

CAMERAWORK

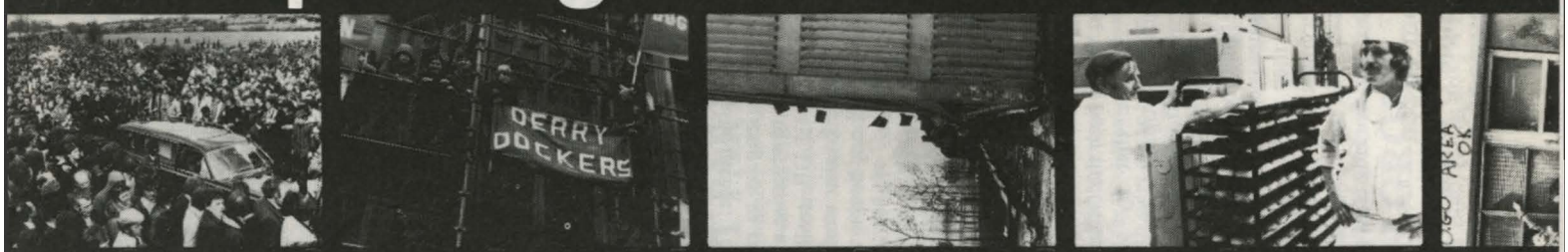








Reporting Back on Ireland

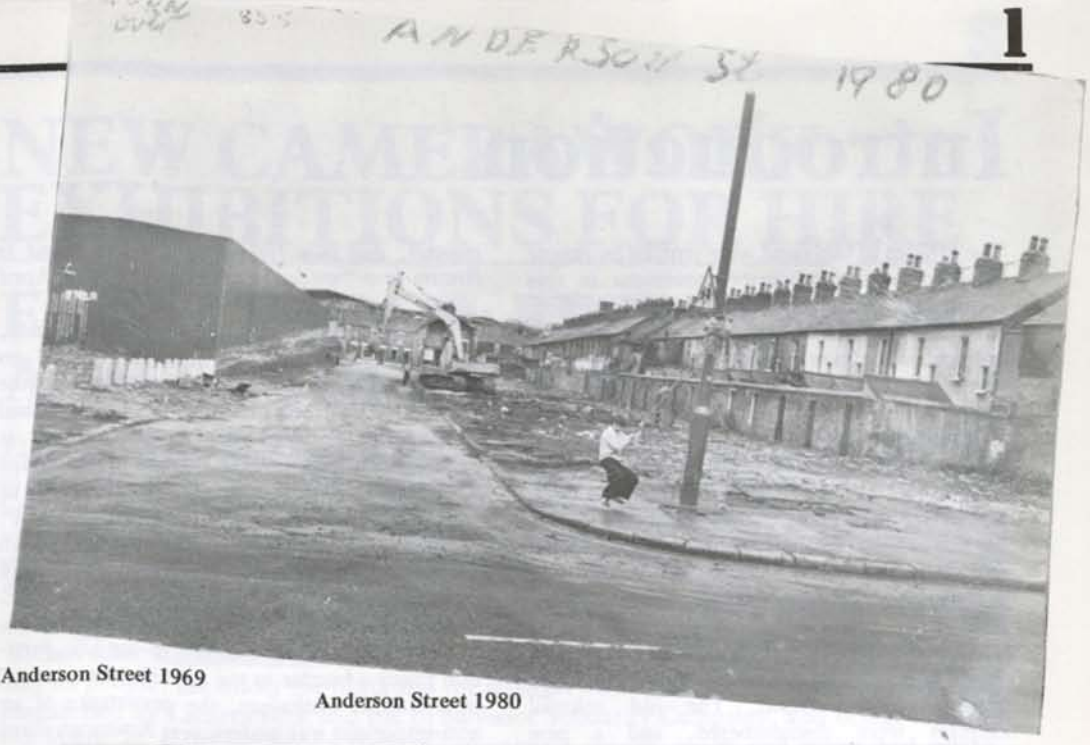


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Anderson Street 1969



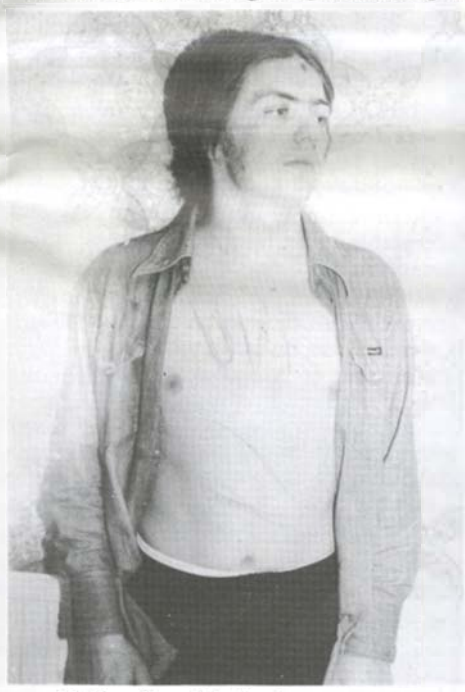
Anderson Street 1980



Co-operation among Catholics: small farmers bring food direct to the Short Strand during the Ulster Workers Council strike against power-sharing in 1974. Photo: John Conlon.



Wasper



Victim of loyalist attack.
Photo: Andersonstown News

Editorial

This is **Camerawork**'s second special issue on Ireland. Britain's imperialist war in Ireland still continues and remains the single most important issue facing British people today.

Coinciding with a reluctance to prioritize Ireland, the British left has still produced little material on Ireland, particularly material that will reach a broad audience. Such work in the media is crucial: there is no other political conflict whose news coverage is so extensively managed and constructed to maintain a consensus of the British people in support of government policies and interests. It is ever more important to present images, reports and analysis which challenge the categories and content of the 'news' we normally receive about Ireland.

Photographically, the present issue was based on a different scale and method of picture research from previous issues. We felt it important to use work not only by known professional photographers, but to devote time to contacting non-professionals, as well as people who did not consider themselves photographers at all but rather who took pictures as part of dealing with living in the middle of a war. This was important, firstly, because we felt such photographs would be more likely to reflect people's experiences of the war, carry more credibility, and to record things which professionals might not have access. Secondly, in a struggle taking place in an industrialised country, photographs are taken in very varied contexts: the photographs used for evidence, propaganda, communications or even in newspapers like *An Phoblacht/Republican News* are not necessarily taken by professionals, but often by amateurs, friends, relatives or neighbours and by politically active people to whom photography is a useful tool.

In fact, we did not have the time or resources to go as far as we wished with this. Nonetheless, because of our decision and because of the way in which photography is carried out in Ireland, this issue contains a diversity of kinds of image. The political debates on photography which are the focus of other **Camerawork** issues here remain implicit in the procedures we followed for gathering and selecting photographs for this issue.



After an army search.
Photo: Ardoyne Advice Centre

CAMERAWORK

is a journal of the politics of photography. It is designed as a forum for analysis, critique, theory and information in order to provide the basis for using photography within socialist and feminist practices and to develop and encourage socialist strategies within the politics of representation.

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Introduction

The articles in this issue were written by people involved in the solidarity movement in this country and in Ireland. It is not a comprehensive analysis, but a contribution to the task of political education which has continued in Britain since the start of the present phase of the war.

Histories of Ireland from an anti-imperialist point of view commonly stop at Partition and resume with the Civil Rights Movement in 1968. But in the intervening period, especially following the Second World War, there were national and international developments which have become major determining forces in present day Ireland.

After the end of the Second World War there was a major structural shift in the pattern of imperialist domination. The old colonial empires were dismembered, and a new imperalist hegemony led by the United States and based on the dollar emerged. The old colonial empires which restricted the mobility of labour and capital and thus hindered the growth of trade, were replaced by certain economic and military alliances such as the World Bank, the IMF, NATO, and the EEC, thus enabling the emerging multinationals to increase their scope for exploitation on a global scale.

Britain, having lost its dominance, although a member of NATO and the EEC, was not in tune with this new phase of imperialism for some years, and still clung to its colonial heritage, in particular in its relationship with Ireland and the importation of a cheap reserve pool of labour from its colonies.

North and South

After the Partition of Ireland in 1922, the Irish Free State was a predominantly agricultural economy with almost no industry, totally dependent on Britain as a market for its produce and for the import of manufactured goods, with large scale emigration of surplus labour to Britain.

When Fine Gael came to power in 1932 the Free State attempted, through a policy of protectionism, to encourage economic independence. This policy failed as a result of underdevelopment and lack of the resources necessary to stimulate economic growth. Since the late 1950s the Free State has followed a different course by opening up the economy to foreign investment. Tax incentives, the promise of cheap labour and development sites and the setting up of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) provided conditions favourable to foreign investment, and the state developed infrastructure to complement it. The world's first Free Trade Zone was in operation in Shannon in 1958. Ireland joined the EEC with Britain in 1973. These changes within the South have drawn the economy more into the orbit of international capital, and the rapid export-based expansion has produced a growth rate twice the EEC average. The economic history of this period is described in the article *The Changing Face of the Irish Economy*.

By way of contrast, the Six Counties after partition contained almost all of Irish industry (textiles, heavy engineering and ship-building), entirely linked to British capital. Changes in the world market, and finally recession in the 1970s, contributed to the decline of these industries. With economic growth at a virtual standstill, and foreign investment much less extensive than in the South, the economy now depends on massive financial aid from Britain (see *Northern Ireland – an Economy in Collapse*).

The Haughey-Thatcher summit

Thus Partition laid the basis for the economic disarticulation of Ireland north and south. But as both Irish economies are increasingly drawn into the international flow of capital, capitalists north and south see their political and economic interests converging. This is reflected in the splits within the historically monolithic Unionist block (see the section on *Political Parties* and *Loyalism*) and in the December 1980 Haughey-Thatcher summit.

The Haughey-Thatcher summit signifies a major shift in British policy. It has by-passed the Loyalists altogether, setting up a London-Dublin dialogue concerned with 'institutional arrangements' between Britain and the Free State. Possibilities now on the agenda are: '*firstly, the Six Counties having its own devolved administration whilst still tied to Britain, but also having an institutionalised "unique relationship" with the Free State; secondly, the Six Counties being set up as a condominium, which means having its own administration, but with joint overall control of state affairs being vested both in Britain and the Free State; thirdly, a confederal arrangement whereby the six county and twenty six county states are linked together, and then Ireland as a whole bound to Britain in a "unique relationship".*' (IRIS, April 1981).

But the implications of political instability, economic decay and partition in Ireland go beyond Britain's interest in a solution, to the United States and the EEC. The colonial relationship between Britain and Ireland is necessarily affected by the changes in imperialist domination described earlier. In the words of John Hume, Euro MP and leader of the SDLP: 'The interest of the US and the European Community in Northern Ireland is historically inevitable and perfectly legitimate'.

Several crucial and related aspects of the situation are of particular concern to the US: partition poses a barrier to the new requirements of international capitalism; the persistence of an anti-imperiaist war underscores American plans to channel aid through agencies such as the EEC, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme into social reform measures, in an attempt to appease and contain Nationalist aspirations; within a part of the UK, social democracy as a political system has failed, and this failure threatens the stability not only of Britain, but also of the European bloc; the concern over Ireland's official neutrality within the EEC reveals the strategic nature of US interests – that Ireland should not offer a base to any external threat to the security of Britain and her allies. Ireland, apart from France the only member of the EEC which is not a member of NATO, is seen as politically and strategically crucial to the stability of the western alliance.

Britain's Search for Stability

In attempting to achieve the stability in Northern Ireland necessary to the Western Alliance, Britain's strategy has been one of reform backed up by repression.

Consensus is essential to the functioning of a social democratic state. It cannot accommodate dissent on any large scale. Dissent must be bought off (by reform) or disposed of (by repression). Large scale dissent requires systematic repression, and the liberal facade is destroyed.

In Northern Ireland one third of the population dissents, and it dissents because the Northern Ireland state is by its very nature irreformable: it was constituted as a sectarian state, and whilst the Six Counties remain separated from the rest of Ireland it will continue as such. Thus Britain's policy has become one of attempting to reform the irreformable, and dealing with its inevitable failue with massive repression.

Failure of reforms

Since Direct Rule in 1972, rather than looking for an 'internal compromise', as it claims to be doing, Britain has consistently worked at reforming the Northern state by taking overtly repressive control out of Unionist hands.

In the main, these reforms have failed: the disbanded 'B Specials' have been replaced by the equally sectarian UDR; the RUC remains as sectarian as it ever was. Many of the attempts to alleviate the appalling housing situation in the Catholic areas have been thwarted by Unionist pressure: the Poleglass estate is perhaps the best known example, but by no means the only one (see *Housing*). Even the pretence of consensus represented by the power-sharing executive of 1974 was too much for the unionists, and was brought down by the Ulster Workers' Council strike.

The failure to produce any real improvements in the areas that matter – housing, employment and civil rights – has not prevented the British Government from trying short-term solutions. Money has been flowing into such projects as sports centres and swimming baths in the name of 'community development', but these can achieve nothing whilst the fundamental problems are left unresolved.

Repression

The most physically obvious aspect of repression is the heavy military presence in the form both of the British Army and, as a consequence of the 'Ulsterisation' policy introduced by Roy Mason, the military-style RUC. For the Nationalist population this means round-the-clock armed foot patrols, regular convoys of armoured cars and army Land Rovers through shopping centres and housing estates, road blocks, permanent barriers erected between one street and the next, the daily round of verbal abuse and physical intimidation, violent raids on houses, social clubs and political meetings, and the murderous use of plastic bullets to break up protest rallies and marches.



Balrbre Foreman

Much less obvious, but no less significant, is a massive system of covert surveillance and intelligence operations, described by Michael Maguire in his article *The many-headed British intelligence operation in Ireland*. The highly sophisticated intelligence network draws its information from a range of undercover operations and also from house-to-house searches, random person and vehicle checks, extraction of information by physical intimidation, telephone tapping and the interception of mail. All these actions are legitimised by the various pieces of 'emergency' legislation described by Philip Rendle in his article *The sixty year long emergency*.

Central to the repressive system developed by the British Government in Northern Ireland is the Diplock Court 'conveyor belt' system. The institutionalised abuses which are the basis for this system have been documented by Peter Taylor in his book *Beating the Terrorists* in which he also demonstrates that the British Government is fully aware of these abuses, and in fact condones them. The path to the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and Armagh Women's Gaol begins with maltreatment and intimidation at Castlereagh and other RUC barracks and passes with its 'confessions' and uncorroborated police statements through the no-jury Diplock Courts to Northern Ireland's specially designed prisons for 'terrorists'.

What is so sinister about this is that it parades itself as a system of law and justice. The need for this pretence arises precisely because blatant repression is incompatible with the consensus which is an essential feature of the social democratic state. It is for this reason that repression must be dressed up: political prisoners must be treated as criminals; dissent becomes 'crime'; war becomes 'civil disturbance'. This process is vividly presented by Joe O'Connell as quoted in *Irish Prisoners in English Gaols*.

