

IRIS

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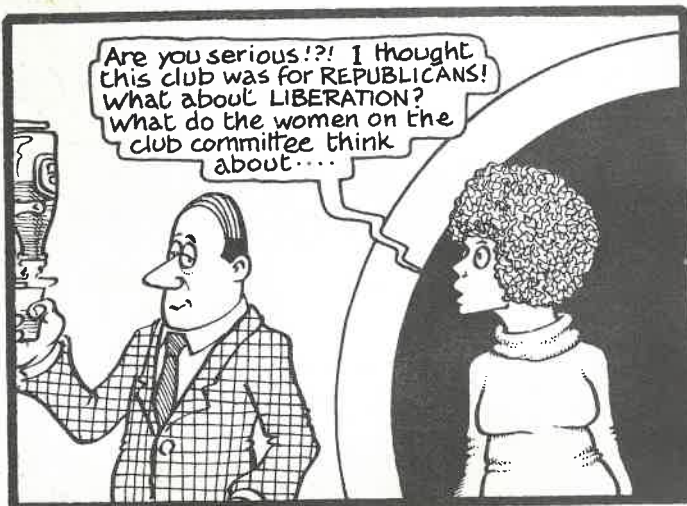
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**THE
BALLOT
BOMB**

JUST A DIVERSION FROM THE NATIONAL QUESTION

by CORMAC



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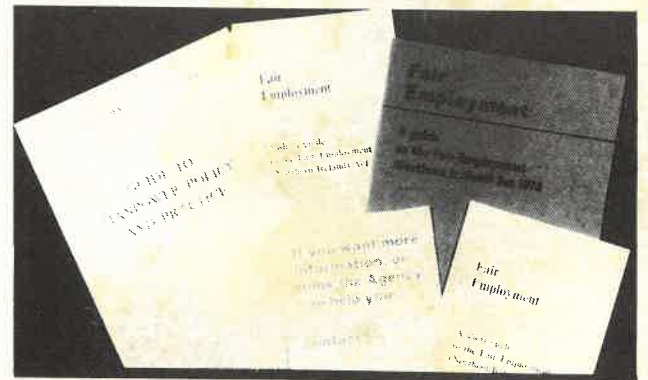
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Sinn Féin and the Assembly elections Sean Delaney reviews the background to Sinn Fein's electoral intervention, and the campaign itself — an election which republicans were opposed to from the start, but in which an important victory was scored. **PAGE 6**



The Fair Employment Agency The FEA was ostensibly set up to bring about an end to discrimination against Catholics in employment. Patrick Dempsey examines the reasons behind its failure. **PAGE 16**



A segregated jail Sinn Fein's former national organiser Jim Gibney (left), who has been held on remand since January on the word of an informer, gives a revealing insight into how segregation between republican and loyalist prisoners in Crumlin Road jail is an 'unofficial' reality. **PAGE 31**



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VIEWPOINT

Benedict McElwee, received the fourth highest number of first preference votes in the six-seater constituency and was only eliminated on the 12th count.

Thirdly, the vagaries of the proportional representation system of transferable votes meant that although Sinn Fein won only five seats compared to the Alliance Party's ten seats, Sinn Fein's share of the first preference votes overall was 10.2% compared with Alliance's 9.3%. In North Belfast notably, the elected Alliance candidate needed transfers from the Workers' Party and SDLP, as well as from unionists, to edge out Sinn Fein's Joe Austin.

A feature too of the entire election campaign was that Sinn Fein succeeded in mobilising by far the largest, most energetic and most committed body of election workers of all the political parties, spanning every generation from youth to veterans and every section of the nationalist community.

It is well to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Republican Movement, to record the thanks that are due to all those people who worked for and voted for Sinn Fein, despite a massive campaign of intimidation and harassment.

REACTIONS

WHAT then of the reaction to the vote for Sinn Fein? The establishment media has for years resolutely minimised the strength of republican support in the North, with the result that they faced the manifestation of that support with almost hysterical disbelief. The fact that they had done their utmost to derail Sinn Fein's electoral challenge throughout the campaign, by censorship, distortion and downright contempt, must only have made the result more bitter.

In the Free State, where Leinster House politicians have persistently called upon republicans to submit themselves to the electorate, the hypocrisy and the emptiness of their much vaunted 'democratic' credentials has now been illustrated clearly with the refusal to scrap Section 31 which bans Sinn Fein from RTE. Instead of acknowledging the reality of widespread republican support, both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael party leaders have gone to great lengths to explain away Sinn Fein's success, laying the 'blame' on the ineptitude of the 'Prior plan' for devolution.

For their part, there is now a general acceptance on the part of the British government that the 'Prior plan' is in grave trouble; but equally there is a stubborn refusal to concede that the Sinn Fein vote was not just a vote against Stormont, but for a British withdrawal, for militant republicanism, and for Irish self-determination.

At any rate, Thatcher's bloodthirsty boast that the hunger-strikes were republicans' 'last card' has now well and truly got stuck in her big mouth. It is now about time for those in British political circles and the labour movement, who have earlier questioned the British role in Ireland, and who were profoundly affected by the election of Bobby Sands in 1981, to speak out loudly, faced with the clearest evidence provided in the last decade of the support republicans enjoy.

The result will have important implications internationally, where Britain's efforts to use the elections as a demonstration of the political 'progress' that has been achieved, and of her own role as an 'honest broker' caught in the middle, have been totally undermined.

ELECTORAL STRATEGY

THE results are a vindication of those republicans who argued for an electoral strategy, and a vindication of the Leadership's 'positive attitude to elections'.

However, as was proved by the Free State general election earlier this year, republican electoral intervention will only be successful if we have the right political attitudes, and if the issues raised by republicans are relevant to the electorate.

Much still needs to be done. Time must be set aside for analysis and self-appraisal. Examination of the results show that Sinn Fein had a real opportunity of gaining eight or maybe nine seats. Examination at local level, with the participation of everyone who worked in the election, will show



Nationalist supporters gather as Derry candidate Martin McGuinness faces up to the RUC, in a typical incident of election harassment



Gerry Adams' resounding victory in West Belfast is met with horrified dismay by loyalists gathered at the count

IRIS

VIEWPOINT



● Gerry Adams, with Tom Hartley, moments after his victory is declared

valuable lessons which must be learned, and learned quickly. For example, a real effort must be made immediately to get all republican supporters registered to vote.

The SDLP will have been stopped from entering Stormont because of the strength of the republican vote exercised through Sinn Fein. But we must nevertheless be vigilant. The SDLP will stabilise the British presence in the North at every opportunity, and the Brits will not give up —not yet!

Britain is on the hook and we must not let her off. A street campaign needs to be conducted to expose the reality of naked Orange rule which Prior's assembly represents, and simultaneously the politicisation of nationalist people in both the six and twenty-six counties must continue.

That means, emphatically, that republicans in the twenty-six counties should understand that Sinn Fein's election success in the North is their success also, has political repercussions throughout Ireland, and leaves them with an equal responsibility to set about increasing support and structuring it within a sound organisational framework before it is squandered.

THE ROAD AHEAD

FIGHTING elections is only one way of quantifying support and building resistance. It is only one way of organising and politicising. Elections can only be successfully fought in the first place if there is a base of support and an election machine.

We must organise people, or educate them to organise themselves — not just against partition but for a free Ireland and a socialist society. We cannot merely sloganise; we must

organise our people by fighting alongside them. We must organise, and support, the unemployed, the socially deprived and the homeless, as well as the nationalists both in the urban and rural areas.

They are all strands of the one struggle; it must be our urgent priority to fuse each strand together.

IN conclusion, it should be stressed by republicans, in whatever forum they find themselves, that the vote for Sinn Fein was not, as the Brits glibly and hypocritically attempt to brand it, a 'vote for violence'.

It was a vote for Sinn Fein's stated objectives: a total opposition to the British presence in the North and the attempt to resurrect Stormont; self-determination; a new, vigorous leadership for the nationalist people; and a principled and resolute resistance against the oppression of British occupation.

Sinn Fein's vote in the assembly elections is only one step in an urgent process to build the new nationalist leadership which is necessary, a leadership of people united around a common political programme, not around an SDLP-style set of personalities. We are not for exchanging one set of personalities for another.

Now is the time to consolidate the gains we have made, and not to delude ourselves about how much we have already achieved. The significance of the election result can only truly be judged in the light of what we manage to achieve in the coming year. Let us not waste the opportunity we have been given. ■

ARMAGH



● Jim McAllister



● J.B. O'Hagan

WEST BELFAST



● Gerry Adams



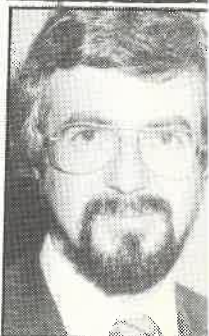
● Alex Maskey

NORTH BELFAST



● Joe Austin

SOUTH DOW



● Cyril Toman

Sinn Féin and the

BY SEAN DELANEY

AS THE poll results of the October 20th Prior assembly elections started to come in the following day, showing Sinn Fein polling extremely well right across the North, and as on the early evening of Friday 22nd the final results showed that republicans had secured five seats, a wave of almost total disbelief spread through political and media circles across Ireland and in Britain.

The only people showing no surprise, but naturally delighted nonetheless, were Sinn Fein election organ-

isers and campaigners themselves, who, despite their relative inexperience in contesting elections, had in private confidently predicted between four and six seats, and who in moments of greater optimism had speculated on a possible eight.

Here we review the background to the campaign, and the campaign itself, for an election that Sinn Fein had been forced – by SDLP opportunism – unwillingly to contest.

SEEKING A BOYCOTT

AFTER months of press speculation aimed at hyping interest in the assembly initiative, Northern direct-ruler James Prior finally submitted his 'white paper' entitled 'Northern Ireland – A Framework for Devolution' to the British parliament.

There, despite a skilfully-orchestrated filibustering attempt by loyalist MPs, aided by 26 Tory rebels, the Assembly Bill received its final reading in the Commons on June 29th, went to the Lords, and finally became law on July 23rd. Prior had already set the date for elections as October 20th.

Moves within the nationalist community, including Sinn Fein, were already afoot to organise an electoral boycott among all major nationalist groups. Writing in *An Phoblacht/Republican News* on July 15th, the paper's editor, Danny Morrison, stated: "In the absence of any broad and representative unified nationalist approach, Sinn Fein's commitment to contest the elections on a selective basis and boycott the assembly remains..."

"The crucial factor in a unified nat-

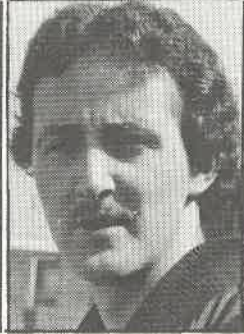


● Candidates at the Belfast press conference launching the Sinn Fein manifesto on October 1st

DERRY



● Martin McGuinness



● Cathal Crumley

FERMANAGH/S. TYRONE

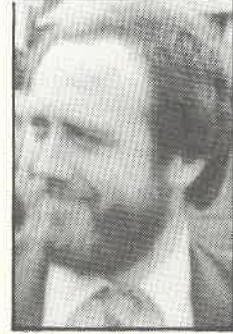


● Owen Carron

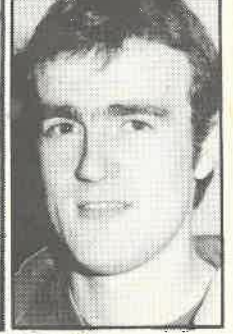


● Francie Molloy

MID-ULSTER



● Danny Morrison



● Benedict McElwee

Assembly elections

ionalist approach, since all are agreed on the bankruptcy of the proposed make-up of the assembly, will be the attitude of the SDLP. It has yet to make up its mind, although the prospect of the SDLP supporting an electoral boycott (which Sinn Fein would support as the best and most efficient means of rendering the British devolution proposals unworkable) appears slim and against all trends."

HUME

However, although John Hume correctly stated that loyalist opposition to power-sharing remained firm, and that the proposed assembly would be 'a dangerous talking shop' (possibly leading to a loyalist *coup*), he refused to commit the SDLP to a boycott of the election, or even of the assembly itself, stating only that the party executive would take a decision in due course, probably in mid-August.

This lengthy and opportunistic prevarication, on an election decision about which Hume and the bulk of the SDLP leadership already had their minds firmly settled, was clearly geared to causing maximum divisions within the rest of the nationalist political camp, and to increasing the SDLP's self-perceived status as the main political party on the nationalist side. The SDLP tactic was to fail on both counts.

On July 17th, Sinn Fein representatives Danny Morrison and Owen Carron were present at a meeting held in Carrickmore, County Tyrone, at which Sinn Fein agreed to sponsor a 'Stop Prior pledge' aimed at facilitating a broad-based nationalist conference to agree a unified boycott of the elections. Also present at the Carrickmore meeting were Bernadette McAliskey, John McNulty of People's Democracy, Brendan Martin (an SDLP councillor), and various independent councillors and interested individuals. The Irish Independence Party (IIP), which had earlier talked of

such a conference, declined an invitation to attend.

'STOP PRIOR'

Within two weeks, however, the initiative was falling on stony ground. The IIP refused to sign the 'Stop Prior pledge', and on July 22nd they issued a somewhat ludicrous call on the Dublin government — in the event of nationalists taking part in the elections — to set up a non-legislative, all-Ireland assembly in which those elected on October 20th could sit. (The Dublin government delivered a judicious snub to the IIP by failing to respond to their suggestion, receiving with a cautious warmth, however, an almost identical SDLP suggestion shortly afterwards.)

The IIP stated that while they favoured a total electoral boycott, they were going ahead in the meantime with their electoral plans. Sinn Fein countered, saying that by refusing to take part in a joint effort to pressurise the SDLP into a boycott, they were in fact easing the pressure on the SDLP.

On August 11th, the *Irish Times* reported that a number of SDLP leaders



● SEAMUS MALLON, spokesperson for the collaborationist SDLP

had taken a majority decision to contest the assembly elections, and that this would almost certainly be endorsed when the party executive met in two weeks' time.

Party spokesperson Seamus Mallon dismissed the *Irish Times* report as mere speculation but nevertheless at the party executive meeting on August 25th the SDLP endorsed the decision to contest the assembly elections by 25 votes to 14 votes. It was Hume's personal influence in the party which had swung the result so heavily in favour of contesting. Even Hume, however, could not conceal the huge divisions within the SDLP.

DIVISIONS

Earlier, on August 19th, at the Mid-Ulster constituency council of the SDLP, the 80 members present heard that leading party members Dennis Haughey and Paddy Duffy were in favour of an electoral boycott. In Belfast, the SDLP district executive — earlier thought to be heavily in favour of contesting — voted only 8 votes to 7 votes in favour of contesting the elections, while in North Belfast leading members Brian Feeney and Pascal O'Hare (with the support of the SDLP in North Belfast) announced that they would have nothing to do with the elections.

In the event, both Dennis Haughey and Pascal O'Hare were to back-track on their 'principled' position, and they contested — successfully — seats to the assembly. Other prominent SDLP members, however, such as Paddy Duffy and Michael Canavan, continued to have nothing to do with the elections.

The serious divisions in the SDLP were only partially soothed by the party's decision to boycott their seats, if elected to the assembly. Even this, however — as Sinn Fein, who had declared from the outset that they would never take their seats in a Stormont assembly — was only a provisional boycott, which could and would be set

aside when the British government found time for a face-saving formula to let the SDLP take their seats.

It was at this stage that Sinn Fein moved decisively into the election arena. The issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* dated August 26th announced boldly: "Sinn Fein will now fight" and said that among those candidates who would probably contest for Sinn Fein were Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness, Owen Carron, Francie Molloy, Danny Morrison and Joe Austin.

BELATED

Now, on September 5th, the IIP belatedly announced they would boycott the elections, calling on the SDLP

and Sinn Fein to do likewise. John Hume retorted immediately that the SDLP would not change its position. Sinn Fein reiterated its call, yet again, for a unified nationalist electoral boycott, in a statement from Danny Morrison:

"Sinn Fein believes that a total nationalist boycott of the elections is the best way of destroying Prior's attempts to refloat Stormont, and our position is quite clear. It is now imperative that the nationalist section of the SDLP asserts itself loudly and clearly and forces that collaborationist rump of the leadership into adopting a boycott stance. We will certainly boycott under those conditions.

"However, we cannot leave ourselves

or our people once again at the mercy of this section of the SDLP under John Hume. We cannot allow them to monopolise the leadership of the nationalist people, and prop up Stormont at the earliest pretext. Under these conditions we will fight the elections and oppose the SDLP."

By September 18th, all hope within the anti-imperialist camp of pressuring the SDLP into an electoral boycott — with only a month to go to polling day — had evaporated, and at a meeting in Dungannon on that date, most of those (excluding the IRSP and IIP who did not attend) who had been previously committed to an active boycott of the elections, now agreed to jettison such a

(continued on page 9)

ON THE ELECTION TRAIL

THE campaign provided opportunity after opportunity to witness British electoral 'democracy' in action in relation to the representatives of the nationalist people.

While the RUC initiated an immediate black propaganda drive — on 'rack-eteering' and 'protection payments' — clearly aimed at republicans, NIO minister Lord Gowrie went so far as actually to wish the SDLP well in the elections!

Meanwhile, Official Unionist leader James Molyneaux, subsequently supported by the DUP and Alliance, announced that they would not participate in radio or TV election programmes with Sinn Fein. This situation had arisen because, by fielding twelve candidates, Sinn Fein automatically qualified for television electoral coverage.

In a reference to Danny Morrison's most quotable quote ever(!), Molyneaux said:

"We will not participate in any programme with a party which says that it will fight with a ballot in one hand and a gun in the other."

Sinn Fein responded that the loyalist parties were afraid of being challenged on "50 years of unionist crimes."

Subsequently, on BBC and UTV 'election specials', Sinn Fein's spokesperson, Danny Morrison, was interrogated by extremely hostile journalists barely able to conceal their contempt for republicans, and insistent that at most Sinn Fein might win 'one or two' seats. Morrison's calm and articulate performance on these occasions undoubtedly convinced many nationalists of Sinn Fein's sincerity and political understanding.

At least one of his quotes is worth



● Martin McGuinness canvassing in Derry in the run-up to the election

recording here, as much for its ambiguous metaphor as for its undoubted meaning. Morrison said: *"Sinn Fein is the grit in the gut of the nationalist people."*

ELECTION PANEL

However, on a number of TV 'election panel' programmes involving representatives of the parties contesting the elections, BBC and UTV changed

the rules to accommodate the loyalists, by not inviting Sinn Fein to join the panel and instead offering them the option of a pre-recorded interview.

Inevitably though, this very real censorship and discrimination exposed the farce of 'impartiality' towards Sinn Fein in the elections, and demonstrated that the SDLP was the party which the British establishment wanted to do well on the nationalist side.

vocal campaign, since it might in some areas actually give the SDLP the edge over Sinn Fein, and would thus be of assistance to Prior.

In return, Sinn Fein agreed to sign a pledge (along with People's Democracy which now also decided to stand two candidates) committing the party to attend a conference after the elections to discuss nationalist unity, and to a street campaign to vigorously oppose the new Stormont.

Needless to say, the SDLP, which was also invited to sign the pledge, declined out of hand.

ACCELERATE

Sinn Fein's electoral challenge now began to accelerate. The issue of *An*

Phoblacht/Republican News dated September 30th announced the full line-up of twelve Sinn Fein candidates, contesting seats in seven of the North's twelve constituencies: North Belfast, West Belfast, Derry, Mid-Ulster, Fermanagh/South Tyrone, Armagh and South Down.

Candidates included veteran republican J.B. O'Hagan and Jim McAllister contesting the Armagh constituency, former H-Block blanket man Cathal Crumley contesting Derry along with prominent republican Martin McGuinness, and — a surprising last-minute change — Danny Morrison contesting Mid-Ulster (with former blanket man Benedict McElwee) instead of, as earlier thought, West Belfast.

On October 1st, the Sinn Fein manifesto was formally launched in West Belfast.

With the election campaign now moving into top gear, republicans had already received a predictable taste of the harassment and obstruction they could expect throughout the campaign.

On August 24th, Cathal Crumley — who had been announced provisionally, only 24 hours earlier, as one of Sinn Fein's candidates in Derry, in the event of the SDLP deciding to contest — was arrested and jailed on remand on the word of a paid informer. He was not to be released throughout the campaign, and is in fact still in jail.



Despite intense harassment by the Brits, UDR and RUC, the enthusiasm and determination of Sinn Fein's election workers was a shining example throughout the campaign

On the streets, the harassment of republican election workers was repeated across the North, with not only election workers, but candidates as well, being held and questioned for lengthy periods, and as election day approached key campaign workers being arrested and held under three-day detention orders.

Nevertheless, Sinn Fein president, Ruairi O Bradaigh, who is 'excluded'

from the North, risked arrest by making a dramatic campaign appearance in South Armagh on one occasion, in support of the local Sinn Fein candidate, Jim McAllister.

The Brits, RUC and UDR were also as usual in their element, tearing down Sinn Fein election posters, which were speedily replaced.

The newspaper media, too, particularly the *Irish News*, took a number of

policy decisions regarding their coverage of Sinn Fein's campaign, almost uniformly insisting on describing the party as 'the Provos' or 'Provisional Sinn Fein' despite repeated complaints that the party had only one name, Sinn Fein.

However despite, in particular the *Irish News'* political endorsement of the SDLP in the election campaign, Sinn Fein nonetheless did receive an almost unique degree of coverage compared with the usual media censorship it faces.

ON THE RUN

Finally, as election day loomed, Sinn Fein held a press conference in Belfast at which they outlined the physical harassment and arrests which the Sinn Fein election campaign had faced in the previous two weeks. Across the North in that period, a total of 51 election workers had been arrested, several under three-day holding orders.

This situation, said Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein candidate in West Belfast, had effectively led to election workers in key positions going 'on the run' to avoid arrest before polling day.

No degree of harassment, however, could conceal the fact that of all the political parties, Sinn Fein had by far the largest and most energetic street organisation of canvassers and election workers, particularly from among the youth but also reflecting republican support across the generation gaps.

On polling day itself, across the North, it was Sinn Fein posters that were most visible in the seven constituencies being contested, it was badge and rosette-wearing Sinn Fein supporters that were most visible on the streets and outside the polling stations.

By Thursday lunch-time, fifteen hours after the polling stations had closed, it was already becoming apparent that despite all of its electoral inexperience, Sinn Fein's principled opposition to Stormont and to the British occupation, its unequivocal support of the IRA's armed resistance, and its offering of a new committed political leadership for the nationalist people, was paying high dividends.

GETTING RESULTS

BY the time Sinn Fein vice-president Gerry Adams was elected in West Belfast, topping the poll in the constituency and dramatically being the first candidate elected in the North, the political pundits were already in confusion with early reports of Sinn Fein candidates polling extremely well everywhere.

