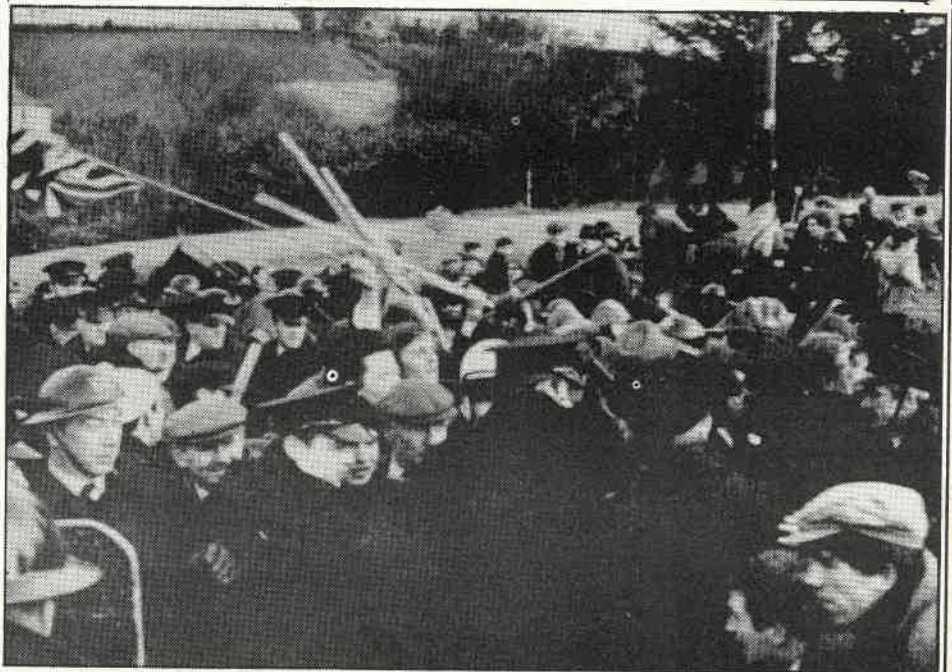
Hunt's report was issued on October 3rd 1969 and was announced as the 'reform' of the RUC. The reforms, however, were not real but apparent. The 'B' Specials were disbanded but were replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment (attached to the British army rather than to the RUC). In fact 90% of all 'B' Specials in 1969 joined the UDR at its formation in 1970; this meant that 80% of the UDR was composed of former 'B' Specials. Most of the Catholics who joined, in an initial belief in the reality of the reform (about 12% of the UDR in all), resigned when it soon became clear that the UDR was no more than a 'Special Constabulary' in khaki uniform. (As a further concession to the pride of the 'B' Specials, former members were allowed to keep their weapons!)

Another Hunt 'recommendation' that the RUC be disarmed was implemented initially, but under loyalist pressure it soon resumed its traditional role as the armed paramilitary wing of loyalism. In fact, to suppress the militant nationalist population, the British administration actually strengthened the RUC in numbers and weaponry.

### CONVEYOR BELT

In the history of nationalist and republican resistance to the Orange state throughout the 'seventies, this better-armed, better-trained and numerically stronger RUC force played a central and conscious role in the attempted repression of that struggle. Their contribution in particular to the post-internment H-Block/Armagh 'conveyor belt', through the use of RUC-trained interrogators in Castlereagh and other torture centres across the North, was a major factor in the torture (by physical or psychological methods) of the estimated 20,000 nationalists who have passed through these centres since the ending of political status in 1976. Over 80% of those subsequently convicted by non-jury Diplock courts were jailed solely on the basis of 'confessions' obtained while under interrogation in these centres.

The RUC's immunity from criticism in employing these methods is well illustrated by the case of Dungannon man James Joseph Rafferty. Arrested in November 1976, Rafferty was held for three days in Omagh RUC barracks where he was brutally beaten by detectives from the 'Regional Crime Squad', which had



● January 4th 1969: RUC men, 'B' Specials and loyalist thugs attack non-violent civil rights marchers at Burntollet



● January 5th 1979: the 10th anniversary of Burntollet is marked by a commemorative march — and yet another attack by the RUC on the peaceful protestors

recently been established by the then RUC assistant chief constable Kenneth Newman for just such purposes. Eventually, Rafferty was released without charge and taken to hospital where he remained for several days. The evidence of the brutality used against him was clear-cut: he had multiple bruising, his scalp was covered with blood-red pin-pricks, and his backside was gashed. Doctors testified that these injuries could not have been self-inflicted.

Nevertheless, after years of a stone-wall conspiracy of RUC silence, which caused one member of the RUC Police Authority, Jack Hassard, to resign in disgusted frustration, Rafferty's torturers were acquitted in court, and Rafferty's claim for compensation has been, recently, dismissed.

As Jack Hassard said: "The bastards who beat up Rafferty would stop at nothing, even killing."

They didn't stop for Brian Maguire.

**CASTLEREAGH**

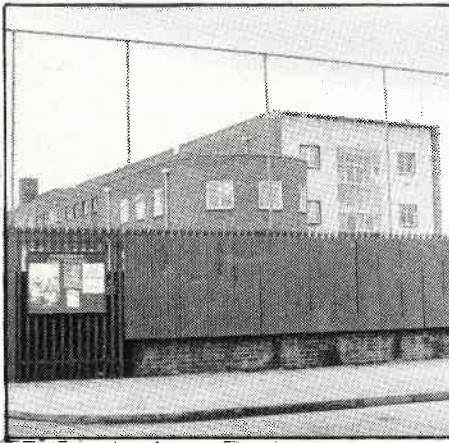
*In Castlereagh from day to day  
The tortured know no rest,  
And men don't sleep and men must weep  
Until they have confessed.  
Confessed to 'crime' for sentenced time  
Though guilt they may not know,  
But that is law, however raw,  
So bear your cross of woe...*

(Bobby Sands: 'The Crime of Castlereagh')

ON May 12th 1978 there were two funerals of particular relevance for the nationalist people. One was Jackie McMahon's, his body having been dragged from the River Lagan, the first time he had been seen since being taken into RUC custody four months earlier. The other was the funeral of 27-year-old Brian Maguire who, two days earlier on May 10th, had been found hanging from his cell ceiling by a sheet, in Castlereagh barracks.

Brian Maguire was an electronics engineer at the Strathearn Audio factory in west Belfast, a branch secretary of his union, AUEW(TASS), and a militant in the Trade Union Campaign against Repression (TUCAR). In November 1977 he had helped organise a march in west Belfast against repression, at which one of the speakers warned that unless Castlereagh were closed then somebody would be tortured to death. Brian Maguire was that somebody.

Brian Maguire's murder was, typically, officially dismissed as suicide, physically an impossibility in the regime of constant



● Castlereagh torture centre, Belfast

supervision in Castlereagh. A key to what did actually happen to him, however, is given by the case of Phelim Hamill from west Belfast who was being held for questioning about the same matters as Brian Maguire.

**HAMILL**

Phelim Hamill was 20 when he was taken from his home on April 23rd 1978. Over the next two days he experienced the most severe physical and mental torture in Castlereagh, suffering ear damage, abdominal bruising and bruising to the kidneys and testicles. While being beaten by 'teams' of up to eight RUC interrogators, Phelim was made to stand against the wall spread-eagled for long periods. The torturers also engaged in a specific type of mock strangulation which induced a drowning sensation. It is this last torture that is believed to have gone too far in Brian Maguire's case and led to his death.

In a statement taken before Maguire's death, Phelim Hamill detailed this aspect of the torture: "My arms and legs were pinned down and a light-coloured towel

was put over my head, obstructing my vision. They tied the towel around my neck and choked me. While the towel was tied around my face a cup of water was poured down my throat and nose, giving me a drowning feeling."

After surviving this terrifying experience, Phelim spent eleven months on remand before being released. Brian Maguire was not so lucky.

*Like withered leaf or side of beef  
They hang you by the heels,  
Then kidneys crunch with heavy punch*

*To tortured jiggling squeals.*

*Bones are bruised, 'cos boots are used*

*To loosen up your tongue,*

*So men admit a little bit*

*When nothing they have done.*

(Bobby Sands: 'The Crime of Castlereagh')

**CONCLUSION**

THE RUC are a bigoted and sectarian force, existing today to perform the same function they were set up to perform — the defence of the Orange state. The child-killers of 1969 are the torturers of Castlereagh and the plastic bullet assassins, and 13 years on (or 60 years on) the RUC are an unchanged and unchangeable paramilitary force. Their name spells repression and death to the nationalist community.

That is why, for all the newspaper articles and editorials, and for all the middle-class prayers and council motions, and — above all — for all the ambivalence and collaboration of the SDLP and the Workers' Party towards them, there are not and never will be any birthday greetings to the RUC from the nationalist people. ■

**14 FATAL VICTIMS OF 'RIOT CONTROL'**

**Rubber bullet victims:**

- Francis Rowntree, aged 11.....died 23rd April 1972, Belfast
- Tobias Molloy, aged 18.....died 16th July 1972, Strabane
- Thomas Friel, aged 21.....died 22nd May 1973, Derry

**Plastic bullet victims:**

- Stephen Geddis, aged 10.....died 30th August 1975, Belfast
- Brian Stewart, aged 13.....died 10th October 1976, Belfast
- Michael Donnelly, aged 21.....died 10th August, 1980, Belfast
- Paul Whitters, aged 15.....died 25th April 1981, Derry
- Julie Livingstone, aged 14.....died 13th May 1981, Belfast
- Carol Ann Kelly, aged 12.....died 22nd May 1981, Belfast
- Henry Duffy, aged 45.....died 22nd May 1981, Derry
- Nora McCabe, aged 30.....died 9th July 1981, Belfast
- Peter Doherty, aged 40.....died 31st July 1981, Belfast
- Peter Magennis, aged 41.....died 9th August 1981, Belfast
- Stephen McConomy, aged 12.....died 19th April 1982, Derry

**THEY SHOOT CHILDREN**



Recommended reading: 'They Shoot Children: the use of rubber and plastic bullets in the North of Ireland'. Available (50p plus 20p post and packaging) from Information on Ireland, Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1. Discounts for bulk orders available on request.



# Conditions in English jails

THERE are currently 67 Irish political prisoners in jail in England, 53 of them republicans and at least 14 of them totally innocent victims of political trials. Five of the POWs are women, held in Durham jail, and there is one remand prisoner, John McComb from Belfast, who has been in Brixton for several months now.

Over half the prisoners are from the North, the rest are from the twenty-six counties. Thirty-two of them are originally from Belfast.

There are supposed to be no political prisoners in England, no political trials, but in reality the arrests, trials and prison conditions of the POWs are all highly political. Most of the trials took place in an anti-Irish, highly prejudicial atmosphere, the circumstances of the arrests were often indiscriminate, and many cases involved paid *agents provocateurs* and police set-ups. The nature of the evidence was usually flimsy, and 80% of cases have been under the notorious catch-all conspiracy laws where the onus of proving innocence is on the defendant. The length of sentence has invariably been, as in the North, savage.

The vast majority of the POWs are classified as top-security category 'A'.

The rules governing category 'A' are used punitively against them and it is this system that has enabled the British Home Office to treat them in an altogether more repressive way than other groups of prisoners, while formally maintaining the fiction that there are no political prisoners. The rules are designed to impose maximum isolation on the Irish prisoners.

## ISOLATION

Solitary confinement is a major weapon. British courts cannot sentence anyone to long periods in solitary, but through the use of 28-day renewable spells in the 'punishment blocks' the prisons have constantly done just that to Irish POWs, for petty infringements of prison rules, protests and reactions to beatings they receive from prison warders. In addition, 'rule 43' allows a prisoner to be isolated indefinitely to 'maintain good order and discipline' in the prison. By using these two rules, the regime has managed to hold Irish POWs in continuous solitary confinement for as long as 2½ years (Brendan Dowd), and several for two years (Eddie Butler, Liam McLarnon and Hughie Doherty) and almost all for regular 28-day spells.

When six POWs in Albany prison staged a peaceful 'sit-in' in their cells in 1976 as a protest against Brendan

Dowd's 2½ years in solitary, they were subjected to a full-scale attack by prison warders, leading to broken limbs and other serious injuries, and were punished by further periods in solitary. Physical assault is routine, nearly 75% of POWs have been seriously attacked and beaten, many to the extent of being hospitalised.

Although many prisoners' families live in Ireland, only four prisoners have ever been repatriated (and then only after a 205-day force-fed hunger-strike). Yet it is official Home Office policy to transfer prisoners to jails close to home, and British soldiers are automatically sent back to England or Scotland in the few cases where they have been sentenced for their criminal activities in the North.

The 'closed' visit, strip-searching, the harassment of relatives on visits, and the issue of repatriation, have been the chief areas of protest by the republican prisoners in English jails, over the years.

## THE FUTURE

Over the next two or three years most of the shorter-term prisoners will be released. In previous years eleven republican prisoners have been released, and the latest releases were Tony Madigan and Brian McLaughlin, released in June; and Fr. Patrick Fell and David Owen who were released in July. This will leave a core of republican prisoners serving life or more (Joe O'Connell, life plus 159 years!) who have lost all remission.

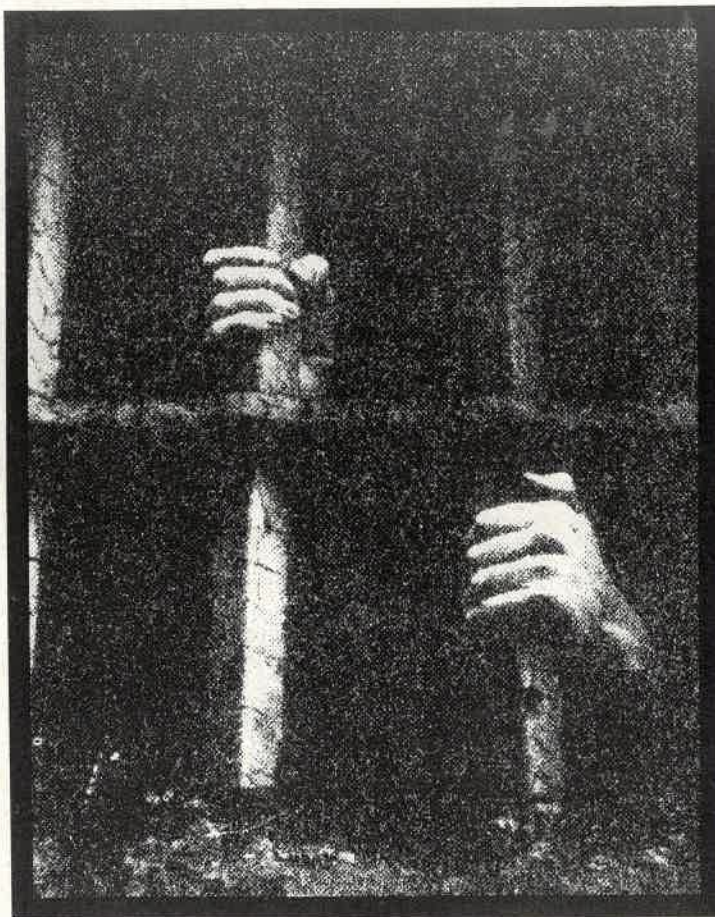
Repeated demands that these prisoners should be allowed to serve their sentences in Ireland have been refused. The original grounds given by the British Home Office were the inadequacy of secure prison conditions in the North, but since the building of the H-Blocks and new prison facilities at Magheraberry this is even more blatantly untrue than before.

The fact is that these prisoners are being held as political hostages, a punitive warning to others who may bring the war into England that they can expect to spend their natural lives imprisoned on foreign soil in brutal and hostile conditions, isolated from comrades, friends, family and community.

It is an indication of the courage and political strength of these prisoners that they have not only sustained themselves mentally, even in extreme isolation, but have persisted in protesting for their beliefs inside the jails, with their pens, or from the prison roof-tops, or barricaded in their cells.

Like their comrades in the H-Blocks and Armagh the Irish POWs in England have resisted criminalisation against all the odds, with the same conviction articulated by Joe O'Connell, speaking from the dock at the Old Bailey, during the 1977 Balcombe Street trial: "We admit to no crimes, the real crimes and guilt are those British imperialism has committed against our people." ■

# Irish political prisoners in England



THERE are currently 52 sentenced Irish republicans in jails in England. Although they are continually transferred from one 'maximum security' jail to another, the list below is a fairly accurate guide to where they are presently being held. Included in the list, where known, are their prison numbers. Anyone able to send a card or letter to any of these prisoners should ensure that they include the correct number and full address, since otherwise it is unlikely they will be received.

**HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Road, London W12:**  
William Armstrong (119085), Martin Coughlan (507955), Kevin Dunphy (134893), Paul Norney (863532);

**HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight:**

Jimmy Ashe (507951), James Bennett (464989), Stephen Blake (507953), Anthony Clarke (726381), Patrick Christie (514787), Joe Duffy (507952), Noel Gibson (879225), Ronnie McCartney (463799), Raymond McLaughlin (509387), Roy Walsh (119083);

**HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight:**

Robert Campbell (B32954), Hugh Doherty (338636), Vincent Donnelly (274064), Harry Duggan (338638), Bernard McCafferty (unknown), Joe O'Connell (338635), Gerry Young (507954);

**HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Road, Market Harborough, LE16 7RP:**

Liam Baker (464984), Eddie Byrne (873453), Patrick Guilfoyle (507956), Sean Hayes (341418), Sean Kinsella (758661), Shane O'Doherty (336143);

**HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs., WR11 5TZ:**

Martin Brady (119087), Anthony Cunningham (B03106), Gerry Cunningham (132016), Robert Cunningham (131877), Paul Holmes (119034), Con McFadden (130662), William

McLarnon (119082), Andy Mulryan (461576), Patrick Mulryan (461575), James Murphy (340235), Peter Toal (516099);

**HM Prison Durham, Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HU:**

Ann Gillespie (994769), Eileen Gillespie (994770);

**HM Prison, Hedon Road, Hull, Yorkshire, HU9 5LS:**

Richard Glenholmes (B32955), John McCluskey (136282), Michael Murray (509534), Stephen Nordone (758663), Eddie O'Neill (135722);

**HM Prison, Love Lane, Wakefield, Yorkshire, WF2 9AG:**

Patrick Hackett (342603), Michael Reilly (515243), Gerard Small (507957);

**HM Prison, County Road, Maidstone, Kent:**

Gerard McLoughlin (D77395);

**HM Prison, Welford Road, Leicester, LE2 7AJ:**

Eddie Butler (338637), Brian Keenan (B26380), Brendan Dowd (758662).

In addition, there are fourteen prisoners who are not connected with the Republican Movement in any way, but who are campaigned for by the Sinn Fein POW department because their imprisonment has come about, incidentally, because of the political situation in the North. They are: Anne Maguire, Carole Richardson and Judith Ward (all Durham jail); Patrick Armstrong and Patrick Maguire (Wakefield); Gerard Conlon (Parkhurst); Paul Hill, Sean Smyth, Billy Power and Richard McKenny (all Wormwood Scrubs); Hugh Callaghan, John Walker, Gerard Hunter and Paddy Hill (all Long Lartin).

In order to highlight the plight of all these prisoners, Sinn Fein is organising a programme of activity during the month of August. The theme of this year's anniversary of internment demonstrations will emphasise: *i)* the two blanket men, Patrick Hackett and Michael Murray; *ii)* the use of solitary confinement; *iii)* conditions in control units; *iv)* visits and *v)* the right to repatriation on demand. Enquiries about this programme of activity should be made to the Sinn Fein POW department. ■

# Continued intransigence

ON TUESDAY 6th October, three days after the protesting republican prisoners terminated their 7-month-long hunger-strike for political status, the Northern direct-ruler James Prior announced a package of concessions which, although falling far short of the five demands for which ten blanket men had sacrificed their lives, proved just how much pressure the hunger-strike had brought to bear, both internationally and in Ireland, on an almost uniquely callous and intransigent British government.

The republican prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh had been on protest for five minimum demands. These were: the right not to wear prison-issue clothes; the right not to do prison work; free association between political prisoners (which included the demand for segregation of republicans from loyalist and non-political prisoners); proper educational and recreational facilities, visits, letters and parcels; and the full restoration of remission lost during the five-year protest.

## OWN CLOTHES

Of these demands, the only one to be met in full by Prior was in conceding the right of prisoners to wear their own clothes. This important victory, won at such an awesome cost, undermined the whole concept of 'criminalisation' by removing its most blatant symbol, prison uniform, and led to the ending of the blanket protest.

In response to the prisoners' other four demands, however, Prior and the British government signally failed to demonstrate the flexibility and sincerity which, they had been warned, would alone resolve the conflict in the prisons once and for all.

On prison work, Prior continued to insist that republicans do any kind of work asked of them by the prison regime. Because of this, several hundred republicans, both in the H-Blocks and Armagh, have maintained a 'no work' protest since the hunger-strike, and have been penalised as a result.

On association, Prior's concessions



● The only concession to be met in full is the right of the POWs to wear their own clothes

allowed three hours' association between adjoining wings of each H-Block each evening and at weekends. 'No work' protestors, however, are allowed association only on every second evening and on alternate weekends. They are also denied the use of education facilities.

Visits, letters and food parcels were also increased. Yet once again protestors are penalised, for example receiving only three ½-hour visits a month instead of four enjoyed by conforming prisoners.

But it is perhaps the issue of remission on which the British government has most punitively demonstrated its undiminished intransigence towards republican political

prisoners. Instead of restoring full remission to all of the prisoners, Prior's package offered only the restoration of half remission to those prisoners prepared to conform to the prison regime, and no return of lost remission to those who continued on a 'no work' protest. In addition, protestors continued to lose ten days' remission for every twenty-eight days they remained on the protest.

The obvious consequence of this is that many republican prisoners serving relatively short-term sentences, who had it not been for the blanket protest forced on them by British 'criminalisation' policy would have been due for release, still face several years in jail.

So, nine months since the hunger-strike ended, where now is the spirit of goodwill on the part of the British government, and the determination to resolve the prisons crisis, that those who urged the prisoners to end their hunger-strike (the Catholic hierarchy, the Free State government and the SDLP) assured them would exist? And where are their voices heard now on the prisoners' behalf?

In 'communications' smuggled out recently to *IRIS* by the PROs of the protesting prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh women's jail, the prisoners have detailed the conditions under which they are presently living, and the continuing intransigence of the prison regimes.

## H-BLOCK

Prison conditions are somewhat different for protesting prisoners since the ending of the hunger-strike and the obtaining of our own clothes as a right. New avenues were opened to us which had been closed due to our refusal of prison garb.

Shortly after Prior's initial concession package, new details regarding punishment for failing to put oneself forward for prison work were introduced. Despite this, considerable ground was gained (two extra visits a month, association on alternate nights which was never to be got prior to this, improvements on remission). So, taking all this into consideration,

# PRISON NOTES

coupled with the pettiness and harassment by the prison warders, I will describe prison conditions briefly to you as they now prevail, constructively criticising the pitfalls of prison bureaucracy and stubbornness.

All maintenance in the wings is done by orderlies selected by ourselves. This includes meal serving, cleaning etc., so as distinct from the past a higher degree of workmanship prevails, meals are proper and full (no missing sugar, jam and other fineries as in the past). All meals are now served and eaten in the dining hall, 20-25 minutes allocated for each meal; over-anxious screws have attempted to cut this, but ignoring them has stopped it almost completely.

Washing and showering falls short of adequacy to say the least. One shower a week is your 'entitlement' (no evidence for this has ever been produced), and this one shower can be more often than not luke-warm, as the volume of heated water repeatedly falls short after one group of six men are washed. Repeated appeals to POs and assistant governors have fallen, as in most cases of dispute, on somewhat deaf ears. Complaints have been made to the doctor about the inadequacy of warm water for dish cleansing and kitchen-type hygiene. He said he has forwarded his discontent on this situation but we have seen no fruits of his efforts.

Men have been put to the cell-block (sentenced to loss of visits and other 'privileges') as a result of taking a shower on the day of a visit, or after training in the cell or exercise yard. Each wing regime can vary on this, some wing screws can and do see the absurdity of one shower a week and, with the co-operation of the republican wing O/C, work a fast-flowing shower system which is well maintained by the men to prove the workability of the scheme.



*(No evidence of this has produced) ... the volume of heated water repeatedly falls short after one group of six men are washed ... Repeated appeals to POs and assistant governors have fallen ... He said he has forwarded his discontent on this situation but we have seen no fruits of his efforts ... Cells have remained uncleaned in the cell block since March 1st 1981 ...*

• The original text of the statement smuggled out from the H-Blocks and written on two sides of a cigarette paper

Cells have remained uncleaned, in fact filthy, since March 1st 1981; one frugal steam cleaning has been the total effort made by the authorities, requests for paint for self-maintenance purposes are

refused to us. The metal grilles and window boxes (placed on cell windows during the blanket protest, and severely restricting fresh air and sunlight into the cells) remain a permanent and sore feature of the cell. No attempt to relieve this is imminent, so it seems.

Exercise and association are well below par. On alternate days we receive one hour's exercise in the yard and two hours of the so-called three-hour association period. On the days in-between we receive one hour's association and are locked in our cells the rest of the day (except for meals and washing). Inter-wing association (between adjoining wings) has been introduced recently — at last! — and so far seems to be running smoothly. We are afforded the gym for only one period for each wing per week, and considering there's over 40 men to a wing that means we get the gym once in every three weeks. Compare this to twice a week for those in conforming Blocks!

Censorship of books, papers, magazines and clothing is disastrous to say the least. The things we are allowed are generally somewhat unobtainable by our relatives to buy. Censorship of books etc. and the library is all part and parcel of education being deemed a 'privilege'. Several attempts to obtain small gains on book material have been met by a stonewall attitude. Laundry facilities for our clothing are shoddy and the number of complaints about the destruction of clothes grows with each laundry day.

The above is only a minute summary of our conditions, and each item could be broadened to the length of the text as a whole, but I hope it will at least let you see in the true light that conditions, described by the NIO as whiter than white, are in fact horrid and — more importantly to us — still frustrating.

# ARMAGH JAIL

For many, the ending of the hunger-strike last October presented a significant development in the prison issue since the British government had maintained throughout that no reforms could be implemented until the hunger-strike ended. To date, here in Armagh prison, no movement of any kind has been made to improve conditions and create an amicable situation whereby our protest would no longer be necessary.

On the work issue, Armagh's antiquated system remains in the penal times of the 19th century. It does not cater for the education or vocational training which Prior had outlined in his proposals. It simply consists of stitching and laundry, the old-style penal work designed solely to degrade, humiliate and criminalise.

One can only conclude that the NIO does not deem it necessary to introduce

*STATEMENT: ... FOR THE ... NOT CAPABLE ... TRAINING ... PROPOSALS ... LOSS OF REMISSION ...*

• The statement from Armagh women's jail

proposals into Armagh's out-dated regime. Much has been made of the ten days' loss of remission per month punishment in place of the day for day loss. It

must be realised that we protestors have lost the majority of our remission over the past five years on protest, the rest can and will be whittled away in the ten days' loss each month. While the British continue to distort this reality, supported by Fr Faul, representing it as a softening of attitude, we protestors point out that it's merely a slower process of removing our remission.

In reality, conditions here in Armagh remain virtually unchanged since our protest began in 1976. The daily lock-up continues, whereby the only time allotted to washing facilities is during our association period. Our day to day existence is one of continual repression with restrictions on visits, parcels and reading materials.

We women protestors have yet to witness any change in the NIO's attitude to the situation in Armagh prison. Not only is it one of intransigence but also one of indifference. They have the means to secure an end to all protest action now.





# RESISTANCE ON ALL FRONTS

IRIS TALKS TO A SPOKESPERSON AUTHORISED  
TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

**IRIS:** Recently there was considerable publicity given to alleged IRA attempts to obtain sophisticated heat-seeking missiles. To what extent does the present lack of such weaponry limit the IRA's operational capacity in rural areas?

**IRA:** I would say that if that type of weapon was available to IRA units you would find that we would be able to physically clash with the British face to face, that is, do what they are always saying we can't do, stand up and fight. There would be a whole new phase of the war, a totally new game altogether.

At present there are massive areas of the occupied territory, such as in south Armagh and in parts of Fermanagh, particularly around Lisnaskea, Donagh and Maguיריםbridge, where the Brits

don't use vehicles at all. They supply all their outposts by helicopter. The same applies to large areas on the Fermanagh/Donegal and west Tyrone/Donegal borders. Without helicopters, which this kind of missile is designed to attack, there would be a complete inability to continue supplies without mounting a massive operation to secure the area using hundreds of men. So the effect of our lack of this weapon is obvious.

## EBB AND FLOW

**IRIS:** Although IRA activity is frequently intensive and highly successful in any particular week or over a period of weeks, there are other periods of little or no apparent activity. Why does this 'uneven-

ness' exist?

**IRA:** Well, I think that the answer to that is that this is the nature of guerrilla warfare.

Vietnam is the one guerrilla war that people refer to as the textbook guerrilla operation. But in fact, prior to the Tet offensive hardly a shot had been fired. After that, of course, everything changed. If you take the Algerian struggle, actions were few and intermittent. Cyprus was the same. In Malaya there were very few Brits killed over a three-year period.

The IRA suffers from a number of drawbacks. Firstly, unlike many liberation movements there is no government supporting us militarily or financially. We have a small land area in which to fight. We are one of the few guerrilla armies

that lives and fights in the occupied area. We are fighting a major world force with massive resources, and at our backs is a hostile collaborationist government spending millions of pounds trying to help defeat us. We have political enemies throughout the world trying to cut our lines of supply. In the occupied area we have over 50% of the population (*the loyalists*) collaborating with the enemy.

Our biggest single asset is the nationalist people who by and large support us to varying degrees. All our support today lies with our own people, just as in 1916 the Proclamation said that the Irish people were relying for the most part on their own strength.

So, in the light of all the minuses, we do have periods when we have an inability to strike and to keep momentum going. But if you look back, say over a two-year period, you'll see that we do have continuity and we do continue to strike.

Also, it should be stressed that while there is a natural ebb and flow caused by logistical problems etc., it is a mistake to judge the intensity of the struggle using solely the level of operations as a guideline. While operational levels will fluctuate, political work in IRA-based areas, education, recruitment, expanding the support base, all continue on a daily basis.

## SPRINGFIELD AVENUE

**IRIS:** After the massive explosion at Springfield Avenue in west Belfast, in June, in which local homes were devastated by the Brits' detonation of IRA explosives which were being temporarily stored in the area and which the Brits had uncovered, the IRA stated that the explosives had been unprimed and could have safely been removed from the area without detonating them; that is, the Brits detonated the explosives in an attempt to discredit the IRA in nationalist eyes. Immediately afterwards, the Housing Executive chairman, Charles Brett, appeared to participate in this black propaganda campaign by saying that the effect of the bomb damage would be to delay the west Belfast housing programme, that is, again blaming the IRA by implication. What is your attitude to the Housing Executive's apparently growing collaboration with the British military and their objectives, and the similar collaborationist attitude of other semi-governmental and public bodies?

**IRA:** Firstly, I think it's important to clarify the background to the explosion you mention.

We have suspected for several months that the Brits are working at defusing our bombs before they have cleared the area, that they are deliberately ignoring bomb warnings and the locations given for bombs. In other words, they are deliberately jeopardising civilian lives, knowing that injuries or deaths can be blamed on the IRA.

**The explosives in Springfield Avenue were not primed and could not have exploded. The Brits primed them and detonated them as part of a classic counter-insurgency move...**

We don't travel with primed bombs, we don't store primed bombs, they are always primed 'on target'. It's not a big job, only a matter of flicking a switch. Timers, also, would not be attached to explosives until they are planted on the target.

Unprimed explosives are little different from having a can of petrol in your back yard — it's safe till someone puts a match to it. The kind of explosives we use cannot detonate by friction, by being knocked about, by freezing up or being too warm. A detonator on its own will not detonate it. The only thing that can is a primer of higher velocity explosives than those being primed. In short, they cannot explode on their own, they're probably the safest explosives that there are. The last person to be killed by unstable IRA explosives was Volunteer Jack McCabe, as far back as 1971. Any accidents caused by explosives since then have been manual failures by Volunteers.

The explosives in Springfield Avenue

**Our biggest single asset is the nationalist people who by and large support us to varying degrees...**

were not primed and could not have exploded. The Brits primed them and detonated them as part of a classic counter-insurgency move.

As always, we regret the damage to working-class homes, but while the people of the area are understandably annoyed by the devastation to their homes — and while we share their annoyance — we are confident that people reject the Brits' version of events, if only because they know the Brits of old, that they've lied on a hundred occasions about a hundred different things. The same politicians who gasped in horror after the explosion have also lied about sundry other things whereas, for good or ill, the IRA admits what it does.

On the second part of your question, we know that all government and semi-government agencies are being used in line with Kitson's theory that all government structures, at all levels, have to be

used against insurgents (*Editor's note: see, elsewhere, 'The Politics of Repression'*). All these people will be treated like any other enemy of the Irish people.

## CAR BOMBS

**IRIS:** In recent months the IRA has employed car bombs extensively, often with devastating success but also with an apparently high risk to civilians. Does the IRA intend to continue with its use of car bombs, and how would you answer this criticism?

**IRA:** Yes, we intend to continue with the car bomb tactic. Because of the length of warning we give on a car bomb prior to its detonation, if the enemy act on the warning there's no danger to civilian lives. The car bomb is used on property only, and this is accepted even by the British army and RUC. It is not an anti-personnel bomb, that's why we give warnings. It does not serve our cause to inflict civilian casualties, and all our operations (whether against military or commercial targets) are planned and conducted with this in mind.

## 'PSY-OPS'

**IRIS:** The hunger-strike period was generally a time when nationalist commitment to the struggle was heightened and refreshed. But since then there have been concerted enemy efforts to confuse and demoralise the nationalist population, through the use of informers, psychological operations and black propaganda. What impact on the immediate post-hunger-strike increase in support has this had, within the Movement and on external supporters?

**IRA:** I think you have to deal with two separate circumstances. It had little effect internally because people who are actively involved understand the situation and what the enemy is trying to achieve. The use of paid agents by the RUC did initially have some psychological impact on nationalist supporters, but this has been quickly eroded as they have deepened their understanding of the situation, and by virtue also of a number of IRA operations carried out at the time when Hermon (*the RUC chief constable*) was making his infamous 'the IRA are reeling' statement.

## POLITICISATION

**IRIS:** The general tendency within the Republican Movement, especially over the past year, seems to be towards a massive upsurge in internal and external education. To what degree has this affected the average IRA Volunteer in terms of his or her politicisation and understanding of republican goals?

**IRA:** If you're talking about new recruits since the hunger-strike, I think the honest answer to that is that it's too early to say how well the education process has been taken in. It will take several more months to assess.