The struggle for political status

Thus the struggle for political status symbolises the whole imperialist/anti-imperialist struggle. The fight for political status is a fight against the fraudulent notion of 'consensus' in the context of the Northern Ireland state. It threatens Britain's whole strategy.

Over the past five years the campaign for political status has become a central focus of Republican activity, culminating in the H-Block hunger strikes which began in December 1980 and which have just ended (at the time of writing, October 1981) with the loss of ten lives and at present an uncertain outcome. The impossibility of establishing consensus in Northern Ireland has been forcefully demonstrated by the massive show of support for the hunger strike campaign both on the streets and through the ballot box. The election of Bobby Sands and Owen Carron to the British Parliament, and of Paddy Agnew and Kieran Doherty to the Irish Parliament, dealt a devastating blow to the international credibility of British policy.

The hunger strike campaign has succeeded in bringing the Northern Ireland situation to international attention, though one could be forgiven for not guessing it from the British media (see *Reporting Bobby Sands' Funeral*). Even the *Guardian* was forced to admit: "If the H-Block campaign has been a failure on the mainland of Britain, there is no doubt that it has been a famous success overseas" (13th August 1981).

This success has manifested itself in demonstrations and actions in Greece, Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, America and many other countries. The Portuguese parliament passed a unanimous motion of support for the hunger strikers' demands; the Indian parliament stood in silence when Bobby Sands died; the Iranian government named the street passing the British consultate after Bobby Sands.

The tremendous international pressure which this has generated has as yet failed to force any significant move on the part of the British Government, but it must only be a matter of time before the pressure becomes irresistible. The manifestly dishonest treatment by the British Government of the Irish Commission for Peace and Justice, and then of the International Red Cross, as part of a pretence at seeking a settlement of the hunger strike campaign, was undoubtedly a first sop to this pressure. Recent noises from the new Secretary for Northern Ireland, James Prior, suggest that the British Government is keen to satisfy its partners in the western alliance and come to a settlement acceptable to its imperialist friends. This will necessitate the overcoming of two of its major obstacles: on the one hand the deeply entrenched attitudes of the loyalists deliberately fostered by the British in the past to bolster their exploitation of Northern Ireland, but now a force with its own dynamic; and on the other hand, that part of the Republican movement for which a united Ireland is only the first step to a socialist republic. Whether the British Government can overcome these obstacles and stay within the bounds of political acceptability remains to be seen. The scheduled second London-Dublin summit is the next step in their attempt.


Peter Slepokura



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Information on Ireland, Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1 60A. Have produced some excellent pamphlets including, *The British Media and Ireland* (75p plus 20p p&p); *Ireland – Voices for Withdrawal* (90p plus 20p p&p). They will also provide information on available films, slide shows, videos and exhibitions, as well as a detailed booklist.

Regular publications include:

An Phoblacht/Republican News, weekly from 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, or 51-53 Falls Road, Belfast, annual subscription rate £16.50. The official paper of the republican movement, this is essential reading for information you will never get in the British papers.

Belfast Bulletin, usually quarterly, from Workers' Research Unit, c/o Just Books, 7 Winetavern Street, Belfast BP1 7JQ. (£3 for four issues, including p&p, £6 for institutions). In depth analysis of areas of political interest (trade unions, churches, repression, local government, etc).

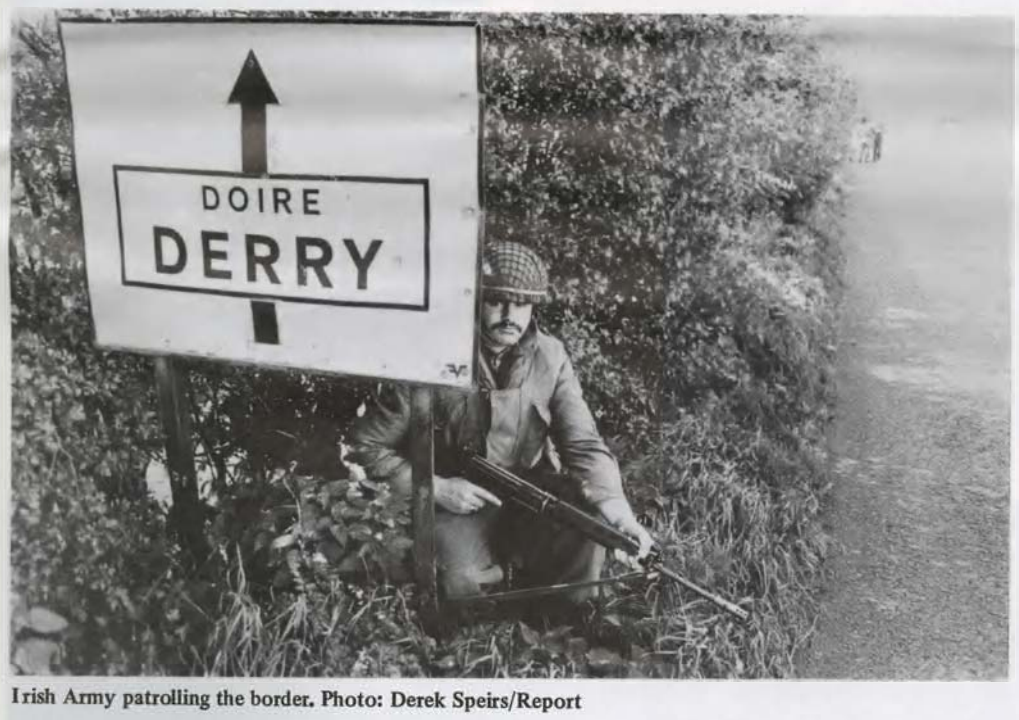
Organisations active around Ireland include:

Troops Out Movement – branches nationally and locally, active in campaigning for immediate British withdrawal and producing propaganda. Monthly paper. For more information contact: PO Box 353, London NW5 4MH. Tel: 01-267 2004.

Armagh Womens' Coordinating Committee (London), c/o 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Coordinates political activities around Ireland, within the women's movement and generally. Working in support of prisoners' demands. Educationalists, discussions, will speak at meetings.



D. Mansell



Irish Army patrolling the border. Photo: Derek Speirs/Report

Riots on Merrion Road, Dublin, after Gardai prevent H-Block march from passing the British Embassy. Photo: Eamonn O'Dwyer/Report



NEW CAMERAWORK EXHIBITIONS FOR HIRE

EL SALVADOR: REPRESSSION AND REVOLUTION

El Salvador, a predominantly agricultural country in Central America no larger than Wales, is the scene of the most horrific political repression since the Pol Pot regime's genocide in Cambodia. Every morning some 40 bodies are found littering the streets of San Salvador, victims of the nightly raids by security forces who are murdering all political opponents of the ruling junta. In the last two years 30,000 have been killed and mutilated. The United States' support for the military junta in El Salvador heralds another Vietnam, this time in its own 'backyard'.

El Salvador: Repression and Revolution is a photographic exhibition portraying the country and its people, life under the junta and the struggle for liberation. The exhibition has been researched by Camerawork and the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, and brings together the work of eighteen photographers, containing colour, black and white and photo-montaged images together with personal accounts by Salvadoreans.

EYEOPENERS

an exhibition by Andrew Bethell

Visual images carry so much power in our society because most people look at them but do not see what they mean. Looking is easy, seeing is not.

Eyeopeners is an exhibition of photographs taken to help young people see and understand the images which surround them. By seeing how visual representation is constructed and by participating in some of the choices that determine meaning, those who work through the exhibition will be better equipped to analyse and take on the images of the mass media. There are constant invitations to participate and challenge the choices that have been made. **Eyeopeners** will appeal to young people from primary school through to colleges of further education.

MASS-OBSERVATION: THE WORKTOWN PROJECT

an exhibition of photographs of Bolton and Blackpool 1937-38 by Humphrey Spender

From 1937 to 1938 Bolton and Blackpool were the focus for an intensive study by Mass-Observers. Humphrey Spender documented ordinary life in photographs, while volunteers and observers wrote down reports, descriptions, conversations and interviews. The photographs are accompanied by extracts from an interview with Humphrey Spender and by Mass-Observation reports.

For details of hiring, availability, and other **Camerawork** *touring exhibitions, telephone 01-980 6256 (note new telephone number).*

CAMERAWORK DARKROOMS

The Camerawork Darkrooms in Bethnal Green are now open. Membership entitles you to access to facilities and courses: darkroom hire, copying facilities, dry mounting, laminating, process camera.

JOIN NOW!

A year's subscription costs £12.00 waged, £8.00 unwaged, and £6.00 pensioners and under 16s. Membership rates for groups are negotiable.

Contact Camerawork Darkrooms, 121 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 0QN. Telephone 01-980 6256.

Camerawork

The Half Moon Photography Workshop, consisting of the magazine **Camerawork**, the gallery, exhibition production and hire, and the darkrooms, has changed its name: it is now all known as Camerawork.

Open Meeting

The next Camerawork Open Meeting is on Thursday 21 January 1982 at 7.30pm. The open meetings are designed to introduce people to how Camerawork works, what is happening and future projects. All Camerawork readers are welcome.

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Student rate £5.26	Institutional rate £18.00	Student rate £7.00

CAMERAWORK

75p each (+25p p&p)

Back issues still available – articles include:

5: On Photographic Printing, the Side Gallery, Bill Gaskins, Barry Lane.

8: Analysis of press coverage of National Front march, Lewisham August 1977.

10: John Berger – Ways of Remembering. On Photomontage. DIY exhibitions.

11: Special issue on Mass Observation, a documentary project started in the thirties.

12: Special issue on Portraiture.

13: Special issue: survey of Photography in the Community. The Bengali community under attack.

15: Documenting Clydeside. On Advertising. Through the Lens Fantasy.

16: Manchester Studies – a people's history in photographs. Critique of **Camerawork 8.**

17: Analysing the Fashion Spread (Deborah Turbeville, Helmut Newton). Who Killed Blair Peach? The Matchgirls' Strike of 1888. Nuclear Wastes.

18: Porn, Law, Politics. Still Images on TV. Reporting Squatting: the *News of the World*. Images of the Steel Strike.

19: The State of the Nation – photomontage by Kennard, text by E. P. Thompson. Edith Tudor-Hart – pictures from the thirties.

20: Photomontage from Heartfield to Staeck, Immigrant Women, the politics of Community Photography.

21: Representing the Disabled. Gaining Momentum: Women photograph Women. Loraine Leeson and Peter Dunn: Political Photography. Photography and the Law.

22: Women and Documentary Photography in Northern Ireland. Reporting the New Cross March. Resisting Narita Airport. A Women's Photographic Archive in Denmark. Policing Photography. El Salvador. Teaching about Power and Photography.



November 1979: British soldiers move in to take over the Whiterock industrial estate which employed many Catholics from Turf Lodge and Dermot Hill, who are now watched over by the new fort. The firm's premises were requisitioned under the Emergency Provisions Act. (An Phoblacht/Republican News 10. 11. 79). Photograph: Andersonstown News.

The Changing Face of the Irish Economy

Historically, the development of modern industries in Ireland has always been retarded by the country's proximity to a more developed British capitalism. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the industries of Southern Ireland collapsed in the face of cheap British manufacturers; an alien landowning class changed land-use patterns from labour-intensive cattle rearing: Ireland was reduced to being a supplier of cheap food and cheap labour to Britain and was denied independent political power.

The only part of the country to participate in the 19th century industrial revolution was the north east area immediately around the city of Belfast. Even here, economic growth never reached the levels attained within the regions of Great Britain. Already, by the beginning of the 20th century, the major industries of the six counties of the north east were in decline. In 1921 exactly half of northern Ireland's employment was in agriculture, textiles and clothing, the most backward areas of economic growth.

In the thirties, the Southern bourgeoisie embarked on a policy of using protectionist methods in an effort to stimulate growth in the twenty-six counties economy. State enterprises were established in manufacturing, services, power production and transport. However, little was done to stimulate growth in agricultural output and manufactured exports. Hence unemployment and migration remained high, and the population continued to fall; a phenomenon unique in the Western world.

In the late fifties the southern government abandoned past nationalist protectionist measures and sought to take advantage of the liberalisation of trade and capital movements occurring in the developed world. The twenty-six counties entered the competition to attract foreign capital, and transnational firms were given inducements to set up branches in Ireland. Mainly foreign-owned new industry accounted for around two-thirds of the increase in manufacturing exports and investment in the 1970s. Investment rates increased from an average of 15% of GNP per annum in the 1950s to 20% in the 1960s, 24% in the early 1970s, and 30% in the late 1970s. This was supplemented by heavy government spending. The national growth rate more than doubled. In 1977 and 1978 it was the highest in the OECD area.

In 1973 the southern State joined the EEC together with Britain and Denmark. Membership of this bloc has further aided the transformation of the Irish economy under the impact of multi-national capital.

In agriculture, whilst not producing any dramatic expansion of farm output, the EEC brought prosperity from higher prices gained through the CAP and access to the continental markets.

Rising costs brought about by EEC membership (through higher food prices and the expense of 'harmonisation' measures) have tended to hit the older, labour intensive industries such as clothing, furniture and footwear trades the hardest. The proportion of domestic consumption met by imported foreign goods has increased from one fifth in the early 1960s to one third today. Between 1973 and 1977 over one quarter of Irish manufacturing jobs were destroyed; to be replaced by more capital-intensive, higher productivity jobs in the subsidised export-oriented sector. Overall manufacturing employment remained static, whilst there was a continuing loss of jobs from agriculture.

Despite the much faster influx of foreign investment, its capital-intensive nature, coupled with the virtual collapse of the traditional industries and the decline of agricultural employment, have meant that total employment has declined since the beginning of the post-war industrialisation drive. A summary of the situation is provided in these figures:

	In work	*Out of work*
1961	1,052,000	55,600
1966	1,066,000	52,200
1971	1,055,000	62,400
1975	1,020,000	104,000
1977	Not available	111,000

The policy of dependancy on foreign capital to stimulate economic growth has undoubtedly brought short-term advantages to the Irish people measured in terms of higher living standards. But the long term prospect is bleaker.

Multinationals

In the first place, the prosperity of the agricultural sector has been due to the high prices obtained through the unreformed structure of the CAP, rather than an increase in the productivity of Irish farms. The likelihood is that changes in the CAP in the medium-term future will diminish this advantage for agriculture and drive down farm prices.