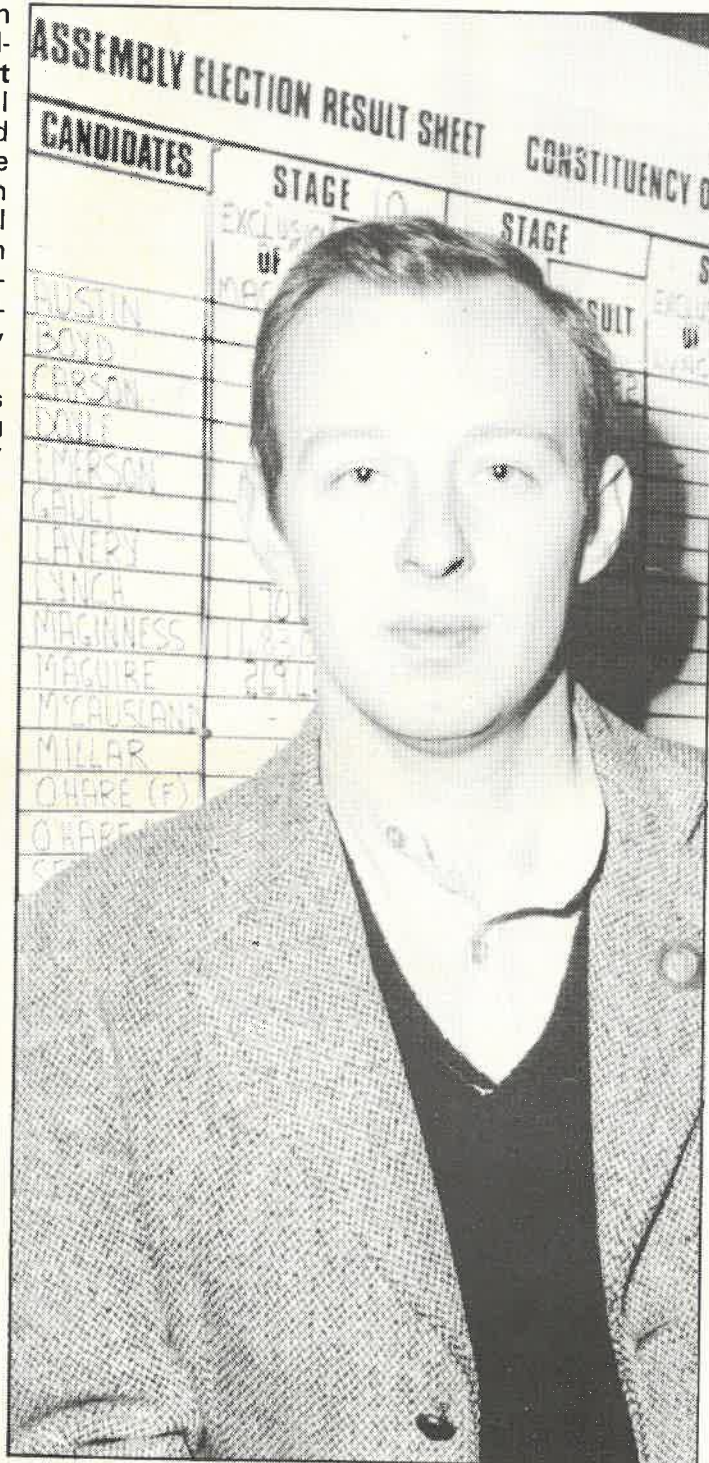
Adams polled 9,740 votes (quota 6,853), outstripping his nearest, SDLP, rival by over 4,500 votes. His transfers of over 2,500 votes went almost solidly to his second runner, Alex Maskey, who had himself polled 627 first preferences (the Sinn Fein strategy in West Belfast had been to maximise Adams' vote).

These transfers were sufficient to keep Maskey in until the penultimate count, although as in other constituencies the totally expected absence of transfers from other political parties, with Workers' Party and SDLP transfers going to Alliance, meant Maskey could not be elected.

In North Belfast, Joe Austin received the third-most first preference votes, 4,029 (quota 5,958), of 17 candidates, outstripping his nearest SDLP rival by 900 votes. This constituency was a cliff-hanger result for Sinn Fein, but once again it was the transfer of SDLP and Workers' Party subsequent preferences away from Sinn Fein that edged Joe Austin out on the final count.

In Derry, where again the strategy was to maximise Martin McGuinness' vote, McGuinness polled 8,207 votes (quota 8,058) and was elected on the first count. His running mate Cathal Crumley, who had spent the election campaign in Crumlin Road jail, received 556 first preference votes.

In Mid-Ulster, both Sinn Fein candidates polled well; Danny Morrison received 6,927 votes (quota 8,853)



● Sinn Fein's Joe Austin narrowly failed to be elected for North Belfast, being eliminated on the final count

while Benedict McElwee polled 5,763. Again, however, the almost total absence of transfers meant that while Danny Morrison was elected, on the final count (though still 1,400 votes below quota), Benedict McElwee narrowly missed out.

In Armagh, the two Sinn Fein candidates again polled

extremely well; J.B. O'Hagan received 3,042 votes and Jim McAllister received 5,182 (quota 7,739). McAllister was easily elected shortly after O'Hagan was knocked out on the 5th count, receiving the bulk of O'Hagan's transfers.

In South Down, Cyril Toman received 3,393 first

preferences (quota 7,382) and reached the 6th count before being eliminated.

Finally, predictably, in Fermanagh/South Tyrone, Owen Carron MP topped the poll for Sinn Fein with 14,025 votes (quota 9,864), trouncing his main rival and former Westminster election rival, Official Unionist and former UDR man Ken Maginnis, who received 10,117 votes. Carron's transfers gave Francie Molloy, who had himself received 2,700 first preferences, a good chance of securing the final seat, in another cliff-hanger, but once again the shortage of transfers meant Molloy being pipped, disappointingly, at the post.

The final result then, with Sinn Fein securing five seats but coming so close to eight or nine, was a body-blow to the complacency of those who had believed, or propagandised, for so long that the strength of committed support for republicans was minimal, and in effect spells an end to the possibility of the SDLP collaborating with Prior's doomed assembly.

The SDLP itself, well able to analyse the real effect of Sinn Fein's electoral intervention on their own support (a far greater effect than that indicated by simply comparing Sinn Fein's five seats to the SDLP's total of fourteen), was scarcely able to conceal its frustration and pessimism at the success of the republican challenge, and, falsely, attempted to exonerate its own collaborationist stance by putting the blame on the British government.

The electoral challenge of their fellow 'nationalist' collaborators in the Workers' Party simply failed, once again, to materialise.

The full impact of Sinn Fein's campaign will only be fully assessed in the months ahead, as republicans gear themselves to ensure the speedy destruction of Prior's revamped Stormont assembly. But whatever happens, the face of six-county politics will never be the same again. ■

ECONOMY IN CRISIS

-an historical perspective

BY ANY STANDARDS the economy of Ireland, North and South, can be described as being in a sorry mess with crisis, recession and imminent bankruptcy the most constant themes of economic discussion, intermittently over the last decade and ceaselessly in the last three years. Here, Peter Graham surveys the factors which have produced this economy, and the historical role of foreign and native Irish capital.

EVERY economic indicator tells its own story. Unemployment, officially put at more than 250,000 throughout the country, has never been higher. Growth in the Free State, by virtue of its dependency on international investment, summarily pulled out by the Western world's recession, is stagnant. The North's economy, similarly, dependent almost totally in recent years on British government public spending, is crumbling as a result of monetarist policy decisions which demand cut-backs in state spending.

Whilst in the North the tight fiscal policies of the British government have brought inflation painfully down to single figures, the Free State — now separated by its independent punt in the European Monetary System — suffers inflation that soars uncontrollably each year by around 20%.

In simple human terms, the economic statistics are translated into the depression of joblessness, either for those losing jobs or those never having had one in prospect. As a result too, come the cuts in real wages of those employed, decimating living standards.

Adding to the misery is the severe drop in public services of all kinds, at a time when needed most, and the prospect of further cut-backs as the governments' response to the 'crisis'.

But for all this apparent failure of capitalism to deliver, the immediate prospect is not one of revolution towards a socialist alternative which would include nationalisation, the end-

ing of the profit motive, and a planned economy with full employment, but rather one of the continuation of private enterprise, publicly-financed where weakest by the state, and of the further crippling of workers and the unemployed who bear the brunt of this failure.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Undoubtedly, the reasons for this total lack of socialist economic alternative, even in the absence of a strong constitutional force of the left either North or South, rest on **political** factors originating in Ireland's national history.

In the North, the continuation of sectarian discrimination against the nationalist people, in order to maintain

the state itself, has eradicated any basis for the growth of class politics. In the Free State, the centrality of the unresolved issue of partition in the political affiliations of the population, coupled with a labour movement historically afraid of that issue, has had a devastatingly similar effect in stifling even the mildest consideration of revolutionary economic solutions.

But of equal importance in considering the position of the Irish capitalist economy — and ultimately in considering its particular weaknesses — is the development of that **economy** historically.

For economically, as well as nationally, the Ireland of today is very much the victim of its imperialist-dominated





● Tenants disrupt an auction where the livestock and property of an evictee is being sold during the Land War

history, though its native contribution is not insignificant either.

The establishment of landlords in Ireland and the plantation of Ulster, culminating eventually in the Land War of the second half of the nineteenth century, are familiar territory in Irish nationalist history.

Not always so familiar, however, in the restricted area of simple nationalism, is the analysis of the economic developments which have derived from this, and the limited diversification into native industrial capitalism which was one of the results.

CONFISCATIONS

Right from the Norman conquest itself in 1169, but more directly from the Cromwellite and Williamite confiscations, there was of course conflict between the usurpers of the land and the dispossessed. It was to remain the central issue which ultimately culminated in the Land War in the nineteenth century, a conflict which fuelled — more successfully than ever before — a new *nationalist* strength.

However, in the interim period and particularly through the cataclysmic Famine, the landlord enemy was not exclusively the foreign occupier, but, through major changes in land ownership, by now included native Irish, Catholic, men of substance.

The changeover from tillage to grazing in Irish agriculture, hastened by the Famine which made wholesale land clearances possible and which continued throughout the nineteenth century, was itself an economic force which demanded that the landless agricultural labourers were of no further use, and that the small cottier with his few acres of potatoes (which in

non-famine years made him independent) had to be driven off the land, which could then be consolidated into large cattle-rearing ranches. This at least was the dominant trend in spite of the long survival of numerous small-holdings.

The Land War, and the eventual winning of peasant-ownership, left the agricultural labourers and the remaining small-holder tenants very much in the same, or even worse, economic distress. The more prosperous native tenant now became the landowner himself, self-sufficient on his acreage in one nuclear family, conservative politically, socially and economically, the direct forebear of today's big farmer.

PARNELL/DAVITT

Parnell and Davitt saw the benefits for nationalism in linking it to this economic force, which in its turn found the national cause a useful rallying call. The rural population which continued its nationalist zeal within Fenianism and into the next century, and supplied the blood spilt in the Tan War, was largely that of the small farmers and the declining agricultural labourers.

Those who had gained most from the Land War and the subsequent enabling legislation from Westminster financing their purchase of land, were by that time solid farmers repelled by any further revolution. For them, increasing their newly-won private property was, and has remained, the priority. The nationalisation of land, which Davitt himself preached as the real economic freedom for the rural population, remains anathema for them today, as it was then.

Obviously the link to Britain was

economically, as well as politically, the dictator of Ireland's agricultural economy. And so it was Britain's foreign wars and foreign trade, its *laissez-faire* phases, its uncaring attitude to the Famine, its penal legislation and so on, that set the pace and direction for all economic development. For most of Ireland, that was in agricultural terms.

Yet, notwithstanding all that foreign influence and interference, there was emerging a native land-owning class, which has remained and strengthened its stranglehold on the agricultural economy up to the present day.

NORTH-EAST

The agricultural situation in the north-east of Ireland was of course different. The plantations of vast areas of land there with Protestant settlers made those settlers essential politically to their landlords, and thus in a far stronger tenure position than the native Irish tenants further south.

This security among northern Protestant farmers by the mid-eighteenth century made it unnecessary for them to espouse the separatist cause as a tool for extracting economic benefit.

The resulting weakness of the north-eastern landlords in their inability to over-exploit or drive off their tenants, also saw the intensified industrial development of the north-east as landlords strove to increase their income by diversification into investment, ultimately into the linen and ship-building industries on which that region's prosperity became based.

To secure his political position, the northern industrialist made sure that those who worked in his factories

were Protestants. This was not a distinction which saved those workers from any of the hardships of capitalist exploitation of their labour, but, stimulated by organised sectarianism, it did keep them aware of their advantage over the Catholics of the same class.

An industrial revolution in Ireland confined itself therefore largely to the north-east, where the necessity of maintaining political control by sectarianism strangled the ideological revolution which was experienced elsewhere in Europe by reason of that economic development.

SOUTH

Conversely, the southern unindustrialised part of the country was very receptive to these new ideological concepts of freedom.

There were of course some industries established down the east coast, mainly in Dublin and Cork, but in the main the rest of Ireland lay non-industrialised and economically underdeveloped, dependent on its agricultural economy other than perhaps for its main exceptions of brewing and distilling.

Politically, Britain obviously had much responsibility for this failure to industrialise in Ireland. Certainly the Act of Union, at the beginning of the key period of the nineteenth century, left Ireland an open economy, linked closely to Britain and drastically subservient to her economically.

But the fact remains that those industries already mentioned — linen, ship-building, brewing and distilling — did prosper, and no satisfactory reasons why others could not would seem to be apparent.

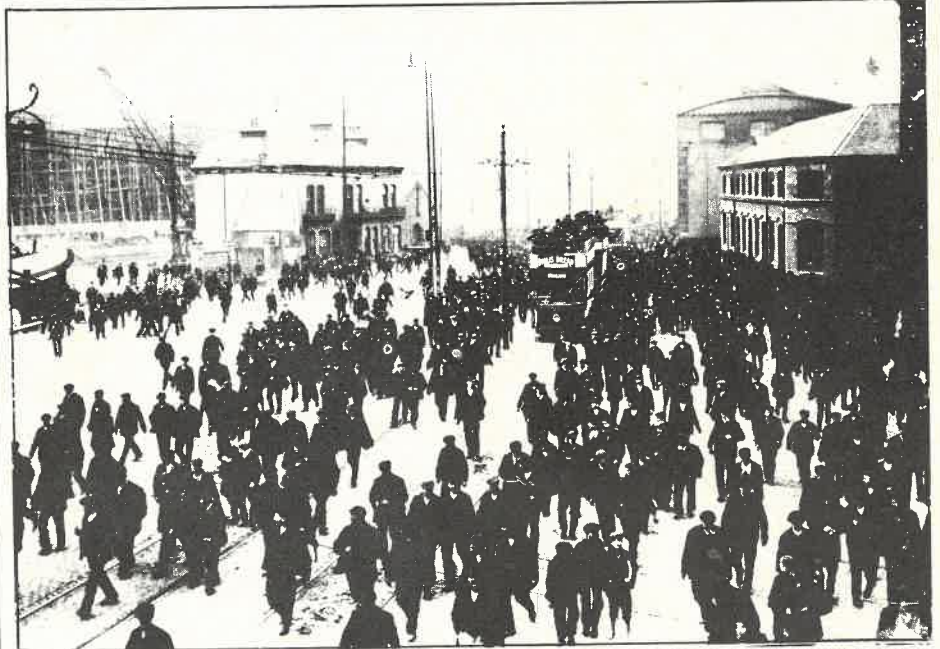
The native Irish capitalist, and indeed the foreign — but Irish-based — landed man of substance, who could have been expected to cause this industrial revolution to occur throughout Ireland, was by no means missing from the scene.

Even before the removal of the Penal Laws due to O'Connell's Catholic Emancipation bill in 1829, Irish Catholic merchants were prospering in supplying Irish agricultural produce to English cities which were growing as they industrialised, and also taking advantage of the need for that produce due to the French wars.

CATHOLIC PROSPERITY

Much of the economic barriers to Catholic prosperity had already been breached by necessity, for the simple reason that the very small minority of wealthy English Protestant landowners wanted to deal in land and other commodities with those Irish Catholic tenants who had prospered relatively and possessed wealth.

The propulsion behind Catholic Emancipation was not therefore so



● Men from the almost exclusively Protestant workforce leave the Harland & Wolff shipyards in 1911; although Belfast's population was 25% Catholic only 7.6% of the shipyard's employees were Catholics

much economic as social and political. Rather than become industrialists, the native wealthy Irish were singularly obsessed with the status of obtaining access to education, the professions and politics, which were all opened to them by the ending of the Penal Laws.

This social phenomenon was itself of course a result of the English ascendancy's social system in Ireland, yet it was so powerful as to divert the economic logic of the growth in native wealth. As an alternative to investment in home industries, the far easier attractions of the lucrative London stock market drew capital out of Ireland, and the acquired wealth of the prosperous native followed the rack-rented spoils of the absentee landlord.

As the banks grew up and spread like wildfire throughout the towns of Ireland in the nineteenth century, picking up the small deposits of the lowly, they too concentrated not on investing in Irish industrial development but rather in Britain. The country was starved of its necessary capital.

So Ireland became, and has remained to the present day, an economic peculiarity in normal colonial and neo-colonial relationships, in exporting capital to the dominant country rather than being the recipient of capital for exploitative development.

Whatever capital was attracted to Ireland from Britain was generally concentrated in the north-east, which, up until recently, looked more stable and attractive for investment than other areas of the country.

From 1922 then, the 6-counties continued and maintained its industrialisation, controlling by sectarian divisions the class conflict that might otherwise have arisen, particularly dur-

ing the depression of the '30s.

During the Second World War, the British link gave the North's industries, particularly ship-building, an enormous boost which continued prosperity for its owners into the post-war '50s.

At the same time, the extension of the welfare state from Britain into the North held the lid on its enormous social deprivation, and further distanced comparisons between it and the 26-counties for at least three decades.

Still, the 6-counties' position as the outermost 'region' of the United Kingdom economy left it increasingly weaker in relation to other regions, with unemployment rates always substantially up on Britain's and economic growth lagging far behind, its ailments largely ignored by a preoccupied Westminster.

The explosion of civil unrest in the late '60s, developing into a renewed war of national liberation, has since scared off much investment capital from the North, such as it was, and has left British public spending as the temporary growth industry. Even this though has been increasingly cut back in the three years of Thatcher's monetarism.

PARTITION

In arriving at the two partitionist states it was more the independent power of Irish nationalism, rather than economic forces, which were at work. Although the early twentieth century had seen, under Larkin and Connolly, a major upsurge of trade union membership and working-class militancy in the 1913 lock-out, it was the middle-class (which had condemned the 1916 Rising) which speedily reassessed the force of nationalism.

So that by 1918 middle-class influence had already infiltrated into a

Features

Sinn Fein which within three years would sell out the republic for the Treaty, whilst labour had to accept that it must wait and stand out of the political arena.

For the Irish capitalist class in the 26-counties, the establishment of the Free State in 1922 achieved its aims. The victims on the republican side in the Civil War were overwhelmingly the small farmers, agricultural labourers and city workers, fighting on for a republic which embraced the socialist principles of Connolly, Pearse and Mellows — not necessarily a politically-conscious struggle, but one which intuitively recognised that the republic must mean the wealth of Ireland for the people of Ireland.

Once in power, the attention of the new ruling class was not merely concentrated on the oppression of republican militarists. In 1923 the wages of a wide range of workers, from dockers to manufacturing employees, were cut to levels below those of the pre-1913 lock-out.

RECESSION

In the North the new unionist government followed suit. The trade union movement throughout Ireland was effectively attacked to the extent that, within five years of the establishment of the two partitionist states, its membership was reduced by one-third.

Welfare considerations were given the minimal attention, and social conditions enforced a solution to unemployment in the thousands who emigrated throughout the '20s.

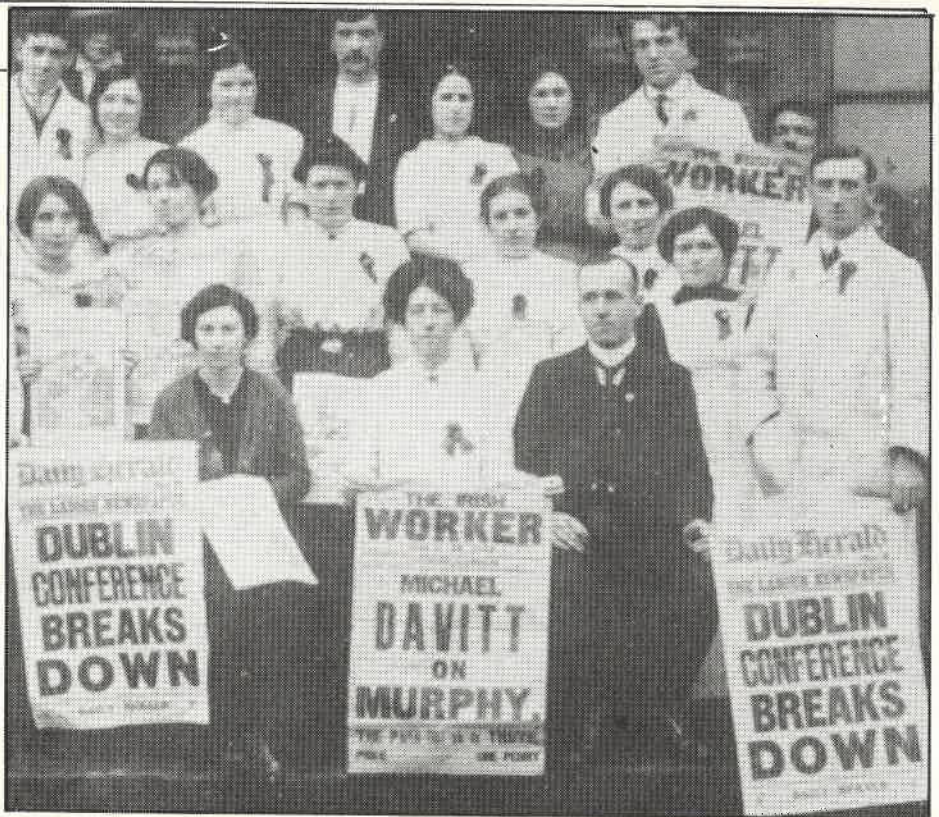
The world depression of 1929 saw a major slump in the North's export industries, particularly the biggest ship-building and linen firms. The Free State situation was not as seriously affected initially, being agriculture-based and prices generally holding up. But the agricultural economy itself had remained stagnant since the foundation of the Free State (and was to remain so for decades).

Far from putting into practice the self-sufficiency of Griffith's Sinn Fein doctrines, with the logical attempt to create industrial capitalism behind tariff walls, fed by the rural hinterland, the new Free State government concentrated its limited economic stimulation on increasing the cattle and dairy export trade which was the foreign money earner. Food, demanding tillage for its production, continued to be imported.

The nettle of import tariffs to foster home capital-inspired industry was left to the de Valera government to grasp, and grasp it he immediately did.

ECONOMIC WAR

Once again, the national issue becomes entangled in the Irish economy with the introduction of tariffs becoming embroiled in the withholding



● Workers at Liberty Hall, Dublin, following the breakdown of talks to end the 1913 lock-out



● Mechanisation in rural areas has resulted in larger farms but fewer employment prospects for their inhabitants

of land annuities from Britain, and the economic war which ensued.

In the six years until its settlement, the economic war damaged mainly the agricultural cattle trade, but also, by impoverishing the rural population, it reduced the home market for developing industries.

Nevertheless, even this pressure from an economic nationalist campaign did not see the switch from cattle to tillage which was necessary for the attainable self-sufficiency in food.

From then onwards, efforts to control foreign food imports, guarantee farm prices, and divert ever-increasing amounts of public money into agriculture, did not have the effect of stim-

ulating development, but rather, because of the ability of big farmers to profit from these schemes, had the effect of transferring wealth to them at the expense of the small farmers.

The protectionism of Free State government economic policy, which continued right up until the late '50s, did not get any major response from Irish capital. Rather than risk his money in creating industry, the wealthy Irishman invested in Britain; and the high interest rates guaranteed by the Free State government for scarce investment money became another burden on public spending, as under-financed industries rose and soon collapsed.



● Harvesting peas for one of the Free State's semi-state bodies, the Irish Sugar Company

What small industries did grow behind the tariff walls were geared to the small home market, while the resultant high costs made any foray into the export market wholly unrealistic.