As for longer-established Volunteers, their politicisation has been going on for over ten years, inside and outside jail. The current education process will only be formalising it for them.

## COLLABORATION

**IRIS:** Garret FitzGerald recently talked about the desirability of some form of joint border security force, and generally in recent years there seems to have been an intensification of border collaboration. To what extent is this hampering the IRA?

**IRA:** First of all, there is not an upsurge in collaboration, there is total integration of controls between the Free State forces and the Brits/RUC, co-ordinated searches, follow-ups, sealing roads, a direct radio link and a direct computer link-up.

But because the operational IRA is self-contained within the six counties, cross-border collaboration doesn't affect us. For example, out of a series of reported arms dump 'finds' in the Free State earlier this year, only two involved quantities of IRA equipment: seven rifles in one find and an ammunition find in Emyvale in Monaghan. The other 'finds' either didn't belong to us, were of obsolete gear, or were fictitious. It's only window-dressing by the Free State to show the Brits that they are keeping up the collaborative process, and to do this they are manufacturing non-existent 'finds'.

But anyway, any increase in garda/

Free State army collaboration has yet to affect an active service unit in Ballymurphy or stop an operation on the Falls Road, or in Derry, Dungannon or anywhere north of the border. The only actual thing that the gardai, with the heavy increase in Task Force numbers, is involved in, is the harassment of republicans throughout the twenty-six counties.

We have no doubt in the future that the garda Task Force will be used against militant trade unionists and other political activists as unemployment deepens in the twenty-six counties.

## CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

**IRIS:** The activities of petty criminals and organised gangsters pose a substantial problem within the nationalist community, particularly within Belfast. In recent months the IRA seems to have taken a strong line, through punishment shootings, the attempted execution of Danny 'Boy' Valliday and the execution of 'gangster' Devlin. Do you intend to take a similar line in future, and does the IRA regard these activities as an irritating but largely insoluble problem?

**IRA:** The type of criminal you refer to is one who organises crime, who is terrorising the local nationalist population who already have far too much to put up with for us to allow this to continue. Where we find that sort of organised criminal we will execute them.

Our efforts to find other means of dealing with this problem, and our pur-

suance of these efforts, are well documented over the past twelve years. We believe that the solution to the petty criminal problem lies with involvement by the community as a whole.

## NORMALISATION

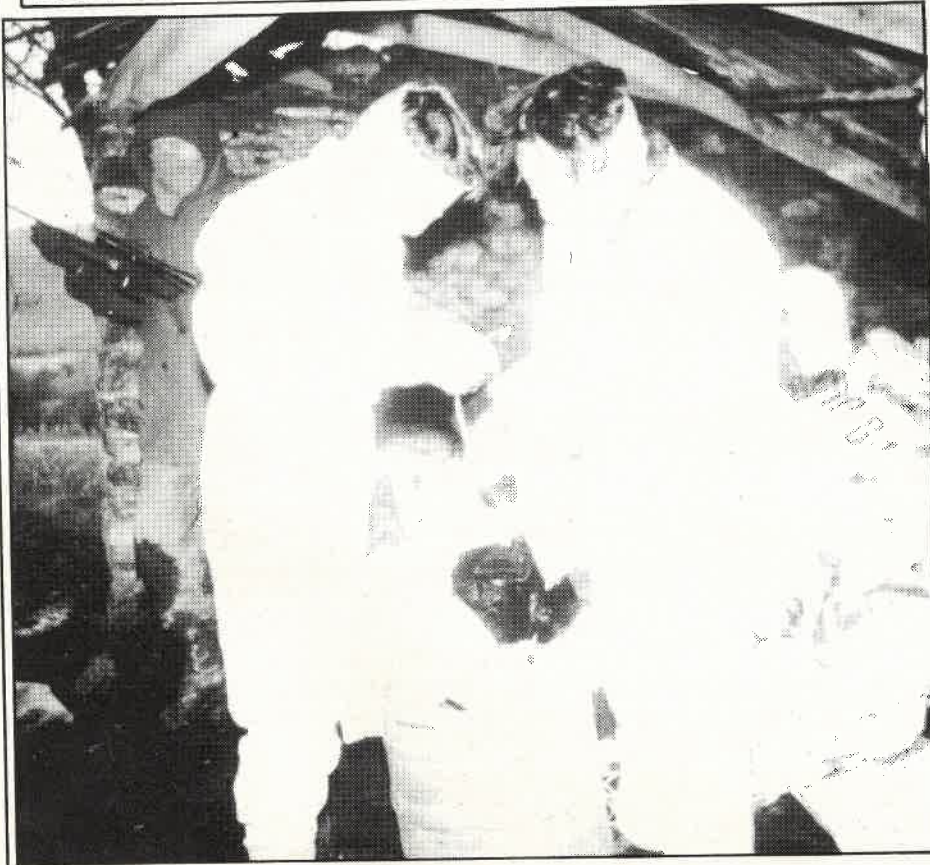
**IRIS:** What is your view of the 'normalisation' process? Did the hunger-strike spell the end of it, or is it still ongoing?

**IRA:** It's ongoing. 'Normalisation' was a major problem in 1977, 1978 and 1979 although the IRA's efforts, operations etc., blocked it to a large extent. The hunger-strike had a big effect in causing people to start looking again at the whole process of British involvement. So, while it is an ongoing process, the IRA too is involved in an ongoing process of defeating it.

## ELECTORAL INVOLVEMENT

**IRIS:** Some supporters still question whether republican involvement in the electoral process will mean a de-escalation of military involvement. There is even perhaps an implication that this electoral strategy may have been forced on the Movement of necessity, because of the IRA's inability to guarantee a high level of military struggle in the future. Could you comment on this?

**IRA:** No, it has nothing to do with the escalation or de-escalation of the armed struggle. Its benefits in using it as another arm in the struggle are: a) the Brits don't



political challenge of the Republican Movement, how do you view the future for the SDLP?

**IRA:** The SDLP is a middle-class 'Castle Catholic' establishment party. In the absence of any electoral involvement by republicans it was able to masquerade as the political voice of the nationalist people, clouding the class divisions which exist within the nationalist camp. Electoral involvement by republicans has shattered that myth, and, although the task will be a necessarily hard one, continued involvement in that process by republicans will place the SDLP in their true light, and they will be seen increasingly as being supportive of the British presence in Ireland.

## BROAD FRONTS

**IRIS:** The H-Block/Armagh campaign marked a departure for republicans from earlier strategies in that a broad front tactic was experimented with. What would be your attitude to future broad fronts?

**IRA:** Obviously the mass mobilisation of a considerable section of nationalist opinion behind the hunger-strikers' demands was a welcome development. We welcome any involvement of people in opposition to any aspect of British and neo-colonial rule. It is difficult to say with certainty how such an involvement could be structured and formalised, and whether given the reality of the effects of partition a mass mobilisation would be feasible at this time.

However, we view with approval the discussions taking place between Sinn Fein and other anti-imperialist groups. It would be wrong for us to pre-empt any conclusions to these discussions.

## THE PLO

**IRIS:** In view of current events in the Middle East, could you reiterate your position on the Palestinian struggle?

**IRA:** We support the PLO's right to their own country. We morally support their position. We see in the Israelis' attempt at genocide a similarity to the Nazis' attempted genocide of the Jews in the '30s and '40s. That is to say, there is a marked similarity between Israel's present stance and Hitler's 'final solution'.

The hypocrisy of the super powers — of the Reagan administration particularly — and of the EEC governments, is evident and we condemn it.

## PRIORITIES

**IRIS:** If you were to specify one particular need which you consider the highest political priority for republicans at this time, what would it be?

**IRA:** To organise support and structure it. And to ensure that opposition to British rule is not restricted to military actions but that people's opposition is channelled into resisting in whatever way they are able. ■

**Republicans must never allow themselves to be isolated, we must never depend on one facet of resistance alone...**

want republicans to use electoral involvement, which proves that as a weapon it is very effective; and b) it's a massive embarrassment to the Tories and the collaborationist political parties (highlighted by the response of all but a few honorable exceptions in Leinster House and Westminster at the time of the deaths of Kieran Doherty TD and Bobby Sands MP, and the way the British changed the law to prevent other sentenced prisoners being elected) when we involve ourselves in the 'democratic process', because it's always shown up to be completely undemocratic and false.

The electoral strategy wasn't forced on us. It was a conscious decision, and to a large extent the views of people throughout the Movement were canvassed and taken into account.

Republicans must never allow themselves to be isolated, we must never depend on one facet of resistance alone. Our resistance must be military, political, cultural, social and economic, at the same time. In that way we can involve all the people in our war against the British and the collaborationist forces. Within that wide spectrum of resistance there is a place for everybody, and every-

body can find his or her place. Everyone is equal in the struggle no matter what job they are doing: selling papers, collecting, picketing, leafletting, carrying out an operation....

But, at the same time, armed struggle is the first facet of our resistance and always will be till the British are removed from Ireland.

## PRIOR'S ASSEMBLY

**IRIS:** It seems probable, despite all the delays, that Prior's assembly elections will take place this autumn. What is your understanding of the assembly's future?

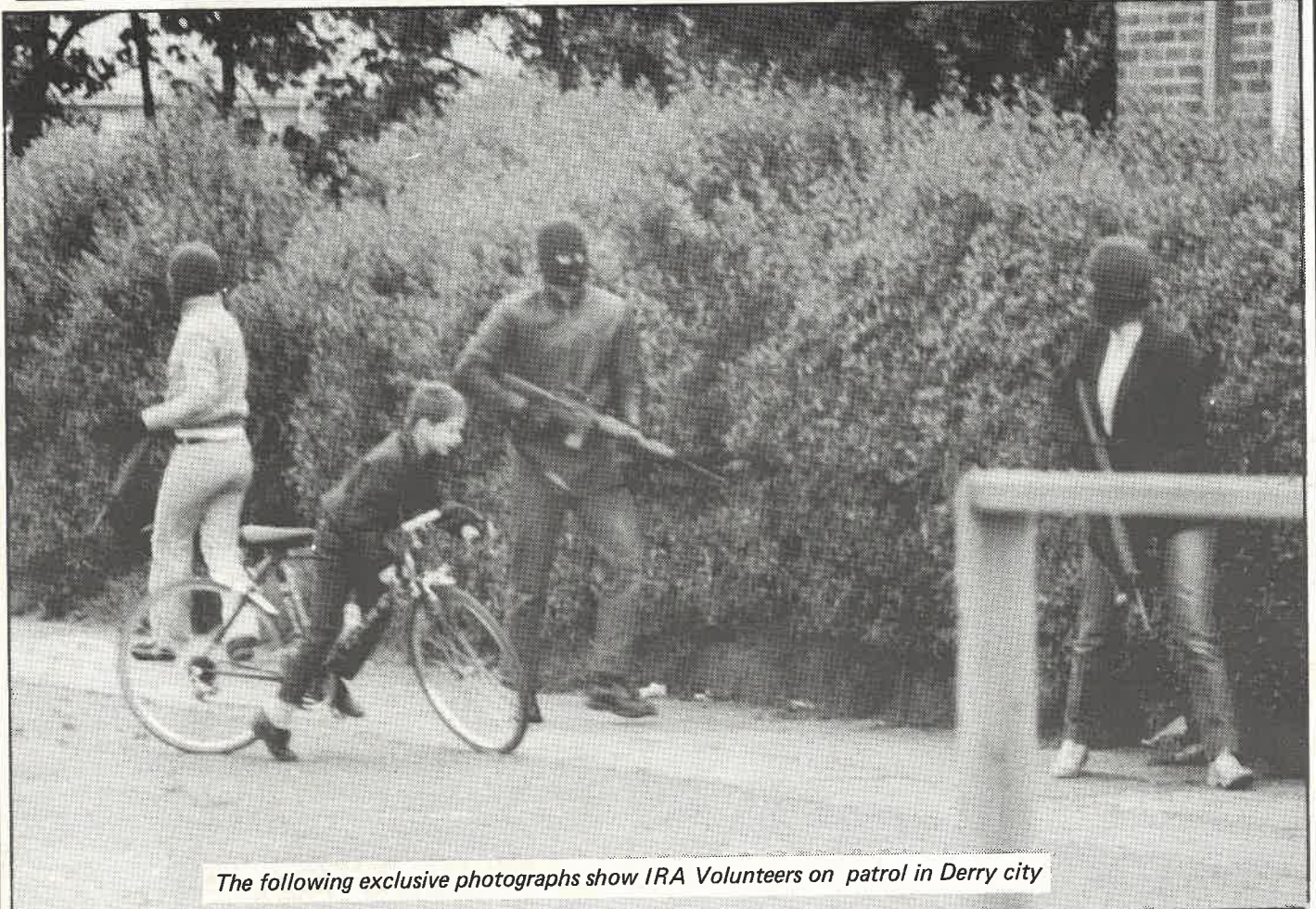
**IRA:** There's so much opposition to it that we don't see it working. We have nevertheless taken a conscious decision to support Sinn Fein's involvement in the election, which is on an abstentionist basis in that they won't take seats if elected.

Whatever political scenario the British impose, the republican response will remain the same.

## THE SDLP

**IRIS:** In the wake of the hunger-strike, and faced with the electoral and general

**There is not an upsurge in collaboration, there is total integration of controls between the Free State forces and the Brits/RUC...**



*The following exclusive photographs show IRA Volunteers on patrol in Derry city*











# WAR NEWS

All operations referred to were claimed  
in supplied statements by the IRA

DESPITE wistful claims by British premier Margaret Thatcher that the hunger-strike was the IRA's 'last card', the ending of that tragic phase of the prison protest has not diminished the IRA's capacity to wage war (or the nationalist people's will to assist them), with the struggle against British occupation continuing — and intensifying — relentlessly on all fronts.

The post-hunger-strike period has been noticeable, particularly in the early months of 1982, for a concerted and conscious attempt to sow the seeds of confusion among the IRA's nationalist supporters, and even attempting to demoralise IRA Volunteers themselves, through a wide range of 'psychological operations' and black propaganda, focussed on the RUC's claim that the IRA was plagued by informers (a handful of whom had been recruited on the promise of guaranteed immunity from jail and huge sums of money). This false propagandist claim culminated in RUC chief constable Jack Hermon's infamous 'the IRA are reeling' speech on March 24th. Infamous, because it left him squirming in agonised embarrass-

ment the very next day when an IRA active service unit positioned overlooking Crocus Street in west Belfast opened up on a Brit patrol with an M60 machine gun and left three soldiers dead!

But it is not only on such 'spectaculars' that the Irish Republican Army has earned its reputation for military expertise and ingenuity. Throughout the period under review, republican Volunteers across the six counties have engaged in hundreds of operations directed against the enemy or against the commercial and business infrastructure of the Northern state — and even a few in Britain itself! Some have been undeniably successful in terms of the cost to enemy lives and property, others inevitably have been less successful and maybe given the enemy no more than a good fright, but throughout all of this the IRA has resoundingly given the lie to Thatcher's baseless triumphalism, emerging even more confident, even more expert, and even *more* determined.

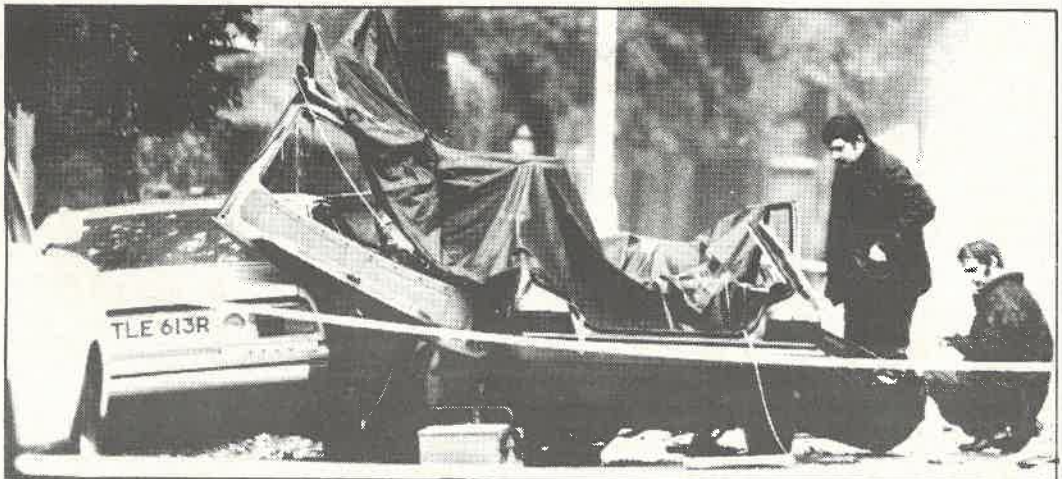
The IRA has proved that there are no 'last cards' in the nationalist people's will to resist.

## IRA OPERATIONS IN ENGLAND

IN the run-up to Christmas 1981, IRA Volunteers, active in difficult circumstances in Britain, continued to carry out spectacular operations, frequently breaching tight security procedures.

### MARINE COMMANDANT CAR-BOMBED

On Saturday 17th October, exactly a week after 22 British soldiers were injured in a brilliantly and coolly executed van-bomb attack close to Chelsea barracks in London (covered in the previous edition's *War News*), the IRA struck again, in south London, this time with a car-bomb which detonated as 53-year-old Lieutenant-



● The booby-trapped car of Lieutenant-General Sir Stuart Pringle is examined by British police officers



● The heart of London — the prestigious Oxford Street — was the target of IRA Volunteers in October 1981. A former British army bomb disposal 'expert' was killed trying to defuse this restaurant bomb

General Sir Stuart Pringle drove off from his home. Pringle, who lost a leg in the explosion, was then the Commandant-General of the Marine Commandos, a regiment with a brutal reputation of violence against the nationalist people.