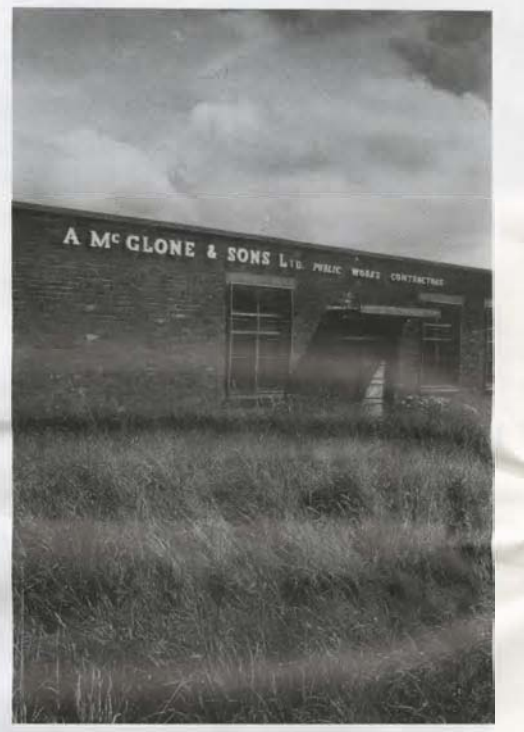
Secondly, whilst the attraction of foreign capital into the economy remains the central plank of government strategy, there is little prospect of full employment being attained. The competition to draw in foreign firms mean offering inducements which, in financial terms, frequently amount to the equivalent of the sum being invested in the economy. A study by the US multinational ITT reveals the following figures for typical state subsidies to a medium capital intensive plant with assets of £2.5m and a projected employment of 125 people:
Italy (South): £2.0m or £16,300 per worker
Eire: £2.1m or £16,400 per worker
N. Ireland: £2.6m or £19,000 per worker.
The amount of subsidy to attract investment on a scale sufficient to reduce unemployment would have to be enormous.

In addition to the scale of state subsidy, the problem of control over the policies of multinationals with respect to the siting of plant and long-term involvement in the economy is a major issue. In recent years the Southern government and its Industrial Development Agency have encountered difficulties with foreign-based companies which have established expensively-subsidised factories which have been abandoned by the company after a brief period owing to changes in company policies.

The weakness of the two states in Ireland in confronting the power of multinational capital is a major issue for the Irish working class and its allies. The struggle for full employment and an industrial development which reflects the needs of the majority of Irish people necessarily raises the issue of national unity in the struggle to limit the power of multinational capital.

Don Flynn

This article is extracted from two articles: 'Ireland' by Anthony Coughlin, and 'Northern Ireland: Beyond British nationhood, beyond British reform' by Chris Davis in Ireland Socialist Review *no 2 (Summer 1978). Any errors in the article are the responsibility of the present author.*



Another closed workplace in West Belfast
Photo: Larry Herman



Skilled workers at Harland and Wolff, Belfast; once the largest shipbuilders in Europe, now kept going by a succession of government subsidies, allegedly given to the traditional Loyalist employer for political reasons. However, in twenty years the workforce has dwindled from 23,000 to 4,000.
Photograph: Larry Herman.



Workers during the liquidation of the firm O'Connor and Bailey Ltd., Dublin. It was decided to black all O'Connor and Bailey sites until redundancy money was paid.
"High borrowing to finance expansion has finally stopped as the new Fine Gael Government adopts monertarist policies which will push up unemployment in the South".
Photograph: Derek Speirs

Northern Ireland – An economy in collapse

In the House of Commons on 7 August 1980, two Unionist MPs expressed the opinion that the whole of Northern Ireland should be classified as a depressed area in need of massive government financial assistance. On the same occasion it was disclosed that the unemployment rate for the six counties was twice that in Britain; that proportionately there were 50% more supplementary benefit claimants, and that there were 500% more family income supplementary claimants.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has stated that Belfast has the worst housing conditions in Western Europe. The SDLP, in a paper submitted to the talks held by Secretary of State Atkins in 1980, spoke of 'an overpowering picture of an economy in collapse . . . 45% of manufacturing industry at present depends on Government aid for survival.'

Industrial decline

The decline of industries traditionally dependent on the British economy (engineering, shipbuilding etc) has been well documented elsewhere. The rate of decline continued during the seventies to the extent that 27% of manufacturing jobs disappeared during that decade. This year alone will see 4,000 jobs lost in the artificial fibres industry as recession bites and bigger profits are sought elsewhere.

The response of government to this decline has been twofold. On the one hand, the Northern Ireland Development Authority was established to attract multinationals with inducements of tax relief, grant aid, etc. Despite some well-publicised examples of new industry, between 1972 and 1976 only 900 new jobs were created in this way and there is no sign of the North attracting anything like the same number of firms as have invested in the South.

The second response has been in the area of services. Between 1970 and 1980 employment in services increased from 41% to 54% of total employment and is now twice as large as the manufacturing sector. The corollary of this is the disproportionate effect recent announcements of government cuts will have on the economy of Northern Ireland. Latest estimates of unemployment increases directly due to the current round of cuts predict a further loss of 12,000 jobs by 1983.

Dual economy

What is disguised by the figures given so far is the way in which economic factors affect the two communities, Catholic and Protestant, in different ways. Unemployment, for example, has always been approximately two and a half times greater for Catholics, a fact confirmed in 1976 by the first report of the newly established Fair Employment Agency. In September 1980, after four years of activity, the FEA could only report that there has been 'no change' in employment practices and that 'major positive action' was required.

The major Government report on the economy of Northern Ireland, the Quigley Report of 1976, summed up the depressing state of the economy and argued that, without urgent action,

'The characteristics of a dual economy which NI already displays – some areas containing the more dynamic sectors of industry, other areas largely lacking a modern industrial base – will persist. The possibility of removing inequalities of employment and income between the two halves of the economy will become entirely academic.'

Quigley's solution – large amounts of financial aid – which has also become the solution adopted by the labour and trade union movement, has largely failed. No noticeable effect was achieved by the aid packages sponsored by the last Labour Government and by default, governments have chosen merely to prop up the ailing industries like Harland and Woolf or spend vast sums on what amount to little more than publicity stunts like the De Lorean car factory.



Woman testing and assembling microchips at Analogue Devices Ltd., Limerick, where the chips are manufactured. Photograph: Derek Speirs/Report

Trade Union response

After the failure of the Better Life For All campaign to generate an alternative economic strategy – it was, after all, set up in response to Republican resistance activities – the trade unions have sponsored numerous demonstrations against the Thatcher government, the biggest in April and May 1980. In addition, groups of workers, especially in the public sector, have been militant in support of pay claims.

However, the unions are hamstrung by the lack of any coherent alternative to relying on the British labour movement forcing a radical change in government policy. Even if this were likely to come about, in what way would the special characteristics of the crisis in the six counties be approached? During the period of the last Labour government, the Northern Ireland Committee of TUs merely contented itself with encouraging the government to try harder:

'We have been much impressed by the vigour with which Government has applied itself to the task of attracting industrial investment and by the heartening indications of some revival of investor confidence in Northern Ireland . . . however . . . the prospect of improvement must lie some distance in the future.'
(NIC members writing in the Economic Council report of 1977-78).

To find the answer as to why the TU leadership has not even acknowledged, let alone proposed any solution for, the fact that even this pathetic level of investment has largely been in the areas least affected by high unemployment, etc, we need to look at the nature of TUs in Northern Ireland. While their membership remains largely Unionist in political attitude they will not countenance any other strategy than that adopted by the British TU movement. This effectively prevents the emergence of a programme that can include the role of links with the South, a transfer of resources to those areas of the North most in need (ie, West Belfast, the South and West) and a challenge to the Unionist establishment with whom it often allies itself in putting demands upon the British state.

Where lies the solution?

The real constraints that the Northern Ireland economy faces are political ones – the failure to develop areas contiguous with Southern Ireland and to develop greater cooperation with it; and the constraint that macroeconomic policies have to be identical to those followed in Britain.

An independent Northern Ireland is not the answer. The problems of such an economy would be insurmountable. The only way that the problems of a dual economy can be overcome, the only way of providing the basis for an all-Ireland response to the ravages of crisis and the power of multinationals would be to establish all-Ireland institutions which could harmonise monetary, fiscal and industrial policies for the benefit of the whole of the Irish people.

Peter Chalk

Further Reading

"NI: an economy in crisis", B. Rowthorne; *Cambridge Journal of Economists* May 1981.
"NI, Economic Trends", C. Davies; *Ireland Socialist Review* 5.
"Multinationals & Ireland", M. Smith; *ISR* 6.
"Geography of Sectarianism", M. Smith; *ISR* 8.



Wang Laboratories, Limerick: an Industrial Development Authority sponsored factory opened in 1980 for the assembly of word processors. Photo: Derek Speirs/Report.



Small scale fishing off the Irish coast; another area of the economy beginning to suffer the effects of EEC membership. Photo: An Phoblacht/Republican News.

Economy North and South

NORTHERN IRELAND UNDER THATCHER
The major source of new jobs over the past decade has been in public services, where expenditure increased by 14.3% in 1974-80. Tory cuts in the period 1980-83 amount to 3.7%, and this in a period of rising unemployment. Housing expenditure is being slashed by 19%, education by 7%, while spending on social security and the security forces will continue to increase. Overall, the latest round of cuts means 12,000 fewer jobs in the six counties.

NORTH AND SOUTH – A COMPARISON
The changes in economic performance in the North and South since partition provide some indication of the possibilities open to a convergence of the two states free from British domination. For example, in 1920 the 26 counties had a third of all Ireland's industrial employment, whereas today it has 50% *more* than the North. Over the past twenty years the figures are even more staggering. Manufacturing employment increased by 45% in the Republic, but *fell* by 5% in the six counties. Industrial production increased by 200% in the South, but by less than 60% in the North.



Cattle auction in Cork. Photo: Philip Wolmuth



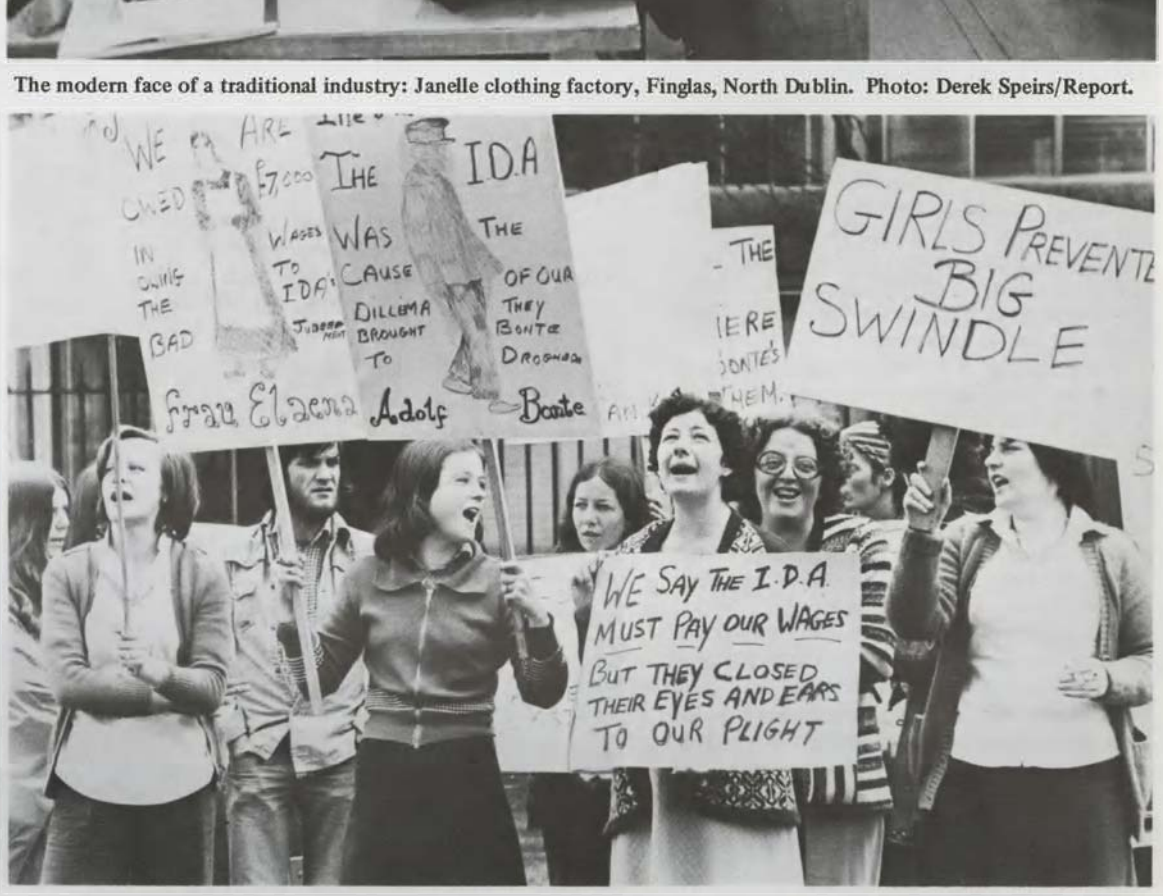
The modern face of a traditional industry: Janelle clothing factory, Finglas, North Dublin. Photo: Derek Speirs/Report.



Small bakery still going in Crossmaglen – a village that virtually ignores the fact that it is in the North and trades largely with neighbouring towns in the South. Photo: Larry Herman



Exploratory rigs drilling for uranium in Donegal. The Republic's abandonment of neutrality and entry into NATO would entail the stationing of nuclear weapons in the South. The North is, as ever, an integral part of Britain and NATO's air defence plans; RAF Bishopscourt near Ardglass in County Down is a base for fixed and mobile radar installations, and airfields, storage facilities for nuclear weapons, radio networks and emergency administration systems all exist for use in the North in times of nuclear tension. The Ministry of Defence is clearly working under guarantees that Northern Ireland will remain in the UK until at least the end of the century. Photo: Martin Stott.



Militant women workers fighting the closure of the Confexim factory in Drogheda picket the Industrial Development Authority offices in Dublin, during a sit-in occupation at their factory. Photo: Derek Speirs/Report.



Since the start of the 'troubles', sectarian threats and violence, or fear of them, have caused over 60,000 mainly working class people to flee from mixed areas to comparatively safe ghettoes, leaving thousands of homes bricked up and decaying. Photo: David Mansell.

The centralisation of housing control into the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in 1972 did nothing to remedy loyalist discrimination in housing which had operated for fifty years under the unionist local councils. Bill Rolston's article shows the effect of the failure of public sector housing authorities combined with unionist influence over the NIHE.

Housing



For Catholics, the main safe ghetto is West Belfast, which is now chronically overcrowded. The latest attempt by the NIHE to alleviate this was so severely attacked by leading loyalists that the scheme, the Poleglass estate, was halved, and there was pressure to abandon it entirely. Photo: Andersonstown News.

The twin effects of class and sectarian inequality are apparent in the conditions and allocations of housing in the Six Counties. To take class first: the combination of a Unionist government whose inter-war social policies were reminiscent of 19th century laissez faire capitalism and a centralised Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) which since 1972 has not once reached its projected annual house-building target (and is unlikely to do so now that the cuts are in full swing) has meant that for many working class people, relying on the public sector, there are not enough houses, and not enough fit houses. There are 32,000 people on Belfast's waiting list alone, with few new houses being built; in fact, the overall effect of redevelopment is a net *decrease* in the housing stock. For those lucky to have a public sector house conditions are often deplorable. The NIHE's own surveys show that in 1974 19.6% of Northern Ireland's housing stock was unfit for human habitation, compared with 7.3% in Britain. (The figure is an average, and thus masks the amazing statistic for West Belfast of 49%!) Admittedly, redevelopment has led to a slight improvement since; admittedly, also, the cuts have been less severe than in Britain: the housing budget in the UK was cut by 28% between 1975 and 1980, and will be cut a further 44% between 1980 and 1983, Northern Ireland's housing budget increased 28% in the first period, and will decrease 14% in the second period. But, given that housing in the Six Counties had further to go to catch up, these relative figures are deceptive. More people in the Six Counties are dependent on state-provided housing (35%, compared with 29% in Britain) and therefore the effect of the cuts is that bit more widespread. (The effect of the cuts on the construction industry must also be noted. The industry is 80% dependent on government programmes; the cuts therefore partially explain the fact that almost 25,000 construction workers are unemployed.) In short, for many working class people the experience of public sector housing is that of long waiting lists, higher rents (a rent increase of 35% on average is in the offing, supposedly justified by the insidious notion of people having to pay an 'economic rent') and poor maintenance (so called essential repairs cannot be carried out in any less than six weeks after notifying the NIHE.)