WORLD WAR

The Second World War, inevitably, and even more than any other British foreign war, had its effects on the Irish economy. Fuel and raw materials, necessary to be imported for any real industrial advance, were almost impossible to attain. Yet at the same time, the total necessity of self-sufficiency forced the introduction of compulsory tillage for crop production on the farms.

In the economic world of widespread destruction and scarcity after the war, it could have been boom-time for the Free State economy, with a ready market for its agricultural produce, and a chance for its manufacturing industries to quickly expand. But, once more, there was scarcely any growth during this period because of the refusal of private Irish capital to invest.

Massive increases in subventions to farmers in the post-war period, far

from encouraging tillage, saw surpluses in such subsidised crops as wheat, and sugar beet, scarcities in other crops and the return to cattle as the Free State's main economic prop.

On the industrial scene, significantly, from the '30s right up to the '60s, the only really successful development was when state investment created the semi-state bodies such as the Irish Sugar Company, the Milk Board, Aer Lingus and Irish Shipping. Private capital again failed to respond to the challenge of nominal political independence, and the Free State economy remained tied virtually completely to Britain.

Throughout the period as well, the possible political consequences of massive unemployment, poverty, rural decline and economic stagnation — the breeding ground for revolutionary upheaval — were avoided by the traditional release valve of almost continuous emigration on a massive scale.

NEW ERA

The establishment of the Industrial Development Authority in 1958 marked the beginning of a new era. Where Irish capital had failed, now

foreign capital was to be attracted by every possible means.

Economic protectionism was abandoned, and by tax concessions, grants and the outlay of public funds, foreign capital — particularly American — was wooed into a desperate 26-county economy.

Certainly, foreign capital taught the native variety a lesson in industrialisation, as through the '60s and early '70s — at a massive cost borne by the Irish taxpayer himself — foreign industrial development brought with it for the first time the hint of industrial prosperity.

As the unemployment spectre receded somewhat, Irish trade unions also began to flex their muscles again through the '60s — a hopeful development which nonetheless was defused with the introduction of centralised wage bargaining at the beginning of the '70s.

But the profit principle of capitalism, native or foreign, always predominant, was to halt this industrial progress. Recession came on the scene in 1974 and foreign capital began to be pulled out as speedily and as clinically as it had come in. By that time, too, the Free State had abandoned its economic sovereignty, such as it was, having become the very junior member of the EEC with all its restrictions.

Even agriculture, which in cash terms appeared to benefit from this membership, continued its ceaseless trend of putting profit in the pocket of the large farmer — still producing only cattle — and saw the poor farmers continue to grow poorer or disappear altogether.

LESSONS

The lesson then of this examination of the Irish economic experience is the failure, even in its own terms, of the native capitalist system, despite every possible state assistance, to bring prosperity to the Irish people, whether through agriculture or industry. Foreign capital, whether British or American, has been confirmed as only a self-interested entity in the economic system.

The Irish capitalist has often ridden the nationalist tide, sometimes following it, sometimes leading it, but inevitably his concentration on personal profit dictates his approach to all other considerations.

The future then for Ireland, economically and socially, depends not on more attempts to rescue or prop up the capitalist system, which has proved impotent, but on replacing it totally.

The inextricably malignant influence of Britain's interference remains as relevant as it ever was, economically, in Ireland, but at the same time the native capitalist malignancy has been developing within. Both must be destroyed. ■

THE FAIR EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

— an empty exercise in 'reform'

THIS ARTICLE examines the establishment of the FEA in 1976 to counter religious discrimination in employment in the six counties, and why it has so monumentally failed.

BY PATRICK DEMPSEY

VERY little has changed in the six counties since its establishment in 1920. Lord Brookeborough's open boast of a 'Protestant parliament for a Protestant people' remained indicative of the loyalist supremacist attitude to all aspects of life in the North, including employment, right up until this bankrupt and corrupt state exploded onto the international scene in 1969, its prejudices — and Westminster's tolerance of them over the years — revealed for all to see.

Since then, the bigotry and the institutionalised discrimination against Catholics have been more circumspectly applied, but have not fundamentally altered.

Even so, some of the most 'respectable' apologists for the six counties have been unable, from time to time, to refrain from nakedly bigoted observations. One of the North's senior economic advisors and strategists for the crucial period 1964-75, when the bulk of foreign investment and economic development occurred, stated (*Ulster under Home Rule*):

"As for business life, Presbyterians and Jews are probably endowed with more business acumen than Irish Catholics... For generations they were the underdogs, the despised 'croppies', the adherents of a persecuted religion who



were kept out of public affairs by the Protestant conquerors. They were made to feel inferior, and to make matters worse they often were inferior if only in those personal qualities that make for success in competitive economic life."

More recently, Paul Compton, a senior geographer at Queen's University, Belfast, and a self-styled 'specialist in population studies', argued (*Religious Affiliation and Unemployment in North-*

ern Ireland, 1981) that the higher percentage of Catholic unemployment and the subsequent social deprivation could be explained by their traditional failure to adopt "the temperate and sensible reproductive behaviour" of their Protestant counterparts!

For Compton, a realistic 'solution' to Catholic unemployment would appear to be a heavy increase in emigration from the six counties.

It was against the background of this prejudice, and the history of serious religious discrimination in employment which this prejudice had been the cause of, that the Fair Employment Agency was introduced in 1976 by the British government. The enabling Westminster parliamentary act hailed it as a major step forward in "promoting equality of opportunity in employment and occupations in Northern Ireland between people of different religious beliefs, and of working for the elimination of discrimination... on the ground of religious belief or political opinion."

From its inception, however, there was little in the make-up of the 12-strong Agency board, with its small nucleus of staff, that suggested that the FEA was anything other than a cosmetic exercise within the British government's strategy of presenting a facade of normalisation of six-county society, for the benefit of British and international public opinion.

The British government-appointed chairman of the FEA was an out-of-work Alliance Party politician, Bob Cooper, one of whose first contributions to establishing the Agency's credibility in the eyes of the Catholic community was to successfully recommend the co-option to Agency membership of Glenn Barr, a key figure in the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association.

Almost unbelievably, Barr was to remain a member of the FEA right up until August 1981, when he failed to be renominated. His membership covered a period when the UDA was heavily involved in random sectarian attacks against Catholics.

Nonetheless, when at the 47th board meeting of the FEA in November 1980 Barr raised the issue of his continued membership, the chairman, Bob Cooper, sought — unsuccessfully — a vote of confidence in Barr.

MIDDLE-CLASS

Overwhelmingly, the other members of the Agency, consisting of three nominees each from the Northern committees of the employers' CBI and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, and three other 'independents' appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, were middle-class Protestants, or right-wing Catholics like the wealthy Tom Conaty (a leading figure in the Central Citizens' Defence Committee in Belfast after the 1969 pogroms, which defused nationalist militancy and liaised with the RUC).

Other Agency members included Professor Desmond Rea, an Official Unionist and an economic lecturer at Ulster Polytechnic, and Joe Cooper, the right-wing president of Belfast Trades Council. This Agency make-up has not altered in the intervening years in any important respect.



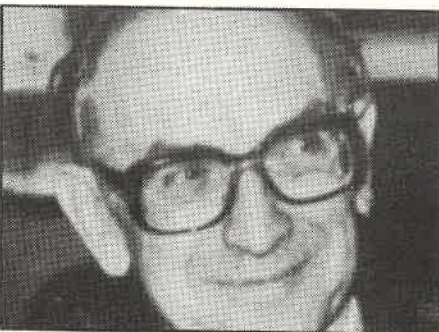
● Glenn Barr and Peter Sefton



● Bob Cooper



● Peter O'Keeffe



● Joe Cooper

Given the composition of the Agency board, and the appointment to the staff, as Co-ordinating Director, of a right-wing Catholic from England, Peter Sefton, it was hardly surprising that the FEA in the ensuing years was to content itself with concentrating its efforts on individual allegations of discrimination, and to show considerable reluctance to investigate the larger-scale discrimination commonly known to be practised by major employers in the six counties such as Harland and Wolff, Sirocco, Shorts, Mackies, etc.

All of these industrial concerns were nominal signatories of the FEA's 'Declaration of Principle of Intent', which was an undertaking not to discriminate in job recruitment, and which was to become a prerequisite for obtaining British government contracts on which the major firms depended for their economic survival.

5,000 firms are currently signatories of the Declaration, yet the FEA has never monitored any substantial number of those firms to ensure that discrimination does not in fact take place.

ENGINEERING

The Agency was, however, to be forced reluctantly into a much-delayed investigation of the recruitment procedures of the major engineering companies. It was to demonstrate clearly the effective lack of commitment of the FEA to identifying and tackling institutionalised discrimination.

Following an allegation in the Belfast nationalist newspaper, *Andersonstown News*, in 1977, that the Ford Autolite factory in the predominantly Catholic Andersonstown district was discriminating against Catholics, the FEA launched an enquiry. This, however, was to be broadened out into a general engineering enquiry at the insistence of the industry minister at the Northern Ireland Office, Don Concannon, who was alarmed at the possibility of criticism attaching specifically to Ford's.

Concannon requested a meeting with FEA chairman Bob Cooper, to discuss "some aspects of the engineering enquiry", which took place on January 17th 1978. Cooper reported back to the 17th meeting of the FEA in February 1978, saying that "basically all that the Minister wished to make clear was the importance of Ford in Northern Ireland, and the use the government is making of that company to try to encourage future investment. The Minister is anxious that the Agency's investigation should not cause any security problems."

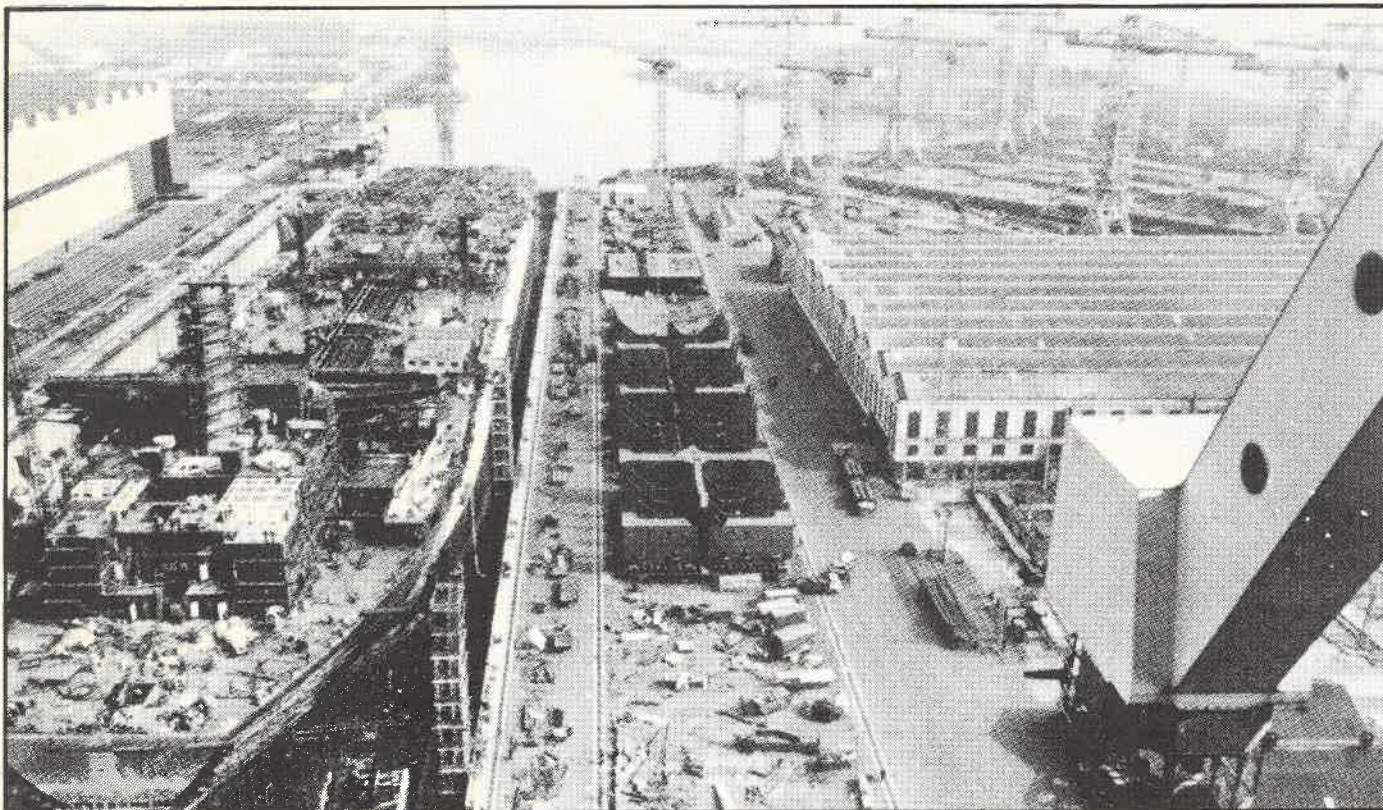
The hint was taken, and the investigation was delayed for two years. Peter Sefton described this appalling lapse, euphemistically, as 'an hiatus'.

When the investigation did resume, it found sufficient evidence that within the engineering industry the tradition of a 'marked imbalance' of Catholic representation in these high-paid and high-status occupations had changed little since 1971.

HARLAND AND WOLFF

In Harland and Wolff there was not one Catholic employed in a three-figure force of skilled fitters. In Shorts, only between 4½% and 8% of the skilled workers were Catholic. Even in Ford's in Andersonstown, only 9% of the skilled workers and 40% of the apprentices were Catholic.

In the case of Harland and Wolff, the FEA sent them a confidential preliminar-



● The Harland & Wolff shipyards in Belfast have long been a bastion of sectarian privilege, the FEA's report reinforcing this widely acknowledged fact subsequently had its clause on discrimination removed – at the request of Harland & Wolff!

any report of their findings, in mid-1981, concluding that equality of opportunity for Catholics did not exist. The shipyard responded with a letter, in July 1981, to the Co-ordinating Director of the FEA, Peter Sefton, which asked for the discrimination clause to be removed. Interestingly, Harland's accused the FEA of appearing to be concerned only "to bring about an improvement in opportunity for, and an increase in the numbers employed from, the Roman Catholic members of the community."

Faced with this challenge, and without any further investigation, the FEA responded by congratulating H & W on its 'considerable efforts' to achieve equality of opportunity, and removed the offending clause from its final (and confidential, like all the FEA investigations of the kind) report.

It was not a surprising retreat on the FEA's part. As early as May 1977, Bob Cooper had said of this notoriously anti-Catholic employer: "In the case of Harland and Wolff where the management, and probably the workers themselves, are ready to welcome more liberal recruitment, this is militated against not only by the environment but also because Harland and Wolff is in a contracting market situation. It is not sensible to get involved in something which will produce nothing worthwhile."

Bob Cooper's FEA, it seemed, was prepared to advance any rationale to avoid having to openly accuse a major six-county employer, a wholly government-owned concern, of sectarian discrimination.

In the case of Ford's too, the criticism in the preliminary report in February 1981 that access to the apprenticeship scheme was limited where Catholics were concerned, was deleted in the final report of June 1981.

Predictably, none of the firms were charged with discrimination against Catholics.

DISSENSION

Increasingly, within the FEA itself this set-up began to be challenged with a voice of dissension.

One of the ICTU nominees, NUPE official Inez McCormack, once intimated that she would resign because of the FEA's failure to identify the widespread discrimination which existed, but she failed to do so. Her eventual successor to the FEA, fellow NUPE official John Coulthard, was to go as far as to say: "There'll be no progress at the FEA unless Cooper and Sefton go," but when the crunch came he was to play a role with Bob Cooper in suppressing the opposition within the Agency.

The real opposition focussed around several of the full-time staff members, centring on Sefton's subordinate, Peter O'Keeffe, the deputy Co-ordinating Director, who in October 1979 argued that the Agency's failures had "lost us the only irreplaceable asset which we had in 1976, namely our credibility."

O'Keeffe argued that the success rate of individual complainants to the FEA could have been around 20% instead of the then success rate of 7%, and he indicted the Agency for its series of delays and for its retreat in the face of loyalist political challenges to its func-

tion of locating discrimination.

On November 14th 1980, four senior staff members of the FEA – including O'Keeffe – who were members of the Northern Ireland Public Services Alliance (NIPSA) branch 147, passed a motion calling for a full enquiry into the workings of the Agency. The staff members also wrote to Hugh Rossi and Adam Butler, ministers at the NIO; and to the NIPSA general secretary, Jim McCusker.

McCRUDDEN

The following month, at the Agency meeting, an enquiry call was endorsed despite opposition from Bob Cooper. A Belfast lawyer, Christopher McCrudden, a legal whizz-kid lecturing at Balliol College, Oxford, undertook the enquiry – but its terms of reference were strictly limited. Instead of examining the failure of the FEA since 1976, as the staff had demanded, McCrudden was solely to review the Agency's procedures and its future policies.

His report, while it was critical of the way the FEA operated and its failure to inspire confidence in potential complainants, was in reality largely a duplication of procedures drawn up by O'Keeffe two years earlier, which themselves had largely been taken from the British government's Race Relations Board training manual.

The staff felt, among other things, that McCrudden was trying it on somewhat, offering plagiarised procedures as though they were his own. The Agency board, however, largely accepted McCrudden's report, and promptly placed it on the shelf where it has gathered

dust since.

Nonetheless, the staff's disillusionment with the FEA's voluntarily lax approach to sectarianism in employment, has since been countered by the Agency board under Bob Cooper and Peter Sefton. Peter O'Keeffe was forced to resign in 1981 after having been effectively deprived of any work to do for over a year, and the intimidation and harassment of staff members involved in the dissension has continued.

CIVIL SERVICE

Internal dissension aside, one of the most staggering indictments of the chronic failure of the FEA, in the six years of its existence, to counter the institutionalised discrimination against Catholics in employment, comes in the form of a preliminary, confidential report into equality of opportunity in the six-county civil service, completed in July 1981, details of which have recently been 'leaked'.

The civil service is, perhaps above any other, the acid test of what has been achieved in redressing the sectarian discrimination against Catholics; that is, in 'reforming' the six-county state in the area of employment. For, if the FEA cannot point to equality of opportunity in public employment, what chance at all is there of equality in the private sector?

The period of the Stormont administration prior to direct rule showed a clear parallel between discrimination in the higher echelons of the civil service and Catholics' general disadvantaged position in higher-salaried occupations throughout private industry.

By 1961, only six of the top 61 posts in Finance were occupied by Catholics; in Health and Social Services the figure was one out of 78 posts; in Education, four out of 31; and in Development, four out of 51. By 1972, the year in which direct rule was introduced, 95% of the top 477 senior civil service posts were occupied by Protestants.

The 1981 preliminary report into the civil service reveals little change, despite its doubling in size since 1972 to 23,000 employees. True, the overall percentages of those employed in the civil service, for whom a religion could be ascertained, break down at 69.5% Protestant and 30.5% Catholic — a figure, which while not accurately reflecting the higher proportion of Catholics in the six counties, is something of an improvement over past years.

(It is worth recording however that the percentages are distorted by the exclusion of the almost totally Protestant membership of the 'security' occupations, prison warders, search personnel, etc, from the investigation 'on security grounds'.)

However, it is when the occupation and salary grades of the 25 occupation groups analysed in the investigation are compared against religious affiliation,

TABLE 1 — SALARY GRADES BY RELIGION

Grade	% Protestant	% Catholic
Senior Principal or higher	87.3	12.7
Principal and Deputy Principal	83.2	16.8
Staff Officer	82.7	17.3
Executive Officer 1	76.4	23.6
Executive Officer 2	71.7	28.3
Clerk	63.8	36.2
Clerical Assistant	63.6	36.4

(Total number of civil servants in survey: 19,604)

that the major pattern of inequality is revealed (see table 1).

LOWER GRADES

As can be seen, it is only in the lower grades of the civil service that the proportion of Catholics resembles their overall percentage employment in the civil service. In the higher grades, the reins of power and influence remain firmly in Protestant hands.

In a further analysis at departmental level, the average pay scale, with the exception of Education, indicates higher salaries for Protestants, particularly those engaged in Commerce, Environment, Finance and Agriculture.

Of the 25 occupational groups, only 3 contain proportionately more Catholics than is typical for the civil service as a whole. These groups are general service, typing, and data processing where Catholics occupy the most menial posts. Protestants remain dominant in key groupings such as Engineering and Highways, Agricultural Inspectorate, Water Service, Architecture, Medical Staff, Economists, Work Study Officers, PSV Examiners, Wireless Staff, and Communications.

An analysis of the departmental breakdown maintains this pattern of discrimination. Only three departments: Commerce, Health and Social Services, and Manpower Services contain proportionately more Catholics than the overall average of 30.5%, but once again most of these are to be found in the lower grades: typing, clerical, etc. (see table 2).

CONCLUSION

It is clear then that discrimination

against Catholics in employment, both in the wholly government-controlled civil service, and in the largely government-controlled sectors of private industry, has not been structurally altered either during the period of direct rule since 1972, or since the setting up of the Fair Employment Agency in 1976.

The FEA is an impotent body, with — by its composition — no real commitment to either identifying or tackling the problem of sectarian discrimination. Officials within it, such as Bob Cooper, have actively campaigned to prevent or stifle internal dissension within the FEA ranks.

But most fundamentally of all, the failure of the FEA proves the charge that its establishment in the first place was a cosmetic propaganda-inspired attempt to present a better public image of the six counties, in which actually combatting institutionalised sectarianism formed no part of its brief.

The fact is that the North and the sectarianism it exhibits **cannot** be reformed, they can only be uprooted whole and destroyed.

The North is, and will always be until that time, a sectarian Protestant state. In the words of Sir Robert Maxwell in 1924: *"The accusation against the government of Northern Ireland of religious discrimination is somewhat difficult to deal with. In one sense it is of course obvious that Northern Ireland is, and must be, a Protestant 'state', otherwise it would not have come into being and would certainly not continue to exist."* ■

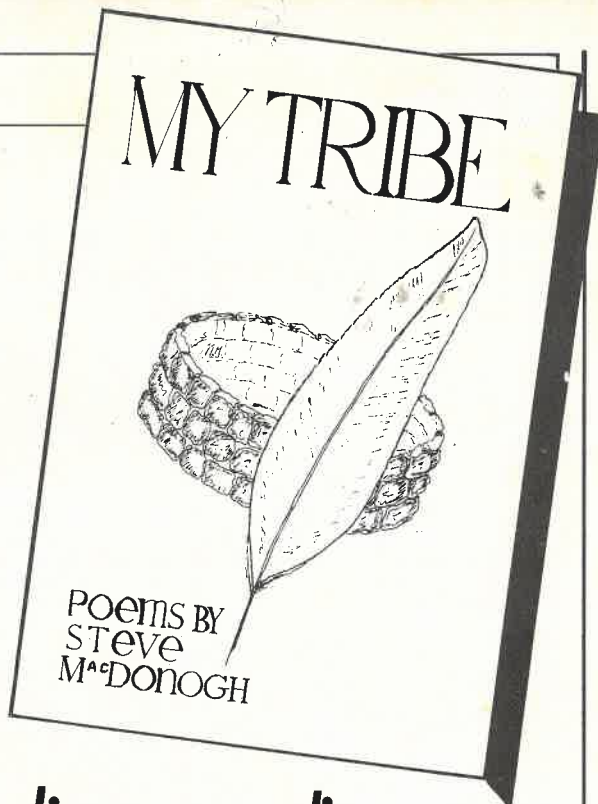
TABLE 2 — DEPARTMENT BY RELIGION

Department	% Protestant	% Catholic
Agriculture	72.0	28.0
Court Service	79.2	20.8
Commerce	66.1	33.9
Civil Service	77.1	22.9
Education	83.3	16.7
Environment	73.9	26.1
Exchequer and Audit	84.8	15.2
Finance	72.8	27.2
Health and Social Services	57.0	43.0
Manpower Services	60.5	39.5
NIO	79.1	20.9
RUC Police Authority	89.0	11.0

My tribe

STEVE MacDONOGH is a 33-year-old Dubliner whose poetry has appeared in Ireland, Britain and America since the 1960s. His first published collection was *York Poems* in 1972. *My Tribe* — from which the following poems have been selected — is MacDonogh's second collection of poetry, published by Beaver Row Press. His poetry deals with a wide range of subjects, though the poems we have selected all touch on the political situation in Ireland.