## OXFORD STREET BOMBS

The following week saw yet more IRA bombs in the heart of imperialist Britain, this time directed at commercial targets in London's prestigious Oxford Street. Despite heavy surveillance of the area by plainclothes police following the earlier attacks, an ASU planted bombs in two department stores and a restaurant on October 26th. Phoned warnings by an IRA Volunteer ensured that civilians were cleared from the area in good time, but a police bomb disposal 'expert' (who had been 23 years in the British army, and had served in the North) was killed as he attempted to defuse the restaurant bomb. The other two bombs were defused.

The hysterical media reaction to these operations proved that they were an extremely effective means of breaking through the British media's 'conspiracy of silence' on the war in the North, and predictably they were enthusiastically welcomed by the jubilant people of the beleaguered nationalist ghettos there.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S HOME BOMBED

The fourth attack in five weeks in the IRA's campaign in England came at 11.20 pm on November 13th, when a bomb completely

devastated the Wimbledon flat of British attorney-general Sir Michael Havers. Unfortunately the flat was unoccupied at the time, because Havers — who would certainly have been killed had he been at home — was attending an international legal conference in Madrid.

To carry out the attacks, the Volunteers had penetrated a round-the-clock police guard on the flat, including a police hut yards away and sophisticated electronic surveillance. Understandably the attack caused consternation in establishment circles, among the prominent people who feared they might be next on the IRA's agenda!

## BARRACKS BOOBY-TRAP

The fifth and last operation of this short but extremely effective IRA campaign in Britain (and which, most satisfying of all, caused no losses among republican Volunteers) took place on November 23rd. IRA Volunteers had planted a replica gun packed with several ounces of explosives outside the gates of the Royal Artillery regiment's headquarters at Woolwich in south-east London. Unfortunately a soldier who saw the replica ignored it, and the bomb was instead detonated by a dog being walked by two soldiers' wives, causing serious injuries to one woman and slight cuts to the other.

The campaign ended as a frantic Metropolitan police force began a search of an estimated 375,000 lock-up garages in the London area, looking for IRA explosives. 375,000 garages later, they had found masses of stolen property, but nothing belonging to the IRA!

# THE WAR IN THE NORTH

## OCTOBER

MEANWHILE in the six counties, IRA operations against economic targets and the British forces (*most of October's operations having been covered in the previous edition's War News*) continued with a car-bomb attack on October 17th 1981 against the exclusive Royal County Down golf club at Newcastle, which caused extensive damage.

## UDR SOLDIER SHOT DEAD

In a particularly well planned operation, the IRA's Belfast Brigade shot dead a UDR soldier in the north of the city on October 21st. At around 8 pm a lone Volunteer calmly walked up to the soldier's Antrim Road home and fired several shots as he answered the door. The UDR soldier was the tenth member of the regiment to be killed during 1981.

October concluded with two attacks in Derry city; on October 26th IRA Volunteers opened fire on an RUC landrover in the Creggan area, setting fire to the vehicle with a petrol bomb and forcing the patrol to abandon it; and on

October 29th two bombs were planted in city centre stores but were eventually defused.

## NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER'S IRA activity opened in Derry city too, where a UDR soldier standing on a ladder, inside the protected city walls, was shot several times and wounded, on November 3rd.

Four days later, in the south Armagh village of Crossmaglen, three Brits were injured, one seriously, by a 200 lb bomb concealed in a tractor on the edge of the village square.

In Belfast that day, two shots were fired at a British army patrol in the Beechmount area but no hits were claimed.

## UDR ATTACKS

Over the next three days, four attacks (and one aborted ambush) were carried out against the locally recruited Ulster Defence Regiment, in counties Armagh and Fermanagh.

On November 8th, Volunteers booby-trapped a UDR soldier's car outside his home at Lisnadill, just outside Armagh city. Unfortunately, although IRA intelligence was aware that only the UDR man him-



● November 12th saw an RUC man seriously injured in this booby-trap attack in Banbridge, County Down

self was insured to drive the vehicle, it was his son (due to take his driving test the next week) who first got into the car, and regrettably he was killed in the explosion.

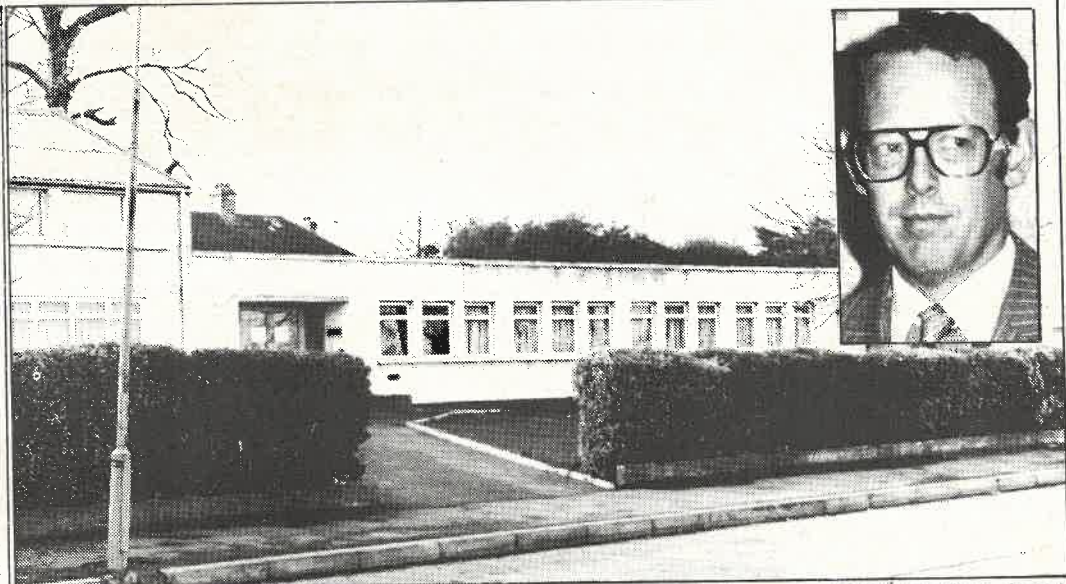
The following day, at Donagh in County Fermanagh, a UDR soldier was caught in a hail of bullets when Volunteers ambushed him as he got into his car. Critically wounded, he died two days later.

Nine hours later and also in Fermanagh, at Fivemiletown a UDR corporal narrowly escaped with his life, and was seriously injured, when he fled across fields to escape IRA Volunteers who had riddled his car with bullets.

The fourth attack came on the evening of November 10th when a former member of the UDR was shot dead as he drove out of the Loughgall industrial estate. Volunteers lobbed a hand grenade at the car's windscreen and opened fire with automatic weapons, causing the car to crash and fatally wounding the man, who was a member of the Orange and Black institutions and had only recently left the regiment.

The aborted ambush, in the early evening of November 10th, was near Strabane, close to the Tyrone/Donegal border and involved a dozen Volunteers and a 1,000 lb bomb located a short distance from a joint UDR/RUC checkpoint. Shots were fired by the Volunteers to lure the enemy, but unfortunately they were forced to withdraw. It took the Brits two days to defuse the bomb.

In Banbridge, County Down, on November 12th, an RUC man lost both legs in a car booby-trap explosion, while in Derry city on



● South Belfast's Finaghy community centre where the sectarian hate-monger Robert Bradford (inset) was executed by the IRA

the 12th and 13th there were two bomb attacks and one shooting attack, all directed at enemy personnel, which resulted in one British soldier being seriously injured and five less serious Brit casualties.

### BRADFORD EXECUTED

The most prestigious, and assuredly one of the most brilliantly carried-out operations, was the execution of south Belfast loyalist MP, Robert Bradford, who the IRA later said was "one of the key people responsible for winding up the loyalist paramilitary sectarian machine in the North," leading to attacks, some fatal, on Catholic civilians.

On Saturday 14th November, an IRA active service unit took over the Finaghy community centre in south Belfast, where Bradford was holding a monthly advice session, arrested the occupants (including the MP's armed bodyguard) and shot Bradford dead at close range, before all returning safely to base. The execution of this bigot, detested by nationalists, provoked a deep and protracted internal crisis within the divided loyalist camp and destabilised the political situation (more than usual) for several weeks.

### RUC/UDR DEATHS

IRA operations continued unabated, with four enemy deaths and one serious injury in the space of

three days. On November 17th, an RUC man was shot in the head and seriously injured in an IRA attack in Newry town centre. That day too, an RUC man shot two months earlier in Ballygawley, County Tyrone, died in hospital.

At Maguiresbridge, County Fermanagh, also on the 17th, a UDR soldier died instantly when he was shot four times by Volunteers, and in Derry city on the afternoon of November 18th a recently-resigned UDR soldier was ambushed and killed at New Buildings, three miles from the city centre.

On November 19th, the IRA successfully struck again, this time at Strabane in County Tyrone, when they ambushed and shot dead

a UDR soldier they had lured to a house which earlier an IRA active service unit had commandeered. The man was a corporal in the regiment.

## BRIT BARRACKS BLITZED

An active service unit of fifteen IRA Volunteers mounted a large-scale gun attack on Middletown barracks in south Armagh on November 24th. The IRA blitzed the barracks with M60 machine-gun fire, unleashing over 200 shots. Enemy fire was returned but all Volunteers returned safely to base after the attack.

## FERMANAGH AMBUSH

An elaborate car-bomb ambush was mounted against a permanent British army checkpoint on the Fermanagh/Cavan border on November 26th, injuring four soldiers, one seriously. After placing a commandeered car across the road north of the checkpoint, to keep civilians clear of danger, other Volunteers drove a commandeered car packed with explosives towards the checkpoint from a southerly direction. A short distance from the checkpoint, these Volunteers jumped clear, leaving the car-bomb to plough — driverless — into the Brit post. The massive explosion was heard ten miles away.

## RUC MAN KILLED

One RUC fatality and three injured were the net result of the IRA's last operation in November, on the 29th. A 10 lb bomb placed behind corrugated iron fencing at Unity Flats in north Belfast was detonated by command wire as a regular RUC change-over of patrols took place adjacent to the bomb. Following the explosion, nationalist youths rioted spontaneously against the RUC.

## DECEMBER

IN terms of the scale of military operations, December — with bad snow conditions making it difficult for urban Volunteers to operate 'run-backs' — was a relatively disappointing month for IRA units, with no enemy fatalities (though as usual the IRA observed an unannounced cessation of attacks over the Christmas period). Establishment politicians and journalists, however, who over-optimistically pointed to the absence of fatalities as evidence of the IRA's 'decline' were to be rudely jolted back to reality as 1982 progressed.

On December 1st, Volunteers in Armagh city mounted a gun and hand grenade attack on two



● The bomb on this petrol tanker disrupted the Belfast-Dublin rail-link for two days from January 17th



● New Year's Day 1982 — another year of struggle lies ahead. The IRA continues its relentless campaign against the crown forces — a UDR soldier was seriously injured in this attack

RUC men opening a security gate in Dobbins Street, hitting one of them nine times in the leg, arm, side and pelvis.

The IRA's Derry Brigade planted two bombs in commercial premises on December 15th, and the following day in Belfast the Henry Taggart Brit/RUC military base was attacked with a van-bomb, but on both occasions only slight damage was caused.

## WAREHOUSE ATTACKED

In Newry, County Down, on the 17th, Volunteers planted a 300 lb van-bomb outside of the Henry Thompson bonded warehouse on the Greenbank industrial estate. The warehouse contained over £1 million worth of wine and spirits, but unfortunately this was saved when the bomb failed to detonate, and it was eventually defused. (The disappointment of the IRA's South Down command at this failure was alleviated on June 1st when, in a repeat attack on this same warehouse, extensive damage was caused.)

Volunteers in Derry city launched separate bomb and gun attacks

on British army and RUC personnel on Sunday 20th December, resulting in injury to one British army sapper.

And two days later, in Belleek, County Fermanagh, Volunteers launched a mortar blitz on the local RUC barracks, although regrettably it was only partly successful, with some of the mortars failing to detonate.

1981 came to a close with a shooting attack on the RUC in Dungiven, north Derry, on December 29th, when no hits were claimed; and a short gun battle at Monogue in south Armagh on December 31st, in which one Brit was slightly wounded.

## JANUARY

AN IRA booby-trap bomb ambush on the car of a UDR soldier in Newcastle, County Down, on January 1st, resulted in serious injury for him and the death of a male companion. The 1 lb bomb detonated just before midnight opposite the Avoca Hotel where

the car had been parked.

## UDR SOLDIER KILLED

In a precisely planned ambush, Belfast Brigade Volunteers drove onto a garage forecourt on the Antrim Road in north Belfast, early on January 8th, and shot a UDR soldier six times, killing him outright. The ASU then made good their escape in the prevailing snowstorm, which made pursuit impossible.

## RAIL-LINK CLOSED

Massive disruption was caused to the Belfast-Dublin railway track on January 17th by a commandeered tanker, feared to contain a full load of combustible fuel, which the IRA had booby-trapped and placed under the Ayalogue bridge near Meigh in south Armagh, connected to two booby-trap bombs. Although the bombs were eventually defused on the 19th, the rail-link (which passes over the Ayalogue bridge) was successfully severed for two days.

Elsewhere in County Armagh, this time in Armagh city, Vol-

unteers planted three bombs at a hardware store and timber yard on January 23rd, which caused slight damage.

## FEBRUARY

IF the previous two months had seen a slight downturn in operations, February gave a taste of things to come.

### TRIPLE BOMB BLITZ

In the largest single bombing operation for six months, the IRA carried out a co-ordinated blitz, on Monday 8th February, on two hotels, in Warrenpoint, County Down, and Campsie, County Derry, and on a golf club in Strabane, County Tyrone. All these attacks caused extensive damage to premises. A fourth car-bomb, consisting of 120 lbs of explosives, was defused in Lurgan, County Armagh.

### INCENDIARY ATTACKS

Following up these attacks, on the very next day, the first of two incendiary bombs planted in the Manor House restaurant in Bellaghy, south Derry, detonated, causing scorch and smoke damage, although the second bomb was eventually defused.

Also defused that day, although at considerable expense of manpower, were incendiary bombs planted on board four holiday cabin cruisers at Enniskillen, County Fermanagh. This was only one of a series of attacks aimed to deter potential holiday-makers from visiting the North, by emphasising its abnormality and the existing state of war.

To round off the day, IRA Volunteers in Derry city fired a machine gun burst of shots at an RUC man driving across Craigavon bridge, though the shots unfortunately failed to hit him.

### RAIL ATTACKS

In three days the IRA carried out three attacks on the railways in the six counties, demonstrating a tactical flexibility in their choice of target, and one that was to ensure massive disruption and frustration in the coming months.

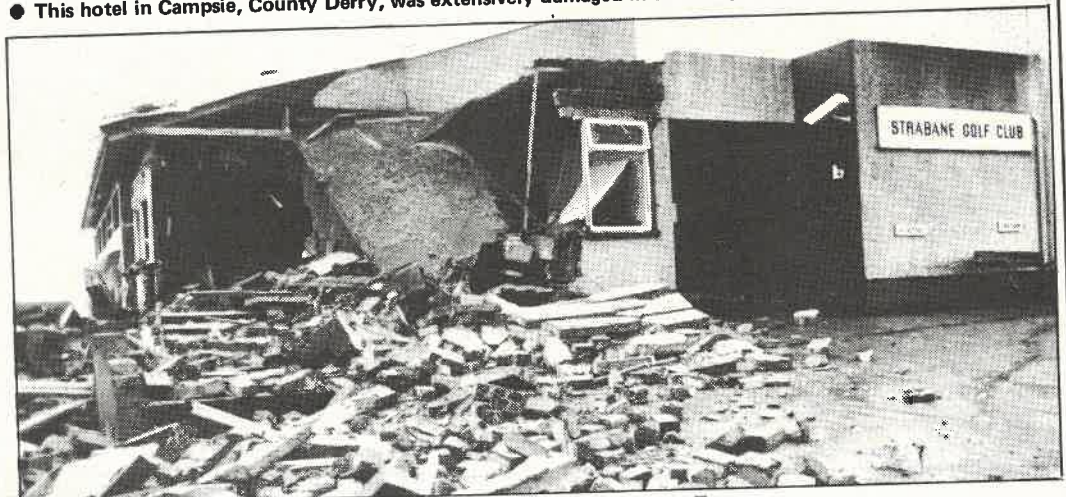
On February 12th two bombs exploded near the Kilnasaggart and Grant's bridges in south Armagh, severing the Belfast-Dublin rail-link; and on the 14th the Belfast-Larne line was disrupted for several hours before a bomb planted at Newtownabbey was defused.

Later in the evening, on the 14th, a large section of Portadown railway station was demolished by an IRA bomb which showered rubble onto the track.