But the bad housing is not randomly distributed among the working class in the Six Counties. For example, 12.4% of houses in Belfast are officially defined as overcrowded, but the figure for Catholic West Belfast is 23%. A major factor in West Belfast's position has been the actual intimidation and the real fear of intimidation among Catholics, which have led them to escape to the relative safety of areas already strongly Catholic. It is estimated that as many as 60,000 people, mostly Catholic, were forced to evacuate between 1969 and 1973. Through the years since, that flight has continued, although on a less drastic scale, leading not only to overcrowding in Catholic areas, but also squatting. But the problems of the Catholic working class as regards housing are not all 'troubles'-related. The higher unemployment in Catholic areas, as well as general conditions of low pay in the Six Counties, lead to debt. Debt to all public bodies has grown in the past generation; in housing specifically, by 1978/9 there were an estimated 42,560 debtors owing £8.9 million to the NIHE. Although some of this may be attributed to civil disobedience, by far the main explanation is the very real problem of meeting rising prices on low incomes. This fact is patently obvious, except to loyalist politicians who insist on seeing the much higher debt in Catholic areas merely as one more sign of Catholics' disloyalty to the state.

Loyalist politicians have also been the most active in preventing the badly needed extension of West Belfast, the Poleglass estate. New Catholic housing can only move out beyond present West Belfast into the territory of loyalist-controlled Lisburn Council, which has opposed such a move by organising marches, refusing to provide recreational facilities or collect bins, etc. The Northern Ireland Office has capitulated to this naked sectarianism by cutting back the scheme to one half the originally proposed size, as well as using the phased nature of the building programme as a means of coercion, making each phase dependent on the 'good behaviour' of those already resident there.

All in all, Catholic West Belfast provides the perfect example of how class and sectarianism inter-relate in housing. The overcrowding, poor conditions, high rents, debt levels and army and police saturation all combine to dispel any notion that anyone might have left of the welfare state in general or the Northern Ireland state in particular as benign. Such cynicism easily explains the willingness of some tenants (such as those in the Demolish Divis Committee) to resort to militant protest over housing conditions. While Catholic tenants in Divis wrecked vacated flats to back up their demand for total demolition, Protestant tenants had the relative choice of refusing to live in flats. For the Protestants some houses were available; for the Catholics there was no choice but collective militance. Yet paradoxically, the first flats to be demolished have been in Protestant areas, even in the absence of a sustained campaign there for demolition. The Catholics have campaigned, yet in just one more way have found themselves trapped by the NIHE's refusal to concede more than a very partial demolition on the grounds that there is nowhere else in West Belfast to house the Catholic tenants.

Bill Rolston



Divis Flats, Belfast. The Divis Demolition Committee campaigned to get their estates demolished and replaced with decent housing. They seized control to the extent that it was no longer possible for the Housing Executive to place new tenants in any flats on the estate. When a flat became vacant, the committee would board it up, or if it was not too bad, move in a family from a worse flat, and board that one up instead. The numerous problems facing tenants include serious damp and a population of rats which outnumbers the people. Photo: Jeremy Nicholl.

Most of the statistical information in the above is taken from Mike Tomlinson, 'Housing, the State and the Politics of Segregation', in Liam O'Dowd, Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson, *Northern Ireland: Between Civil Rights and Civil War*, London, CSE Books, 1980.

See also:

Community Information Service, *Poverty – the Impact on Northern Ireland: an Information Folder*, Belfast, Northern Ireland Council of Social Service, 1981

Action on Debt, *'Sticking the Knife in': Debt and Debt Collection in Northern Ireland*, Belfast 1980

Bill Rolston, 'Divis Flats', *Ireland Socialist Review*, 8, Winter 1980/1

Women and Nationalism

Irish women have been active in various ways throughout Ireland's long history of anti-colonial struggle, and it has been only in comparatively recent years that they formed their own separate organisations. This development, however, brought about by the changing position of women both in the family and in the wider economy, has generated a series of contradictions and conflicts which have recurred as major political dilemmas for the Irish women's movement. A central and unresolved question has been the relationship between feminist struggles and the nationalist movement, and which struggle takes precedence. Currently for example, two distinct lines are posed by feminists whose positions are broadly represented as 'those who believe that the interests of women must be given priority, in whatever sphere they occur, because if the issue of women's oppression is not consistently raised, it will be ignored', and 'those who believe the struggle for the successful resolution of the national question is the primary task', as it lays the preconditions for the liberation of all the oppressed (*Scarlet Women* 11). Connected to this debate has been another question concerning the ideologies of nationalism and unionism, especially regarding women, and which of these political movements can be categorised as the more progressive. This issue, first introduced by the suffragettes, has been raised again in the current debate on the re-unification of Ireland.

Early women's organisations in Ireland

Irish women's political involvement in the form of separate women's organisations first occurred in the late 19th century. This early movement had no unifying ideology, but fell instead into two distinct groupings with the formation of the Ladies Land League and the first suffragette groups. The differences were between those who campaigned on issues of women's suffrage and those who were active on questions concerning national independence.

At the beginning of the 20th century there were few nationalist organisations open to women, and in 1900 Maude Gonne founded the Daughters of Erin, which was the first expressly nationalist women's group established in Ireland. As with many of the nationalist organisations of the time, they were characterised by a strong anti-English sentiment, and this was reflected in their objectives which were 'to re-establish the complete independence of Ireland; to encourage the study of Gaelic, of Irish literature, history, music and art . . . to support and publicise Irish manufactures.' The women's first activity was an anti-enlistment campaign against the Boer War, and their propaganda concentrated on urging Irishwomen not to consort with British soldiers and exposing the horrors of venereal disease within the army. Later they campaigned for free school meals for the working class children of Dublin.

The first suffrage societies in the 1870s in Ireland were characterised by a conservative and constitutional approach to political activity concentrated around winning the vote for women in Westminster. This single issue demand enabled them to encompass a broad spectrum of political ideologies and included the Conservative and Unionist Franchise League in Belfast. A more militant approach was adopted with the formation of the Irish Women's Franchise League in 1908 which concentrated on pressurising the Irish Parliamentary party to include women in the Home Rule Bill.

With the outbreak of the first World War, Irish suffragettes were seriously split over participation in the war effort, and these differences were accentuated by the conflict between republicans and unionists. From this time on it was no longer possible for them to campaign solely on the basis of votes for women, and they declined as a political force. The founding of Cumann na mBan in 1914 deepened these contradictions still further. It was set up as an auxiliary wing of the Irish Volunteers, an armed republican militia. Their participation in the following years was an auxiliary one, serving the male volunteers, but its character was militantly republican. After the 1916 Rising the Cumann expanded rapidly. This large mobilisation of women in support of the men, although not raising questions which related specifically to women, as with all popular movements which involved women, nonetheless raised the whole question of women's active participation in politics. They played an active role in Dail Eireann, the independent legislative assembly set up in 1918 after Sinn Fein's electoral victory, and Constance Markievitc was made Minister of Labour. Their commitment to the principles of radical republicanism was further demonstrated in 1922 when they became the first organisation to reject the Treaty.

The eventual defeat of the anti-treaty forces had a major effect on the Republican movement and in particular on women's political involvement. For while it is true to say that the question of women's liberation was not central by any means to republican politics, their defeat and the partitioning of Ireland was a serious setback for women. After 1922 Cumann na mBan, reduced in numbers, remained an intransigent supporter of a united Ireland and against the Free Staters. Increasingly, as with other sections of the Republican movement, its outlook became more concerned with social and economic issues, and by the late 1920s there was a recognition that they wanted not only a united Ireland but also the overthrow of capitalism.

From civil war to civil rights

Due to lack of information, the picture of women's role in political activity is sketchy from around 1916 to the 1960s. In the north women were probably politically active in phases, but their lives were determined by their existence in their respective communities, Republican or Loyalist. This was maintained both by sectarian ideologies and practices, and by the dominance of the Catholic and Presbyterian Churches, which placed women firmly in the background.

In the South the 1937 Constitution formalised the relationship between Church and State. This relationship, which in the past was crucial for imperialist domination, now served to consolidate the rule of the Irish National bourgeoisie. The Church was accorded a 'special place' by the Constitution, and it is therefore not surprising that Article 41.2 concerning the position of women in the new Irish State reads: 'In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved . . . The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home'. Throughout this period Cumann na mBan, although a much weakened organisation, remained the main focus for women's political involvement. Feminists by and large were inactive and unorganised apart from a series of women's organisations, defensive in nature and organised around limited reformist demands within the Free State. By 1938 however, the Republican movement had declined and lost almost the entire membership of the IRA. Cumann na mBan, dependent on the momentum of the IRA, was unable to resist the attacks the State was making on Republicans and women, and unable to mobilise against the De Valera constitution. By the 1940s, it too had largely disappeared.

From 1969 – the North

Women's groups reemerged in Ireland north and south during the early 1970s but essentially the more radical sections have remained quite isolated. With the changes in economic and political power that occurred during the 1960s in the north – decline in Ulster industries necessitating the attraction of foreign capital, consequent splits in the Unionist Alliance, and the emergence of a Catholic middle class – it was inevitable that the contradictions in the North would erupt, and the catalyst was the Civil Rights Movement. It was in the context of this movement that feminist organisations started to re-appear, and the war has critically structured the various forms feminist ideology has taken, and the strategy and tactics advocated for the winning of feminist demands. The annexation of the North by Britain has effected an ideological and political division, whereby all contradictions and conflicts are reflected through the dominant contradiction – that between Republicanism and Loyalism. In practice it has also meant that Loyalist women are constrained both by their particular religious ideology, and by their loyalty to the Union and to their communities. And whereas Catholic women have inevitably become involved in the nationalist struggle at all levels, in the Loyalist communities women, although active in organisations such as the UDA in the early 1970s, have never been involved on the same scale. Thus struggles around feminist issues have tended to come from those involved in the anti-imperialist struggle, although with the clear recognition that feminist issues must be a secondary consideration to winning the war. The Relatives Action Committees were aware of the crucial role



Announcing news of the death of Tom McElwee, Falls Road, Belfast, 8 August 1981. Photo: Roger Anderson.

women have played in this war; from the 'dustbin lid' warning systems of the early days, the organisation of the women in Turf Lodge against the British Army after the murder of a young boy, to the work on political status for POW's and the recent hunger-strike.

Organisations which focus primarily on 'women's issues' had existed since the early seventies but only developed since 1975 with the founding of the Socialist Women's Group, the Northern Ireland Women's Rights Group and Women's Aid. The Womens Aid Federation saw itself as separate from the politics of the North, but this position led them to make political interventions in terms of getting British legislation favourable to women (Domestic Violence Act, 1969 Divorce Act). Inevitably these demands met with opposition from those feminists who see that the real progress for women in the north will only come from ending British rule. These struggles have a historical parallel in the conflict between the suffragettes and nationalist women prior to 1916. The Socialist Women's Group saw itself as specifically socialist, and as such were aware of a clear connection between the 'sexual, economic and political oppression of Irish women and the overall exploitation and oppression of the Irish working class under British capitalism and native Irish capitalism'. It dissolved in 1977 to make way for two other groups, the Belfast Women's Collective (BWC) and Women against Imperialism (WAI). Both of these groups explain women's oppression in terms of British Imperialist domination, but the latter group would assert that the anti-imperialist struggle is central to gaining womens liberation (thus their close links with the RAC's), whereas BWC concentrated far more on localised women's struggles especially child-care, women and brutality.

From 1969 – the South

The events of 1969 in the North brought, in the South, after an initial wave of sympathy, repressive legislation. This included the Forcible Entries Bill, followed by the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act; eventually an emergency was declared in 1976, and the Emergency Powers Act, giving the right to detain suspected 'subversives' without trial for 7 days, was introduced. Special Criminal Courts were established to back up this legislation. Massive censorship was in operation to suppress the Republican case. Alongside this there was a marked increase in industrial action for equal pay and working women's rights. This was the context in which the first women's groups re-emerged. The early groups were involved in getting greater participation for women in parliamentary politics, and in pressurising for the prompt introduction of the new EEC regulations concerning women's rights. The largest single group, Irish Women United, was founded in 1975. It contained a broad spectrum of feminist thinking. The course of women's liberation movements in the western capitalist world was a seminal influence, and this was reflected in the nature of its demands: free contraception, abortion on demand and equal pay. Its magazine *Banshee* covered topics such as equal pay, unmarried mothers and the role of the Church. However, it rarely dealt with what was happening to women in the North of Ireland and, apart from a small caucus within it, was avowedly anti-Republican and not concerned with the question of British imperialism. The Group disbanded in 1977, and many of the women who were active in it moved on to other campaigns such as the Contraception Action Programme and the Rape Crisis Centre. A few individuals have since regrouped with others around the campaign for political status for POWs and the recent hunger-strike by Republican POWs. A series of All Ireland women's conferences have resulted in increased contact between women north and south, and although this development is on a small scale in practice, it has led to a greater understanding of the domination of Ireland by British Imperialism and the consequences for women.

This brief survey of the history of the women's movement in Ireland clearly shows that in the struggle for women's emancipation, the unresolved national question has both structured and limited its development and effectiveness. This has been shown through the historical divisions between women over the relationship between feminist struggles and the nationalist movement. That partition has affected all political and social movements in Ireland, including the Women's movement, is evident by the absence of a strong national women's movement.

This article is based on papers written by members of the Women in Ireland group, which was working until 1980.



Relatives of H-Block blanket protesters going to Long Kesh for monthly visit. Andersonstown, Belfast. Photo: Larry Herman.

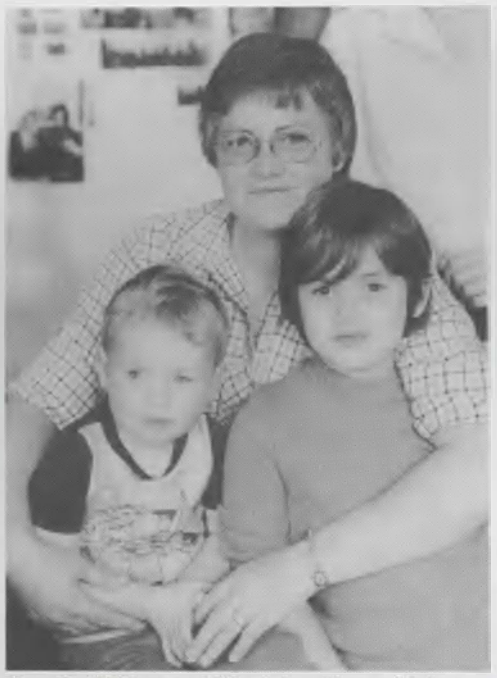


Thomas' eight sisters – Kathleen, Mary, Bernadette, Annie, Enda, Nora, Pauline and Majella – carried the coffin of their brother

An Phoblacht/Republican News



Strikers confronted by the owner of Keen Foods, Belfast, during strike over working conditions and pay. Photo: Larry Herman



Rose McAllister, aged 42, pictured here with two of her four children, is an ex-Armagh prisoner who has served two terms in prison, the most recent for possession of an incendiary device. She was released in May 1980 after two years on prostest for Political Status. During her first prison term she had been given Political Status.