We hope to include poetry on a regular basis in *IRIS*, and readers are welcome to submit their own work.



However

*"The army does not make changes," however,
rifle-butts alter
the shape of a woman's face
and the light in a boy's eyes.*



Peace

(to William Whitelaw)

*Elegant hands spin a web
for words of peace; soft
shapes send patterned shadows
from the seat of power.
This peace is defeat:
the defeat of "our enemies".
Peace brought down to a
rhetorical weight or counter.
A soft tongue at the centre
but an edge to the words like steel.
Peace, peace, peace, peace:
Repeat "peace", and find
another sound of war.*

We live, we die

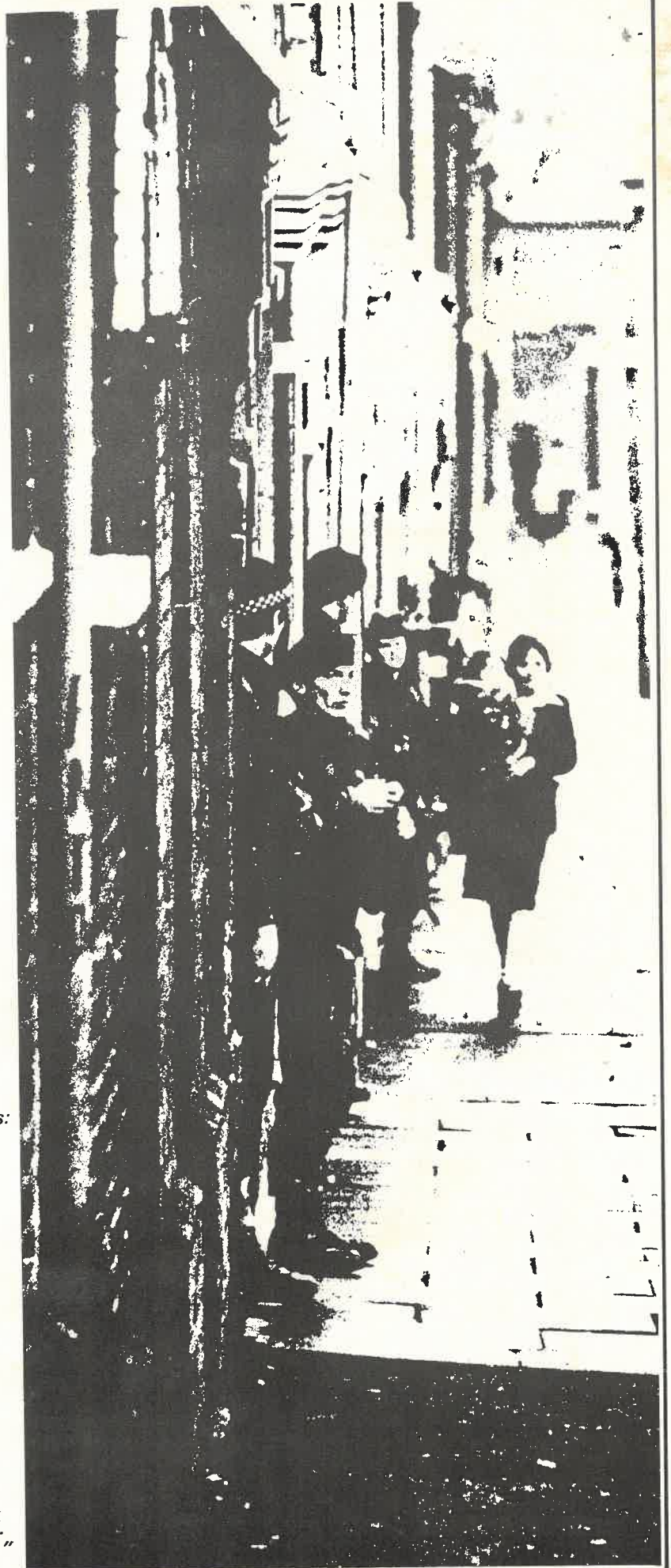
*Nothing comes easy
in the knowledge of contradictions:
no, not even slogans
by whose truth we act, or fail to act.
Rooftops merge
into a soft spring night sky.
Botanic Avenue: restaurants,
a student carrying records,
back vulnerable to a cruising jeep;
soldiers, faces white
against dark battledress
in the light of a wide-ringed moon.
Three more green jeeps
escort a single RUC van,
turn in Cromwell Road, patrol.
We walk through Holy Land's
regular terraced rows, serried ranks
of white-brick-edged doorways
fan at curved arches.
Indoors, endless cigarettes, tea;
after eight years on the streets
we have our pauses: our mood
like University Road this morning,
black with smoke from a bombed warehouse.
But smoke clears to reveal the stark
face of complexity; nothing comes easy
in the knowledge of contradictions;
no, not even slogans;
and yet we know the simple, difficult truth
that before we begin on half our task
the Brits must go!*

POSTSCRIPT

*Four-thirty sun smacks through air:
Ben Bulbin splashed like a tie-dye shirt.
In an overgrown cottage garden
some strange kind of large violet,
nettles, dandelions and dark brambles;
by the gate a wild bush of barberry,
bright orange against green.
I clear a low hedge choked with weeds
and plant Belfast montbretia.
Here there is peace but here also
there is much to be made new.
In the Trades Club, despite cries of *ciúnas*,
young socialists exchange more than airs
and plan the fight for a human future.*

My tribe

For them
 was it ever a question
 of religion?
 The priority was
 to escape the peasantry.
 History pressed into the actual,
 becoming impossible in hometown Dublin,
 becoming escape
 to England, — home,
 they hoped, of the decent.
 Although having nothing,
 bar fraternal disputation,
 against the 'other brand',
 they greatly preferred
 godless good manners to —
 however religious — the rabble.
 My tribe had
 etched their mark
 on the bodies and minds
 of the people of no property;
 their Christian charity quite consistent
 with the lines of thick stone walls
 reaching high into barren foothills.
 No conflict; no, not even
 with taking commission on slaughter.
 No conflict for my tribe,
 but the fear,
 acted in avoidance,
 that the peasantry might
 stand up, might
 say: We're people
 more numerous and in our number
 more powerful when organised.
 From this, then, the fear of the hearth,
 of Irish spoken by people not
 safe-dead saints or scholars.
 From this, in part at least, the obsessive
 love of order, cleanliness, respectability,
 carte blanche for authority.
 If it ever was a question of religion, then
 the question masked reality; as, for instance,
 their expressed preference for Protestant workers:
 a sentimental affection based on
 Union Jack, banner, drum and Royal portrait,
 symbols of the fact that
 they didn't ask questions, didn't
 muddy the waters.
 My tribe enjoyed
 a bond of class peace stronger
 than the mere ties that bind
 of shared religion. My tribe.



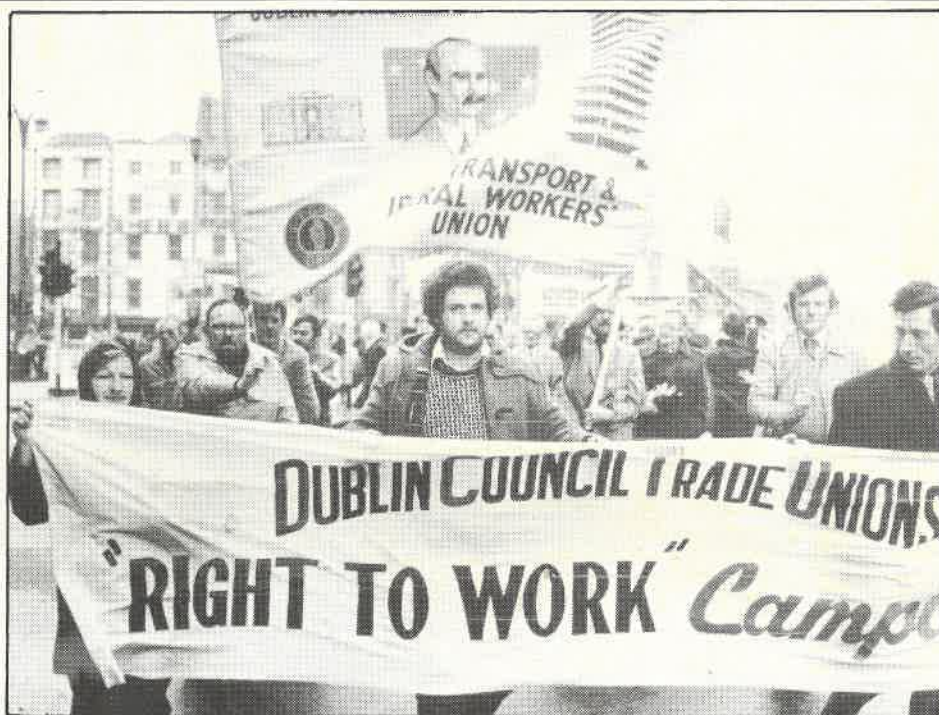
At the match

The eminent don knew nothing of soccer;
 All the same, he yelled wildly for the underdogs.
 "It's the British sense of fair play," he explained.
 "Yes," I said, "we have some experience of that."

Trade unions and capitalism in Ireland

THE ROLE of the trade union movement in Ireland in relation to the continued imperialist occupation of the North and to the foreign multi-national domination of the Irish economy — both north and south, remains an area of confusion for many people. In the first of two articles, John Doyle examines the economic policy of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), and the general failure of the official labour movement to advance the cause of the Irish working class, except in terms of extremely limited gains.

The crucial and related questions of the unions and partition, and the unions and loyalism, will be dealt with in a future issue of IRIS.



THE BALANCE between militancy and cynicism is one that pervades all layers of the trade union rank-and-file in Ireland.

The militancy is just what could be expected from members of a national trade union organisation (ICTU) which represents 65% of insured workers in both parts of the country, and which has a history dating to 1894.

The cynicism of course derives from bitter experience of betrayal from the Congress leadership. The dissipation of the initially enormously militant PAYE demonstrations of recent years and the isolation, or exclusion, of militant unions (such as the bus-workers' union, NBU) from the ICTU umbrella, are classic examples of the

trade union leadership acting to prevent disruption of its spineless conservatism.

Michel Peillon (a lecturer in sociology at Maynooth college), writing in his book *'Contemporary Irish Society: an introduction'*, clearly demonstrates that despite the ICTU's formal recognition of the exploitativeness of the capitalist system it nonetheless accepts the capitalist model of industrial development, as well as an industrial development policy based on the multi-national investment which is now predominant in the Irish economy.

Speaking of the Congress, Peillon says: *"It daily pits itself against a bourgeoisie whose leadership it accepts. The trade unions, defensive associations operating within capitalism, by and large accept the industrial project of the bourgeoisie. They offer no serious alternative to the capitalist future of*

Irish society."

CONNOLLY

The fundamental failing of the Irish trade union movement can be seen in that, of the 90 unions affiliated to Congress (and those few outside its highly restrictive embrace), all confine themselves nearly absolutely to the role of 'gas and water socialism' warned against by James Connolly in his controversy with the Northern unionist/labour politician, William Walker.

Then, laying down basic principles for workers vis-a-vis capitalism, Connolly wrote: *"The real battle is the battle being fought out to control industry... in the number of those workers who enrol themselves in an industrial organisation with the definite purpose of making themselves*



● Machines in the multi-national Ferenka plant in Limerick lie idle: the myth of capitalist 'development' has been well shattered

masters of the industrial equipment of society in general."

But there is very little of Connolly in the practice of today's trade unions, as locked within a capitalist vision of development they fight only, and even at that meekly, not for control but for a share. A share which, although it has increased proportionately since 1894-1913, has been given by a subtle Western capitalism, not taken by an assertive working class.

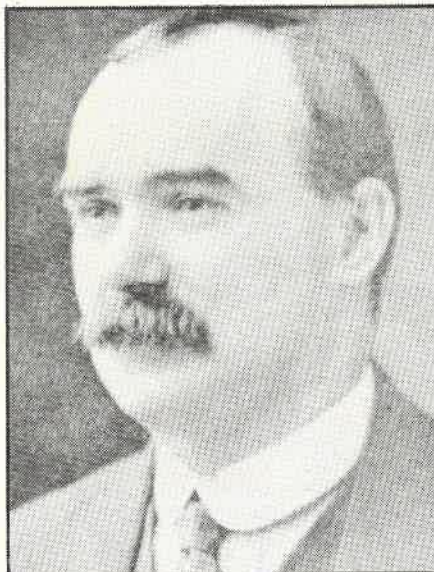
As Michel Peillon says, the workers' movement has advanced no rationality as an alternative to the irrationalities of capitalism. Given that absence of political perception it is not even bureaucratic trade union leadership that prevents movement forward to Connolly's revolutionary socialism, but the lack of ideology and its necessary practice.

The inevitable consequence for Irish workers, within an economy where the industrial base has expanded extremely artificially with overweighted multi-national investment compared with 'home' industries, is that when the system turns nasty the political lessons which have not been learned will have to be learned in a far more vicious social classroom.

TRACK RECORD

Given that the ICTU confines itself purely to economic and limited social demands, its recent track record is worthy of examination.

In the late '50s and '60s capitalism in Ireland developed in a new way (see also *'Economy in Crisis - an historical perspective'*). The hitherto protectionist economic policies of the Free State were gradually abandoned, and following the Whitaker report (1958) and Sean Lemass's pro-American speech at the Fianna Fail ard fheis



● JAMES CONNOLLY warned of the dangers of the 'gas and water socialism' espoused by today's Irish trade union movement

of 1962 the 26-counties were drawn increasingly under the shadows of international, not just British, industrial exploitation.

'Open door' economic policies operated under both the Stormont and Leinster House regimes, coupled with the 're-unification' of the unions under the aegis of ICTU in 1959 and the growing 'respectability' of trade unions, led to the expansion of the industrial base by multi-nationals and to a rapid increase in the size of the industrial working class, who for the first time represented the largest section of employment.

The economic 'boom' from the mid-'60s to the early '70s not only massively expanded trade union membership but heightened workers' social and economic aspirations, a heightening which Irish capitalism could only partially accom-

modate, dependent as it was on cheap labour.

The response of ICTU was to identify as its objectives, full employment, prosperity, and due recognition of its own status. ICTU increasingly adopted a corporate approach to industrial negotiations, undermining the real militancy which was often present in local areas and at the level of individual unions.

STRIKES

Despite major strikes right through the '60s, notably the 1962 bus strike, the 1964 building workers' strike, and the maintenance workers' dispute in 1969, and the influx of new (nationalist) forces into the public service unions in the 6-counties, ICTU rather than fuelling this militancy actively suppressed it.

The introduction of a two-tier picketing policy in 1970 and the practice of 'national wage agreements' and 'social contracts' during the decade, actually led to a decrease in the living standards of industrial workers of about 12% by the end of the '70s, as compared to a real increase in the '60s.

The logic of the trade unions' leadership 'policing' its members in these ways, was that, supposedly, capitalism would 'deliver the goods' if soaring wage levels didn't rock the boat. But far from it, the myth of capitalist 'development' has been well shattered. Unemployment in the country (North and Free State) stands at an average of 17% with areas in the north and east suffering actual figures of 40% adult and 50% youth unemployment.

The establishment of a sound industrial base, essential to prosperity, has not occurred. Instead the withdrawal especially of British capital,

and the high turnover of other industrial enterprises, has prevented the consolidation of new industries while the developments of the last 25 years have shattered most native industry.

CONFORMISM

Even within its own strictly economic terms the ICTU's strategy has been proved sterile, yet it persists in its confidence in capitalism's potential, while its apologists actually praise the rise in 'status' of the trade union movement.

James Plunkett (a Stick, and author of, among other books, *Strumpet City*) writes in *Trade Unions and Change in Irish Society*: "Trade unionism in Ireland has come through three stages... Today it is part of the economic trio; that of employers as a body, of government and trade unions..."

And so, thrilled by its acceptance by the state, the contemporary ICTU comprehensively ignores Connolly who warned "...the political State of capitalism has no place... measures which aim to place industries in the hands of, or under the control of, such a political State, are in no sense steps towards that ideal (of socialism)."

A political voice

As stated earlier, the fundamental weakness of the trade union movement in Ireland today is its lack of a clear socialist ideology.

In 1914, just prior to the outbreak of war, the then 20-year-old Irish Trade Union Congress restructured itself as the Irish TUC and Labour Party, as a result of a proposal promoted by Dublin Trades Council and supported by Connolly. Yet that early conception, of a mass working-class political organisation with revolutionary socialist policies linked to a general trade union of industrial workers, has failed to materialise in the intervening years.

Why this has been so can largely be attributed to the official labour movement's voluntary distancing from the national struggle (which will be dealt with in a subsequent article). But other aspects which prevented the building of a political and industrial organisation of the Irish working class are relevant here.

Primary among those aspects was that those who carried Connolly's policies forward were nearly all caught up in the developing national struggle, their energies concentrating on immediate objectives of surviving the massive repression across the country and defending basic organisation against the general reaction and the sectarianism of the '20s and early '30s.

Secondly, since the '30s the majority of trade unionists in the Free State have supported Fianna Fail, initially



● The ICTU's weakness is, in part, its refusal to place the economic struggle of workers (seen here on Belfast's Falls Road) within an anti-imperialist framework

because of its populist policies and republican image, more so today because of traditional voting patterns and Fianna Fail's residual nationalist image. Equally in the North, partition has inevitably polarised trade unionists along nationalist and unionist lines.

These patterns have not been broken, because of the inadequacy of the Labour Party in the Free State and its rejection of Connolly's socialism, and also because — it must be said — of republicans' practical (and sometimes political) inability to come properly to grips with social issues over the same period.

Equally, the partitionist and economic positions of the Workers' Party offer no alternative to the sterile contortions of the Labour Party and their refusal to advance socialist policies. By mimicking the 'left' of the Labour Party, the Workers' Party have made temporary gains in the Free State, though they have become increasingly redundant in the North. Yet, despite their greater efficiency and comprehensiveness of policy, they are no nearer Connolly than the Labour Party.

The way forward

The alternative to the current disarray within the labour movement, and the lack of socialist perspectives, is not to be found in theoretical tracts or in abusive rhetoric, but in sound agitational work based on the enormous militant potential of grass-roots trade unionists.

While capitalism in Ireland is relatively stable, its foundations are un-

certain, and the false base of foreign investment will assuredly lead to a political crisis in coming years. Equally, the terms of IMF reflotation loans will become increasingly harsh, and capitalism's ability to maintain social consensus will falter.

In this situation, industrial action alone, and isolated defensive actions by the most militant unions, will not be enough to deal with the situation.

It is only by political action paralleling industrial might that the trade unions will become a genuine force for lasting social change. Naturally, this work will not take place in isolation from the national struggle against imperialism.

The political and social crisis inside and outside the trade union movement requires as a base line that republicans and all genuine progressives come together in a sort of economic broad front to head the new political direction forward. Just as socialists must play their full part in the liberation struggle, so republicans must orientate themselves seriously into urgent work on the trade unions, now.

Sinn Fein can be the catalyst for the building of Connolly's vision, if the effort is made. ■

Suggested reading:-

The Rise of the Irish Trade Unions; Andrew Boyd, Anvil Books.

Selected Writings; James Connolly — edited by P. Beresford Ellis, Penguin Books.

Trade Unions and Change in Irish Society; edited by Donal Nevin, Mercier/RTE.

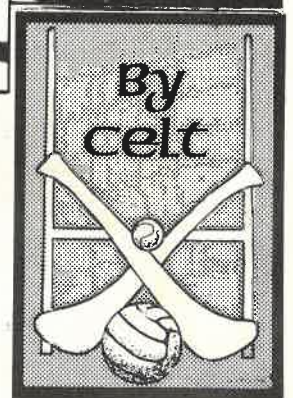
Contemporary Irish Society: an introduction; Michel Peillon, Gill and Macmillan.

Trade Unions in Northern Ireland; Belfast Workers' Research Unit.



● Irish Volunteers drilling in 1914 with hurling sticks before rifles were imported

SPORTING NATIONALISM



THE earliest driving force behind the GAA was provided by Michael Cusack, who founded the association in Hayes' hotel in Tipperary, during 1884. A pioneer of Irish language revival and a founder member of the Gaelic League, Cusack was inspired by the ideal of restoring pride in the national games of hurling and football, and — through them — instilling hope and determination among Irish manhood in their ability to control their country's destiny.

The cruel hardships of the Famine, less than 40 years earlier, bringing death and emigration to 2½ million people, had shattered the national strength. Traditional games like hurling and football — prohibited under law by police and magistrates deeply suspicious of any organised activity which could act as a front for nationally-minded bodies — had been severely disrupted or extinguished altogether in many areas. Restoring these was the end to which Cusack's efforts were

A look at the political origins of the GAA

ALMOST 100 years old, the Gaelic Athletic Association — the largest and most influential sporting body in Ireland — has from its inception to the present day been considerably influenced by political events in its ideals and policy.

In recent years, concerted attempts to curb the intensely nationalist beliefs of many GAA members and some clubs have hinged on the demand that the GAA observe the gulf between 'sport' and 'politics'. This article argues that in the history of the GAA no such gulf ever existed.

directed.

A teacher by profession, from County Clare, Cusack had founded his

own academy in Dublin and moved in the prolific literary circles of his day, being an acquaintance of both Douglas Hyde and James Joyce. He was fond of the popular practice of letter writing to the national press, using their columns as a springboard for debate on national and cultural issues.

Less than two years, however, after becoming the figurehead of the emergent GAA, Cusack found himself in open conflict with other members of the Executive, and was subsequently voted from office.

The issue which enveloped the GAA, and was to do so again and again, was the conflict between the nationalist lobby within it who favoured constitutional agitation, and those separatists who favoured physical force.

FENIAN

Two of the original seven founding members of the GAA, Bracken and Wyse Power, were also members of the revolutionary Irish Republican Brotherhood, and it was obvious before long that the IRB had worked diligently at ground level in many parts of the country, to further their aim of using

the association as a training ground.

By 1886 the Fenian element within the GAA was extremely strong. P.T. Hoctor, a renowned IRB leader from Tipperary, was elected vice-president, and in the same year an invitation was offered to the Fenian, John O'Leary, just returned from exile, to become one of the GAA's patrons.

Other invitations to become patrons had been accepted by Maurice Davin and the archbishop of Cashel, Dr. Croke. Davin was an outstanding athlete and was fired by a concern to preserve Irish games from alien influences. Dr. Croke's patronage saw the Catholic church recognising the growing strength of the association, and Croke himself was to act as mediator as the growing dissent between political factions for control of the GAA continued with vigour.

The annual convention of 1887 was indicative of this power struggle. The IRB had managed to pack the meeting with its members, and foremost among them were Hoctor and Fitzgerald. Forced to wait in the streets outside, with only a few of their supporters inside the convention, the clerical brigade and National Leaguers led by Fr. Scanlan tried to storm the meeting. Amidst fist fights the press stand was wrecked by a group led by Fr. Scanlan himself!