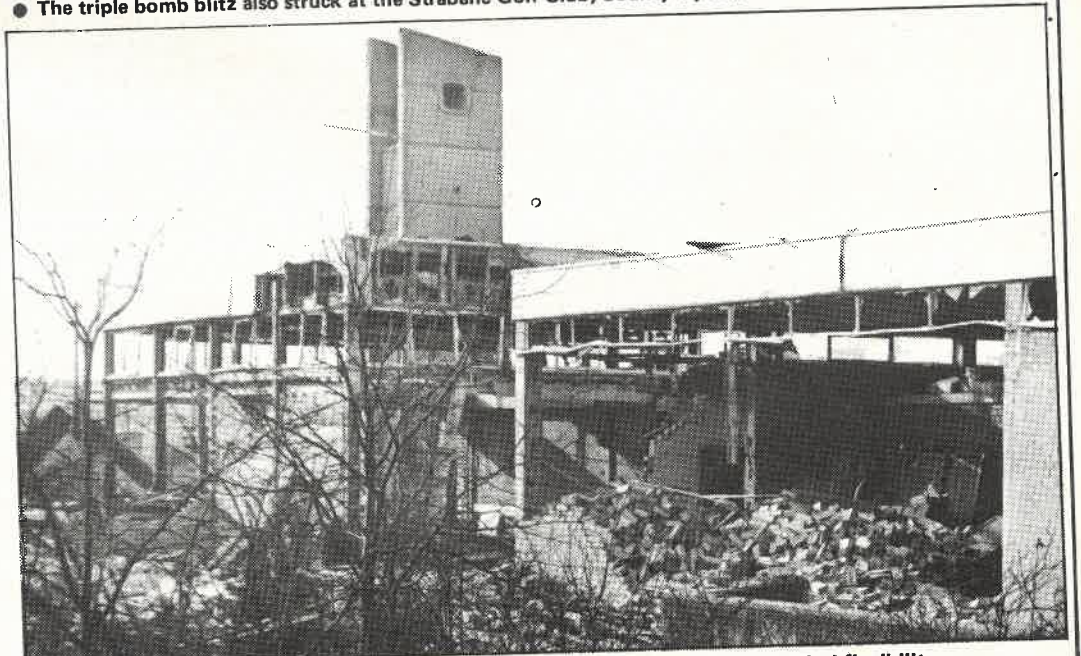
Demonstrating their ability to operate right across the North, IRA Volunteers ambushed a two-



● This hotel in Campsie, County Derry, was extensively damaged in February's co-ordinated bomb blitz



● The triple bomb blitz also struck at the Strabane Golf Club, County Tyrone



● A large part of Portadown's railway station was destroyed in a show of IRA tactical flexibility



● (Above) An IRA technician primes the bombs on the British ship *St. Bedan* to explode well after the Volunteers and crew are safely away from the vessel and (below) the *St. Bedan* comes to rest

vehicle UDR patrol near Dunloy village in north Antrim, on February 15th. In the ensuing burst of IRA gunfire, three enemy soldiers were wounded, though not seriously.

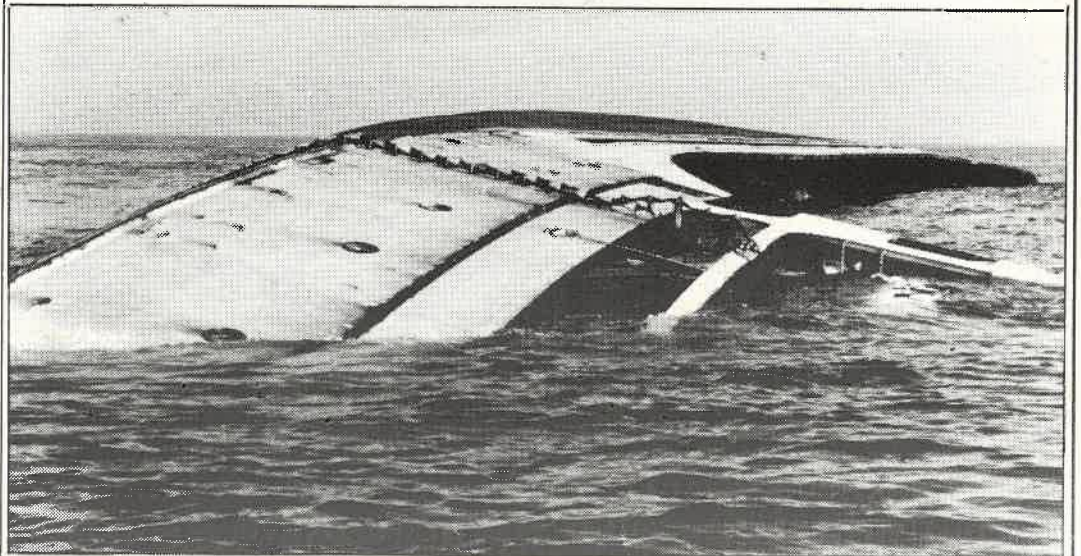
### ST. BEDAN SUNK

Another daring 'high profile' IRA operation — and one with a touch of humour — was the sinking of the British-owned *St. Bedan* coal boat in Lough Foyle on February 22nd, a carbon copy of the sinking of the *Nellie 'M'* coal boat by the IRA in February 1981.

Up to a dozen Volunteers were involved in taking over the pilot station at Carrickrory pier in County Donegal, before boarding the 1,847 ton ship with its 1,600 ton cargo. While holding the ten-man crew hostage, one of the Volunteers took spectacular photographs including one of the crew laughing and shouting 'Up the Provos'.

Before the ship and its cargo — estimated to be worth a total of £2 million — were sunk, the crew were set adrift unharmed in a lifeboat, to tell their tale of the 'Provo pirates' they had met on the high seas of Lough Foyle.

More serious IRA operations that week included a booby-trap attack in Armagh city on February 19th on a man who had recently (unknown to the IRA) left the UDR, critically wounding him. On February 22nd, IRA Volunteers in



south Armagh, and at Mullan in County Fermanagh, opened fire on British army patrols but claimed no hits.

### SOUTH ARMAGH GUN BATTLE

A 20-minute gun battle took place late on Sunday night, February 28th, between about six IRA Volunteers operating on high ground and a Brit foot patrol from the nearby military base at Middletown in south Armagh. Intensive rifle fire was exchanged but no hits were claimed by the IRA.

## MARCH

OPENING the month, on March 2nd to be precise, the top legal figure in the North, Lord Chief Justice Lowry, was almost on the receiving end of some *revolutionary justice* when IRA snipers opened fire on him, and missed only by inches.

The attack took place at Queen's University in south Belfast as Lowry arrived at

the staff common room to address academics at an unpublicised luncheon. Despite an intensive follow-up operation the Volunteers escaped. Ironically, the week before, the RUC had warned public figures to take precautions against IRA attack, yet Lowry's arrival at Queen's in a bullet-proof car and with armed bodyguards had made no difference.

Later that evening, Volunteers in Lurgan, County Armagh, planted

a 100 lb bomb outside the local golf clubhouse, which detonated causing thousands of pounds' damage.

In Derry city, on March 5th, Volunteers planted incendiary bombs in insurance premises in the city centre, which caused severe damage.

Elsewhere in County Derry later that night, at Knockloughrim near Maghera, two UDR men travelling in a car driven by the wife of one of them were wounded, one of them in the head and chest, when Volunteers riddled their car with bullets. The woman was unharmed. In Claudy, north Derry, at 10 pm, an RUC patrol which challenged a Volunteer who was actually booby-trapping an RUC man's car, came under attack from a back-up ASU and one RUC man was wounded.

## RAIL ATTACKS

Beginning on March 8th and carrying on into the middle of that week, IRA Volunteers carried out a campaign of widespread disruption of Northern and Belfast-Dublin rail-links with a series of bombs and bomb hoaxes at Lisburn, Greenisland, Newry, Meigh in south Armagh, and between Belfast and Bangor.

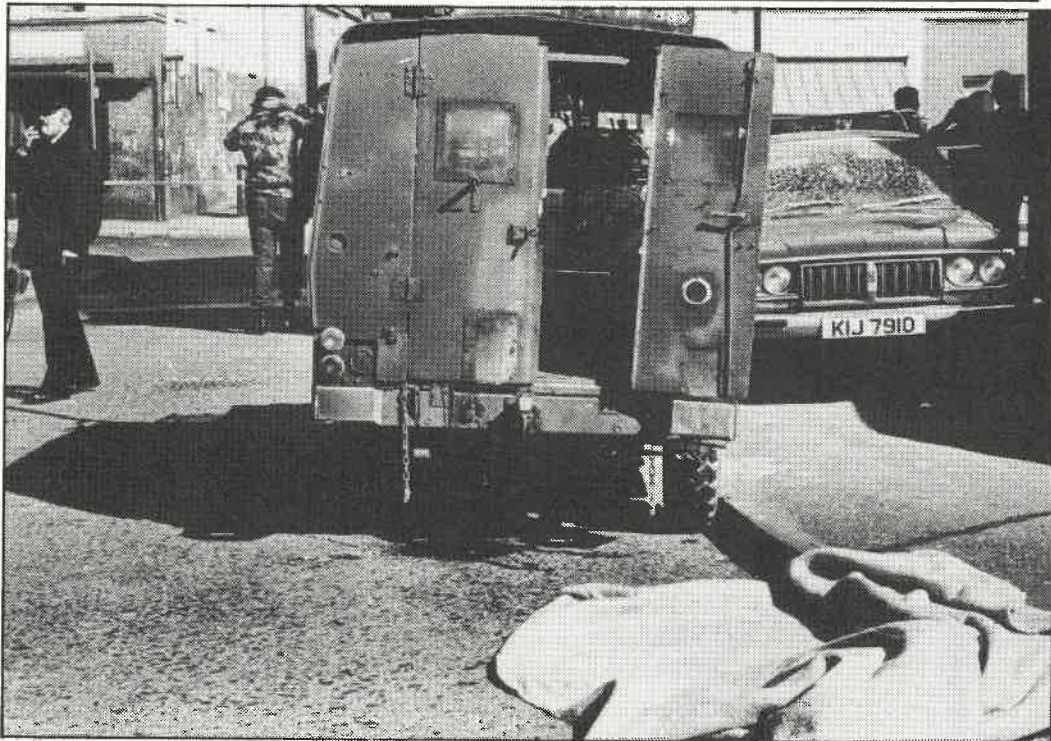
## SHOOTING ATTACKS

The IRA executed a former member of the UDR in Newry, County Down, on March 11th. In spite of several public warnings by the IRA to personnel resigning from the enemy forces he had not made his resignation known through an intermediary. Two motorcycle-mounted Volunteers approached him and opened fire, killing him instantly. Subsequently the IRA reiterated its warning that those leaving the RUC and UDR should make their position known to the IRA through an intermediary such as a priest.

And close to Crossmaglen that evening, in the townland of Drumuckavall, a British soldier was slightly wounded when Volunteers fired two shots. Three days later, the British discovered a 200 lb landmine at Drumuckavall, eventually managing to defuse it.

## BOMB BLITZ

The IRA carried out, on March 15th, an extremely successful bomb blitz at five locations: Banbridge and Newry, in County Down; Newtown Stewart, County Tyrone; Armagh city; and Belfast city centre; employing four 200 lb car-bombs and a fifth bomb which was carried into the Newry premises. (A sixth car-bomb, at Lisburn in County Antrim, was eventually defused.) The attacks caused massive damage and demonstrated the IRA's ability to launch co-ordinated blitzes across the occupied territory. Regrettably in the Banbridge attack, an 11-year-old boy died as a result of an



● The Crocus Street M60 ambush destroyed the RUC's claim of the previous day that the IRA were 'reeling'

uncharacteristically inadequate IRA bomb warning, a tragedy for which the IRA apologised.

Four days later, two car-bombs were planted by the IRA, this time in Ballymena in north Antrim and in Strabane in west Tyrone. Like an earlier car-bomb in Strabane three days before, these were both unfortunately defused.

A new RUC barracks at Durham Street on the perimeter of west Belfast was the scene of a bomb blast on March 20th. The explosion was caused by a pipe bomb planted by the Belfast Brigade IRA some time previously. And in Newry, County Down, two days later, another golf club was completely devastated by an IRA bomb.

## MORE RAIL ATTACKS

The IRA continued their two-week-old bomb and hoax bomb campaign against six-county rail links, with a bomb hoax on the Belfast-Dublin line at Meigh in south Armagh, on March 17th; another hoax at Mount Vernon in north Belfast on March 21st; and a third one close to Dunloy in north Antrim on March 22nd. All of these caused prolonged rail disruption, but most successful of all was an incendiary bomb attack on railway carriages at Coleraine in County Derry on March 20th. Three carriages were burnt out and a further two were scorched.

## RUC MAN WOUNDED

IRA Volunteers disguised as keep-fit joggers shot and seriously wounded an RUC man as he left Queen's University physical education department, Belfast, on March 18th. As the RUC man stepped out of his car to open the car

park gates, two Volunteers ran up and fired at least six shots, hitting him in the abdomen and thigh. The Volunteers returned safely to base.

Despite the IRA having repeatedly demonstrated its military capabilities, RUC chief constable Jack Hermon chose this moment, on March 24th, to assert that 'the IRA are reeling', from the demoralising effects of a number of paid informers the RUC had managed to recruit. (In fact, as the IRA explained, this was merely a temporary phenomenon, and even so only marginally affected republican active service units.) The events which concluded March, ironically, were to dramatically expose the hollowness of Hermon's propaganda!

## M60 BLITZ

The day following Hermon's boast, on Thursday 25th March, three members of the Royal Green Jackets were machine-gunned dead in a spectacular M60 machine-gun and automatic rifle blitz in Crocus Street, yards from Springfield RUC barracks, in west Belfast. It was the largest number of Brit fatalities in a single operation since a 1,000 lb IRA landmine at Altnaveigh in south Armagh claimed five lives on May 19th 1981. British morale — illustrated by the hysterical outrage in the British media — was shattered by the attack, while nationalists not surprisingly were overjoyed. One local wit was soon to enquire of the Brits what chance they had of getting 8,000 miles to the Falklands when they couldn't even manage to get up Crocus Street!

## RUC INSPECTOR KILLED

Derry Brigade IRA, as usual,

played their full part too. Three days later, on March 28th, two IRA Volunteers on a motorcycle shot dead a senior long-serving RUC inspector, close to the city's main RUC interrogation centre. He was the most senior RUC officer ever shot by the IRA in Derry, and had been stationed in the city since 1959.

## RUC SERGEANT KILLED

Back in Belfast, on March 30th, IRA Volunteers calmly ambushed and shot a newly-promoted RUC sergeant, whose regular daily routine they had observed for some time. The attack took place in Springfield Crescent cul-de-sac and the Volunteers fired four shots. The RUC man, critically wounded, was rushed to hospital for emergency surgery, but he died almost three weeks later.

Rounding off a highly successful month, south Armagh Volunteers at Edenappa near Jonesborough planted a 100 lb landmine, which detonated on March 30th as a British patrol passed by, causing at least one injury.

## APRIL

APRIL too was to be an extremely bad month for the enemy, and the continuing high level of operations was one of the factors which turned the tide absolutely in favour of republicans in the now-failed RUC attempt to cause confusion and demoralisation among nationalist supporters of the IRA.

In a dramatic and brilliantly carried-out operation, three Derry Brigade Volunteers stepped out in

front of a van carrying two undercover British soldiers, and opened fire with high-velocity automatic rifles, killing both Brits instantly. The attack took place at Creggan Cross in the city, on April 1st, and followed extensive surveillance of the Brits, and a 15-hour preparation during which Volunteers had commandeered a house from which the ambush was launched.

## RAIL-LINKS HIT (AGAIN)

The main Belfast-Dublin rail-link was once more disrupted, this time for several days, when south Armagh Volunteers planted a 600 lb van-bomb under the Red Bridge near Newry, County Down. The bomb caused extensive damage to the bridge when it detonated on April 1st. The very next day, in the townland of Clonalig, near Crossmaglen, an IRA booby-trap bomb concealed among rocks by the Derry-Dublin roadside was detonated by a British army patrol, wounding one soldier.

## RUC/UDR ATTACKS

There were two separate attacks by IRA Volunteers on April 6th. In Coalisland, County Tyrone, an RUC man was ambushed close to the local RUC barracks. A fusillade of shots was fired but the RUC man was, unluckily, only hit in the shoulder. Later that day, Volunteers in Derry fired twenty shots at a UDR soldier driving in the Waterside area of the city, but although the vehicle was hit repeatedly the soldier escaped with nothing more than a bad attack of nerves.

## FORKHILL BOMB

A booby-trap bomb planted by Volunteers in the Forkhill area of south Armagh exploded on April 7th, but without causing enemy casualties.

## BELFAST CAR-BOMB

Brits and RUC men had a lucky escape, and ran for their lives (literally), when only the detonator exploded on a 4 lb car-bomb positioned by IRA Volunteers in Beechmount Avenue in west Belfast, and detonated by remote control. In an extraordinary piece of 'psy-ops' propaganda, the Brits were subsequently to allege that the bomb consisted of 300 lbs of explosives and was packed with iron bars, and that it was designed to cause maximum devastation to local homes as well as Brit personnel. This incredible nonsense was to become a macabre 'reality' on June 28th when Brits cynically detonated unprimed explosives a few streets away in Springfield Avenue, devastating nationalist homes.

## BELFAST INCENDIARIES

The IRA, to the public alarm



● Armagh city's bus fleet was virtually destroyed in April's incendiary attack



● Two plainclothes undercover British soldiers were killed on April 1st by the IRA's Derry Brigade in this well-planned ambush

of its enemies, demonstrated its growing technological know-how by carrying out a co-ordinated incendiary bomb blitz in Belfast on April 9th, using a new design of bomb which incorporated a silicon chip and a small circuitry board. Three stores suffered damage in the attacks, and although some of the bombs this time failed to explode, practice makes perfect.