Women and Republicanism

The roots of women's oppression are based in imperialism, and the position of women in Ireland cannot be divorced from imperialist domination. It is our argument that without the overthrow of British Imperialism and the establishment of a united socialist republic of Ireland, women will remain oppressed.

The Republican Movement has been criticized, particularly by feminists, as a male-dominated organisation. The fault lies not with the Republican Movement but with the attitudes and beliefs that exist in Ireland towards women participating in activities outside of their homes and families. We recognise that the Catholic Church has a role in the maintenance of such beliefs and attitudes. Some of these have, of course, permeated the movement, but over the last few years a genuine programme to combat sexism within it has been undertaken.

The most powerful element of this programme has been the respect earned by the women who have played an active part in the military campaign and who have fought their own battle for political status in Armagh Gaol.

Women in Sinn Fein

At the end of 1979, at the Ard Fheis (National Conference) of Sinn Fein, a Women's Co-ordinating Committee was formed, inviting all women in the movement to participate in the drafting of a policy document on women to be incorporated in Sinn Fein's overall policy for Eire Nua ('The New Ireland' – Sinn Fein's manifesto). This document was accepted with few amendments by the Ard Fheis of 1980, and a Department of Women's Affairs established to continue a programme of education within the movement itself.

Why within rather than 'autonomously'?

It is important to understand why many women in Ireland have not yet become involved in the pattern of feminism common to many Western countries – organising as an autonomous movement – and have preferred to work within a mass movement of anti-imperialism. As well as agreeing with the aims and principles of Republicanism, we recognise that only under a system free from native and foreign capitalism can women achieve total freedom.

The liberation of Ireland is only one battle for anti-imperialist women, but with its success the major obstacles to our individual freedom as women will have been destroyed – British Imperialism, British capital and the role of the Church's influence in State affairs.

The Republican Movement is not simply a Brits Out Movement. Its main objective is a new socialist structure for Ireland; British colonialism and neo-colonialism is simply the main obstacle to that objective.

Sinn Fein Policy on Women

Around the world, we have seen the attempts made to return women to their subordinate role in society in the aftermath of a revolutionary struggle, e.g. in the Algerian national struggle, and we can contrast this with the concrete gains for women in nationalist struggles such as Eritrea and Guinea-Bissau. This can only be overcome by the fullest possible participation of women who are active in the heart of that struggle. It entails women coming off their fences and joining with those involved to ensure their own emancipation because eventually it will be the responsibility of the women to ensure that gains made during the liberation struggle are built on. The Sinn Fein policy of positive discrimination towards women is young, but it goes a long way in ensuring that these gains will not be lost.

The overall policy of Sinn Fein towards women is a comprehensive one; envisaging in a new Ireland equal pay, equal work, safe contraception under community control, that child-care is a responsibility of society as a whole which must organise its economic life in accordance with this responsibility; it commits itself in the interim to campaign to combat sexism in education and pledges its support to campaigns against violence directed at women. However, the first priority of the Women's Department is to expose and publicize the degrading treatment and abhorrent conditions experienced by the women in Armagh and women held in interrogation centres.

Marie Mulholland

MONOPOL

An ordinary street . . . an exceptional state . . . the war c





POSTER COLLECTIVE/CAMERAWORK

Extracts from an interview. Belfast 1980

'The British relation to the Irish has always been one of subtraction. Elizabeth 1's soldiers were here simply to fortify that side of her Empire, so she could defend it against the Spaniards or French or whoever cared to come round our coast to invade it. Since '69 they have had nothing to offer except jails, holding centres, armies of suppression and a police force of dictators.'

'I believe that H-Block was a plan envisaged about five years ago. They had a great understanding of how people operate under stress at a given set of circumstances. H-Block was made to create fear and hysteria. For what purpose? Why didn't they stop it before? Why don't they stop it now? It must be engineered. What do they want? What are they waiting for? H-Block won't go away. It leads you to think there is something devilish going on. The British are creating an attitude of acceptance of civil war.'

'When something takes place in Castlereagh, like a hanging or a severe beating, that is not the fault of any individual, that is a policy. They want you to know that it's a torture centre. Not everybody is tortured, but a percentage are as a matter of form, irrespective of what they know about you.'

'About this technology of repression and the subtle way they use it: they do a thing pretending they don't want it to be seen to be done, but actually they do want this repression to be seen, to let the people know that they can do this dreadful thing to you. They can destroy you physically and mentally and take away your liberty and they want it to be known. Surely they would not spend all this time and money to scientifically invent and develop all this repression just for a bunch of us 'paddies'. They must have bigger and better things in store.'

'The thing about the war in Ireland is that political sciences have evolved, and the technology made available to perfect and implement these sciences, and they have found their way into the British system of government. It's now a government institution. They have taken on themselves fantastic powers of surveillance for a start, which means at some time in the future, some bureaucrat or military personnel will have the technology to act as judge and jury. The end result of all this is repression, and this repression is used to underline the authority of the state.'





TV covers the war, becoming the front line, creating the perspectives and positions. A MONOPOLY of representing the wars of different interests. The presence of domination emanates from the screen, with technology, information and repression serving to unify the view. Other voices are branded with the criminal stamp. The legalised domination of the MONOPOLY state is inscribed on the screen.


DAILY STAR

Two contrasting deaths highlight the tragedy that is Ulster today

VOLUNTEER

VICTIM

THE 50,000 WHO MARCHED IN THE RAIN–SEE PAGE 3

Angles of vision: different uses of the same moment – Gerald Sands at Bobby Sands' funeral – show how the Daily Star's crop isolates him from his family to make its point.


An Phoblacht/Republican News

Reporting Bobby Sands' Funeral


David Mansell

On 7 May 1981 Bobby Sands was buried in Belfast's Milltown Cemetery. The same day a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary was shot and killed, and Ian Paisley held a remembrance service for 'victims' of the 'Troubles'. These events are connected by the character of the Northern Irish state, which is a scene of oppression and refusal: the oppression of the Catholic/Nationalist minority by a Protestant/Loyalist majority created by the British Government and sustained by British money and arms; and the refusal of that minority to live under the floorboards of British 'democracy'. It is a struggle that has many 'fronts', amongst them the prisons of Northern Ireland where Bobby Sands fought, with the only means open to him, against the British Government's attempt to criminalize those struggling for social justice.

The death of the RUC officer had quite a different political content: whatever his personal motivation, he was a member of a Loyalist force which has long oppressed the Catholic population. He was no innocent bystander but must be seen as part of the repressive machinery of Northern Ireland. Ian Paisley has long represented Unionism in its cruellest and most aggressive form, and has played a major part in destroying the possibilities for peaceful change. His service of 7 May was expressly designed to draw attention away from Sands' funeral, and to reassert his argument that the IRA are solely to blame for violence in Northern Ireland.

These are the events upon which the British press worked in reporting on Northern Ireland on 8 May. I would like to use the *Daily Star* of that day as an example of how the media can use words and photographs to construct an ideological account of crucial political events in Northern Ireland.

The Funeral of Bobby Sands

Taking the funeral first, the *Star* selects its participants carefully. Besides Bobby Sands the cast includes his son Gerald Sands, various IRA members, 50,000 mourners, police and troops. Other participants are omitted for precise reasons: eg, Sands' mother and father, his sisters, his election agent, the Euro MPs who attended.

Bobby Sands

He is classified by the big headline as a **VOLUNTEER.** In IRA terms he was a volunteer because he chose to join them, but the *Star* appropriates this word into its own ideological picture: by juxtaposing it with **VICTIM,** the coffin in the photograph, and the 'contrasting deaths' in the sentence to the left of Sands' image, it is read as meaning 'He volunteered to die'. Of course he chose to go on hunger-strike because of the government's prison policy. The *Star* however means that no other agents bear any responsibility for the situation. In the front-page text he is described as having 'deliberately starved himself to death' leaving no room for doubt as to Sands' choosing: no other participants are visible in the process this sentence describes. In the same sentence he is classified as a 'terrorist', a creature who in press coverage has no social connectedness and acts only out of inner, pathological drives.

It is finally mentioned on page 3 that he 'died . . . after a . . . hunger strike for political status' but this is immediately followed by 'he was serving 14 years for his second arms offence' which, without any other information, must mean that he was a criminal and so did not deserve to win his demands. The *Star* also challenges the classification of Sands as a 'hero' and 'martyr' with ironic inverted commas.

Most importantly, Sands is never described as a 'former MP'. This would certainly have jarred ideologically with the *Star's* handling of Sands and the IRA as isolated in 'extremism', hunger strikes being only an instance of a more generalized mindless violence.

Gerald Sands

Sands' son is crucial to the *Star's* handling of the funeral. The text is always a 'compromise formation' resulting from the interaction of the ideology and the events it takes as raw material: here Gerald is available, on some other occasion it might be the burned face of a policeman.

The boy is foregrounded both linguistically and visually and in a specific way. In the front-page photograph he is shown as central, caught between the two IRA men and the coffin bearers. His position at the bottom of the frame emphasises his diminutiveness. The angle from which it was taken also conceals the fact that he is holding the hand of Bobby Sands' sister Marcella who is almost completely hidden by the IRA figure closest to Gerald. The caption crystallizes this reading of the photograph – he is in theme-position and the IRA are escorting *him*, not the coffin. He is 'little'. Later he is described as 'pathetic'. On page 3 we find him alone at the graveside, again not seen to be looked after. The *Republican News* photograph shows that he was in fact accompanied by relations.

The *Star* constructs Gerald as a pawn in the IRA's game, flown from London, and deliberately isolates him both visually and linguistically, from people that readers would recognise as ordinary mourners. As in the front-page photograph, so on page 3, he is surrounded textually by the IRA.

Members of the IRA

'hooded IRA men', 'IRA gunmen', 'the Provos', 'masked Provos', 'hooded gunmen'. The *Star* won't allow a military or political characterization of these participants. They are simply criminals. They are given no motivations, no human relationships to Sands. The text continually draws attention to their facial concealment (for reasons of security) as a mark of their evil. The *Star* hopes to provoke a comparison between the 'hooded men' who hide their faces and the policeman who shows his. In fact, the latter's portrait is deceptive in its transparency: it shows nothing beyond 'this is what he looked like' and is, without textual elaboration, itself a mask over the RUC's role in Northern Ireland.

The mourners

They never come into focus. In the photographs they are blurred and in the text are never described as 'people' (fifty thousand, thousands), nor as 'Catholics' or 'Nationalists'. Their motives are unstated, and the *Star* suggests ('conducted in a blaze of publicity', 'the Provos excelled . . .') that they were manipulated onto the streets.

The *Star* has drained the funeral of any positive human or political content: Sands committed suicide, and the IRA engineered the turnout, exploiting a little boy in the process.

The death of Ellis

On any other day Ellis' death would not have merited front-page coverage, but juxtaposing it, suitably defined, with Sands' funeral was a device too ideologically productive to miss. So adjacent to the photograph of the procession we have a large full-face close-up of the dead policeman. He is classified as a **VICTIM.** Instead of 'died on duty', we have the more morally positive 'doing his duty', which he did 'quietly', ie, unobtrusively, not causing any offence. This 'justifies' the headline classification: he had no choice in his death.

The manner of mourning that followed it is contrasted with that for Sands, to the latter's detriment. After the 'blaze of publicity' and the '50,000' of the funeral, we are admitted to the small, fatherless family group mourning 'in private' (note that the 50,000 do not 'grieve'). In fact, Humphrey Atkins mentioned the policeman in a speech on the day so his death was not ignored. The *Star* prefers the suggestion that Ellis was unjustly forgotten. Ellis' wife is introduced to us by her first name, and she is one of the few participants in the coverage who is allowed to speak in her own words. This gives her an individuality that compares starkly with the blurred mass of mourners marching to Milltown Cemetery to '*see* Sands buried', as mere spectators. The two events are constructed so as to differ in legibility to the English reader: the sadness of a bereaved wife is easy to understand; but 50,000 people attending a funeral requires a context that is deliberately omitted.

Paisley's service

This is reported uncritically: his view of Northern Ireland's problems as being solely due to 'IRA terror' is integral to the *Star's* own discourse. He is quoted at length, echoing the *Star*, or vice versa: Sands was a 'convict who took his own life'. The accompanying photograph shows a woman in the foreground with a wreath. Unlike Sands' funeral, here one can recognise an act of mourning.

So, in sum, the text constructs two key oppositions:

1) VOLUNTEER (Sands) (deliberately starved himself to death, suicide)	VICTIM (Ellis) (gunned down, quietly doing his duty)
2) PUBLICITY (implying unjust attention) (blaze of publicity, 50,000 marched)	PRIVACY (implying unjustly forgotten) (in private, Paula and her three children)

What is said and shown depends on what is not said and shown: eg, to construct Sands as a 'terrorist' requires a silence about his personal history and how that history links up with the wider history of the Northern Ireland statelet: to define Ellis as a 'victim' is only possible if the history of the RUC is deleted.

The reasons for all these structured omissions and the highly charged story which results lie in a political and economic analysis beyond the scope of this article. What has been shown here is some of the machinery by which the establishment media can process and appropriate the threatening events daily occurring in Northern Ireland.

Roy Ashbury

BBC REGRETS MISLEADING IMPRESSION

Comparable considerations to those outlined above seem to have come into play in the manufacture of television news coverage of Bobby Sands' funeral. The following is an extract from the minutes of a meeting held at BBC Television Centre on 6 May 1981:

C.BBC-2 wondered why so much had been heard of the Rev. Ian Paisley. Mr Woon said that at this time, Mr Paisley was realistically the centre of the opposing view. Chris Capron (A.H.C.A.P.Tel.) said that Mr Paisley had, however, been very downbeat in appearance the previous day. Sheila Innes (H.C.E.Tel.) wondered about the many different ways in which Sands had been named. It was agreed that the combination of Bobby *Sands and a smiling photograph gave a misleading impression of a convicted felon. Mr Woon said that Television News had tried very hard to get another phtoograph of him out of the Northern Ireland Office, but had consistently failed.*

Reporting Resistance

D. Mansell



Eamonn O'Dwyer/Report



Creggan Youth Against Oppression consists of teenagers and young men and women who organised during the 1980 hunger strike to develop cultural and political resistance against British imperialism. Such groups, organised within communities, now exist all over the North. With the hunger strikes over, Creggan Youth are now pursuing long-term political, educative and self-educative work.