Having been repelled by stewards, Scanlan and his colleagues withdrew to hold a splinter meeting. Inside the convention itself, the IRB candidate, E. M. Bennett of Ennis, County Clare, defeated Maurice Davin by 316 to 210 votes.

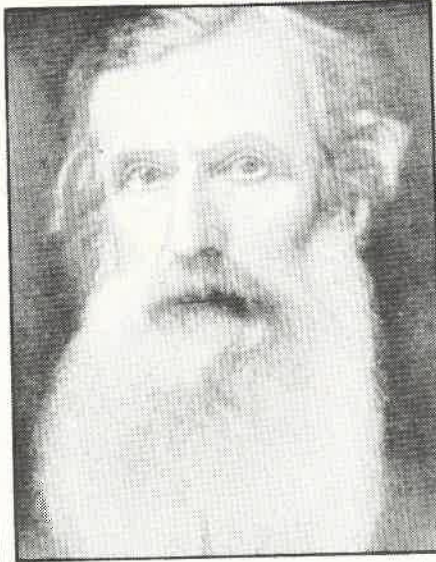
PARNELL SPLIT

Over the next 20 years the fortunes of the GAA were closely to follow the political events in the country. The 'Parnell split' saw the GAA lining up on both sides, with active and well-known leaders of the association openly in confrontation at the meeting of the Irish Party in 1890 which met to decide Parnell's fate as its leader.

But as Parnell's fortunes declined, the GAA as a body threw its weight behind him. At his funeral in 1891 it is reported that over 2,000 GAA members, carrying hurling sticks draped with black flags, followed the cortege.

(The same year was to see an even more public demonstration of the GAA's political involvement when the entire central council followed the funeral cortege of Patrick Nally, who had died under peculiar circumstances in Mountjoy jail after serving a 10-year sentence for treason.)

Thus, by its avowed aims and ideals of consolidating an Irish identity in the field of games, language and culture, the GAA was distinctly and undeniably separatist in its philosophy. And so, in the early 1900s, with the growth of the new Sinn Fein movement, the



● JOHN O'LEARY, one of the Fenian leaders whose funeral was escorted by GAA members carrying hurling sticks as substitutes for rifles

GAA was again to find itself caught up in a new era of the struggle for national independence.

Sinn Fein members had gained important positions on many county boards of the association: Austin Stack in Kerry, Harry Boland in Dublin, Chris Holland in Limerick; and it was quite apparent that Mr. J. Nowlan, then president of the GAA, was himself an ardent supporter of Sinn Fein.

FOUNDING PHILOSOPHY

If then, political alignment had become the reality for the GAA from its earliest origins, what of the attitudes towards that sort of alignment on the part of those whose contribution was central to the association's development?

In his letter agreeing to bestow patronage on the GAA, Dr. Croke wrote: *"One of the most painful, let me assure you, and at the same time one of the most frequently recurring reflections that, as an Irishman, I am compelled to make in connection with the present aspect of things in this country, is derived from the ugly and irritating fact, that we are daily importing from England not only her manufactured goods, which we cannot help doing since she has practically strangled our own manufacturing appliances, but her fashions, her accents, her vicious literature, her music, her dances, her games also... to the utter discredit of our own grand national sports."*

Placing this sentiment in a clearly nationalist context, Croke continued: *"Indeed if we continue travelling for the next score years in the same direction that we have been going in for some time past, condemning the sports that were practised by our forefathers, effacing our national features as though we were ashamed of them, ...we had better at once and publicly abjure*

our nationality, clap hands for joy at the sight of the Union Jack, and place 'England's bloody red' exultantly above the green."

IRISH VOLUNTEERS

It was then in keeping with the founding philosophy of the GAA's figureheads that the association continually demonstrated support for the nationalist cause, with the revolutionary nationalist tendency in the GAA a strong, and often dominant, element.

The funerals of the Young Ireland leader, Gavan Duffy, and the Fenian leaders, James Stephens and John O'Leary, were well attended by GAA personnel marching in military formation, carrying hurling sticks as substitutes for rifles.

With the establishment of the Irish Volunteers in 1913, the GAA was again to play an active role. Typically, one of those at the inaugural meeting of this organisation, which within three years was to take the fight to the British crown forces, was the then secretary-general of the association, Luke O'Toole.

This political contribution, and the GAA's distinctly political separatist philosophy, is well reflected in the introductory remarks to the association's official rule book: *"Those who play Gaelic games and organise its activities see in the GAA a means of consolidating our Irish identity. The games to them are more than games ...they are part of the full national ideal which envisages the speaking of our own language, the buying of Irish goods and the promotion of native music and dances."*

IRISH UNITY

On the topic of Irish unity, the GAA says: *"Since she has not control of all the national territory, Ireland's claim to nationhood is impaired... until complete nationhood is achieved, the association must continue to maintain an all-embracing, patriotic spirit... This national side of the GAA, and its dedication to the ideal of an Irish-Ireland, must be kept to the forefront at all times. To the youth of Ireland, a knowledge of the circumstances in which the GAA was founded, of the part it played in the years before the Rising of 1916, of the share its members had in the fight for freedom, is merely knowledge of their own inheritance and should not be withheld from them."*

Is the GAA then purely a sporting body for running, hurling and football? Emphatically not! Both historically and by its own declaration it has aligned itself with the cause of full national sovereignty. What future role it may play in the present liberation struggle is a subject of speculation, but its members have not been slow in years gone past to direct their energies in the cause of freedom. ■

Saoirse nó daoirse?

LE SEOSAMH Ó LOINSIGH

IARRADH orm alt a chur le chéile le haghaidh an t-eagrán seo d'IRIS agus is iomaí smaoin-eamh a rith timpeall im' intinn. Sa deireadh thiar shocraigh mé an t-alt seo a scríobh mar gheall ar na fáthanna go bhfuilim anois im' bhall de Ghluaiseacht na Poblachta. Is maith an rud do ghach duine a smaointe féin a scrúdú agus a shoiléiriú ó am go ham.

Creidim i dtosach báire gur féidir le gach duine a rogha féin a dhéanamh sa saol seo. Tá saorthoil againn agus más mian linn cúrsaí a athrú is féidir sin a dhéanamh ach cur chuige i gceart. Is gá é sin a rá is dóigh liom toisc mhinicí is a cloistear na focail 'níl aon rogha againn' ó pholaiteoirí agus a leithéid. Is soiléir, tá súil agam ón méid atá scríofa thuas, go bhfuilim dóchasach agus go gcreidim go n-éireoidh linn sochaí níos fearr a sholáthar do mhuintir na hÉireann.

Is gá dóchas chun dul chun cinn ar bith a dhéanamh i gcomhthéacs athghabháil na hÉireann. 'Sé an t-éadóchas an tuairim is mó atá le fáil ó pholaiteoirí Teach Laighean agus ó na polaiteoirí bunaithe de chuid na páirtithe éagsula de chuid na Sé Chontae. Glacaim leis mar bhunchloch, go bhfuil rogha againn agus tá rogha dóchasach déanta agam.

Tá ábhar dóchais agam a chairde. Thaispeán muintir na hÉireann cheana gur féidir leo polasaithe Shasana a athrú. Taispeánadh i dtíortha eile le déanaí, i Vietnam, i Zimbabwe, i Nicéaragua agus i dtíortha eile nach iad, nach féidir leis an daoirse buachaint ar an saoirse má tá náisiún ar bith réidh agus eagraithe chuige.

EAGRAÍOCHT

Ceart go leor, a leitheoir tá mórán constaic le sárú, ach le dóchas agus le heagar ceart ní féidir teora a chur ar an dul chun cinn is féidir a dhéanamh. Is gá mar sin a bheith in eagraíocht atá reidh chun pobal na hÉireann a threorú chun saoirse. Tá daoine ann nach bhfuil sásta páirt a ghlacadh in eagraíocht ar bith ach má tá mór athrú le tabhairt i gcrích sa tír seo caithfidh Gluaiseacht náisiúnta atá ag obair ó lá go lá é a threorú. Ní leor daoine aonair.

Tagaim ansin go dtí an cheist, cad é an saghas sochaí a ba mhaith liom



● Plé agus cur tré chéile ag Ard Fhéis Shinn Féin

a fheiceáil sa tír seo. Ba mhaith liom sochaí bunaithe ar saoirse, sochaí a ghlacadh chuige dualgaisí na saoirse agus a thabharfadh cothrom na féinne do chách. Is soiléir gur a mhalairt ar fad, ar mhórán slite, atá againn go fóill sa tír seo.

Feicim go bhfuil trí ghné ana thábhachtacha den saoirse le bheith ós mo chomhair agus rogha á dhéanamh agam. Ní fheicim go bhfuil tús áite le bheith ag ceann ar bith des na smaointe seo thar a chéile ach caithfidh siad dul le chéile agus a bheith fite fúite ina chéile. Is gá saoirse náisiúnta, saoirse chultúrtha agus saoirse bunaithe ar an sóisialachas.

Rugadh sna Sé Chontae Ficeadh mé agus tógadh mé leis an tuairim go mba cheart go mbeadh Éire ath-aontaithe. Náisiúnachas símplí ab ea é agus is dócha gur mar sin a tógadh furmhór pobal na Sé Chontae Ficeadh. Ach ní raibh mórán tábhacht leis an gceist. Ní chuimhin liom go raibh mórán díospóireachta mar gheall ar an gceist ar scoil. Glacamar leis ach ní raibh mórán le rá againn mar gheall air.

IONADH

Nuair a phleasc an Tuaisceart ós comhair an domhain ag deireadh na

seascaidí agus tús na seachtóidí ní rabhamar ullamh chuige. Agus bhí ionadh orainn nuair a chualamar mar gheall ar na cúiseanna a bhí taobh thiar den gcorraíl. Bhí mórán daoine, mé féin ina measc, a theastaigh uathu cabhrú ach mar sin féin bhíomar ar bheagán eolais agus níor thuigeamar go leor. Ag an am leis bhí scoilt ann idir Sealadaigh agus Oifigiúiligh agus bhí sé deacair idirdhealú eatartha. Diaidh ar ndiaidh de réir mar a chuir mé spéis sa cheist thuigeas go raibh na Sealadaigh ar an mbóthar ceart agus creidim go bhfuilid go fóill.

Ach ag teacht thar n-ais go dtí na saoirsí a luaigh mé cheana ní dóigh liom go mbeidh síocháin sa tír seo go dtí go mbeidh ceist na Sé Chontae sochraithe. Theip glan ar stát na Sé Chontae agus níl dealramh ar bith go n-oibreoidh an stát sin riamh. Dá bhrí sin creidim nach bhfuil reiteach ar bith eile ar an bhfadhb ach Éire a athaontú. Bíodh deireadh leis an ráiméis.

Le seo tagann ceist eile i gceist. Cad é an slí inar féidir a chur ina luí ar Shasanaigh an tír a fhágaint? An bhfuil an ceart ag an mionlach náisiúnach airm a thógáil chun iad féin a shaoadh? Bhuel, tá sé cruthaithe go maith ag an bpointe seo go bhfuil

teipithe ar an ngnáth-pholaitíocht agus agóidí. Níor bacadh le ceann amháin agus buaileadh na léirseoirí ós na sráideanna. Bealach eile go mbíonn mórán cainte mar gheall air ná go ndéanfaí iarracht naisiunaigh agus aondachtoiri a thabhairt ar aon intinn ach a fhad is atá fórsaí Shasana mar chúltaca ag na haondachtóirí agus a fhad is atá an chuid is fearr de phostanna agus tithíocht acu cen fáth go mbogfaidís? Níl aon dealramh ar an scéal go bhfuil bogadh ar bith déanta.

CULTÚR

Fágann sin deá-mhéin Rialtas Shasana agus neart airm. Is minic é ráite nach bhfuil aon phrionsabail ag rialtais Shasana, nach bhfuil acu ach a páirt féin a chosaint. Maidir leis an tír seo tá fírinne an ráitis sin feicthe go mion minic againn. Sa chás seo ní fheicim go raibh aon dul as ach dul i muinín neart airm.

Má táimid le bheith neamhspleách ní haon mhaith a bheith fós ceangailte le cultúr an namhaid go mór-mhór nuair atá cultúr breá againn féin. Tá cultúr ársa againn ach tá sí in oiriúint do shaol an lae inniú. Faoi láthair táimid bodhraithe ó ghach aon taobh ag an gcultúr Angla Meiriceánach. Creidim nach bhfuil ann sa chuid is mó ach cultúr an ábharachais.

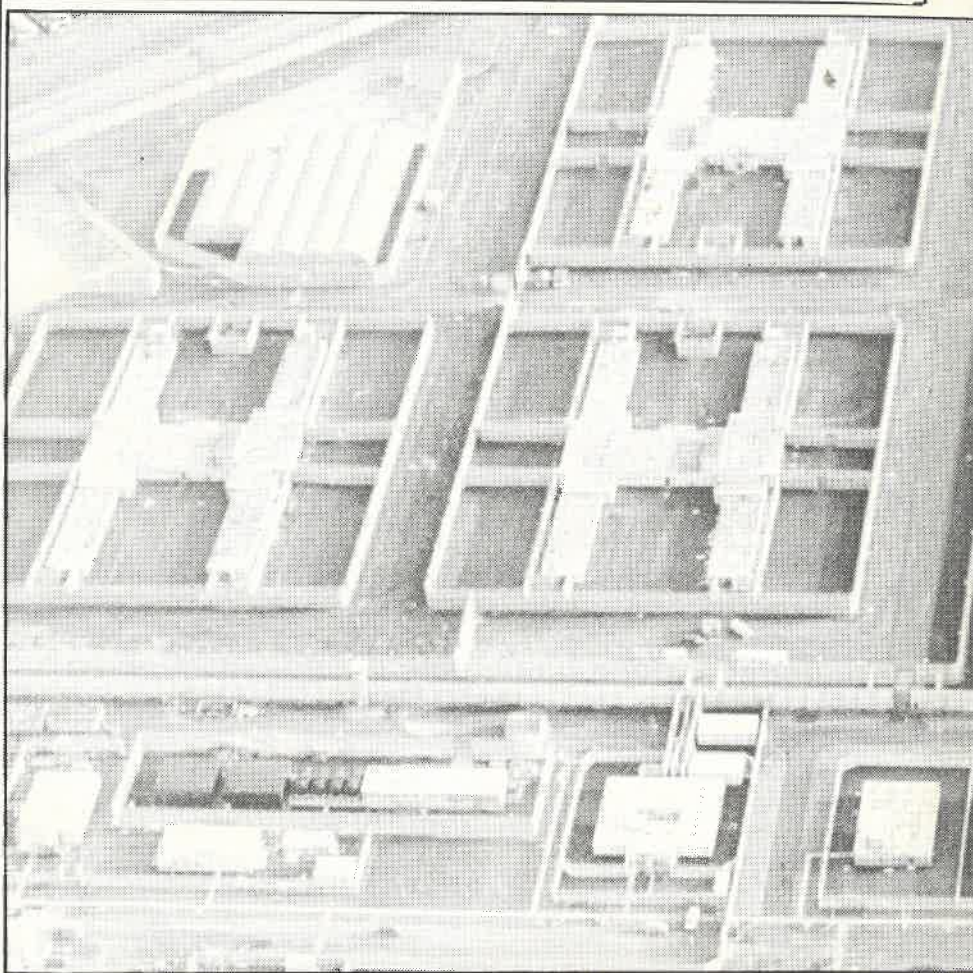
Nílím ag cáineadh gach gné den gcultúr sin ach ba chóir go mbeimís in ann ár gcuid féin a dhéanamh den gcuid ab fharr de agus blas Éireannach a chur air. 'Sí an teanga croí chultúir agus gan an Ghaeilge ní bheidh saoirse cultúrtha againn. Caithfidh aithbheochaint Gaeilge a bheith mar chroílár pholasaí cultúrtha ar bith. Ní fiú trumpa gan teanga polasaí ar bith eile. Creidim go dtabharfaidh aithbheochaint na Gaeilge muinín iontu féin thar n-ais do mhuintir na hÉireann.

POLASAITHE

Focal gan mhórán brí is ea an focal sóisialachas. Is iomaí duine a chrochann an lipéad sóisialaí orthu féin agus creidim go mbeadh sé níos oiriúnaí dóibh creachadoir a thabhairt orthu féin. Is dóigh liom go bhfuil an polasaí sóisialach atá leagtha amach i bpolasaithe Shinn Féin níos congarai don idéal ná polasaí ar bith eile. Tá iarracht mhaith déanta ann sochaí cóir a chur ar fáil. Beidh saibhreas na hÉireann roinnte níos cothromaí ar mhuintir na hÉireann. Beidh srian ar mhí-úsáid daoine ag daoine eile. Beidh cearta an duine cosanta níos fearr.

Táim cinnte go bhfuil an plean rialtais atá snadhmaithe leis an sóisialachas ar cheann des na smaointe is fearr. Tabharfaidh sé ffordaonlathas i réim sa tír seo.

Bhuel a leitheoirí, sin é. Molaim díbh bóthar seo an phoblachtais a leanúint. Cinnte, is bóthar cruaidh é, ach le dóchas agus eagar ceart beidh saol níos fearr againn go fóill. ■



REPUBLICAN PRISONERS HIGHLIGHT IRISH LANGUAGE AS MEANS OF STRUGGLE

Towards a cultural identity

BY GRÁINNE NI MHÁILLE

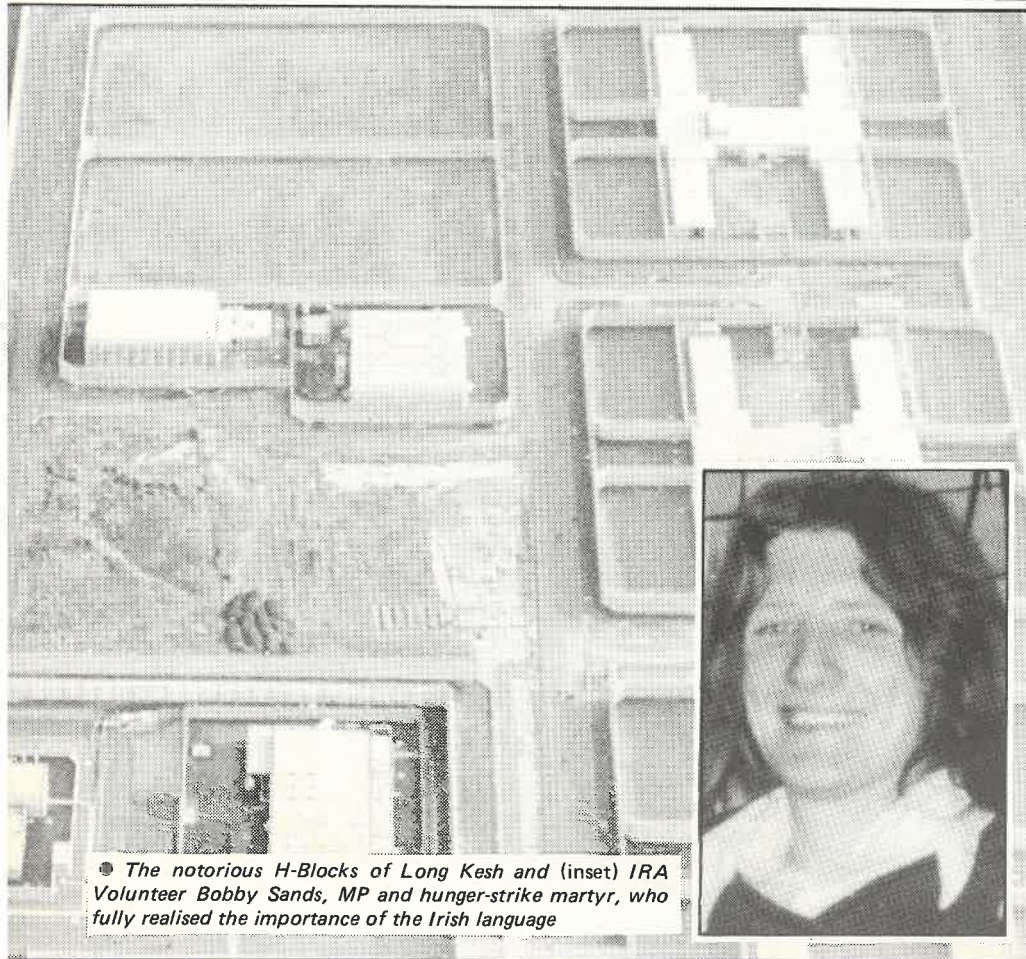
PERHAPS never in the history of Ireland's freedom struggle has the importance of the Irish language been as recognised as it is today among republicans. And by no section more so than the republican political prisoners, in Long Kesh, Portlaoise and Armagh.

The vast majority of young republicans now in jail spoke very little or no Irish before their imprisonment,

yet there is now a Gaeltacht wing in Portlaoise and a high percentage of H-Block and Armagh prisoners attend Irish classes regularly.

It is worthwhile examining this phenomenon more closely. Undoubtedly it is true that the attempted crushing by an occupying power of a language, religion, etc., generally results in a revival of interest in it, and that there exists a parallel here with the suppression of the Irish language by the prison authorities over the years.

Indeed, many of the notes smuggled



● The notorious H-Blocks of Long Kesh and (inset) IRA Volunteer Bobby Sands, MP and hunger-strike martyr, who fully realised the importance of the Irish language

struggle as a whole. This is of particular significance since the same understanding would seem to be lacking among many republicans outside the jails.

While the prisoners are speaking their own language there is little chance of their spirit being broken. Similarly, it would be inconceivable that an Irish-speaking Ireland would ever be finally and irretrievably conquered by Britain — either militarily, culturally or indeed economically.

CAMPAIGN

At present the H-Block prisoners are embarking on a campaign of demanding certain conditions relating to the Irish language and Gaelic games in the jail, which they consider basic rights.

They are demanding the right to converse freely in Irish amongst themselves without recrimination from the prison authorities. They also seek a change in the current prison policy relating to prisoners' mail, that policy being that all letters must be written 'in the language of the country'. In the eyes of the prison administration, of course, that means English.

In addition to this, there are punitive limitations to the amount of books and magazines in Irish which are allowed into the jails (practically none at all at the moment), and there is a total ban on Gaelic games. The flimsiest of reasons are given for this ban, such as that none of the 'physical education' prison warders is familiar with the games' rules, or the pitches are 'unsuitable', etc.

The prisoners now hope to enlist the support of cultural organisations throughout the country to help put an end to this cultural discrimination.

Bobby Sands himself, of course, was a fluent Irish speaker and fully realised the importance of the language. He taught Irish to many of his comrades, and as PRO and finally O/C of the protesting prisoners, his enthusiasm was an inspiration to many of them.

As the prisoners have shown therefore, the war of liberation must be fought on more than the political and military fronts — there is an equally vital need for cultural resistance. As Edmund Spenser, one of Elizabeth I's advisors on Ireland, pointed out in the sixteenth century: "Where the tongue is English, the heart must be English too."

We on the outside could surely learn a lesson or two from our imprisoned comrades on the question of culture. And while the learning of a language is for some a slow process, it is obvious that every aspect of our separate identity needs to be stressed and put into practice during this war, until we become, in the words of Bobby Sands: "a sovereign people, free in mind and body, separate and distinct physically, culturally and economically." ■

out of the protesting H-Blocks in particular, during the blanket protest, illustrate this. Any new words learned by the protestors had to be written on a table or cell wall and memorised immediately, before the prison warders discovered them and removed the writing.