## DERRY AMBUSH

A two-landrover Brit patrol returning to Strand Road Brit/RUC military base on Thursday night, April 15th, came under high velocity fire from Volunteers. Two Brits were wounded in the attack, one in the leg and one in the arm, and were rushed to hospital.

## MORTAR BOMB BLITZ

A devastating IRA mortar blitz in south Armagh on April 17th completely flattened the joint Brit/RUC base in the village of Forkhill.

After evacuating civilians from the vicinity, IRA Volunteers set the mortars to fire. Five landed directly on target inside the barracks' perimeter fence, a sixth landed on the old disused former barracks, and four mortars failed to detonate and were defused.

## SIX-COUNTY BLITZ

The IRA once again sent RUC chief constable Jack Hermon 'reeling' with its most comprehensive bomb blitz for several weeks on April 20th. The bombs, consisting mostly of car-bombs, caused extensive damage amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds, to bank, business and commercial premises in Belfast; Derry; Armagh; Bessbrook, County Armagh; Strabane, County Tyrone; Ballymena, County Antrim; and Magherafelt, County Derry.

Tragedy struck in the last of the bombs, at Magherafelt, when

two civilians were killed, but subsequent IRA investigations conclusively proved that responsibility for this lay with the RUC who had failed to clear the area properly despite adequate warning. This incompetence, and sometimes conscious delay, were to be a feature of RUC and British army responses to bomb warnings on several subsequent occasions.

## UDR SOLDIER SHOT DEAD

Derry Brigade IRA Volunteers shot dead a UDR lieutenant on the outskirts of the city, on Tuesday 27th April. The 36-year-old soldier was ambushed at New Buildings in the loyalist Waterside district. Eleven shots were fired at him and he died instantly. Heaping absurdity upon loyalist bigotry, former unionist mayor of Derry, Marlene Jefferson, subsequently spluttered that IRA Volunteers were 'bounty hunters' getting "between £200 and £500 for each kill"!

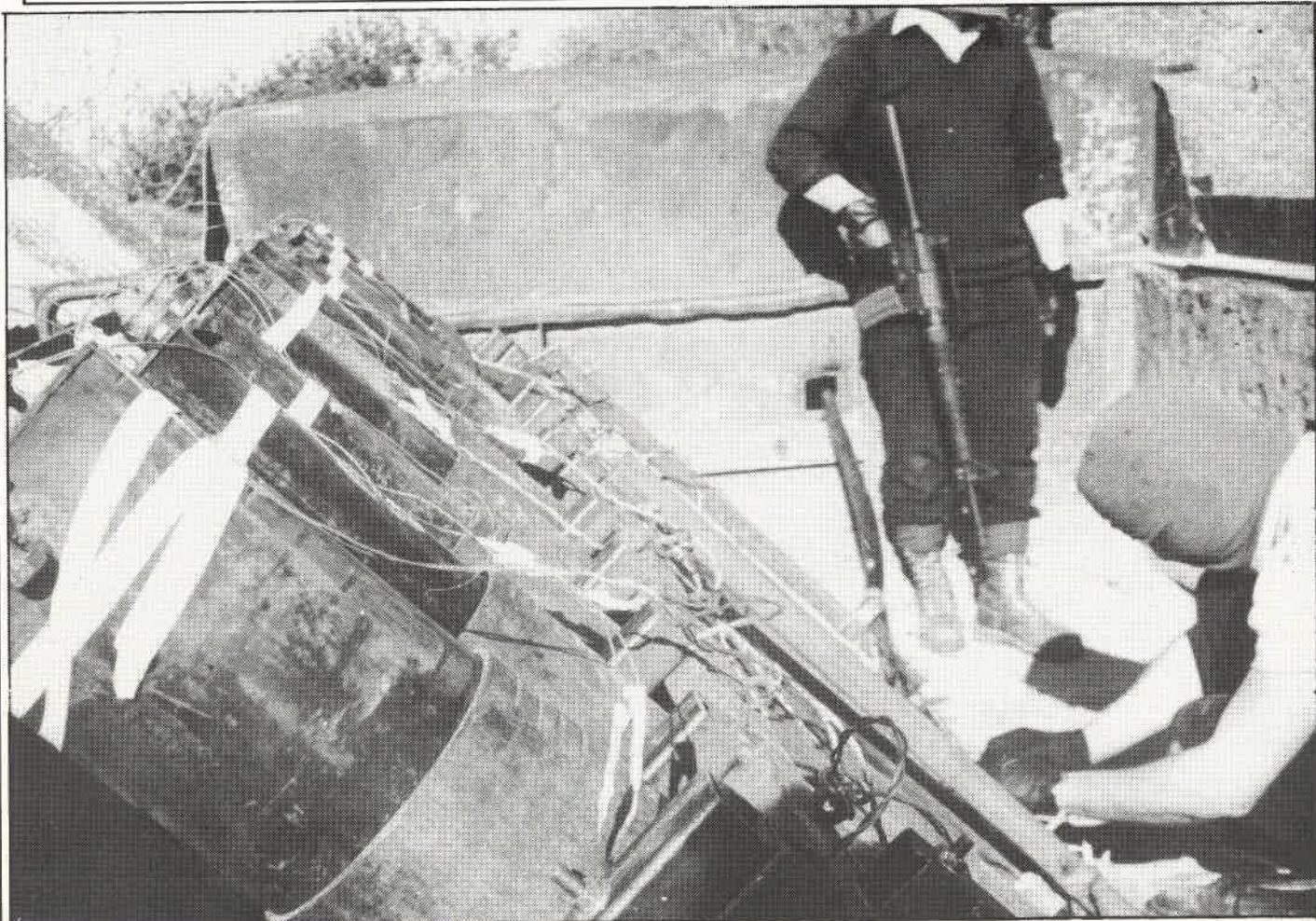
## BUS FLEET DESTROYED

In a spectacular operation on April 28th, IRA Volunteers in Armagh city succeeded in bombing virtually the entire fleet of buses stationed there. Four Volunteers were involved in planting incendiary bombs aboard 24 buses at the city depot, which were all destroyed — at a replacement cost of £1 million — leaving only four buses left in the city.

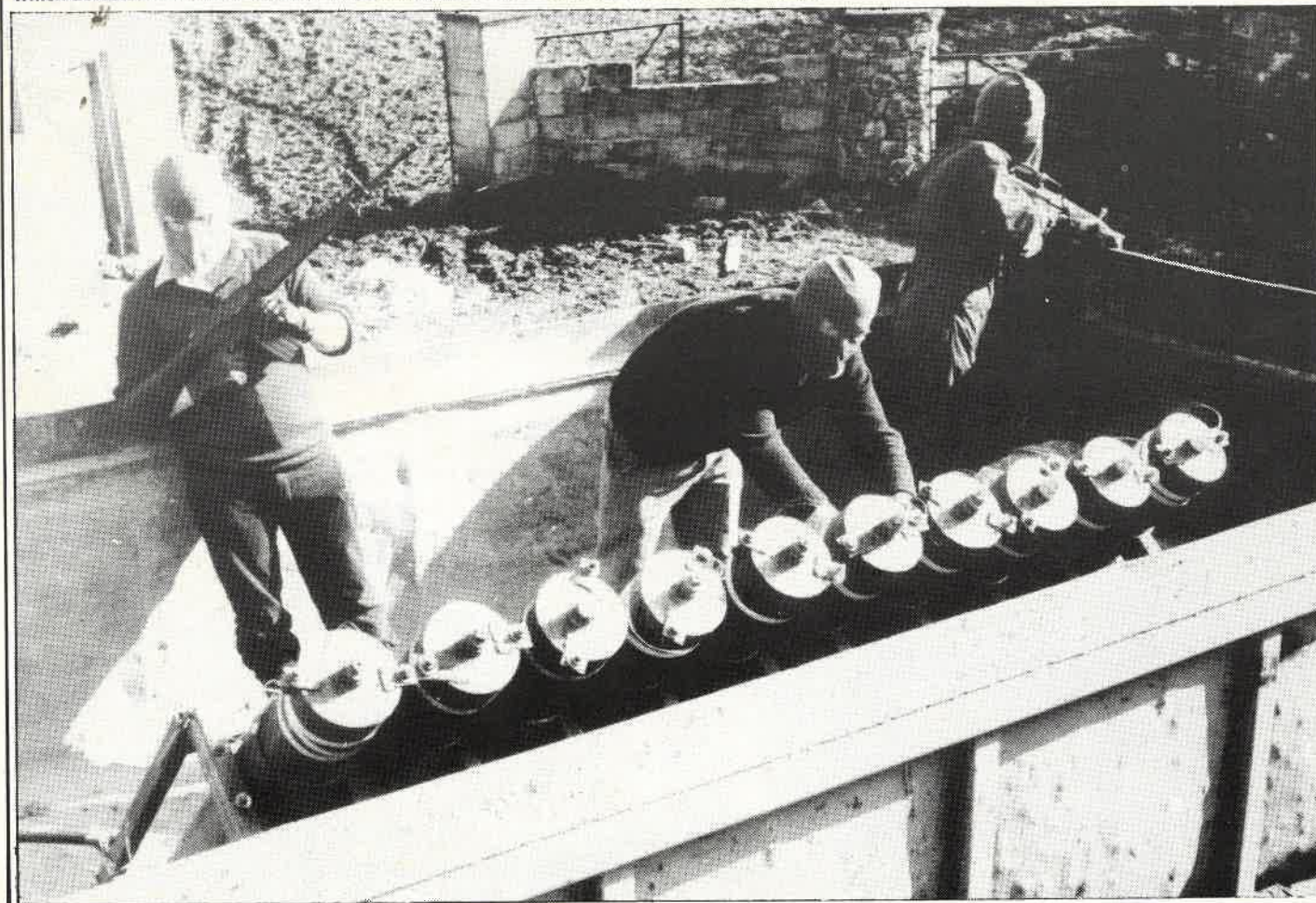
## BRITISH SOLDIER KILLED

Rounding off another successful month, IRA Volunteers in County Fermanagh killed one British soldier and seriously injured another, in a landmine blast near





● (Above and below) IRA Volunteers in south Armagh prepare the mortars for the attack on Forkhill British army/RUC barracks on April 17th, which devastated the base. As an extra precaution the IRA evacuated civilians living near the target area, just before the attack was launched



Belleek, on April 30th. The Brit patrol was passing through the townland of Meenatull at around 5.20 pm when the Volunteers detonated the mine which had been concealed in a culvert.

## MAY

**IN the second successful ambush in Derry city in the space of a week, IRA Volunteers shot dead one member of an RUC foot patrol, and seriously wounded another, in the heart of the city centre.**

The attack took place on May 4th, and involved a commandeered bakery van which pulled up alongside the RUC patrol in the Diamond area, before Volunteers jumped out and opened fire, fatally for the RUC, with automatic weapons.

### KILKEEL BOOBY-TRAP

Again demonstrating its geographical omnipresence in the occupied North, the IRA in the south Down coastal village of Kilkeel caused extensive cuts to an RUC man's legs and arms, and wrecked his car and garage, when Volunteers booby-trapped his garage door in the Grahamville housing estate, on May 6th.

### PETROL TANKER BOMB

Also on May 6th, Volunteers in west Tyrone caused massive disruption, damage and panic when they placed a booby-trapped petrol tanker (which had been commandeered shortly before, and which contained 5,000 gallons of inflammable fuel) at the permanent British army checkpoint at the Camel's Hump in Strabane. Forty minutes later, the bomb exploded, shooting flames 50 feet into the air and causing serious damage to British army huts close by.

In Belfast that day, an IRA active service unit operating in the Beechmount area fired a single aimed shot at a known intelligence officer on patrol with uniformed Brits. He was not, however, believed to have been hit.

### UDR AMBUSH IN SOUTH DERRY

In a daring operation, reminiscent of their former O/C Francis Hughes, south Derry IRA Volunteers engaged a mobile UDR patrol in a hail of gunfire along a country road, seriously wounding one and less seriously wounding two others. Up to 30 rounds in all were fired from SKS, Armalite and Garand weapons in the ambush on the Toomebridge-Magherafelt road on May 7th. The Volunteers all returned safely to base.

**RUC INSPECTOR SHOT**  
Belfast Brigade IRA Volunteers



● Kilnasaggart bridge in south Armagh, after a typical IRA attack

demonstrated their ability to strike anywhere and at any time, when they shot and wounded an RUC inspector, in front of about 500 students, as he prepared to take a final law paper in his Queen's University exams. The attack took place on Wednesday, May 26th.

### RAIL-LINK DISRUPTED

South Armagh IRA Volunteers again demonstrated the Brits' inability to protect the fragile rail-link between Belfast and Dublin when they bombed the line once more at the (much-bombed) Kilnasaggart bridge, about half a mile from the border, on May 27th.

(And a few miles away, in Newry, County Down, four days later, Volunteers again bombed the Henry Thompson bonded warehouse (destroying it) which they had unsuccessfully attacked on December 17th.)

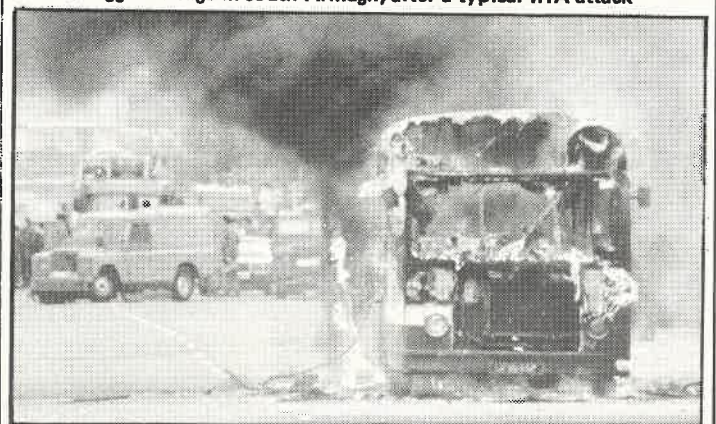
## JUNE

**WIDESPREAD disruption in Belfast city centre was caused on June 3rd by a massive series of hoax bombs, and a few real ones, planted by IRA Volunteers.**

The co-ordinated attack began with two incendiary bombs planted in city centre shops, only one of which was defused, and was cleverly followed by warnings of up to 30 bombs across the city, which eventually turned out to be deliberate hoaxes.

In the south Armagh village of Newtownhamilton the following day, Volunteers left a 400 lb carbomb at the Altnamackin Creamery, which wrecked the premises when it detonated.

After a lull in the level of discernible IRA military activity during May and the first week



● As part of a series of attacks on June 10th the bomb on this Belfast bus successfully disrupted the M1 motorway

in June, the IRA bounced back with a major series of successful attacks which were to see out the month (and the period under review).

### CO-ORDINATED ATTACKS

The Belfast Brigade carried out a successful co-ordinated series of bomb attacks in the city on June 10th, causing serious damage to a city centre restaurant and to two buses, successfully tying down enemy personnel for hours. The only slight casualty of the day, regrettably, was the driver of one of the buses, but the IRA pointed out that this was due to the RUC's incompetent failure to locate the bus aboard which an incendiary bomb had been planted, details of which had been supplied by the IRA 40 minutes before the explosion.

### SKILFUL DERRY AMBUSH

In one of the most sophisticated operations of its type for some time, an RUC man was killed, and two others injured, when a booby-trapped television exploded in a garage in the Shantallow area of Derry on June 11th. The RUC had been called to the garage

by Brits, who had been conducting a search of sheds and garages in the area that morning, and had spotted what they thought was a horde of stolen electrical goods!

### UDR SOLDIER SHOT DEAD

Tyrone Brigade IRA Volunteers ambushed and killed a 39-year-old UDR soldier in the centre of Strabane on June 15th. As the soldier walked towards his car, an IRA active service unit drove up alongside and fired four shots, killing the soldier instantly.

### BELFAST BARRACKS MORTARED

Total panic was caused to the occupants of the joint Brit/RUC barracks in the Lenadoon area of west Belfast on June 18th, when up to two dozen IRA Volunteers took part in a precisely planned and executed mortar-bomb attack, which resulted in most of the ten primed mortars landing inside the barracks' perimeter and inflicting extensive damage. Each mortar weighed 100 lbs and contained 50 lbs of explosives. As the attack began, around 11.40 pm, terrified Brits dashed out of Woodbourne barracks, some dressed

only in their underwear, in an incredible 'spaghetti Western' scene.

## RUC INSPECTOR KILLED

South Down IRA Volunteers killed an RUC 'veteran' in Newry on June 18th. The 60-year-old man — a Catholic — joined the RUC in 1941, serving in south Armagh; was wounded during the border campaign of 1956-62; was permanently injured and invalided out of the RUC after a bomb attack in Jonesborough in 1973; and continued to work as a 'civil servant' in Newry RUC barracks until his death. IRA Volunteers ambushed him as he was being driven home and fired several shots, killing this former RUC inspector instantly.

## UDR SOLDIER BLOWN UP

The third major IRA operation of the week took place in Armagh city on June 19th, when a captain in the UDR lost both legs in a booby-trap explosion as he started to drive his parked car away. The attack was claimed by the IRA's North Armagh Brigade.

## LIMAVADY UDR ATTACK

North Derry Volunteers narrowly failed to inflict fatalities or serious injuries on enemy soldiers on June 24th, when they detonated a landmine on the Drumurn Road, close to Limavady, as a two-vehicle UDR patrol drove past.