Youth Against Oppression was started during the last hunger strike to get young people involved, as opposed to rioting. That's what people think about the Derry youth, that we just riot, it's not true – we work in an organised way. We work around the prisoners, hold peaceful pickets, token hunger strikes, raise money. There are Youth Against Oppression groups all over the north now.

The quotes on this page are from separate interviews conducted with the boys and girls of Youth Against Oppression by the London Women's Armagh Coordinating Committee: the majority come from the girls' interview.



Wasper

When I was younger the Brits used to come and wake us up at five in the morning everyday. It was to break your spirit, they used to smash things up too. You knew they were coming, we used to have a system of warning each family, by using bin lids and whistles. Now the council gives us rubber bin lids.

When we go out and pass some Brits they always yell at us, calling out, "Slut! Slut!" and "Whore". Irish B's, we ignore them now, we're used to them and call them names back, but we had to learn, learn to ignore them. They get mad when you ignore them, that's what they wanted. No Brit likes to be ignored.

If a Brit was shot dead, I wouldn't know what to do, what would you do? I would be inclined to bend down and say an act of Contrition, but then I'd think why do we have to always be the ones to forgive, and forget, they don't – they remember everything.

Our parents support us being involved though they worry about us, all parents worry for their children, but they support us. If we were lifted they'd back us up to the hilt, but for every mother and father they are afraid for us, for it to happen to their own. When we go out we always say what time we will be back in case we're lifted.

With the army pulling out and the RUC & UDR taking over *It's going to be the same way only worse. They're our own people, they're Irish. It seems worse – you know when an English man beats up an Irish man. But it's even worse when an Irish man beats up an Irish man . . . That'll be the difference you see, the police and the UDR, they're Protestants, they're really animals. The ordinary foot soldier isn't. It's just the uniform which is the symbol of oppression. The sooner the English learn it the better – to understand – it's the uniform, not the one who wears it. When you've got the UDR, it is the individual.*

To be a Catholic means living a different life here in Derry. We live in different areas of the town, we go to different schools, live in poorer, over-crowded housing, we get fewer jobs and don't get the ones that are going, so unemployment amongst Catholics is far higher. Before civil rights things, were very bad. They have improved, but not that much.

When we go for jobs, people ask you at the interview where you live, then they know you are a Catholic so they say 'sorry, no vacancies' when you know there are. It's worse for the boys to get jobs than it is for us. On Creggan there is a factory, Essex, which employs mainly women, and it is Catholic, but they don't want political trouble makers. At the interview they asked whether or not I was political. I said politics didn't have anything to do with my job . . . I got the job. Some of us thought we'd get sacked during the last hunger strike when we all came out on strike for the day, some of us thought what we might lose our jobs cos we were trainees, there were too many of us though, so they couldn't, we would have had support from the union.



International Women's Day protest outside Armagh women's prison in support of the protest for political status, 8 March 1980. RUC in foreground. Photo: Derek Speirs/Report



An Phoblacht/Republican News



Wasper

The Many Headed British Intelligence Operation in Ireland

Intelligence and propaganda are vital fronts in modern warfare, and Ireland is the one issue where the special relationship between Fleet Street and Whitehall is most sacred. This article shows the extent to which the British government is involved in manipulating intelligence in the war in Ireland, and the effect this has on 'news' items and the public's appreciation of the war. The establishment press is just one element playing a part in government intelligence campaigns against many organisations and individuals – even the government's own prison doctors – which it seeks to legitimise under the guise of combatting 'terrorism'. Whether the media's treatment of Ireland is motivated by ideological conspiracy or by managed consensus, British intelligence operations are an essential keystone in the process of keeping the people uninformed.



Andersonstown News

Millions of words have been written about British intelligence in general, many thousands about its operations in Ireland in particular. Yet many of the most sensationalist exclusives have in fact been planted on journalists, either wittingly or unwittingly, by an intelligence agency.

Agencies 'plant' stories for different reasons. They often wish to give the impression that their operations are more successful than they really are, but sometimes they may 'confess' to apparent failures as a 'lobbying' exercise to gain more funds or power.

In 1979 *Republican News* reprinted large extracts from a British Intelligence Assessment Report – 'Future Terrorist Trends in Northern Ireland'. This report, which became known as Document 39, caused a major political row, for it bluntly stated that the IRA, irrespective of whatever the British did, would still be as strong if not stronger in five years time. The newly elected Conservative Government, under considerable parliamentary pressure, promised increased funds and personnel to fight the IRA. Stories appeared in the press suggesting that the Provisional IRA had a high level spy in the Ministry of Defence and that criminals sympathetic to the IRA had stolen mail bags containing this top secret report.

In fact, all the available evidence indicates that Document 39 was deliberately leaked to the IRA by the British Intelligence Service SIS (D16). It would appear that SIS wanted a greater role in NI for itself, more funds for intelligence operations in general, and were unhappy about the Government's complacency in assuming that the IRA were on their last legs. Last year the author of the report, Lt General Glover, after several promotions, became effective head of the Defence Intelligence Staff responsible for all army, navy and air force intelligence operations.

Sometimes an agency for several reasons will plant a story deliberately designed to discredit a rival agency. One of the strangest 'Irish' stories ever to appear in the *Daily Telegraph* was an 'exclusive' report that a Special Air Service sergeant had raped a Belfast doctor's wife. After several years of frustrated attempts to improve the treatment of prisoners under interrogation through all available channels, Dr Irwin had publicly complained of consistent torture practices at the Castlereagh RUC Interrogation Centre. British Intelligence launched a black propaganda operation to discredit Dr Irwin by 'planting' stories that he was anti-RUC because the police had failed to catch his wife's rapist. Far from blaming the RUC, he had nothing but the highest regard for the way they handled the case. The RUC officer investigating the case told the *Daily Telegraph* that they had in fact caught the rapist but as he was an SAS man 'pressure from above' forced them to release him without proferring charges. The RUC were also glad of the opportunity to discredit the SAS who they correctly believed to be involved in a series of gruesome 'sectarian' murders.

Colin Wallace, now serving life for the murder of his girlfriend's husband, was a British Army Press Officer specialising in disseminating black propaganda. He created a left wing paper, the *Ulster Citizens Army*, to spread smears about loyalist leaders. Wallace pitched his stories at the required level – detailed political gossip for the quality papers and salacious titbits for the gutter press.

These incidents emphasise the necessity for treating with caution all media reporting of Ireland.

British intelligence operations are conducted on a massive scale in Ireland by a web of agencies often competing against each other. At the bottom of this pyramid is the informer. Most 'touts' sell titbits of information for a few pounds or in return for their petty criminal activities being ignored.

Much useful information is gleaned at street level by Army patrols who note new arrivals, cars etc. in their area. Each infantry battalion has its own small intelligence cell which is greatly expanded during NI tours with about 34 soldiers employed full time in collecting and collating local information. This information is then evaluated by the Intelligence Corp.

In 1969 there were exactly two Intelligence Corp operators in NI, but the intensification of the war saw, in 1971, the creation of a special 12 Intelligence and Security Company purely for NI duty. The Intelligence Corp's above average educational requirements mean that it is always short of recruits. So in 1975 four members of the Womens Royal Army Corps were enlisted into the Intelligence Corp and sent to NI after training. Today about one third of all recruits who complete the Ashford Intelligence Centre training programme are women.

Generally, Intelligence Corp operations are passive as opposed to offensive – collection of information followed up directly by physical response. A relatively few Field Intelligence Non Commissioned Officers (FINCOS) are employed on surveillance type duties. Offensive intelligence duties were originally undertaken in the early 1970s by the Military Reconaissance Force (MRF). This was an ad hoc force of personnel who had formerly served in the SAS, FINCOS and odds and sorts – usually drafted by their old units. The key elements in the MRF however were supplied by local criminals and a handful of 'turned' IRA members. The MRF did not last very long; a series of botched operations culminating in a sensationalist court trial after a failed assassination attempt, led to its disbandment. Some of its locally recruited personnel followed their OC to Rhodesia and fought as mercenaries there.

The MRF were replaced by the Special Air Services. The SAS have been present in NI in one guise or another all through the war, initially in a very unpublicised role, until Roy Mason when Labour Secretary for NI in 1976 decided to capitalise on the ruthless image of this 'elite' counter-insurgency unit by dispatching with full publicity a SAS squadron to stiffen British Army morale after a series of military disasters.

The SAS have had their successes in NI, mostly accomplished by shooting Republicans and the odd civilian down in cold blood. But they have also had their spectacular failures.

The SAS men involved in last years Iranian Embassy siege were decorated secretly because the Ministry of Defence claimed 'naming them might help terrorists identity them'. But two of the SAS men involved were well known in Ireland. The SAS man who got himself entangled in his rope on the descent from the embassy roof was the Figian trooper whose spectacular 'map reading error' led an eight man SAS patrol across the Irish border in 1976 and into the dock of a Dublin courtroom. An embarassed Foreign Office subsequently assured the Irish Government that all eight had 'been kicked out of the SAS'. A group of IRA prisoners who subsequently shot their way out of Crumlin Road Prison observed with interest the photograph of Staff Sergeant George Fairbother, another of the Embassy Siege Heroes, published recently in the Sunday World. Fairbother and others had crouched behind a wall as their CO Captain Westmacott charged on an IRA M60 machine gun team believing, mistakenly, that his men were right behind him. Officially the SAS admit only the deaths of Westmacott and Sgt Naden three years ago, but several others have been killed.

Even when the SAS were operating as a relatively large unit and not individually attached to other regiments, their existence was usually concealed. So, for example, the SAS troopers operating in the Third Brigade area masquerade as 'J Troop' of the HQ Signals Squadron and live in their own tightly guarded compound inside the Portadown UDR barracks. Col Richard Lea, a former SAS regimental commander, is the senior military Intelligence Officer in NI and other SAS officers work with the civilian agencies.



Competition and intra-organisational conflict has been particularly intense between the civilian agencies. The peculiar historical development of Ireland has meant that the traditional 'Overseas' and 'Internal' demarcation line between the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS/D16) and the Security Service (D15) have become very blurred. The organisational fortunes of both agencies have fluctuated under different governments who have played one off against the other.

D15 and D16 have had some spectacular failures. The Security Service suffered considerable embarrassment in 1972 when the IRA exposed its Brothel Sexspionage operation, employing prostitutes provided by London pornography boss Bernie Silvers to compromise Irish politicians. Blunders like this resulted in Sir Howard Smith, a former SIS NI representative, being appointed Director-General of the Security Service.

Ewart Biggs, the British Ambassador killed in a Dublin landmine blast, was a senior SIS official. According to the Sunday Tribune SIS employs at least 50 agents in the Irish Republic. In the early 70s it used agents provocateurs like the Littlejohn brothers to rob banks and petrol bomb police stations to encourage the passing of anti-IRA laws in the Dail.

Sir Brook Richards, the Director of Ulster Security, coordinates the activities of all these agencies through a Joint Intelligence Operations Planning Committee and reports direct to Sir Anthony Duff who is Mrs Thatcher's personal Intelligence advisor.

Richards inherited from his predecessor, Sir Maurice Oldfield, a Special Security Directorate known as the 'Department' which spies on all the other agencies and seeks out the sources of leaks. He also has 14 Intelligence and Security Company available as his 'Dirty Tricks' unit. But despite its Intelligence Corp title this is not



D. Mansell



The 'Peace Line' being built by the British Army to separate Nationalist and Loyalist areas physically. This project is the British State's acknowledgement that the segregation which has taken place in Belfast since the beginning of the seventies has become consolidated, markedly increasing with each phase of violence. During all this period, however, the government's 'Primacy of the RUC' policy was founded on the necessity of building up the 'middle ground'. The most recent manifestation of this policy's utter failure has been the SDLP's withdrawing from the Fermanagh/South Tyrone byelection in the face of widespread dissatisfaction with its ambiguous stand on the prison issue. Photo: Jeremy Nicholl.

The Sixty Year Long Emergency



'Since 1922 – next year will be the sixtieth anniversary – Northern Ireland has been governed to a large extent by the special powers legislation, for 50 years under the Unionists and for ten years under the aegis of this House.'
(Gerry Fitt MP, House of Commons 2 July 1981)

This legislation was, of course, a continuation of the earlier Coercion Acts which Britain had used to rule all-Ireland before partition.

During the history of the Northern Ireland statelet, three repressive Acts have been the basis of this 60 year old 'emergency'.

1. The Civil Authorities of Northern Ireland (Special Powers) Act (SPA), made law by Stormont to maintain the ascendancy within the Six Counties still left under British control.
2. The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts, passed by Westminster when London took over direct rule and thus put its full weight behind a state of martial law in everything but name (EPA).
3. The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts, which made lightning progress through the British Parliament at the time of the Birmingham bombings (PTA).

The first two Acts were (SPA) and are (EPA) used only within the six counties; the third (PTA) is in use throughout the UK.

The S.P.A.

Enactment: The SPA was first introduced by Stormont in 1922; originally subject to periodic renewal, its special powers soon became perpetual – and, of course, still remain dormant on the N.I. Statute Book.

Powers: The SPA gave the police and authorities wide-ranging powers including: arrest without warrant; imprisonment without charge or trial; declaration of curfew and prohibition of meetings; flogging; denial of trial by jury; arrest of witnesses; interference with private property; prevention of access to prisoners; prohibition of dead prisoners' inquests; etc.

Result: In the words of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, it 'violated every guarantee of personal liberty'. No wonder that Hendrick Verwoerd said he would gladly repeal all South African repressive laws just to have the SPA on its Statute Book!

The E.P.A.

Enactment: The EPA started life as the so-called Detention of Terrorists Order, passed by Westminster to give an air of legality to the internment operation of 9 August 1971. The Order was incorporated in the E.P. Act which was introduced by Britain to replace the SPA (which was unenforceable without Stormont).

Powers: The main provisions of the EPA include: abolition of jury trial for 'scheduled offences' (serious offences listed in a schedule of the Act together with certain offences created by the Act itself) and its replacement by trial before a single judge; shifting the burden of proof or disproof of possession of firearms and explosives from the prosecution to the defendant; allowing the admissibility of written confessions in evidence unless the defendant can prove such confessions were obtained by torture or degrading treatment; admitting signed statements in court if the prisoner cannot be produced him/herself; granting of bail in cases charged with a scheduled offence only in exceptional circumstances; wide powers of arrest and of detention without trial.

Consolidation: The first EPA was only one of a large number of Acts and Orders (over a dozen) which were 'consolidated' by Parliament into the present Act – the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. The present Act falls into four parts: Part I covers the Scheduled Offences, preliminary enquiries, bail and young persons in custody, court and mode of trial, evidence, onus of proof and treatment of convicted young persons. Note the inclusion of measures from the Northern Ireland (Young Persons) Act 1974. Part II covers power of arrest, detention, search and seizure. Part III creates new offences against public security and public order – mainly connected with 'proscribed organisations'. Part IV, which includes a number of general sections, lays down that the 'emergency provisions' must lapse after a given time unless 'continued' by Parliament. In practice the so-called 'Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Continuance) Orders' which crop up in Parliament every 6 months (July and December) have been regularly renewed with few voices against. However, in 1980 the Section (and Schedule) on detention was allowed to 'lapse' – they can, of course, be renewed at any time.