As one of those blanket men wrote to a friend: "If at a later stage we find that we have succeeded in mastering the Irish language, the world will have to be reminded that we did so without any books or proper facilities. But I say this to all republicans: if you want to learn the language such deprivation will not prevent you from doing so. We have proved that."

The determination of these prisoners to assert their own identity, independent of the prison identity, in spite of the brutal oppression between 1976 and the hunger-strikes, is spelled out by two statements in particular. Bobby Sands wrote: "No-one can take away from a person his or her ability to contemplate." Another blanket man said: "Ní féidir leo stop a chur lenár gcuid smaointe ná lenár gcuid cainte" (they cannot stop our thoughts or our speech).

SANITY

For many of the prisoners, their preoccupation with the Irish language was a vital factor in maintaining their sanity amid the inhumanity of the prisons.

But it was more than that. It also

A PROMISE

*D'éirigh mé ar maidin mar a tháinig an coimheadóir,
Bhuail sé mo dhoras go trom's gan labhairt.
Dhearc mé ar na ballaí, 's shíl mé nach raibh mé beo,
Tchítéar nach n-imeoidh an t-ifreann seo go deo.
D'oscail an doras 's níor druideadh é go ciúin,
Ach ba chuma ar bith mar nach raibheamar inár suan.
Chuala mé éan 's ní fhaca mé geal an lae,
Is mian mór liom go raibh mé go doimhin faoi,
Cá bhfuil mo smaointí ar laethe a chuaigh romhainn,
'S cá bhfuil an tsaol a smaoin mé abhí sa domhain,
Ní chluintear mo bhéic 's ní fheictear mar a rith mo dheor,
Nuair a thigeann ár lá aithiofaidh mé iad go mór.*

(from The Diary of Bobby Sands)

gave them an insight into the reasons why the prison authorities attached so much importance to suppressing Irish culture, an insight with valuable relevance for the situation outside the jails.

The British administration's negative attitude to all things Irish — language, music and games in particular — acted originally as the catalyst for the language revival in the jails. Since then, however, many republican prisoners have developed a deep understanding of the importance of the language in the

FEAR uasal ab ea Seán Ó Riada. Rugadh é i gContae Luimnigh sa bhliain 1931. Bhain sé céim ollscoile amach i gCorcaigh. I 1952, tamall ina dhiaidh sin, ghlac sé post oibre mar leas-Stiúrthóir Ceoil ag Raidió Éireann. As sin amach a thosaigh an Riadach ar ród an traidisiúin Ghaelaigh agus an cheoil thraidisiúnta.

Sraith agallamh agus mionaistí is ábhar don leabhar seo, ina gcuirtear síos ar shaol, ar obair agus ar cheol an Riadaigh. Dream cáiliúil lucht a scríofa: Tomás MacAnna (stiúrthóir Amharclann na Mainistreach), Gearóid Mac an Bhua (stiúrthóir Ceoil Raidió Teilifís Éireann), Gráinne Yeats (cláirseoir), Seoirse Mac Muiris (léiritheoir an scannáin *Mise Éire*), Dom Pól Mac Domhnaill OGB, Charles Acton (iriseoir ag Scéala Éireann) agus daoine eile nach iad.

Gael agus gaeilgeoir den seandéanamh a bhí i Seán Ó Riada. Saineolaí ab ea é ar cheol idir chlaisiceach agus eile. Siúd is nach gcuirfí sonrú ar bith ina fhíoraíocht chorpártha, chonaithas láidreacht a cheoil agus an dúchais a tháinig ón chroí istigh. Gael a bhí ann ar tús, Gael a thuig don chláirseoir Ó Cearulláin. Thuig sé go raibh áit uasal ag ceol na tíre seo agus nach bhfuair sé aitheantas ceart go fóill.

Chuir sé roimhe an ceol s'againn féin a thabhairt amach as an bhóithéach agus é a chur ar shúile agus ar chluasa an phobail i gcoitinne. Fear fadcheannach ab ea é, fear a raibh féith an ghrinn ann; níor ghnáth-dhuine ar bith é an Riadach.

DÚCHAS

Cuireann an leabhar seo síos ar thoradh a thaighde agus ar a iarrachtaí i dtaobh an cheoil: *Our Musical Heritage* ceann acu sin, sraith leachtaí ar an cheol traidisiúnta a rinne an Riadach do RTE, nuair a bhí suim acu ina leithéid — maing gur imigh an tsuim chéanna leis an ghaith.

Bhí teagmháil ag an Riadach le cách. Bhí pearsantacht agus inleacht an-mhór aige. Bhí an Ghaeilge go líofa aige. Thastil sé ar Mhor Roinn na hEorpa, d'fhoghlaim sé an Fhraincis. Bhí sé san Oileán Úr chomh maith. Tharraing sé ar an rud ar chóir do gach Éireannach fios a bheith aige go bhfuil a leithéid ann, mar atá, dúchas



● SEÁN Ó RIADA

Fear mór cheoil

The Achievement of Sean O Riada; curtha in eagar ag Bernard Harris agus Grattan Freyer — Irish Humanities Centre agus Keohanes (Ir£14.50). Léirmheas le **Marcas MacDiarmada**

— dúchas ceoil, teanga agus cultúir.

Thriall sé chun na foirfeachta i dtólamh, agus ba mhaith leis cuidiú le daoine eile. Bhain sé faoi i dteach Ghaeltachta, óna gtaistealaíodh sé go laethúil chuig ollscoil Chorcaí le léachtaí a thabhairt ar cheol do dhream a bhain tairbhe agus sult as an chúrsa.

Tá pearsantacht dhomhain an Fhir seo le fáil i gcéirníní a d'éisigh Gael Linn dá chuid ceoil. *The Vertical Man*, ceol clasaiceach a chum an Riadach. Thuig sé tábhacht an chomhcheoil, ornáidíocht bheacht dhúchasach, mothú i ngléasadh an cheoil. Bheartaigh sé grúpa a chur ar bun ina mbeadh béim ar leith ar na trí rudaí seo. B'amhlaidh a tháinig Ceoltóirí Chualann ar an saol.

Dá bharr seo, tháinig feabhas mór ar bhufonta eile ceoil. Bhí, agus tá go fóill, ceachtanna móra le foghlaim i dtaobh an cheoil dhúchasaigh, má ghlactar le comhairle an Riadaigh.

CEOLTÓIRÍ

Scoth na gCeoltóirí traidisiúnta a bhí sa ghrúpa, a bhfuil aithne agus meas agam féin ar chuid acu — Seán Ó Ceallaigh, Seán Ó Catháin, Máirtín Fay (fidileoirí), Paidí Ó Maoileoin (píob), Seán Potts (fideog), Éamonn de Buitléar (bosca), Peadar Mercier (bodhrán) agus Ó Tiobraide féin, Mícheál na feadóige móire as Contae an Chláir. Gaeilgeoirí agus sárcheoltóirí ar saineolaithe iad ar na gléasanna sin.

As an teacht le chéile a d'fhás an grúpa eile 'The Chieftains'

d'ainneoin a ndeir a gceann feadhna Ó Maoileoin ach sin scéal a phléitear go miop sa leabhar. Tá clú idirnáisiúnta anois orthu — ach an Riadach a 'chuir an lasóg sa bharrach'.

Fear cruthaitheach, samhlaíoch, beo beathaíoch, pragmatach, gnóthach a bhí i Seán. D'éag sé nuair nach raibh ach daichead bliain bainte amach aige, é i bhfad ró-óg, ba mhíle trua é. D'fhéadfaimís a shamhlú cad e a bheadh ann, agus cad é a bheadh i gceol na hÉireann dá maireadh sé.

Chuaigh ceol an Riadaigh i bhfeidhm ar an tír lena linn féin. Rinne sé cóiríú speisialta do cheol tacaíochta an scannáin *Mise Éire* agus do *Saoirse?* — thóg sé as stór amhránaíocht na hÉireann. Níorbh aon ghnáth cheol *Róisín Dubh* ná *Boo-lavogue* — má thuigtear iad is athmhuscailt ar mhórtas an náisiúin Ghaelaigh ann.

Níor foilsíodh lámhscríbhinn cheol an Riadaigh dá leagan de *Táin Bó Cuailgne*, ach tá sé ar fáil sa leabhar seo. Ó Riada a scríobh ceol don drama *Playboy of the Western World*, ar éirigh go maith leis.

CUIMHNE

Tá pictiúir den Riadach, le Ceoiltoirí Chualann, le hÉamonn de Valera, e i mbun oibre ar *Hercules Dux Ferrariæ*, é ar saoire, é le Tony MacMathúna i seisiún ceoil, ar fáil sa leabhar. Nuair a chluinim ceol an chruit chórda, téim a smaoineamh ar an Riadach. Rud iontach é éisteacht le ceol an Aifrinne a chum sé. Níl baol ann go n-éagfaidh a chuimhe, beidh sé beo ar fad i gceol Chór Chúil Aodha. Mairfidh a chuimhne i gceol na nUaisle agus na nGael.

Chuir mé féin spéis sa chaibidil le Tomás Ó Canáin, den ghrúpa 'Na Filí' ag cur síos ar Ghaeltacht Iarthar Chorcaí. Sílim gur thuig mé níl fhéarr anam, meon, pearsantacht agus cruthaitheacht an cheoltóra. Fear gaelach an Riadach, b'amhlaidh ba mhó ár dtuiscint ar chúrsaí na tíre, ar spiorad an náisiúin, ar chroí an duine — dá dtuigimís den Riadach!

Leabhar lán eolais é, ach beagáinín daor, dar liom. Níl feidhm orm a insint don leitheoir nach gceannaítear aon rud maith go saor níos mó. B'fhiú an leabhar seo bheith i leabharlann Ghaeil, óir tá eolas ar an Riadach lách — ar an traidisiún, ar an teanga a raibh grá aige di, agus ar ár gcultúr dúchasach.

Is uaigneach anocht Cúil Aodha In éagmais an churaidh chaoin Uch, a Sheáin Uí Riada a chroí A Sheáin Uí Riada na n-éacht Cé sheasfaidh anois an fód? A Thiarna Mhic Dé na nGrást Níor taoscadh an tuile go trá Is ní thaoscfar anois go den. (Seán Ó Cearnaigh a chum)

A segregated jail



FORMERLY Sinn Fein's national organiser, 28-year-old Belfast republican Jim Gibney has been imprisoned on remand since last January, one of many who have been held solely on the word of an RUC informer. Most of this period on remand has been spent in Belfast's Crumlin Road jail.

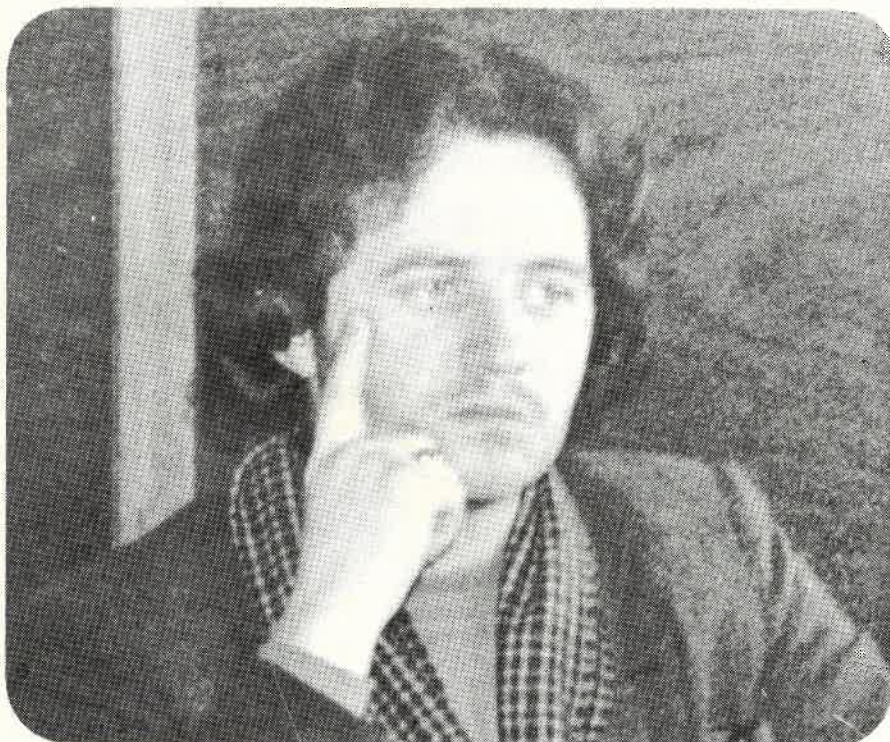
In this article, smuggled out of Crumlin Road, Gibney outlines the daily routine in the jail, in which segregation between republican and loyalist prisoners — one of the hunger-strikers' five demands — plays a central, if 'officially' unrecognised, role.

BY JIM GIBNEY

ONE YEAR after the ending of the hunger-strike in the H-Blocks, the British government continues to refuse to concede some of the outstanding demands which prompted it.

Principal among these demands are the issues of segregation between republican and loyalist prisoners, and a full restoration of remission lost by prisoners during the six-year protest.

Although the relationship in the North's prisons (Long Kesh, Armagh, Magilligan, and Crumlin Road which contains remand prisoners) between prisoners and prison warders has improved, this is due more to the ending of the no-wash and blanket protests by the prisoners, which in turn led to the warders ending their physical assaults and the internal body searches, than to any enlightened handling of the prison situation by the self-avowed



Prison notes

'liberal' prisons' minister, Lord Gowrie. More than enough time has passed since the hunger-strike ended on October 3rd 1981 for the necessary changes to be implemented if the British government was genuinely interested in preventing yet another major challenge to their prison policy, which was derailed last year when they were forced to concede the political prisoners' right to wear their own clothes.

Since then, the focus of attention has switched to the issue of segregation — one of the original five demands which the British government has said it will not implement.

LOYALIST PROTEST

The first significant shot in this protest was fired, in November last year, not by republicans but by loyalists who are also demanding segregation. They took their protest on to the roof of the top security 'A' wing of Crumlin Road jail, having systematically wrecked the wing. Following this incident, loyalist politicians have periodically called publicly for segregation, claiming that loyalist prisoners are out-numbered and under threat from republicans.

But warnings from both republican and loyalist camps of impending trouble between the prisoners, and as a consequence between prisoners and warders, have fallen on deaf ears at the Northern Ireland Office, which continues to issue statements proclaiming that it is not government policy to segregate prisoners according to their political beliefs.

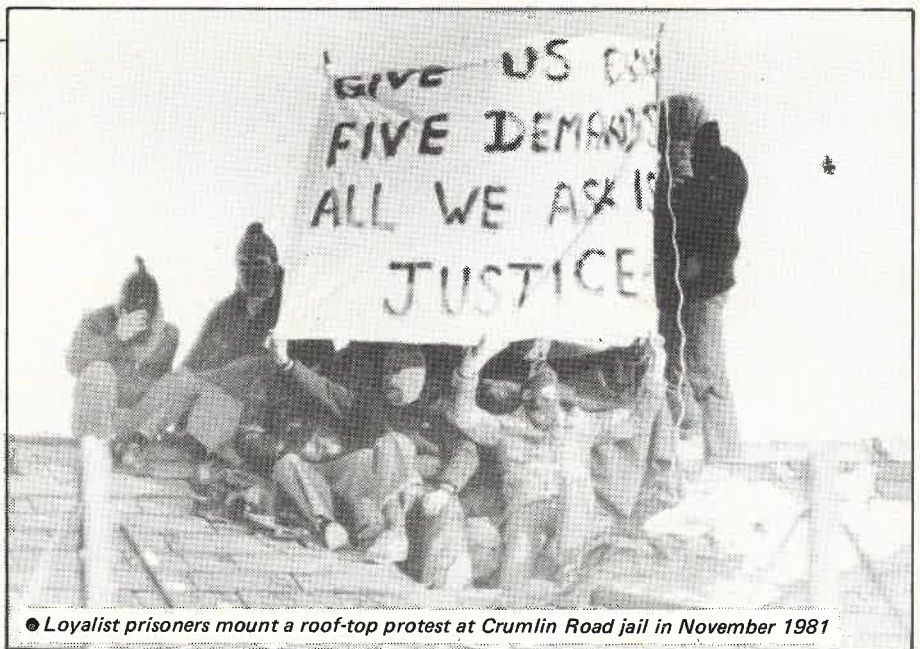
The comparison between this statement and the existing reality in the prisons, particularly Crumlin Road, shows it to be nothing other than a blatant lie.

For over six years, indeed since July 12th 1976 when a riot occurred in the canteen of 'C' wing between republicans and loyalists, the prison administration has operated a policy of segregating remand prisoners during meal-times, association and exercise periods, and while cleaning out their cells. The only time in Crumlin Road jail that loyalist and republican prisoners 'mix' is when they are going to and from visits, and this practice existed even before political status was withdrawn in 1976.

In effect this means that those in charge of prison policy at the NIO, such as Lord Gowrie, know and accept that a system of segregation is being operated. Their 'official' denial of such a reality, in a typical British double-talk, claiming that it is the prisoners themselves who work this set-up and not the administration, is theoretically right but in actual practice is far removed from the truth.

DAILY ROUTINE

A look at an ordinary working day in Crumlin Road jail shows clearly



● Loyalist prisoners mount a roof-top protest at Crumlin Road jail in November 1981

that peace exists because the prison administration operates a limited system of segregation.

The day begins at 7.30 am when prison warders arrive on the landings. Prisoners awaken to a shout from a senior prison warden to the effect that either the 'RCs' (republicans) or 'Prods' (loyalists) are in the canteen for their breakfast.

If it's the republicans, we will then eat our breakfast in the canteen while the warders supervise the 'slopping out' of those prisoners remaining in their cells. Then, when the republicans return from the canteen, we 'slop out' while the loyalists are washing and showering.

At 9 am exercise begins for the non-political prisoners, who are now located in 'B' wing. (This in itself, keeping non-political prisoners in a separate wing, is further evidence of the administration voluntarily operating a form of segregation.) Their exercise ends at 10 am and is followed by republicans exercising from 10 am to 11.15 am. While we are exercising, loyalists continue to wash and 'slop out'. They then collect their dinner from the canteen and eat it in their cells, while republicans eat in the canteen.

All prisoners are locked up from 12.30 pm to 2 pm. At 2 pm loyalists have an opportunity for exercise, following which they have their tea in the canteen. Again all prisoners are locked up between 4.15 pm and 5 pm. Republicans get two hours' association starting at 5 pm, one hour of which is spent in the yard and the second hour in the canteen.

On alternate days, this procedure is reversed and operated in the loyalists' favour.

OFFICIAL ACCEPTANCE

As can be seen, the routine is a cumbersome one to operate, especially when between 100-200 prisoners are in each wing. It could not be worked without the full co-operation of the prison administration.

But the official acceptance — at the prison administration level — of the

need for segregation, does not stop at the day-to-day running of the prison only. At the weekly remand courts on Tuesdays and Fridays, republicans and loyalists are segregated. And even in the area of education classes in Crumlin Road jail, segregation has been implemented — a development which was unheard of prior to the hunger-strike.

As recently as September, during discussions between the Board of Visitors and republican representatives, the Board agreed that segregation did exist and that they would argue for improvements within this established procedure. Republicans, however, regard the Board of Visitors as a toothless animal.

HEFTY PRICE

Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that for this form of segregation prisoners pay a price, and in prison terms it is a hefty one. For, over a week, each prisoner loses 26 hours' unlocked time which he would otherwise be entitled to. On top of this, prisoners are denied a weekly film and access to the prison library. This deprivation, coming on top of other petty restrictions (especially where visits are concerned), of course makes the time spent on remand all the more difficult.

Recently, both republican and loyalist prisoners in 'A' and 'C' wings, amounting to 400 men, petitioned the NIO to relax the rule which prevents a prisoner's wife or girlfriend sitting beside him during a half-hour visit. As they pointed out, there is no similar restriction on personal closeness during H-Block visits. Their petition, nonetheless, was curtly turned down.

The latest protests, beginning on the weekend of October 16th/17th, involving loyalist prisoners in the H-Blocks smashing up 150 cells, with rioting reported at Magilligan also, are an indication of a trend that may continue unless the British government officially concedes segregation.

The one thing they can rest assured of is that until they do there will be no peace inside their jails.

A People's Army

IRIS talks to two active women Volunteers in the Irish Republican Army about their own involvement, their political attitudes, and their observations on the role played by women in the liberation struggle.

Both Volunteers are from the Free State, where they live, and are in their twenties. 'Mary' comes from a country area and has been in the IRA for six years; 'Anne' comes from the city and joined the IRA about a year ago.

IRIS: First of all, could you explain why you got involved in the republican struggle?

Anne: As I don't come from a republican family it wasn't until I was 19 that I first began to identify with the Republican Movement, and that was mainly through meeting people who explained why there was a war taking place in the North. When I realised the degree of oppression there was, and the fact that it was primarily the IRA that was opposing it, I felt I should do something to help. Gradually I became more involved and decided to join the Army.

Mary: For me it was different because I come from an extremely republican area and from a republican family, so I never thought twice about becoming involved. I was aware of Free State repression as well as Brit repression in the North.

First of all I was approached about joining Cumann na mBan, but there were a group of us getting involved at the time, boys and girls, and we all knew each other and went round with each other, and we thought why should any of us be different. We thought we should all be in the same army, so there was a conscious decision on my part to join the IRA rather than Cumann na mBan.

IRIS: Since you joined, have you been allowed to play an equal role alongside male Volunteers?

Mary: Yes, very much so. Everyone just has to do the job, there's never any question of 'oh, we'll have to leave her at home'.

Anne: Since I joined the Army I have been allowed to play an equal role with the rest of the Volunteers in my unit. I'd expect it to be so. I received the same amount of training as my comrades did, so why should I take less risks than them? It wouldn't be fair to them or me.

DOUBLE OPPRESSION

IRIS: It's sometimes said (by women probably!) that, once involved, women make more dedicated revolutionaries than men because of their double



oppression, the 'slaves of slaves'. What do you think?

Mary: The way women are oppressed in our society would make me rebel against it. I can't say there's usually any conscious effort on my part to link the war with the fight against women's oppression, but the two are integrally related. I think it's true that when male Volunteers are going out on an operation they have in one sense less to lose. Women have a home or the prospects of a home to lose. If a male Volunteer is captured he still has his wife and family at home. So yes, in a lot of cases I think women do make more dedicated revolutionaries.

Anne: I would agree with Mary in that the two struggles, national liberation and women's liberation, are integrally related. From my own point of view I cannot say that I am more dedicated than the male Volunteers I work with.

SEXISM

IRIS: Although as an organisation the IRA has a sound attitude to the role of women in the struggle, obviously the attitudes of some of its Volunteers mirror those of society in general. Do you think it reflects on their ability as Volunteers if men retain sexist attitudes towards women?

Mary: It's a terrible weakness in some male Volunteers. If they have sexist attitudes I quite honestly don't think they should be Volunteers at all. It's the same as any Volunteer taking a discriminatory line against any section of the community that's already discriminated against.

Anne: To me it would seem they do not understand the nature of the struggle, not just for a Brit withdrawal but for setting up a democratic socialist republic where men and women are equal. It is through the struggle that they should overcome their sexist attitudes.

POLITICAL OUTLOOK

IRIS: How has your IRA involvement changed your personal outlook?

Mary: It's made me more conscious of other struggles and oppressive regimes all over the world, and of the need to fight all forms of oppression.

Anne: It's made me realise that you don't have to accept things as they are. For instance, I see how more a politically uninvolved friend of mine is inclined to say: "Well, what can you do about it? That's the way things are." My attitude is: "Here's what you can do..." It's just a matter of saying, "I am not going to put up with this."