## BELFAST CAR-BOMB

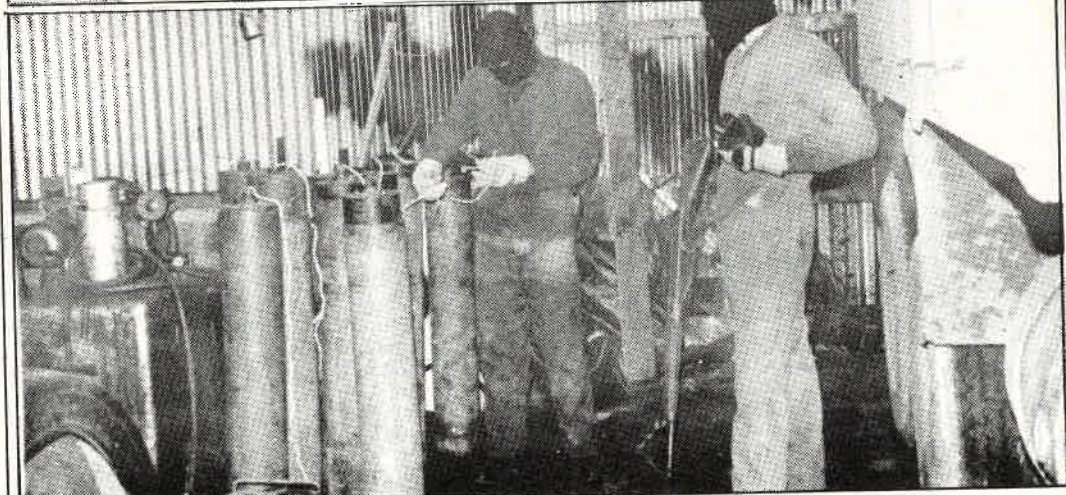
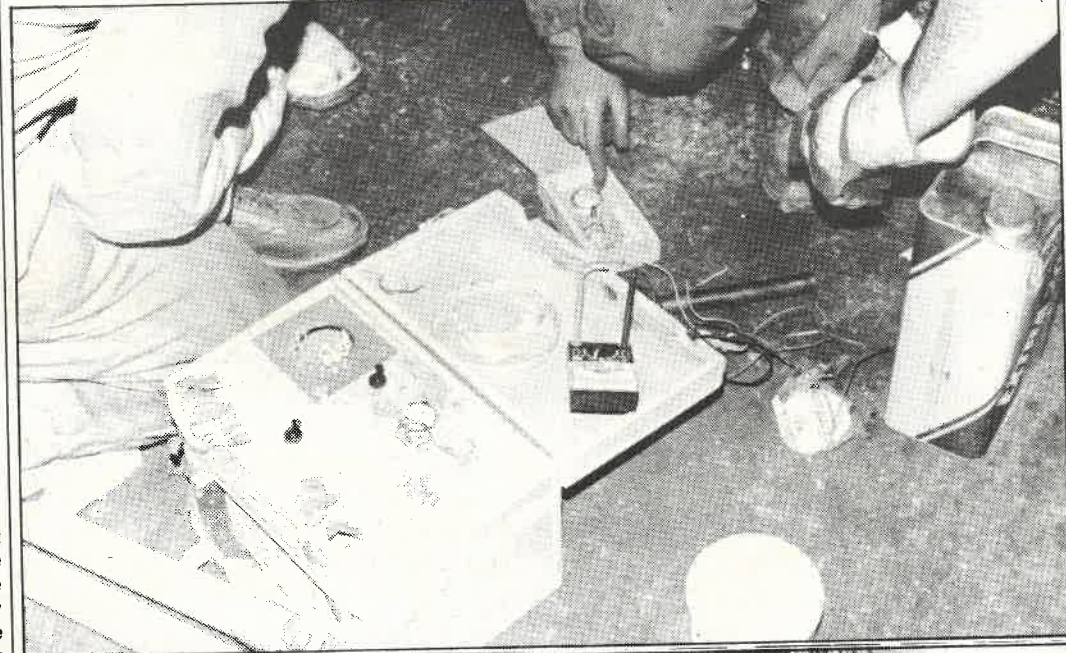
A massive car-bomb in the centre of Belfast caused massive damage to commercial premises on June 25th, setting a large paint warehouse and adjoining boutique on fire, and causing blast damage over a wide area. Despite entirely adequate warnings given by the Volunteers to three sources, a number of relatively minor injuries (and one serious injury) were caused to civilians in the area, which the IRA regretted but which it said the RUC bore full responsibility for. As in earlier incidents of this kind, there was evidence in this case that the RUC had deliberately delayed in acting on the IRA's warnings.

## 'UNCLAIMED' BOMB

A protracted saga was enacted in Crossmaglen, south Armagh, for well over a week, when Brits and RUC men refused to act on a warning given by the local IRA unit about a booby-trap bomb in the area. The IRA had planted the bomb, attached to an Argentinian flag as a lure for the Brits, close to the village post office, but they revealed its location when a British patrol which removed the flag failed to detonate the bomb. Nevertheless, despite the danger to civilians it presented, the Brits refused for a week to acknowledge the bomb's existence,



● (Above and below) IRA engineers prepare the mortar bombs prior to the attack on west Belfast's Woodbourne barracks on June 18th



● An armed Volunteer stands guard, maintaining radio contact with IRA back-up units

until public pressure generated by the IRA forced them finally to act.

Bringing the month to a close, Volunteers in the north Antrim village of Portglenone destroyed

five buses in an attack on the depot on June 25th; an Armagh city ASU engaged an RUC patrol in the nationalist Shambles area on June 28th, but claimed no hits; and on June 29th Volunteers in Derry city breached the high

security inside the city walls, and planted a bomb close to a British army observation post. When the bomb exploded, IRA Volunteers fired on the Brits manning the post, but no hits were claimed. ■

# CENTRAL AMERICA

SINCE the victory of the revolutionary Sandinista forces in Nicaragua in 1979, international attention has increasingly focussed on that part of the world. This article briefly examines the regional situation since then and the impact which the defeat of Somoza had on the revolutionary process throughout Central America.

## No road back

### NICARAGUA

#### Defending the revolution

IT WAS three years ago that the people of Nicaragua drove out the dictator Somoza and his hated National Guard, at a cost of 40,000 dead, 100,000 injured and 200,000 families left homeless. Homes, factories, hospitals, schools, roads, croplands and whole cities were destroyed.

Now, with astounding resilience, the people of Nicaragua are rebuilding their country. Every weekend thousands of volunteers gather in the many open fields of the capital city, Managua. There they practice with old World War 1 rifles or wooden replicas, they learn to run with a rifle, to hug the ground and to shoot straight. This is the Sandinista Popular Militia which will fight alongside the regular army if an invasion occurs. Already there are regular incursions by remnants of the National Guard who took refuge, after Somoza's downfall, in neighbouring Honduras.

The threat to Nicaragua is so real, stemming primarily from neighbouring US-backed dictatorships, that as Mexico's president Jose Lopez Portillo pointed out recently: "Amid falsehood and sophistry we have reached the extreme in which the campaign against Nicaragua is being carried out in the name of democracy."

Free Nicaragua, however, is the only democratic regime the country has ever known, and its people are prepared to defend it, if needs be, in arms and in blood.



### EL SALVADOR

#### Undiminished conflict

The victory in Nicaragua was a great boost to the liberation movement in nearby El Salvador, which joined together in the Farabundo Marti Forces of National Liberation (FMLN). The Sandinistas in Nicaragua had taken two years to incorporate people into its ranks and prepare for a general insurrection. In El Salvador though, the FMLN had less than a year to complete that process.

Until 1980, guerrilla units had existed

alongside the massive 'popular organisations' engaged in legal public protests at the cost of many lives. By 1980, all restraints on government repression had been lifted and public protest became a suicidal act. The process of building a people's army then began in earnest.

In January 1981 an offensive was launched, and though it was not victorious it was not the great setback portrayed by media observers of the conflict. The FMLN was able to mount major military actions in two-thirds of the country and stage assaults on the barracks of most towns and villages. They forced the Salvadorean army to retreat from large areas and concentrate in the cities.

As El Salvador is the most densely populated country in Central America there are no deserted mountains or jungle areas commonly associated with guerrilla

warfare. The FMLN thrives because of the active support of the bulk of the people, or as one FMLN leader said, because "the mountains are the people".

Since January 1981 the popular guerrilla movement has built up the liberated zones, carried out major sabotage operations (in October 1981 blowing up the main bridge in the country) and preparing its forces in San Salvador for the final assault on the dictatorship. And while international attention in recent months has focussed almost exclusively elsewhere, in Poland, on the Falklands/Malvinas and in the Lebanon, the war in El Salvador has continued undiminished in scale.

## GUATEMALA

### The next revolution

The next 'El Salvador' will undoubtedly be in Guatemala. According to the *Washington Post* newspaper this is "a small, blood-stained country run by a right-wing military dictatorship regarded now as the most repressive in Latin America." Effectively some fifty people are assassinated there each day.

But of course where there is repression there is resistance. In the late '60s a guerrilla movement there was brutally crushed, but that of today is based on powerful popular support (especially among the Indian population) and will be crushed only with great difficulty. Perhaps the largest fighting organisation is the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) whose guerrilla fronts cover about half the provinces. There is also the Revolutionary Organisation of People in Arms (ORPA) and the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) who both operate closely with the EGP and are moving towards a unified command.

There is now a general consensus on the main strategic and tactical points — the examples of unity set by the FSLN (Sandinistas) in Nicaragua and the FMLN in El Salvador have shown the importance of this. The movement has learned from mistakes in the past as well as from the experiences of neighbouring revolutions. Having abandoned the purely military *foco* strategy (the belief that a group of armed militants, acting independently, can attract popular support for an insurrection simply through their own actions) which had resulted in isolation for revolutionary forces, one of the Guatemalan leaders has said: "The coming together of the armed struggle with other forms of mass struggle, implies that more and more the struggles of the popular organisations assume paramilitary forms and underground methods, while the armed struggle assumes a more massive struggle."



● Government troops look on at the corpses of their mutilated victims in El Salvador's Chalatenango province



● Guerrillas in training



● A Salvadoran peasant family

## HONDURAS

### Regional gendarme

Honduras is in the middle of this explosive revolutionary volcano, and not surprisingly (since Costa Rica and Panama are dangerously 'nationalistic' too) it is being groomed to fulfil a similar role in Central America to that played by Israel in the Middle East — a regional *gendarme*.

Since April 1980 it has received 3.5 million US dollars in military aid, with more money flowing in all the time to help fight 'subversion'.

Who is this enemy though? One prominent right-wing leader in El Salvador told a journalist: "They are all communists, even the children. They are all sick with communism." How did they get sick? "They were indoctrinated by the priests," he responded. In other words, the people are the enemy and genocide is the only solution.

This has led to massacres of the refugees who pour in from El Salvador, and the abysmal living conditions of the

people of Honduras themselves (matched only by Duvalier's Haiti). An invasion of Nicaragua is being seriously considered by the military chiefs in Honduras to take attention away from its internal problems.

The tide has changed internationally though, with recognition by Mexico and France of the belligerent status of the FMLN in El Salvador, and widespread international support for independent Nicaragua. The 'United Fruit' company, which organised a counter-revolution in Guatemala in the 1950s, still owns vast banana plantations in Honduras. But the days of the 'banana republics' in Central America are over. A new era of socialist republics has begun and there is no road back. ■

#### Suggested reading:-

*Under the Eagle — US intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean*; Jenny Pearce, Latin American Bureau, London 1981.

*Triumph of the People — The Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua*; George Black, Zed Press, London 1981.

*El Salvador Fights — Military dictatorship and people's war*; Robert Armstrong, Zed Press, London 1981.

# PALESTINE



## An unfolding tragedy

*WITH the current Israeli occupation of Lebanon, which has resulted in the deaths, injuring and homelessness of scores of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians, the Zionists have attempted to bring about a 'final solution' to the Palestinian conflict. This article examines the creation of the state of Israel and the historical context in which this conflict has taken place.*

*"THERE was no such thing as the Palestinian people," said the former prime minister of Israel, Golda Meir, "they did not exist."*

Behind that statement lay years of a deliberate policy of genocide against an entire people, comparable with the white Americans' barbaric treatment of the Indian nations, Britain's rule in Ireland, and of course, somewhat ironically, with the Nazis' treatment of the Jews.

Throughout the past 50 years, Israel's Zionist leaders have tried to convince settlers that they are coming to an 'empty' land. To realise this claim, one million Palestinians have been driven ruthlessly from their lands and villages.

Palestinian towns and villages have been dynamited. Everything written in the Arab language has been changed into Hebrew. Maps have been redrawn and history books have been rewritten. All in an attempt to prove that Palestine does not exist, that Palestinians are themselves a 'fiction'.

The Zionists have also tried to convince the world over the years, with the help of the British and later of the USA, that the Palestinian refugees suffering untold hardships in the transit camps of Lebanon, Jordan and Syria are merely 'Arab refugees', victims of a long-forgotten conflict. But, for the Zionist state of Israel and their imperialist backers, the Palestinian 'problem', in spite of all these endeavours, has refused to go away.

The Palestinian people have organised

and forged themselves into a formidable fighting force under the umbrella leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) which has remained a constant thorn in the side of the Israelis.

### ZIONIST STATE

It was on May 15th 1948 that the foundation stone of the new Zionist state of Israel was laid, in the midst of the reign of terror the Zionists termed their 'war of independence'. Although this war was used as a pretext to expel the bulk of Arabs from the whole of Palestine, plans for this had actually been laid as far back as 1917 (the first Zionist settlement in Palestine was in 1882).

For over 40 years before 1948, Britain had exercised an imperialist mandate in Palestine using the same methods

to control that area as they had used, and still use, in Ireland.

In 1917 the British issued the 'Balfour Declaration', declaring their strong support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Israel. The British governor of Jerusalem at that time predicted that massive Jewish emigration to Palestine would create "a little Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism." The analogy of course was with the plantations of Ulster, 300 years earlier, that had created a 'new' homeland for Scots Protestants and had guaranteed Britain the control of Ireland for centuries.

And so by encouraging the Zionists (who were not a national liberation movement but imperialist collaborators, dedicated to creating the equivalent of a colonial-settler state), the British were using the 'Irish blueprint' to ensure that their imperialist interests remained intact in the Middle East, by creating a friendly Zionist state in Palestine.

## PARTITION

When the Palestinians fought back against this occupation, the British used the United Nations to pass a resolution, in 1947, partitioning Palestine into two separate Jewish and Palestinian Arab states. The Palestinians, who formed a sizeable majority, of course objected even more strongly, but — as in Ireland in 1922 — their objections were in vain.

The first concentrated Palestinian struggle had started in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration, and between 1917 and 1936 mass passive resistance was directed against British colonialists and the steady flow of Zionist immigrants. This resistance took the form of petitions, demonstrations, diplomatic protests and the occasional uprising in various districts.

But in 1933, the Palestinian independence party was formed, an important watershed in Palestinian politics. From the beginning, the independence party showed the people that the Zionists were not the only enemy, that British colonialism had been active in the region since the 17th century building a base to protect its interests and using the Zionists as an internal policeman. This politicisation led to the 1936-39 Palestinian rebellion. 15,000 Palestinian militants, backed up by 1,500 full-time fighters, took on 20,000 British troops and the Zionist paramilitary organisations. Over the three-year period 5,000 Palestinians were killed and 14,000 wounded. At the peak of the war over 6,000 Palestinians were in jail.

Out of this, in 1939, the various heads of state from neighbouring Arab countries met with the British in London and began, not for the first or last time, to sell out the Palestinian people. This collection of sultans, sheikhs and princes sent a letter to the Palestinian leadership declaring that 'our friend' Britain had promised to view the Palestinian



● Fighters of the 1936-39 Palestinian rebellion — the first freedom fighters of Palestine



● Palestinian guerrillas in 1982, just south of Beirut — the struggle continues

demands with sympathy and that they had been assured of Britain's 'friendship'. Faced with what amounted to an ultimatum from the Arab states, the Palestinians were forced to accept Britain's 'white paper' which promised to 'limit' further Jewish immigration!

## NAZI HOLOCAUST

The Second World War, however, ensured an increase in the rate of immigration. Thousands upon thousands of European Jews fled the Nazi holocaust, and with this influx the Zionists began to confidently restructure their economic and social plans and to develop an autonomous military apparatus. Even during the 1936-39 Arab rebellion the Zionists had operated three military groups: the Haganah and the Irgun and Stern gangs. Their attitude in 1939 towards the Palestinians was summed

up in one typical statement: "The only solution is Palestine, at least western Palestine, without Arabs... And there is no way other than to transfer Arabs from here to neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe should be left."

And so by 1948, and regardless of the UN 1947 partition plan, the Zionists had laid their plans. With the withdrawal of British troops after the partition, the Zionists launched their attack. Their goal was clear, depopulation and the seizure of as much Palestinian land as possible.

Too late now, seven Arab armies entered Palestine to liberate it from Zionism and to prevent the establishment of a strong, permanent Israeli state. However, their boast that the Zionists would be mopped up in a fortnight turned all too sour. The 1948-



● JUNE 1982 — an Israeli armoured column pauses on the coastal road to Beirut in a campaign aimed at providing a 'final solution' to the Palestinian problem

1949 Israeli 'war of independence' resulted in a crushing defeat of the Arab armies and brought about the now familiar pattern of terrorisation of the Palestinian people.