Result: In a 1973 pamphlet NICRA declared that the passing of the EPA meant that

'the courts are now totally the tools of the Government . . . (there are) grave dangers of conviction of innocent people . . . There are many more subtle ways in which statements of guilt may be 'encouraged' which fall far short of 'inhuman' treatment. Under this law such behaviour is encouraged . . . Hearsay evidence is admissible in trial . . . (The section refusing bail) presumes guilt on arrest. It stands the law on its head.'

Secondly, as Tim Pat Coogan listed in *On The Blanket:*

'Apart from newspaper accounts particularly in The Sunday Times, The Guardian, The Irish Press *and* The Irish Times, *there have been a number of major official reports dealing with the use of torture or 'ill-treatment' against IRA suspects in Northern Ireland since internment. These are:*

continued on next page

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formally part of Military Intelligence and appears to be a composite unit directed by SIS.

But the British who have for very long been aware that RUC men were supplying Loyalist assassination squads with information on Republicans are now worried that RUC men have sold intelligence to the IRA. Last year an RUC Bronze Section officer was dismissed for selling information to the IRA that led to the killing of several informers. English police officers brought in to investigate this case were horrified to observe that it was only the tip of the iceberg. Even RUC Special Branch men have been providing information in return for a guaranteed safety deal with the IRA.

Michael Maguire

Other Intelligence Agencies Operations not mentioned in the text:

Civilian Landline Intercepts Ops (CLIO) – very extensive telephone monitoring by Royal Signals and Intelligence Corp communications specialists.

Aerial Photo Reconnaissance by units of the army, navy and airforce personnel attached to the Joint Air Reconnaissance Centre and Joint School of Photographic Interpretation.

Govt Comunications Head Quarters (GCHQ) – at the Derry Composite Signals Organisation Station transmits sounds designed to prematurely detonate radio-controlled mines.

Special Military Intelligence Unit (SMIU) – Intelligence Corp and Military Police Special Investigation Branch men who work with the RUC.

Ulster Defence Regiment Intelligence Cell – large indigenous operation trained by Intelligence Corp.

Sprucefield Data Reference Section – the RUC equivalent of the military's Weapons Intelligence Unit.

Non-British Organisations:

The Irish Police (Gardai), C3, Special Detective Unit and Anti-Terrorist Task Force – work very closely with the RUC and English Police. The Irish Army G2 (Military Intelligence) cooperate only when specifically ordered to do so by the Irish Government.

American:

The CIA maintains an effective low profile information collection system in Ireland (mostly political information). But FBI officers stationed in the US Embassy in London are involved in tracing captured weapons.

German:

Bundesamt fur Verfassungsschutz (BFV) works closely with the British and Irish police especially since the IRA bombed British bases in Germany. Most NATO intelligence agencies help the British to track IRA arms buying abroad. It was the Chinese International Liaison Department who first exposed the Libyan-IRA arms link to the British.



Jeremy Nicholl

continued from previous page

(i) the Report of the European Court of Human Rights issued in Strasbourg on January 18th 1978.
(ii) a report by Lord Parker of Waddington, adopted on January 31st 1972.
(iii) a report in November of 1971 by Sir Edmund Compton on an enquiry under his chairmanship into the reports of security force brutality towards detainees during and subsequent to the internment swoop of August 1971.
(iv) a report on an investigation into police interrogation procedures in Northern Ireland under Judge H.G. Bennett published in March 1979.

The Compton report found evidence under the headings: Hooding, Noise, Enforced posture on wall, Sleep deprivation and Food deprivation.

Strasbourg found the UK Government in breach of Art. 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights ("inhuman and degrading treatment") and listed similar headings: "Wall-standing, Hooding, Subjection to noise, Deprivation of sleep, Deprivation of food and drink."

Furthermore Amnesty International's 1978 mission concluded that "maltreatment of suspected terrorists by the RUC has taken place with sufficient frequency to warrant the establishment of a public enquiry to investigate it . . . legal provisions which have eroded the rights of suspects held in connection with terrorist offences, have helped create circumstances in which maltreatment of suspects has taken place legal provisions which have eroded the rights of suspects held in connection with terrorist offences, have helped create circumstances in which maltreatment of suspects has taken place . . ." This, of course, points directly at the EPA.

Thirdly, as a result of the EPA, there is a total mistrust of the N.I. 'judicial' system by the nationally-minded members of the community. This has led from the blanket and no-wash protest and the hunger strikes to a crisis in which ten young Irishmen, including Bobby Sands, member of the Westminster parliament, and Kieran Docherty, a member of the Irish parliament Dail Eirann, died in a British prison camp.

The P.T.A.

Enactment: The PTA was enacted in the hysteria that followed the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings.
'On 28 November the then Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, introduced the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Bill. It was approved by Parliament without a division and came into force the next day.

The Act introduced to Great Britain the emergency legislation (first the Special Powers Act 1922 and then the Emergency Provisions Act 1973) which had governed Northern Ireland for over 50 years. As other reports have shown, the use of repressive legislation has exacerbated the violence in Northern Ireland which then spread to the mainland (sic) *– followed by the emergency legislation which helped to create it.'*
(C. Scorer & P. Hewitt *The Prevention of Terrorism Act. The case for repeal.* NCCL. p.7.)
Powers: Part I of the PTA gives the Home Secretary the power to proscribe organisations and creates certain offences of belonging to, supporting or otherwise helping a proscribed organisation. Part II introduces the present-day legal novelty (for the UK) of internal exile; giving the Secretary of State power to 'exclude' persons from Britain, Northern Ireland or the UK. Part III gives wide powers of arrest and detention. (For a fuller account of the PTA's powers see the NCCL book referred to above.)

The PTA was renewed in 1975, replaced by a new Act in 1976 (which, amongst other changes included the new offence of withholding information), and has been regularly renewed each spring since then by the laying of Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1976 (Continuance) Orders before Parliament.
Results: Catherine Scorer and Patricia Hewitt conclude:
'The Prevention of Terrorism Acts have severely undermined the principles of natural justice and the rule of law. Their provisions violate international standards on human rights – standards accepted by the British Government itself . . . Like the Special Powers Act, the Prevention of Terrorism Act means that individual liberty is no longer protected by law, but is at the arbitrary disposition of the Executive. Protests from the United Kingdom about human rights violations abroad come ill from a government which demands such executive powers for itself.'

The authors' appendix shows graphically how the Acts have been used. Of the 5061 people picked up between 29 November 74 and 31 December 80 only 339 (6.7%) have ever been charged with an offence! No Government could get away with such figures without the excuse of preventing and suppressing terrorism.

Terrorism and Human Rights

A British Central Office of Information Reference Pamphlet on *Northern Ireland* devoted less than two of its 54 pages to 'Emergency Powers' and about the same space to 'Human Rights':
'In spite of the introduction of reforms in the period 1969-72, continuing terrorist violence inevitably resulted in the restriction of certain basic rights and freedoms, and successive governments have found it necessary to invoke emergency powers. As a result of these measures the United Kingdom has given notice of derogation from some of the obligations imposed by the European Convention of Human Rights'.

A companion COI Reference Pamphlet *Human Rights in the United Kingdom*, published the year before (1978), is peppered with qualifications on the full implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, because of the special, temporary, emergency, nearly-sixty-year-old legislation needed to fight terrorism. But who, in law, are the 'terrorists'?

The EPA (but not the PTA) gives a statutory definition of 'terrorist'. Both Acts give a word for word definition of 'terrorism'.
'"Terrorist" means a person who is or has been concerned in the attempted commission of any act of terrorism or in directing, organising or training persons for the purpose of terrorism.' (EPA s.31(1)).
'"Terrorism" means the use of violence for political ends and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear.' (EPA s.31(1), PTA s.14(1)).

The reader might care to substitute these definitions in a sentence such as "In Northern Ireland the difficult problem has had to be faced of striking a balance between effectively combatting the criminal activities of *terrorists* and maintaining the civil liberties of a free society." Almost inevitably, the reader will find him/herself stressing the phrase ". . . for *political* ends . . ." – even though this is quietly forgotten once the 'terrorist' becomes a guest of her majesty in Long Kesh!

These are, of course, very special definitions. In real life, terrorism is a social and political phenomenon that can only be eliminated by getting at its roots. For Northern Ireland, these lie in the enforced partition of the nation and the denial of national self-determination.

Consequently it can be said that no British Government has really been in the business of combatting terrorism.

A Wind of Change in Parliament?

In spite of being 'special', or 'emergency', or 'temporary', these Acts have remained in force. Until this year the regular 'renewal' debates in the British parliament (July and December for the EPA and February or March for the PTA) have been formalities. Government and Opposition are at one in the need to keep these laws on the Statute Book, only a handful of Labour MPs and Gerry Fitt fight against and force a division. Indeed, when the Tories were returned to power in 1979, at the first division against the EPA this Parliament (July 1979) only a score of MPs (19 Labour and 1 SDLP) voted against. This year has seen the beginnings of a break in the Tory/Labour frontbench collusion, no doubt as a result of the shocking events in the H-blocks and the despicable way the Thatcher Government has treated the prisoners.

The Labour Front Bench has pushed for enquiries into both the PTA (lost by 143 votes to 191) and the EPA (lost by 215 to 281). On these occasions, as on the votes for the continuance of repressive legislation, the Tories found no support from the non-unionist parties. This is the first chink in the armour of bipartisanship, and must be increased. Isn't next year, 60 years on, time to call 'enough'?

Bringing it all Back Home

We have already seen the EPA (in the clothes of the PTA) brought across the Irish Sea. The British Society for Social Responsibility in Science published a booklet *The New Technology of Repression. Lessons from Ireland.* It covered the areas of riot control, internment and interrogation, the Welfare State and counter insurgency and the Crisis in Britain. Recent events from Brixton to Bristol, Toxteth to Chapeltown vindicate the 1974 warning by BSSRS: 'The dominant theme of this pamphlet is that what Ireland saw yesterday is in store for Britain tomorrow. How many of those who have seen what has been happening over the last 60 years, or even 12, can say to the English – 'your turn next'?

Philip Rendle
Connolly Association



Philip Wolmuth

At least one million Irish born people, and up to 5 million of Irish descent, live in England. Many are active in trades unions, community and tenants' associations. Irish people have traditionally been very active in the labour movement, and the emerging trades union movement in this country was influenced by fenianism.



Philip Wolmuth

Although there has been a tradition of seasonal workers coming from Ireland to England as far back as the 13th Century, it was in the mid 1800's that large numbers of Irish people started coming to England. The great hunger of the 1840's, coupled with the resulting changes in agricultural practice which drove thousands off the land, ensured that the emerging industrial revolution in England was supplied with manual labour from Ireland. The Irish workers took jobs – as navvies, domestics – which their English counterparts would not do. With the labour shortage which followed World War II, England once again drew on Irish people to fill the gaps in the expanding areas of work, such as transport, health service, catering etc.



Philip Wolmuth

Roundwood Park Festival, 1981. Irish cultural activities are important expressions of Irish people's identity in England. Comhaltas Ceoltoiri, the organisation which promotes Irish music and culture, has branches throughout Britain, and organises regular events and competitions. Very often it is through these cultural activities that second and third generation Irish children discover their Irish identity.



Philip Wolmuth

Irish Prisoners in English Gaols

In 1974 a young IRA volunteer, Michael Gaughan, went on hunger strike in Parkhurst top security prison in solidarity with the two Price sisters' demand for transfer to a gaol in Ireland, and also for two political demands: the right not to do prison work or wear prison uniform. Two months later he died, a forced-feeding tube having pierced his lung. Four months later Frank Stagg, an IRA prisoner in Wakefield prison, resorted to a hunger strike for the same demands. He died after fasting for 62 days. The Irish political prisoners in English gaols have always resisted the British Government's policy of criminalisation of themselves and their struggle.

Their status as political prisoners has nowhere been more clearly put than by Joe O'Connell's speech from the dock during his Old Bailey trial as one of the Balcombe Street Four in 1977:

'There has been an attempt by this court to isolate certain incidents which have called 'crimes'. These incidents have been put completely outside the context in which they occurred . . . The true context is that of the relationship between Britain and Ireland . . . a state of war against the occupation of Ireland by Britain.

The judge has attempted to restrict the reference to bombings and shootings to "terrorist" offences. We would like to ask the judge whether the bombings of Hiroshima and Dresden were terrorist offences? Whether the torture carried out by British soldiers in Aden and Kenya and Cyprus were acts of terrorism? We say that no representative of British imperialism is fit to pass judgement on us, for this government stands guilty of the very things of which we now stand accused . . . We admit to no crimes and to no guilt, the real crimes and guilt are those that British imperialism has committed against our people'.

There are supposed to be no political prisoners in Britain, no political trials, but in reality the arrests, trials and prison conditions of the Irish POWs in England are highly political. Like their comrades in the H-Blocks and Armagh, they are in prison in the first place only because of the political situation. Currently there are 72 prisoners, five of whom are women (Ann and Eileen Gillespie, Carole Richardson, Annie Maguire and Judith Ward). Over half of them are young men from the north of Ireland and the rest from the 26 counties. Many are from Belfast and lived through the early years of the British army occupation, internment, Bloody Sunday. Many others have committed no offence at all, and for most their trials took place in a highly anti-Irish, prejudicial atmosphere; the nature of the hard evidence was flimsy; the circumstances of their arrest indiscriminate, and often involved agents or police set-ups. Once they are in gaol the treatment they receive as political prisoners is different from that of any other category of prisoner.

POWs

The vast majority of the Irish POWs are classified as top security Category A. Of a total prison population of 45,000 300 are Category A, and a third of these are the Irish POWs. The rules of Category A are used especially punitively against them and this is the system which has enabled the Home Office to treat them as special category prisoners, while claiming that there are no political prisoners in England. The rules are used to impose maximum isolation on the Irish prisoners.

Solitary confinement is a major weapon. British courts cannot sentence anyone to long periods in solitary. But through the use of 28 day renewable spells in the 'Punishment Blocks', the prisons have constantly used it against the Irish POWs for petty infringements of prison rules, protests and reaction to beatings by the screws. 'Rule 43' also allows a prisoner to be isolated indefinitely to 'maintain good order and discipline' in the prison. By using these two rules, the regime has managed to hold Irish POWs in continuous solitary confinement for as long as two and a half years (Brendan Dowd), and several for two years (Eddie Butler, Liam McLarnon and Hughie Doherty) and almost all for regular 28 day spells. When six POWs in Albany staged a peaceful 'sit-in' in their cells in 1976 as a protest against Brendan Dowd's two and a half years in solitary, they were subjected to a full scale attack by prison officers, leading to broken limbs and other serious injuries, and were punished by further periods in solitary.

Isolation

Like other regimes, the British have tried to use isolation as the ultimate weapon to destroy the personalities of political opponents. In 1974 sensory deprivation units (Control Units) were introduced in Wakefield gaol: rounded white, totally silent cells. They were windowless, admitted no sound, were constantly lit; no warder would speak to the prisoner and they would have nothing to do all day. Eddie O'Neill, Ray Mclaughlin and Brendan Dowd were amongst those held for 90 day renewable periods in the Control Units. As a result of bad publicity the Home Office claimed the units were no longer operating but other prisoners have testified to their continued use in the F Wing of Wakefield prison.