IRIS: How has your understanding of Irish society changed, relative to the views of people around you, since you

joined the Army?

Anne: My understanding of Irish society has changed immensely, from the double-standards and hypocrisy of the Catholic hierarchy to making me more conscious of my roots and culture.

My family are members of Fianna Fail. They believe that Charlie Haughey is more an enemy of the Brits than the IRA. They don't see beyond that. Since the Brits physically pulled out of the 26-counties they and people like them have been lulled into thinking the war ended in 1921. There's still a latent nationalism there but the only outlet many people have is supporting people like Charlie Haughey whenever he seems to be, falsely, coming out against the Brits, as over the Malvinas and Prior's assembly. It's got to be a priority for republicans in the Free State to work to expose bogus republicanism in the eyes of the people, and to convince them that people like Haughey have no interest in ever confronting British imperialism.

PROBLEMS

IRIS: What sort of social problems face young women who get involved in the IRA?

Anne: Well, obviously you are not able to make definite arrangements as regards meeting people, going out, etc. It really depends on how involved a woman Volunteer is. But anyway, you are made aware of what your commitment will mean, before you actually become a Volunteer, so it's up to you.

Mary: If the Volunteer is a married woman, and her husband isn't in the Army, the situation is obviously a lot harder to cope with than if it's the other way round. Though I would say that it's incorrect to say that the family comes second. If you look at the war in Vietnam, the women fighters went out with their children on their backs. We are fighting for our children. If your family's not vitally important then you have to ask what are you fighting for. Even if we don't benefit from what we're fighting for, our children will.

IRIS: Can the IRA do anything to encourage women to become involved in it?

Anne: I see it as part of my role to try and bring more women into the Movement. All sections of the Movement. They might respond better than if they were approached by a man. If women see other women properly and fully involved it acts as an incentive for them to join.

Mary: I wouldn't agree with a specific recruitment drive for women, but it is important that the IRA must always be consciously portrayed and publicly identified as an army of men and women



Volunteers, a people's army.

WOMEN AT WAR

IRIS: How would you assess women's contribution to the struggle generally?

Mary: Fantastic, given that there's so much against them. In the North it was always women that were out banging bin-lids at four and five in the morning, warning of the Brits coming into the area. Women tend to have more patience and they have the fighting and staying power to see things through. No matter how small their involvement they understand its importance.

Looking back through history you have Constance Markievicz and the whole involvement of Cumann na mBan Volunteers, and now you have the women in Armagh jail. They have always been active in every phase of the struggle.

Anne: Because of the image the Movement tends to be given, women are inclined to think that unless you are out using a gun you're not in the IRA proper. That's wrong. Everything you do is important. No matter how small the thing, it's a vital part of the struggle, and no-one should ever be made to feel they're playing an inferior role. Everyone, doing any job... providing a call house or billet, collecting for the prisoners, doing political work, driving a car, it's part and parcel of the struggle.

IRIS: Do you think that the war in the North has led to the reduction of male domination in nationalist society, because of the role women have played?

Mary: That's hard to answer, living here in the Free State, but from what I've seen of it, yes it has. Women in the North have been liberated and involved of necessity. They've just woken up and found that their husbands have been arrested or imprisoned, and they've had to adapt themselves. Down here in the 26-counties there hasn't been the same progress.

IRIS: Finally, what do you say to feminists who regard the national struggle as a diversion from their own struggle for women's rights?

Mary: I suppose most of those who use that argument feel that the war in the North is not geared to getting the support and involvement of all women, they feel that we alienate a lot of women. To a small degree that's true. But I believe that the fight for women's rights cannot be separated, in Ireland, from the fight against imperialism. Imperialism has generated the oppression of Irish women, it's part of the system of social domination we've inherited from a foreign enemy.

Anne: So women have a dual role to play in the Movement: to fight imperialism and to educate the men. We're gradually breaking down these attitudes but it's a slow process breaking down several hundred years of mental oppression. ■

"The IRA are no different today than in our time. They just have more up-to-date equipment!"

JOHN DOYLE TALKS TO VETERAN REPUBLICAN, LILY MOFFATT

NOW living in Dromod, County Leitrim, at the age of 81, life-long Irish republican Lily Moffatt (nee Freyne) is a glowing example of the full role played by women in the militant and political traditions of Irish republicanism, and an apt comparison with today's women IRA Volunteers.

Born at Aughoo, Rooskey, in County Roscommon on March 10th 1901, it was no surprise that she grew up sympathetic to republicanism: "I was brought up in Fenianism, my uncle was a Fenian poet, all belonging to me were Fenian. It was all I heard at home."

Lily's first public involvement was during the election campaign in Roscommon successfully contested by Sinn Fein's Count Plunkett in 1917, where she worked as a Sinn Fein election sub-agent on polling day.

But in 1919 Cumann na mBan was being organised in the area. Lily was among the first to join: "All round here joined when the Tans came. We were taught first-aid by Nurse Anne Horan from Slata. We used to carry messages and we drilled with .303s and Colts in the bogs upon Curraghroe, instructed by Brian Nangle and Andy Feeney.

"They're all gone but myself. We did our drilling up at Nangle's house.

"We could see the Tans passing along the main road from our house. There was a short-cut through fields near where we lived and I used to help men escape down through the back lanes."

Did the male Volunteers respect you? — "Lord, yes. They were very good, like brothers, they had every respect for us. We used to have dances in houses for funds to help the lads.

"The terrible thing was that some of them later 'went Free State' and came back and raided us."

What do you think of women today being on active service in the IRA? — "I think the women in the North are great. If I could go with them now I would. We were never asked to shoot or anything like that as girls, but we would have done anything. It's better now that women can take a full part."

You have been active in support of the republican women in Armagh jail, but



● Lily Moffatt, a dedicated 81-year-old republican; and below, at the age of 22



you have been in jail yourself. Can you tell us about that? — "I was first in prison for two months in 1923, but nothing was as bad as Armagh.

"I was arrested by Free State soldiers in March 1923 in Rooskey. The night before, the local garda barracks had been soaked in petrol by the IRA, but the Staters arrived before it could be burned down. I was bundled off to

Longford barracks and then taken to the Castle barracks in Athlone.

"The sheets were as black as your boots. We got two sheets and two blankets each, but that wasn't much for March. We pushed our beds together, two girls from Sligo and me, and shared our heat and covers.

"My brother Michael was being held too in the same barracks, and we could see him passing each morning. One day when I was looking out, the soldiers fired at us.

"We couldn't get Mass either. One day we complained to the chaplain, but it made no difference. They wouldn't give us Sunday Mass, only Mass on the odd weekday. We had to kneel on rough cement, but one of our guards had a cushion to save his knees, which we robbed on him."

You didn't take the Free State pension, given to republicans involved in the Tan War by the newly-elected Fianna Fail government? — "No, why should I? We were all Volunteers."

What do you think of the Free State today? — "Not much." (Fergal, a 7-year-old relative chimes in: "They're worse than the Brits!") "It's awfully short of the republic. And when I think of Liam, Rory, Richard and Joe shot in cold blood by the Staters...

"The people in the North are right to fight the British, they're our enemy. Now the Free Staters are more British than the British themselves. The people that died in my young days would have no regard for the Free State. Our culture, even our Irish dancing, is forgotten.

Do you agree with the present IRA's methods? — "Yes, they are no different than in our time. In the North today they just have more up-to-date equipment. They are right to fight. I hate to see people killed but England never knew any language but the language of the gun. I wouldn't begrudge anything to get the Brits out."

Finally, Lily, what would you say to the girls and women who see this interview? — "Do all you can for the good of your country. You could do nothing better. My one longing is not to die before the Brits get out. I'd die happy in the morning if we got rid of them." ■



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

THE past four months have seen the continuation of armed IRA attacks across the six counties, directed at British army, RUC and UDR forces, and at the economic infrastructure of the Northern state. Without doubt, of course, the most successful operation of all took place not in the six counties but on the streets of London.

Although the level of those military operations has not been nearly as intensive as in the early part of the year, with the focus of attention being on republicans' *political* activity in the run-up to the assembly elections, the IRA has nonetheless demonstrated — for instance, with the RPG7 rocket attack on a Belfast barracks in late September — its unimpaired ability to

deliver the military goods, at a time and place of its choosing, and often in a spectacular fashion.

In the same period, the discrediting in the courts and the virtual collapse of the RUC's use of paid informers, has hopelessly undermined the campaign of 'psychological operations' it undertook among the nationalist community, and which now hardly offers even the minimal returns it did in the beginning.

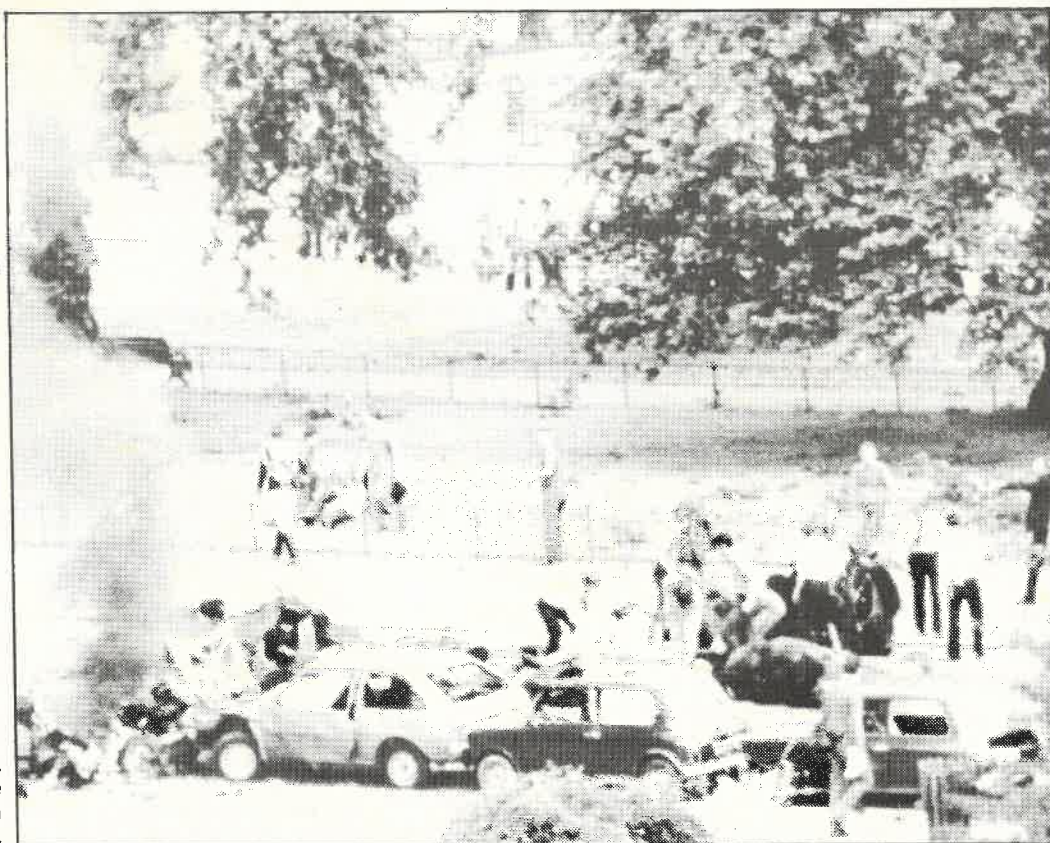
Now, in the wake of the highly successful intervention in the assembly elections by republicans, which has provided a needed boost for the resistance struggle, the Brits can have little to look forward to, as the nationalist people and their armed vanguard, the IRA, continue to wage revolutionary war with increased confidence.

The war in England

WITHOUT any doubt at all, the IRA's double-bomb attack in London on Tuesday 20th July — which claimed the lives of eleven British soldiers — was the most brilliantly-executed combined operation since Mountbatten and eighteen British soldiers were killed on the same day in August 1979.

In the space of hardly more than two hours, the harsh reality of war was briefly transferred from the ghettos of the occupied North to the heart of the enemy's capital where it could not be ignored.

Attack No. 1 came at 10.40am. Less than ten minutes earlier, the gates of Knightsbridge barracks in central London had swung open, and sixteen mounted cavalymen of the prestigious Blues and Royals regiment of the Household Cavalry



● Stunned military and police personnel at Hyde Park, London, where the first of the IRA's devastating and daring attacks in the heartland of the imperialist enemy on July 20th took place

had ridden out on their way to Buckingham Palace for the 'changing of the guard'. They never arrived.

Instead, as the officer commanding the troop of horses drew level with a blue Morris saloon parked in Rotten Row, on the edge of Hyde Park, an IRA Volunteer nearby detonated a sophisticated radio-controlled bomb located inside the car. In the ensuing blast two cavalymen were killed outright and a further four were seriously wounded (two of whom subsequently died). A few civilians in the area received slight injuries, mostly shock, but none were seriously hurt, a tribute to the IRA's careful planning of the attack.

Attack No. 2 came just two hours later, as the IRA struck at a group of thirty-one bandsmen of the Royal Green Jackets regiment, who had foolishly carried on with a pre-arranged and publicised military concert in Regent's Park.

At 12.55pm, twenty minutes into the band's routine, the centre of the bandstand was devastated by an explosion which killed six British soldiers outright and injured twenty-four (one of whom subsequently died). Unfortunately four civilians were also injured, though only one seriously; the controlled upward-directed force of the explosion had ensured, as intended by the IRA engineer responsible,



● The second IRA attack in the English capital on July 20th took place in Regent's Park, resulting in the deaths of seven soldiers and bringing enemy fatalities to a total of eleven

that civilian injuries were minimised.

The British media and establishment reacted to these stunning attacks with predictable hysteria, a sure indication that their effect had hit home hard. Yet, despite their attempt to portray the British army targets as only 'ceremonial'

soldiers — not fighting troops — and therefore not in any sense legitimate targets, this absurd double-speak was roundly rejected by the nationalist people throughout Ireland, whose morale was boosted considerably by the London attacks.

Since then, despite a massive British 'security operation', there

have been no leads to uncover the IRA's daring ASU, and no further attacks in England. And most frustratingly of all, for the British, no indication whether the IRA Volunteers have returned successfully to Ireland, or whether they are still in England, waiting patiently for the next opportunity to strike!

The war in the North

JULY

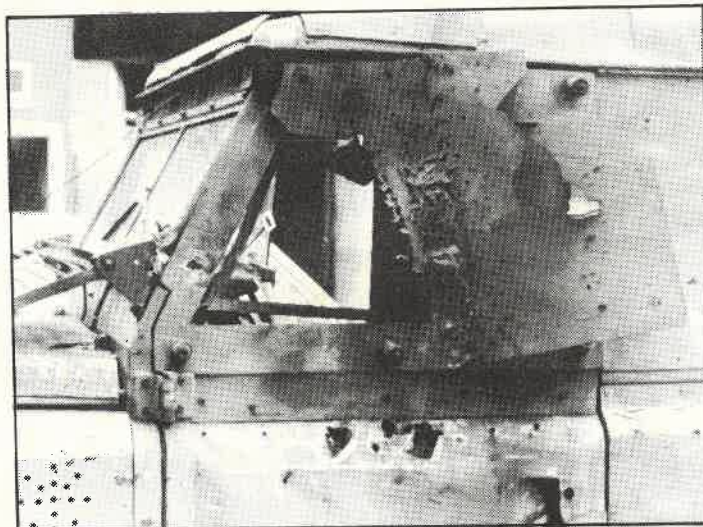
IRA VOLUNTEERS of the South Armagh Brigade successfully severed the Belfast-Dublin rail-link on July 9th, in the first operation of the month. A bomb planted at Grant's bridge — two miles north of the border — detonated late that night, disrupting rail traffic for three days.

BUS DEPOT BOMBED

In a major economic attack, the IRA's Derry Brigade carried out an incendiary bomb attack on the Pennyburn bus depot in the city on July 13th. Nine Ulsterbuses were destroyed (bringing to 128 the number of buses destroyed in Derry alone, over the past ten years), at a replacement value of £270,000. Two active service units (ASUs) were involved in the attack.

RUC AMBUSH

An active service unit in west Belfast fired a single high-velocity shot at an RUC patrol in Broadway Road on July 20th, but claimed no hit. The sniper attack came only hours after the monumentally successful double-bomb attack in Lon-



● On July 27th, despite being hit by an RPG7 rocket and high-velocity fire, the RUC personnel in this landrover miraculously escaped serious injury in Belfast's Beechmount area

don, but as in that attack the Belfast Volunteers eluded a massive follow-up search operation.

M60 ATTACK

Later on the same day, July 20th, the IRA in the Jonesborough area of South Armagh carried out a dramatic M60 machine-gun attack on an airborne, armour-reinforced British army helicopter. Several

bullets ripped through the fuselage, forcing the Brit pilot to make an emergency landing.

DUNGIVEN BUSES BOMBED

£40,000 damage was caused in an IRA commercial bomb attack on Ulsterbuses in Dungiven depot on July 26th. Three bombs were planted at 1am, two of which detonated, gutting one bus and damaging three

others in the ensuing incendiary blaze.

GARAGES ATTACKED

Two hours later, Wilson's garage in Lurgan, County Armagh, was damaged in an incendiary bomb attack. A second bomb, placed at a petrol-filling station 100 yards away, was unfortunately discovered and defused by the Brits before it could explode.

LUCKY ESCAPE

An RUC man in Dromara, County Down, narrowly escaped almost certain death when he spotted a high-explosive booby-trap bomb, on July 26th, which IRA Volunteers had attached to the front axle of the lorry he was about to drive.

RPG7 ROCKET ATTACK

A spectacular IRA attack was carried out in the heart of west Belfast on July 27th, when a two-vehicle RUC patrol came under rocket attack and high-velocity fire in the Beechmount area.

An ASU had taken over a house twelve hours earlier and waited there for an opportune moment. At 10.45am, an RUC patrol drove up along Beechmount Avenue; one Volunteer fired a rocket, clipping the front of the second landrover and disintegrating part of its armour-plating. Other Volunteers opened fire with automatic weapons. Amazingly, the RUC did not

apparently suffer serious casualties in this attack.

UDR SOLDIER ESCAPES

A UDR soldier in Bellaghy, South Derry, was extremely fortunate on July 28th, discovering an IRA booby-trap bomb under his car moments before he was due to drive off. The sophisticated bomb consisted of a small quantity of explosives packed into a camouflaged black PVC pipe and fastened by magnets to the underside of the car.

RUC MAN WOUNDED

One member of an RUC land-rover patrol passing through the Creggan area of Derry city on the evening of July 28th, was seriously wounded when IRA Volunteers opened fire. The ambush took place as the patrol slowed down at a junction.

Also in Derry, in the Prehen district six hours later, the golf club was completely destroyed in an IRA incendiary bomb attack.

AUGUST

ON AUGUST 3rd, only 24 hours after the RUC in Downpatrick, County Down, had viciously attacked nationalists who were protesting at the provocative parading by Paisley and his followers through the town, the IRA's South Down Brigade shot and wounded an RUC man as he left the home of Official Unionist local politician, Cecil Maxwell.

Claiming the attack, the IRA reiterated that "the IRA will not sit back and allow the RUC to ride roughshod over the nationalist people."

ARMAGH INCENDIARIES

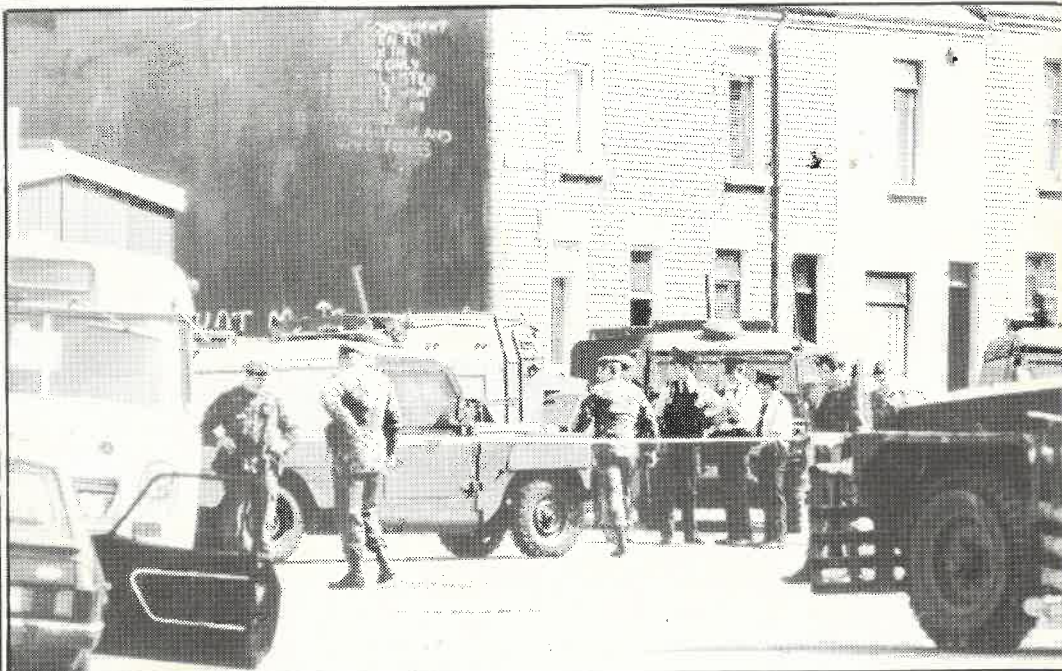
The IRA in North Armagh planted a number of incendiary bombs in the government Youth Employment Agency building in Armagh city on August 3rd. They caused a blaze when they exploded in the early hours of August 4th, but the fire was quickly extinguished by the fire brigade.

BRIT WOUNDED

A British soldier on patrol in Derry's Creggan estate was wounded in the ankle on August 8th, after the IRA opened fire. In their panic to flee the area, the Brit patrol left behind the wounded Brit's SLR rifle, arriving back only after twenty minutes, in full force, to retrieve it.

GRENADE ATTACK

Volunteers of the 1st Battalion, North Armagh Brigade, carried out a hand grenade attack on an RUC patrol in the Banbrook Hill area of Armagh city, in the early hours of August 9th. Three grenades were thrown at the unmarked RUC car, and the Volunteers followed this up



● Brits and RUC at the scene of the Belfast RPG7 attack on July 27th

with rifle fire before withdrawing.

DERRY AMBUSH

Volunteers in Derry's Bogside, operating from two firing points, fired two aimed high-velocity shots on August 9th, at an RUC patrol trying to recover a commandeered van which had been left on the edge of the Bogside as a lure. Panicking under fire, as usual, the RUC and a passing Brit patrol loosed off about 30 unaimed shots at flats nearby, but fortunately hit none.

SOUTH ARMAGH GUN BATTLE

Volunteers operating just south of Forkhill, close to the border, engaged British troops (who had been drawn into the area to deal with a suspect bomb on the railway line at Kilnassagart bridge) in an intense gun battle lasting over twenty minutes, on August 9th. Neither side claimed any hits however.

RAIL-LINE DISRUPTED (AND AGAIN!)

The IRA in South Armagh successfully severed the North's main rail-link, from Belfast to Dublin, on August 11th, when a Dublin-bound CIE goods train was damaged in an explosion at Aghadavoyle bridge. Despite an earlier IRA warning about the bomb, the goods train had continued its journey. As the rear carriages passed over the bomb, it was detonated by command wire.

A full three days later the rail-link was finally repaired, but only three days after that, on August 18th, the line was severed again by another explosion as a goods train passed over Killeen bridge!

DERRY ATTACKS

An IRA sniper opened fire on a Brit foot patrol at Derry's city walls on August 22nd, but no

hit was claimed.