The Zionists massacred the populations of whole villages and drove over 700,000 people out of the major cities of Haifa, Jaffa, Acre, Tiberius and Safed. The Palestinians who remained were concentrated in Galilee, the Triangle and Nagab. On December 12th 1948, military rule was imposed on these areas, which deprived the Palestinians of their civil and political rights and, even more importantly, of their land. An indication of the extent of this repression can be gauged from the fact that, until 1966, a military permit was required if a Palestinian wanted to travel from his home to visit his birthplace, or even to go to his place of work.

After 1949, the neighbouring Arab states of Jordan, Syria, and the Lebanon, including Gaza which Egypt had annexed at the end of the 1948-49 war, found themselves with a massive Palestinian refugee problem. Politically, these Arab states could not assimilate the Palestinians as it would have been looked upon as a formal recognition of the Israeli state. The United Nations were forced to take on the responsibility through its United Nations Relief Works Agency. UNRWA established 53 residence camps in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Gaza, housing 750,000 Palestinians. Jordan meanwhile had annexed the West Bank and part of Jerusalem, resulting in a further 450,000 Palestinians becoming Jordanians.

**REFUGEE CAMPS**

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s

the refugee camps became the 'political universities' of the Palestinians. Young Palestinians quickly began to develop a highly political consciousness which hardened into a broad ideology of revolutionary national liberation and self-determination. Foremost in influencing this radicalism was the Algerian war of liberation (1956-61), and the Palestinians quickly recognised that the type of guerrilla warfare used against the French could equally effectively be used against the Zionists.

By 1959 a new organisation along these lines was formed, Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filasteni — the Palestine national liberation movement — also known as Fatah, one of whose founder members was Yassir Arafat. By 1961, Fatah had become a cohesive political and paramilitary organisation, though small in numbers; but with the resulting Algerian victory in 1962 recruits flooded into Fatah, convinced that guerrilla warfare was the way forward. Other like-minded organisations, these too influenced by the Algerian experience, began to emerge in the Palestinian camps.

**PLO**

The most populous and militarily powerful Arab state, Egypt, under its charismatic leader Nasser, saw itself as leader of the Arab world. The growing influence of Fatah worried Egypt, and Nasser therefore called a summit of Arab leaders in 1964 and founded a rival group, the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Nasser ensured that the PLO was controlled by the Arab nations themselves and by 'old guard' Palestinian nationalists, and that it totally rejected guerrilla warfare as a means of struggle.

Syria, though, refused to recognise the PLO and instead invited Fatah and the other military groups to operate from within her territory. Soon Fatah and the others established themselves along the Syrian-Israeli border and in Jordan, conducting raids into occupied Palestine.

Between 1964 and 1967 two other groups emerged, George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Nayet Hawatmeh's Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP). These threatened Fatah's domination by campaigning vigorously amongst Palestinians for a policy of a 'militant socialist society' and armed resistance. After the overwhelming Arab defeat in the 1967 'six-day' Arab-Israeli war, the PFLP were able to point to the total failure of Fatah's armed struggle-only policy.

**OCCUPATION**

The outcome of the 1967 war enabled the Israelis to occupy both the West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza strip, pushing over 700,000 refugees into the Jordanian east bank. Fatah and the PFLP immediately began re-organising, and a number of successful actions took





● Rubble litters the streets in the Palestinian sectors of Beirut after an Israeli airforce bombing raid

place in the occupied territories. In early 1969 Fatah managed to gain control of the PLO and Yassir Arafat became chairman of what was now a far more radical organisation, embracing all the main Palestinian groups.

These groups continued to argue about tactics. Fatah still put its faith in direct action into the occupied territories, others led by the PFLP favoured widening the war and attacking Zionist targets world-wide.

In early September 1970, Palestinian militants carried out the hijacking of three international airliners and flew them to Jordan. King Hussein of Jordan, who had been plotting to get rid of them for years, used this as a pretext to attack the Palestinians. The Jordanian army moved against the entire PLO and against the Syrians who had moved in immediately hostilities had started. During the resulting short but bitter war, over 2,000 PLO commandos were killed and 10,000 wounded, with the survivors being expelled into Syria and Lebanon.

### LEBANON/WEST BANK

From that point on, the focus of Palestinian resistance has centred on the Lebanon and in the occupied West Bank. The resistance in the West Bank has continued to the present day, manifesting itself through popular revolt



● YASSIR ARAFAT: 'We have taken our decision to resist, to fight and to win'

and specific guerrilla actions against Israeli forces.

The situation in the Lebanon has been an unfolding tragedy for the Palestinian

people. Pushed out of their homeland and rejected by other Arab states they have had to survive in a permanently hostile political climate. Thousands upon thousands have died in a number of major conflicts in the Lebanon. In 1975 the Lebanese Christian falangists turned on the Palestinians and their Moslem Lebanese supporters, resulting in a bloody civil war. This war lasted a year, and Syria, who had been supporting the PLO, entered the country and in a complete policy about-turn used their guns on the Palestinians in order to, as they put it, 'stabilise the situation'.

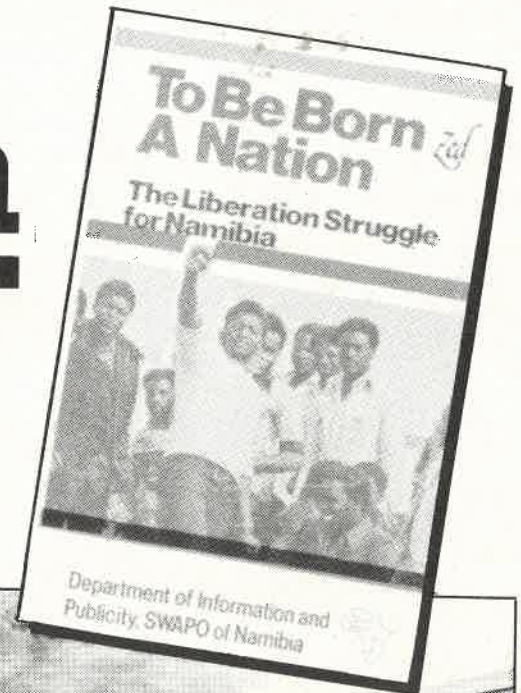
In 1978 Israel invaded the Lebanon in an attempt to wipe out the Palestinians, but met with fierce resistance, mainly from the PLO but also from the Syrians (forced again to turn full circle).

Now in 1982 the world is witnessing possibly the most terrible chapter so far in this terrifying onslaught against the Palestinian people. The Palestinians have very few places left to go, and little left to lose. The Israelis, backed by the US and other imperialist allies, are determined if at all possible to finish off the most radical popular force in the Middle East and so safeguard their interests (and the security of their expansionist Zionist state). But those interests will be maintained only at a cost, the genocide of a proud and courageous Palestinian people. ■

*'TO BE BORN A NATION — The Liberation Struggle for Namibia'*

Published by the Department of Information and Publicity, SWAPO of Namibia, Zed Press, 1981.

# To be born a nation



'TO BE BORN A NATION' presents the Namibian liberation movement's own analysis of its country and the struggle to liberate it. The movement is the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia, recognised by the United Nations as the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people. For twenty years SWAPO has led the Namibian people in an unrelenting struggle to rid the country of South African occupation.

This book's richness of hitherto unpublished information on the territory, including statistics, photos, diagrams and original documents, makes it a publishing event in its own right. But its full political importance lies in its analysis of Namibian society and the history of the liberation struggle from the perspective of the Namibian people themselves.

Section 1 provides a clear analysis of the economics of exploitation upon which colonial rule is founded; a full account of the harsh conditions under which Namibians are compelled to live and work, and the brutal methods of political repression through which the South African apartheid regime tries to keep control; and an indictment of the economic and political role of the transitional corporations and the West, who provide essential backing for the South African occupation.

Section 2 presents a comprehensive account of the history and traditions of the Namibian liberation struggle, from the early resistance against German military forces in the 1890s and 1904-07, through the formative years of building the liberation movement in the 1950s and '60s to the mass mobilisation and the growing power of SWAPO in the 1970s.

This book is being published in the hope that it will provide supporters of Namibia's liberation struggle throughout



◆ South African police attack a SWAPO rally in Windhoek, Namibia

the world with a clear picture of the situation which exists in Namibia today. It will also provide useful lessons and inspiration to all those engaged in similar struggles for liberation. For all those who wish to understand the dynamics of a racist and exploitative society and its interconnection with Western interests.

*"We have produced this book to provide the widest possible documentation on Namibia, and the role of SWAPO in the liberation struggle against the South African occupation regime. Moreover, at this crucial stage in our people's resistance, we felt it imperative that SWAPO itself should provide a comprehensive analysis and authentic version of our history,"* says Peter Katjavivi, former SWAPO director of information and publicity.

We fully recommend reading this book because, as internationalists, republicans have a vital interest in the struggles of other peoples. Whether it is in Central America, Southern Africa, the Middle East, or Ireland, military repression and national oppression has the same basis. Likewise, when a nation is oppressed it fights back in whatever way it can. Repression is co-ordinated internationally, so political resistance should be too.

This book should also encourage Irish republicans to produce a similar comprehensive and readable guide to our country's history, our continuous struggle and our plans for the future. This would be of great value for our own people as well as for countless sympathisers abroad for whom Bobby Sands brought home the nature of our struggle. ■

# AN PHOBLACHT Republican News

*An Phoblacht/Republican News* is the official weekly newspaper of the Republican Movement. It is an invaluable regular source for detailed information on current political topics in Ireland, for republican analyses, and for coverage of the war in the North. It is also the best available source for accurate accounts of daily acts of repression, sectarian attacks and nationalist resistance.

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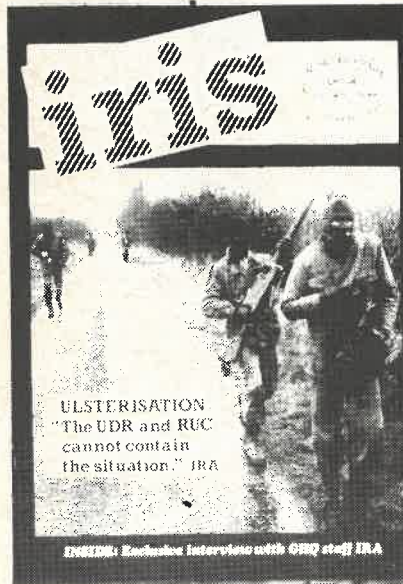
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## IRIS - the republican magazine



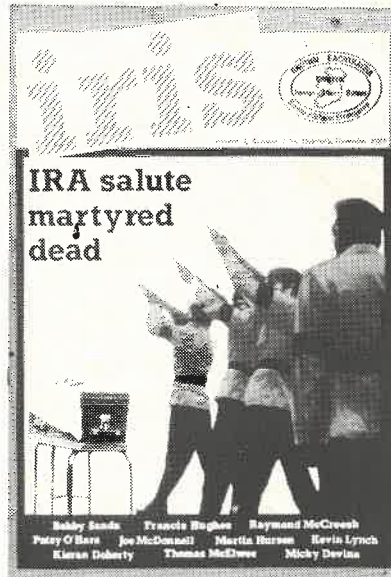
Issue no. 1 contains a comprehensive interview with Sinn Fein president Ruairi O Bradaigh, a review of British political-military strategy since 1969, articles on the H-Block conveyor belt, Document 37, the UDR, RUC collaborators, and the London-Dublin summit. The magazine also contains coverage of war news, previously unpublished photographs of IRA Volunteers on manoeuvres, and an exclusive interview with a member of the IRA's GHQ staff.

Single copies are available at 75p each (plus 25p post and packaging in Ireland and Britain, and 50p p&p in Europe) or at \$3 inclusive in the USA.

\*\*\*

Issue no. 2 is a specially-enlarged commemorative hunger-strike edition covering all aspects of that period and including individual profiles of the ten martyrs. Also included are features on the oppression of women, plastic bullets, electoral interventions and an interview with Owen Carron, war news and extensive photographs of IRA Volunteers on manoeuvres and in action.

Single copies are available at £1.20 each (plus 30p post and packaging in Ireland and Britain, and 80p p&p in Europe) or at \$5 inclusive in the USA. Bulk orders of both editions are available on request.



All correspondence should be addressed to: The Editor, IRIS, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland.

# Republican PUBLICATIONS



'The Writings of Bobby Sands'. A selection of short stories and poems penned by Bobby during his four years on the blanket protest in the H-Blocks. Included in this book is his now famous short story 'The lark and the freedom fighter'. Price 40p

'Prison Poems'. Included in this pamphlet is the famous 'Trilogy' poem consisting of 226 verses and dealing with three of the most notorious aspects of British repression in the North — Castlereagh interrogation centre, the Diplock courts and the H-Blocks. Price 75p

'The Diary of Bobby Sands'. This small pamphlet is based on a personal diary kept by Bobby during the first seventeen days of his hunger-strike. Introduction by Danny Morrison. Price 25p

## CALENDAR

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## RECORDS

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- Legion of the Rearguard', by Kathleen Thompson (£3.50)
- 'Ourselves Alone', Various Artists (£3.30)

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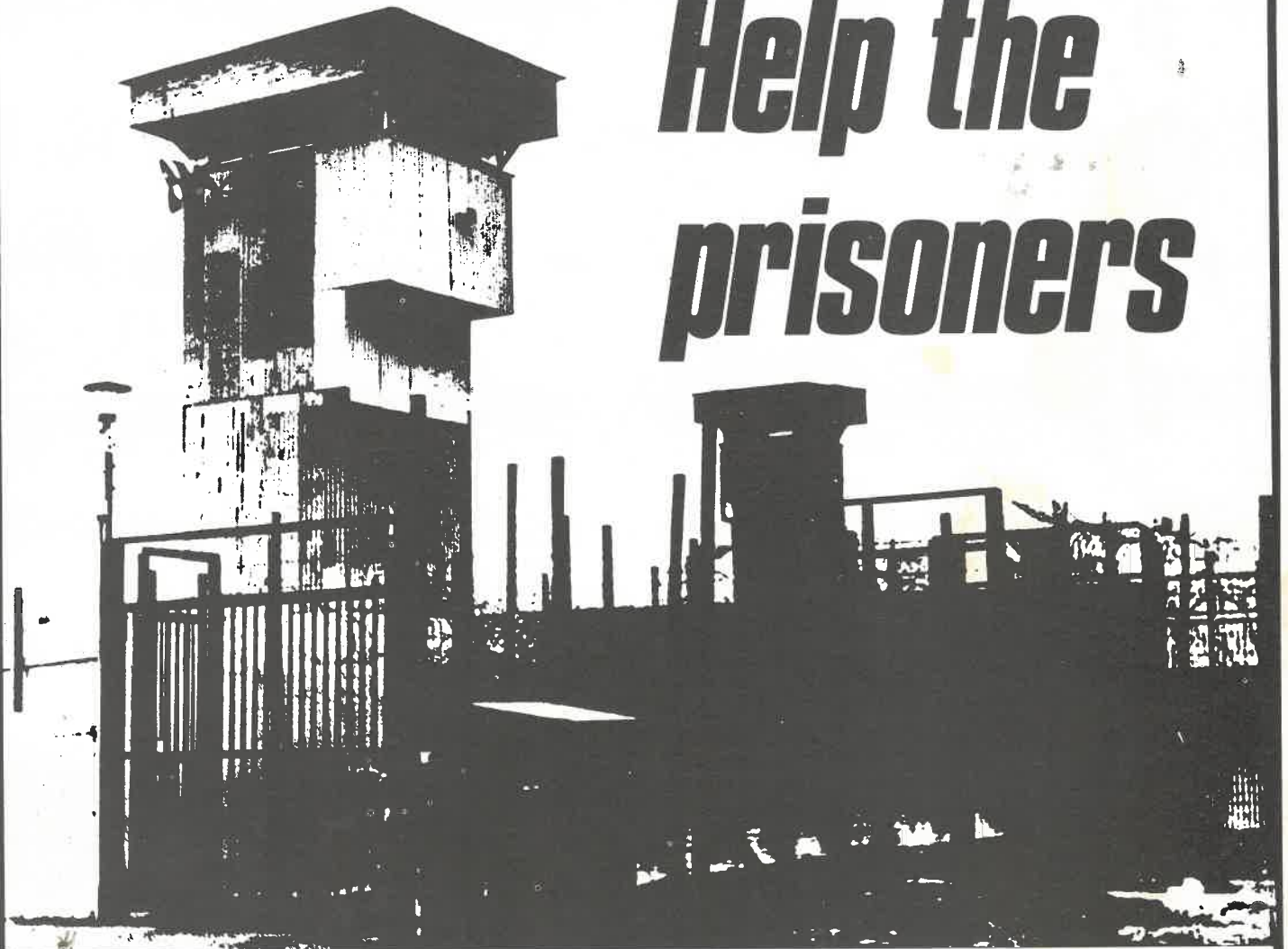
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# *Help the prisoners*



# **SUPPORT An Cumann Cabhrach & Green Cross**

An Cumann Cabhrach and Green Cross are the two organisations, staffed by voluntary unpaid workers, which exist to alleviate some of the suffering of republican prisoners and their families. Dependent solely on public subscriptions and collections, these bodies provide weekly grants to the dependants of nearly 1,400 republican prisoners in jails in Ireland and Britain, pay expenses and arrange accommodation for relatives visiting republican prisoners in English jails, and provide finance to purchase clothing and other necessities for these prisoners.

We thank everybody for their support in the past, and urge all those concerned with republican prisoners to continue with this vital help. In particular we would like to mention the assistance of our exiles in America and Australia, whose commitment is an inspiration.

**All donations, enquiries and offers of help should be addressed to:**

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