Two days later, on August 24th, the IRA discovered that the Brits had established a spy-post, yet again, in a derelict shop in Central Drive in the Creggan estate. An ASU hurled two hand grenades into the post, routing the Brits inside. Unfortunately, heavy Brit reinforcements arrived on the scene and the IRA had to withdraw.

Half an hour later, several shots were fired at a Brit patrol in Bishop Street in the Bogside, and the next morning, August 25th, Brits in Bishop Street were again fired on.

FORMER UDR SOLDIER KILLED

On August 27th, a man who had — unknown to the IRA — left the UDR last year, was killed instantly in an IRA booby-trap on his car. The operation was carried out at Milford, County Armagh.

Following the death, the IRA issued a public statement emphasising that any member of the crown

forces who resigns should inform them through a neutral intermediary if they are no longer to be considered legitimate targets.

SEPTEMBER

AN RUC man received serious shrapnel wounds when a hand grenade was thrown at his patrol in Central Drive, in Derry's Creggan estate, on September 1st. The RUC patrol was attempting to recover a white van which had been commandeered and turned into a barricade, during rioting in the city which followed the arrest of more than twenty republicans there on the word of an informer.

COALISLAND GUN ATTACK

County Tyrone IRA Volunteers mounted a brief gun attack on the RUC barracks in Coalisland on September 11th. A burst of gunfire



● Work begins (once again!) on repairing the Belfast-Dublin rail-link severed by IRA engineers



● The sentry post at the rear of Belfast's Springfield Road barracks which was hit by an RPG7 rocket, killing one British soldier

shortly after 10pm was followed by several more shots, minutes later.

ROCKET ATTACK

In a resurgence of IRA military activity, Volunteers of the IRA's Belfast Brigade carried out an RPG7 rocket attack on the heavily-fortified Springfield Road Brit/RUC barracks in west Belfast, killing one enemy soldier.

The attack took place on September 20th, eight hours after an active service unit had occupied a nearby house in order to monitor enemy and civilian movements in the area. When the vicinity was clear of civilians, a Volunteer carrying an RPG7 rocket launcher calmly walked to the corner of Violet Street, took aim and fired at a concrete sentry post 50 yards away.

The high-explosive rocket head penetrated the post, exploding on impact, and killed the sentry inside, a member of the Worcestershire and

Sherwood Foresters' regiment.

DUNGANNON ATTACK

Tyrone Brigade IRA Volunteers successfully destroyed a car showroom in Dungannon on September 20th, in a resumption of the commercial bombing campaign after the short lull. Volunteers planted the bomb outside Davidson's showroom at 10.30pm, phoning several warnings to ensure the area was evacuated of civilians. At 11.20pm, just as a Brit bomb disposal team prepared to move in, the car-bomb detonated.

COLLABORATOR WARNED

Extensive damage was caused to a pub in the South Armagh village of Middletown on September 18th, after the proprietor had ignored repeated IRA demands that he stop serving drink to members of the crown forces. Telephoned IRA warnings ensured that the pub was vacated well before the explosion

which wrecked the premises.

In a subsequent statement the IRA in South Armagh reiterated that they would not tolerate business people facilitating enemy forces in their shops and pubs.

OCTOBER

THE MONTH began with a dramatic upturn in the level of successful IRA military operations, with two fatal attacks on members of the paramilitary RUC, and one British soldier wounded.

COOKSTOWN RUC ATTACK

In the first of two successful IRA ambushes on the RUC in the space of five days, Tyrone Brigade IRA Volunteers shot dead an RUC Reservist, on October 1st, as he travelled by motorbike along a country road just outside Cookstown. The RUC man was a member of the local unionist gun club and of the Orritor Orange Lodge.

SOUTH ARMAGH BOMB BLAST

At least one British soldier was wounded when an IRA bomb concealed beneath corrugated iron sheeting on the Castleblayney Road, just outside Crossmaglen, exploded as his patrol passed by on Saturday night, October 2nd, hurling him into the air.

DERRY RUC ATTACK

The second fatal IRA attack on an RUC member took place in Derry on October 5th. Shortly before noon, a red Cortina car containing Derry Brigade IRA Volunteers drew up to the security gate at the western divisional

headquarters of the Water Service, in the loyalist Altnagelvin area of the city, where the RUC Reservist was working.

They immediately opened fire on the RUC man as he approached the car, killing him outright.

SOUTH ARMAGH ROCKET ATTACK

The IRA in Crossmaglen fired an RPG7 rocket from a range of 200 yards at the fortified observation post of the local Brit barracks on October 10th. Unfortunately the rocket failed to penetrate the post and exploded harmlessly outside, leaving the occupants of the base nevertheless badly shaken!

GUN AND GRENADE ATTACK

A mobile RUC patrol in Armagh city came under attack from hand grenades and automatic gunfire on October 11th, though they were lucky to escape injury. Two hand grenades were thrown at the RUC armoured vehicles as they passed the entrance to the nationalist Drumarg estate. The IRA followed this up with a burst of automatic fire.

BALLYMURPHY ATTACK

A British army patrol in the Ballymurphy district of west Belfast had an extremely narrow escape on October 14th when a small but sophisticated booby-trap bomb detonated as they passed by.

IRA Volunteers had carefully located the bomb on a piece of waste land between Whitecliff Parade and Whitecliff Crescent in the heavily-patrolled estate. As the four-man patrol approached, shortly after 10am, the bomb was detonated but unfortunately failed to inflict enemy casualties. ■



● Clearing the wreckage at Davidson's car showroom, Dungannon

Battle for the Sahara



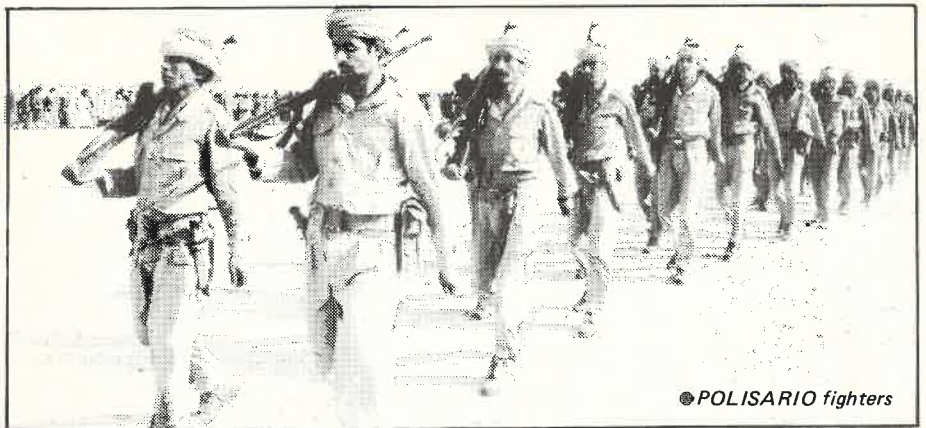
SINCE 1973 the Sahrawi people of the Western Sahara, under the leadership of the POLISARIO liberation movement, have been engaged in a fierce, renewed struggle for self-determination against a succession of imperialist enemies. This article provides a brief background to that little-known war.

BY CIARAN DOWD

THE HISTORY of the Berber and Arab people who inhabit the Western Sahara is centuries old. The direct ancestors of the present-day Sahrawis were tribes which came from the Yemen in the 16th century. They crossed north Africa and eventually established themselves in the Western Sahara. In subsequent centuries there were clashes between these tribes and any newcomers.

The situation was stabilised in the 18th century when the northern El Hamra region became known as the 'land of saints', a centre of learning and holiness which attracted scholars from far and wide.

But all this changed in 1885 when the 'Berlin conference' of the imperialist powers, which settled the partition of Africa between them, allocated this area to Spain as a 'protectorate'. The Sahrawis fiercely opposed this Spanish colonisation (and aided the limited opposition in neighbouring Morocco and Mauritania to French colonialism). Fighting in what was known as the Spanish Sahara continued right up until 1936 when a joint Franco-Spanish military campaign destroyed the resistance.



●POLISARIO fighters

Again, during the '50s and '60s, when so many African countries began to gain some form of political independence, the Spanish Sahara remained a colony, with Spain actually ceding to Morocco the Sahrawi province of Tarfaya as a reward for their collaborative help in suppressing renewed fighting in 1958.

POLISARIO

The people's will for independence could not, however, be contained for long. In the late '60s popular resistance began in earnest, culminating in 1970 in a massive demonstration against the efforts to turn the Sahara into a Spanish province. The Spanish occupying forces responded by massacring the demon-

strators and dissolving the 3-year-old Movement for the Liberation of the Sahara.

Faced with the suppression of peaceful forms of protest, the Sahrawis opted again for armed struggle, establishing in 1973 the Front for the Liberation of Sakiet El Hamra and Rio de Oro (*POLISARIO*) and carrying out their first armed action shortly afterwards. Such actions, frequently involving protracted and intense confrontations, have continued ever since.

Towards the end of 1975, the Spanish government decided to cut its losses and withdraw from the territory, but before leaving they convened a conference in Madrid with representatives of the Moroccan and Maurit-

anian governments, which resulted in the partition of the Western Sahara between these two.

Neither country had any historical claim at all to the Sahrawi territory, which prior to Spanish occupation had existed independently as a voluntary confederation of tribes. However, the Western Sahara contains possibly the largest phosphate deposits in the world, as well as large reserves of uranium, iron, natural gas and oil. The occupation held out the possibility that Morocco — already the world's largest phosphate exporter — would establish virtually a monopoly on the world's exportable phosphate reserves.

ESCALATED

The resistance to the new occupation forces was escalated within the Western Sahara. *POLISARIO* consolidated its position as the undisputed representative of the Sahrawi people, and in February 1976 it proclaimed the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

The government formed shortly afterwards was soon recognised by several African countries, leading in 1981 to the SADR's official representation at the Organisation of African Unity.

Meanwhile, the military struggle intensified. The main priority in early 1976 was to shelter the population from Moroccan and Mauritanian bombardments. After this defensive phase, the Sahrawi offensive resumed in May 1976, with *POLISARIO* establishing and holding extensive liberated zones across the territory leaving most Moroccan/Mauritanian strongholds isolated.

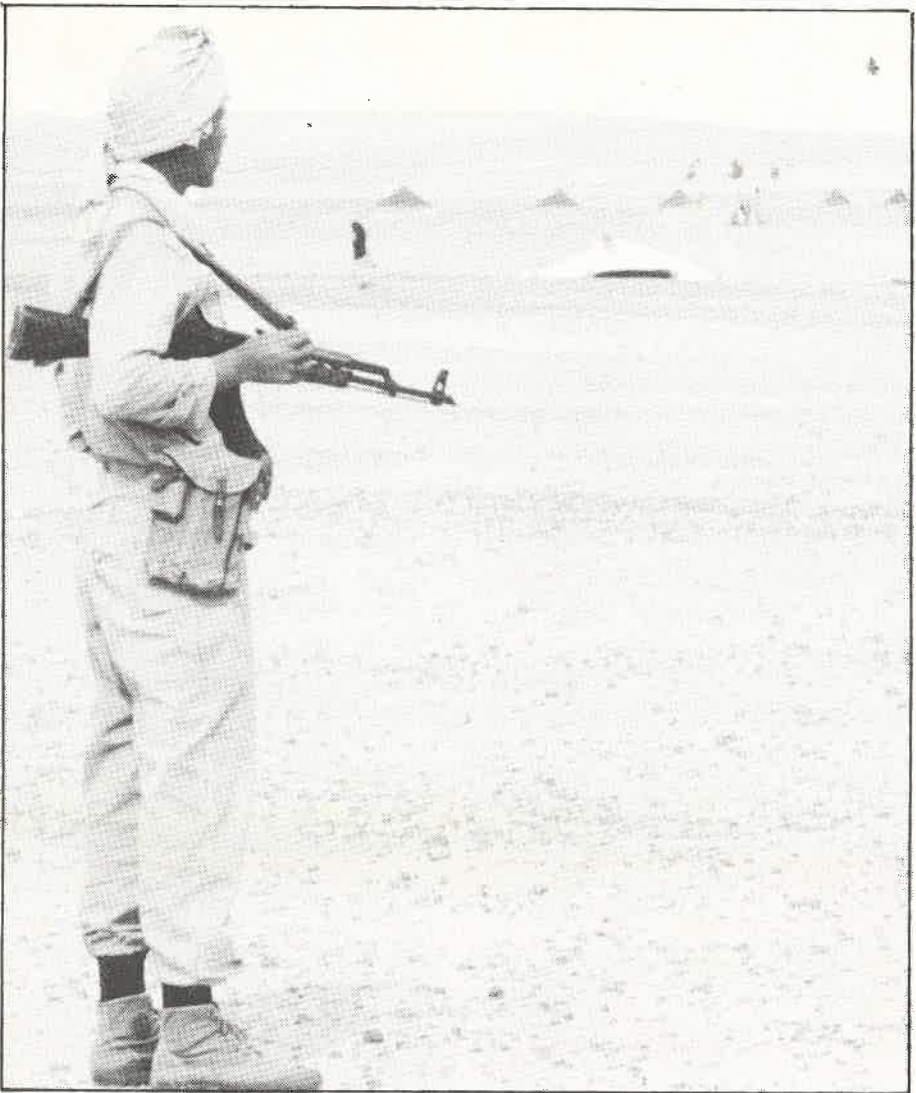
The first phase of this struggle was concluded in mid-1978 when a change of government in Mauritania led to the *POLISARIO* unilaterally declaring a provisional ceasefire, followed subsequently by Mauritania's withdrawal from the conflict.

Morocco however retrenched, and has continued to wage war against the Sahrawis, reinforced by American and French military 'advisors' and sophisticated US military equipment. On January 1st 1979, *POLISARIO* launched its major 'Houari Boumedienne offensive' which led to a series of spectacular military successes. In the years since, this military resistance has been accompanied by growing recognition of the Sahrawis' national rights at the diplomatic level.

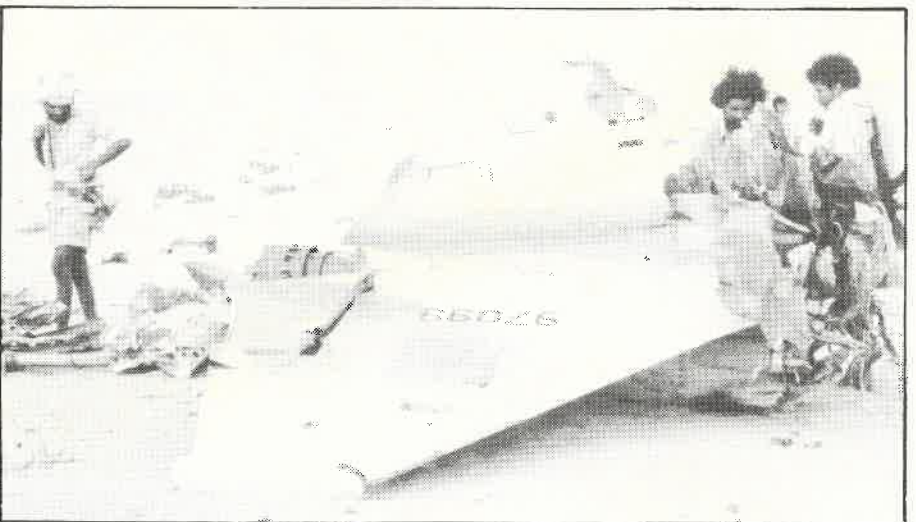
OBJECTIVES

The long-term objectives of *POLISARIO* are defined as a policy of national construction towards the realisation of socialism. This will be carried out through a democratic republican system and the mobilisation of the people. Its fundamental aim is the fair distribution of all resources and the end of all exploitation.

Culturally speaking, the development of Arabic is favoured in preference to Spanish, free and compulsory education,



● A sentry stands watch in a *POLISARIO*-liberated area of the Western Sahara



● *POLISARIO* guerrillas examine the wreckage of a downed Moroccan jet

protection of the traditional civilisation and cultural heritage.

The short-term priorities of *POLISARIO* are centred around a greater political awareness amongst the people, reinforcement of the popular organisations, and the extension of people's participation in the state institutions. Particular attention is given to survival needs in the refugee camps, adequate nutrition, hygiene and health instruct-

ion, with literacy campaigns and women's education being promoted.

The morale of the people is high. As one woman in a camp said: "We have a lot of needs but few means since they took everything away from us: our land, our minerals, our riches. We have problems of food, but we didn't come here to eat, but to carry out the task of reconquering our independence, our territory." ■



● As in all progressive liberation movements, POLISARIO gives its women members an opportunity to participate to the full in the struggle



● Sahrawi youth, from the POLISARIO's junior organisations, on parade

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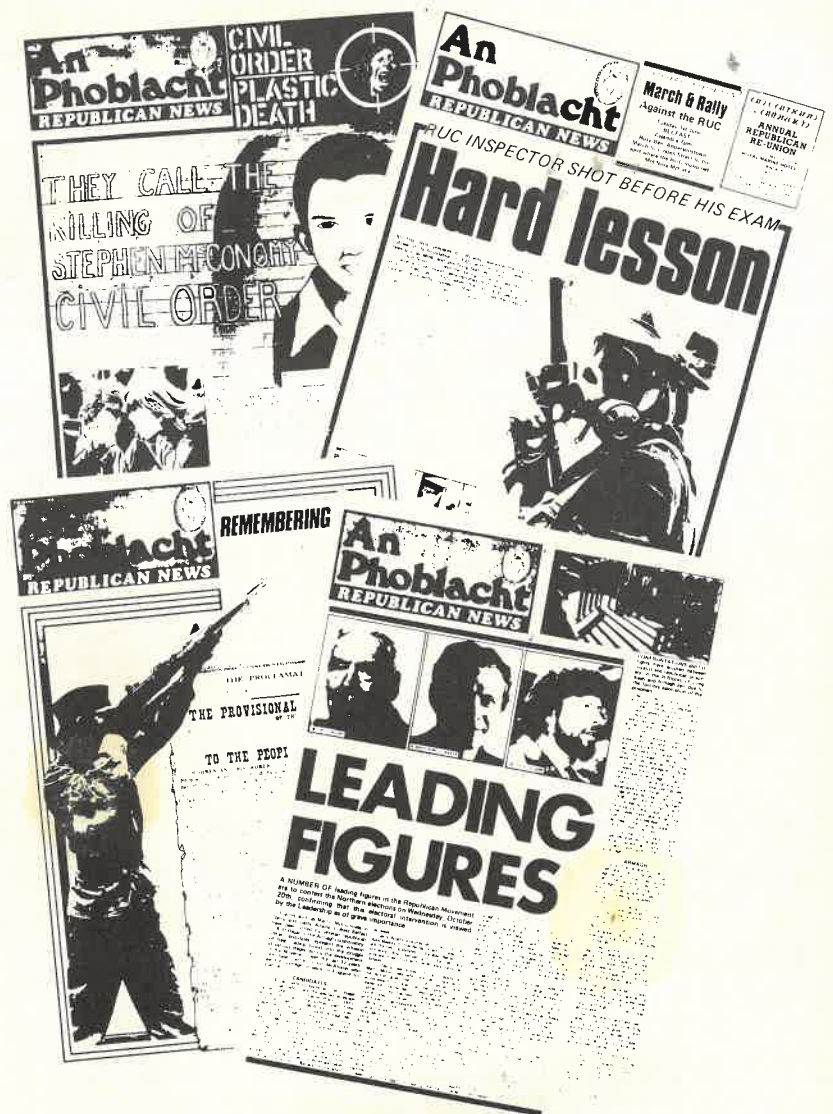
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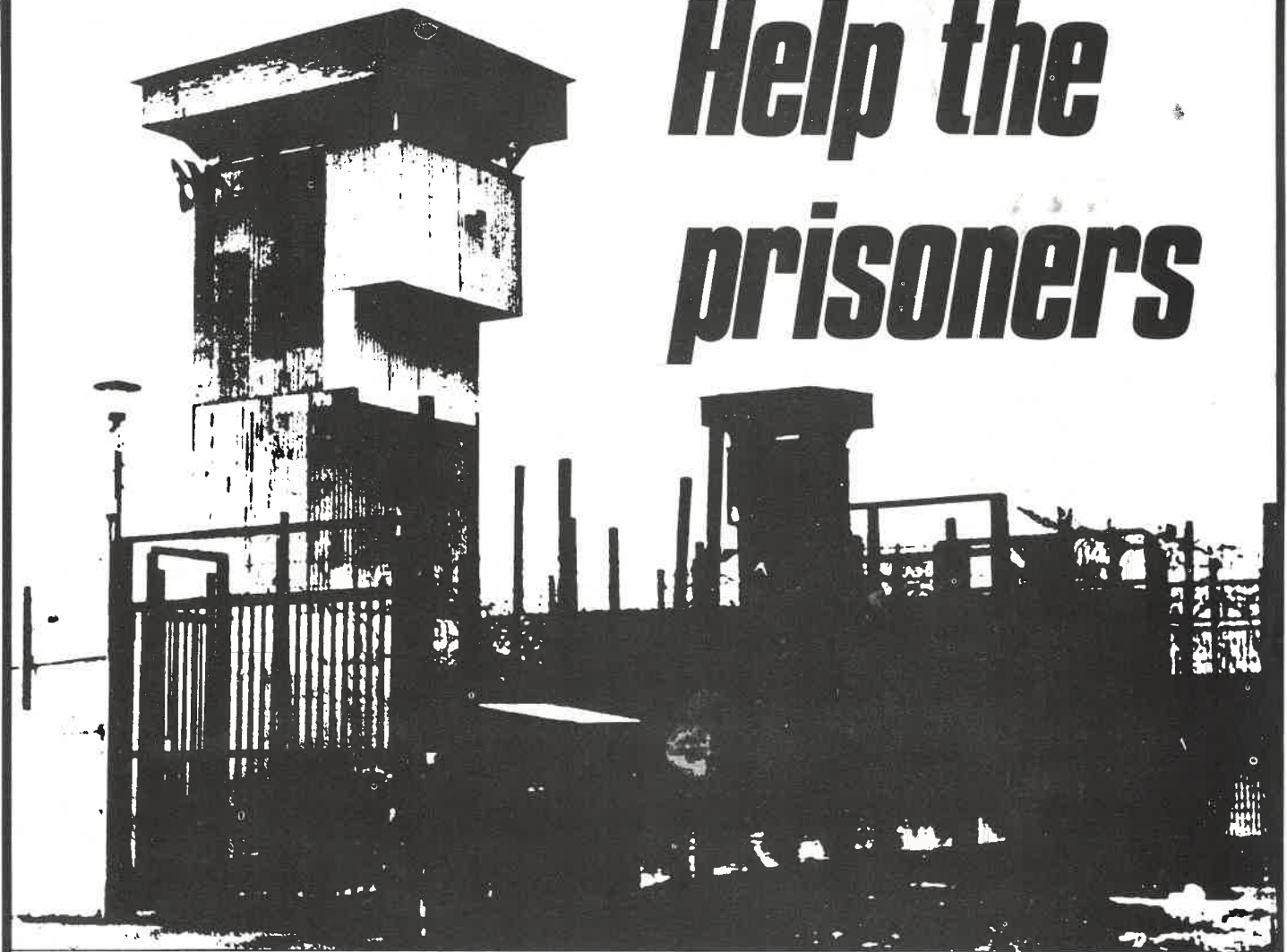
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APOLOGY

IN a review of Sean Cronin's book 'Irish Nationalism' carried in *IRIS* number 2 (November 1981), the author was described as 'a renegade republican turned academic'.

We deeply regret this description of Mr Cronin, and unreservedly withdraw it with our apologies. Sean Cronin's contribution to the republican cause over many years is publicly acknowledged by the Republican Movement.

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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