As well as the mental torture through isolation, physical assault by the screws is routine. Nearly 75% of Irish POWs have been seriously attacked and beaten, many to the extent of being hospitalised.

The prison regime fears the political awareness and capacity to organise that exists among the Republican prisoners. Isolation from the outside world as well as within the prison is a tactic used to disorient and demoralise them. All the available prison rules were used to the full. Political prisoners are allowed only very few authorised visitors, usually only close relatives, and any other visitor is checked out and interviewed by the police. Visitors are searched before and after visits, and the prisoners regularly strip searched. Many visits take place with a screen separating visitor and prisoner (closed or screened visits), and two or more officers sitting up next to them.

Although many prisoners' families live in Ireland, only four prisoners have ever been transferred back to Ireland, and then only after being forcibly fed for 205 days on hunger strike (Price sisters 1974). Yet it is Home Office policy to transfer prisoners to gaols close to home and British soldiers are automatically sent back to Ireland or Scotland after crimes committed in the north of Ireland.

A further harassment is the constant moving of Republican prisoners from prison to prison, and it is regular practice to move a prisoner across the country on the very day that a visitor arrives from Ireland. This can mean prisoners losing long awaited visits and can mean their being moved several times in one year. This form of harassment makes it difficult for them to organise as Republican POWs inside the gaols and to keep contact with home.

The closed visit, strip searching, harassment of relatives visiting and the demand for repatriation, have been the chief issues of protest by the Republican prisoners over the past years in English gaols.

The hunger strikes in the H Blocks and Armagh have exposed to the world the political nature of the arrests and convictions of prisoners in the no-jury Diplock courts. Less is heard of the political nature of the trials in England. Eight per cent have been under the Conspiracy Laws, where the onus of proof is on the defendant to prove he or she is innocent. No crime needs to have been committed, the defendants do not have to be shown to know each other, and convictions are easily obtained in sensational pre-trial media coverage which marks out the prisoners as dangerous IRA men from the moment of their arrest. As a result of the procession of mass trials for conspiracy in the 1970s, over 50 Republicans are serving life sentences or 20/30 years (O'Connell – life plus 159 years) and at least 14 are totally innocent.

Annie Maguire

The case of Annie Maguire highlights this political judicial process in a tragic and dramatic way. For Annie Maguire, and the six people convicted with her, are in prison not for what they did, but for what they are. They were framed because they are Irish, they are from Belfast and they have friends from Belfast.

Annie Maguire was arrested in the wake of an earlier trial in 1976 in which four young people were convicted of the pub bombings in Guildford and Woolwich. One of the accused was a nephew of hers by marriage, Gerald Conlon from Belfast. During this trial reference was made to a supposed bomb factory presided over by someone called 'Aunt Annie'. After the trial, the Daily Mail began a witchhunt which eventually led to the charging of Annie Maguire and her family with possession of explosives.

No explosives were ever found, but the prosecution alleged that the bomb factory was in fact in the front kitchen of Annie Maguire's council flat in Harlesden. Annie's neighbours who are all English were always in and out of the house as Annie was a friendly person. She had lived 20 years in England, had no Republican sympathies and was a member of Paddington Conservative club.

At this implausible bomb factory in Harlesden the police arrested seven people when they raided in December 1976.

Annie and her husband Paddy Maguire; their lodger Sean Smyth; her two teenage sons, Patrick and Vincent; a neighbour Pat O'Neill who had just dropped in, and lastly Patrick 'Guiseppe' Conlon perhaps the most shocking of all. He was the father of Gerald Conlon, a defendant in the Guildford/Woolwich case, and had travelled from Belfast (although very ill) the previous day to see solicitors about his son. All seven received long sentences – Annie and Paddy 14 years, Conlon 12 years, the two boys four and five years, Pat O'Neill 12 years. The two younger children were taken into care.

What was the evidence offered by the prosecution? The *only* evidence was forensic. It was claimed that traces of explosives were found on the hands of all the defendants except Annie, and to convict her it was claimed that traces were found on one out of twelve rubber gloves in her kitchen drawer. The tests used have since been discredited by a forensic scientist, John Yallop, who has found that the test used (thin layer chromatology) can give positive results to a common household substance like washing up powder and also cigarette smoke. He also found that the test had not been competently done by the technician in this case. This is the same forensic evidence that has been used to convict 25 Irish POWs in English trials including those found guilty of the 1974 Birmingham pub bombing who also proclaim their complete innocence.

Such a conviction was only possible because an English jury, whipped up by prejudicial and sensational media coverage for weeks before the trial, could believe that a whole Irish family could be capable of making bombs in the kitchen, that seven people could have explosives on their hands without a trace being found in the house. It was a political trial with seven innocent victims. Patrick Conlon has since died in Wormwood Scrubs, his chronic lung complaint neglected medically, protesting his innocence to the last.

Bobby Sands and his dead comrades, the hunger strikers; the protesting prisoners in the H Blocks and Armagh; the electors of Fermanagh and South Tyrone and Cavan/Monaghan; their hundreds of thousands of supporters in Ireland and over the world; all this has made it irrelevant to plead the prisoner's case for political status. The world knows they are political prisoners, and the British Government's policy of criminalisation is now in tatters. The prisoners in gaol in Britain have waged the struggle against greater odds, and have resisted criminalisation at every stage of their activity. In the words of Paul Hill from Belfast serving life at Parkhurst:

'I am told at every opportunity that I am a criminal, a murdering Irish bastard. Criminal? Who are they trying to convince. Themselves? Because they will never take the fact from us that we are political prisoners.

Their campaign is one of mental torture to leave us mental wrecks . . . but I, like all Irish prisoners held in Britain, will never adapt to their system. We will never be disciplined by their rules.

The Irish prisoners are in British prisons because British troops are on Irish soil. If that is not political, what is?

I have been told that I will spend the rest of my natural life in prison. I am 21 years old. But I, like all Irish prisoners seek no sympathy. But we do seek your support. To the people who remain silent knowing this torture is being inflicted on their fellow Irishmen, I say we are here because of you, because we fought injustice.

And to the people who call us criminals, I say a criminal is motivated by gain. The next time you hear gunfire, don't think just of the gun, think of the so-called criminal behind it. Where is his gain, does he believe in freedom? When a youth stands with an armalite on a street corner and faces the might of the British army with a handful of rounds, you better believe he believes in freedom.'

Sue O'Halloran
Sinn Fein POW Dept.

Ireland's Political Parties

Unlike the development of political parties in England, the national question in Ireland has determined the politics of all forces active there today, be they North or South, nationalist or loyalist.

The following is a set of brief descriptions of the main political parties in Ireland today – it is not a comprehensive list – we have had to leave out a number of smaller parties for reasons of space.

The North

ALLIANCE PARTY

Formed in 1970 out of the New Ulster Movement, a break-off group of pro-O'Neill, liberal Unionists from the Official Unionist Party. Support for the constitution and the Union is at the base of the Party, though it sees its more immediate aim as bringing Catholics and Protestants together. It does so to some extent (for example, its co-founder and present leader is Oliver Napier, a Catholic solicitor). However, it is probable that its support is overwhelmingly middle class and predominantly Protestant at that. Many of these supporters seem to have returned to their roots if the Party's poor showing in the May 1981 local government elections is anything to go by; the number of Alliance councillors in the 26 councils is 48% less than after the 1977 local government elections.

DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY

Formed in 1971 as a vehicle for the policies of Ian Paisley and his Free Presbyterian Church. In the words of one of its founder members, the DUP is 'right wing in the sense of being strong on the constitution, but to the left on social policies'. That means that it can combine populist issues (such as better benefits for NI farmers from EEC membership, and opposition to the pull-out of textile firms like Courtaulds from Carrickfergus, a town in Paisley's own constituency) with what can only be described as moral crusades (for example, the DUP fought the 1981 local government elections on the basis of opposition to Dublin talks, sodomy – for those not into either the Bible or archaic language, that means homosexuality – and 'the continental and Republican Sunday'). What is perhaps more interesting, although less easily documented, is Paisley and his Party's connections with paramilitaries on the Protestant side, both inside and outside of the police and the UDR, Ulster Defence Regiments.

IRISH INDEPENDENCE PARTY

Formed in 1977 from Nationalist Unity (whose MP, Frank McManus, had been Westminster MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone) and other remnants of the by-then defunct Nationalist Party, as well as ex-SDLP members, disgruntled at their party's failure to take up the national question as a priority. Its underlying policy has been support for British withdrawal prior to negotiation of NI's position within a united Ireland. Within that broad brief its specific policies represent perhaps the most conservative strand (in moral and religious terms) within Irish nationalism. It gained 21 councillors in the 1981 local government elections, mainly on the basis of its support for the five demands of the H-Blocks and Armagh prisoners. Party leader is Fergus McAteer (son of the leader of the Nationalist Party in its heyday, Eddie McAteer). Another notable Party member, John Turnley (perhaps paradoxically, given the Conservative Catholic nature of the IIP, a Protestant), was assassinated in Carnlough, County Antrim in 1980.

IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY

Formed in 1974 by a number of members of the Official IRA, who split over the Officials' ceasefire of 1972, as well as their general policies. The Party's name, deliberately, calls to mind James Connolly's party, the Irish Socialist Republican Party; the IRSP feels it has strong links with the Connolly tradition, even to the point of calling their paper the *Starry Plough*, after the flag designed for Connolly's Irish Citizen Army. The IRSP fights politically (as does the Irish National Liberation Army, with which it has unspecified links, militarily) for a socialist united Ireland. Bernadette McAliskey was on the Party executive for the first year, before leaving, along with a number of leading members, over the party's failure to come up with a socialist programme. The party survives though, despite the most massive harassment from State forces on both sides of the border. In the South, leading members were framed and imprisoned for armed robbery in 1978 but were released on appeal. Several leading members have been assassinated, including Seamus Costello in the South, and Miriam Daly, Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little in the North.

NEW ULSTER POLITICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Formed in the mid-70s after the dissolution of the Ulster Workers' Council (which led the strike of 1974 which brought down the power-sharing Executive) as the political wing of the UDA, it has always been totally over-shadowed by its military parent. This is despite the efforts of Glenn Barr to present it as a respectable grouping with a cogent programme for an independent Ulster. The idea never really caught on; none but a few middle class Protestants would even consider giving the ex-heavies turned politicoes the time of day never mind their vote, and the idea of an independent Ulster hasn't caught on, even in the UDA itself. The Group has recently been dissolved, and replaced by the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party, accepted by everyone as a front organisation which will presumably come into its own if the British ever get around to proscribing the UDA.

OFFICIAL UNIONIST PARTY

The original Ulster Unionist Party, which was formed in 1886 in opposition to Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill. It was the Party which, because of the inbuilt Protestant majority within the Northern state, after the partition of Ireland, ruled NI from 1921 until Direct Rule in 1972. It has gone through severe contortions since the Civil Rights days, losing members to various splinter parties such as the Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party, the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, the United Ulster Unionist Party, the Progressive Unionist Party, the Alliance Party, etc. More recently it has suffered from the rise of Paisley's DUP in the eastern, more industrialised area of Northern Ireland; however, it seems to control, for the present, Protestant support in the rural west and south of the Six Counties. Its policies are much less populist than those of the DUP, but are often indistinguishable, especially on the question of security. It is tactics, conservatism and caution which distinguish it from the DUP. The present Party leader is the thin-lipped, unsmiling MP for South Antrim, James Molyneaux.

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

Formed in the early Civil Rights days of 1968, its original leading lights were Michael Farrell, Bernadette Devlin and Kevin Boyle. After an initial phase of mass support, it settled down to being a small grouping, mainly in the Six Counties, with a policy of critical support of the Provisionals. In practice that has meant that it has worked closely with Provisional Sinn Fein through the years, especially on the question of prisoners, in the Political Hostages Release Committee, the Relatives Action Committee and the H-Blocks/Armagh Committee (PD member and Belfast City Councillor Fergus O'Hare is on the last-mentioned committee) while at the same time criticising the Provisionals for failing to mobilise mass working class support and on programmatic grounds. In 1978 PD merged with the Movement for a Socialist Republic, the Irish section of the Fourth International, thus becoming more obviously the all-Ireland organisation which it has always striven to be. Michael Farrell is the only one of the original leading lights still with PD.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY

Formed in 1970 as a Party, as it were, from the top down. A number of Stormont MPs (Fitt and Wilson – the latter was later assassinated – from the Republican Labour Party, Hume, Cooper and O'Hanlon, independent Civil Rights MPs, Currie of the Nationalist Party and Devlin of the Northern Ireland Labour Party) grouped together under the programme of a constitutionalist path to a unified Ireland, and gained support from Catholics who had supported the NILP and various nationalist parties. Throughout the 'troubles' it has been the main party to which Catholics of all classes have given their vote. The media have referred to it as the 'mainly Catholic SDLP', but in fact the only Protestant to have been in a leading position was Ivan Cooper, no longer a Party dignatory. Despite its nationalist origins and its early strong stances on internment and Bloody Sunday, it later became a sort of blue-eyed child of the Northern Ireland Office, being groomed for power, which it took in the heady days of the power-sharing Assembly in 1974. After the demise of the power-sharing experiment, it went into a long phase when its nationalist light was definitely kept under a bushel. In recent years, however, especially with the escalation of the H-Blocks struggle, the urban social democrats, Paddy Devlin and Gerry Fitt, have felt the pressure as the party's roots resurfaced. Devlin and Fitt have gone, leaving the cosmopolitan Hume in the slightly uneasy position of leading a party increasingly rural rather than urban, nationalist rather than social democratic. It may turn out to be one of the ironies of contemporary Irish history that the party which was once groomed by the British to be the non-nationalist Party for Catholics in Northern Ireland was driven back to nationalism partly as a result of British intransigence over the five demands of the H-Blocks protesters.

WORKERS' PARTY REPUBLICAN CLUBS

Formed in 1967 as the political wing of the pre-split IRA, and titled 'Republican Clubs' in a vain attempt to beat the proscription of Sinn Fein (as it was previusly known) by the Stormont Ministry of Home Affairs. (In the South it retained the name Sinn Fein, and later added 'the Workers' Party'.) In the North, it became legal one year after the Official IRA ceasefire, that is, in 1973. Since then WPRC, like SFWP in the South, has settled down happily in its stages theory of socialist revolution in Ireland. (This theory, and the general Stalinist influence in Sinn Fein, was part of the reason for the split in 1969.) In the North this has entailed support for the democratisation of society as a priority. To this end WPRC has supported the return of a devolved parliament and a Bill of Rights, and put most of its eggs into the one basket of elections.

Eight years of such a strategy do not seem to have taken the Party far. Despite their commitment to 'bread and butter issues' and the respect of the Northern Ireland Office and the Alliance Party (on the grounds that they have abandoned their militant Republican roots), the Protestant working class has given them no support, and the section of the Catholic working class which supported them before (enabling them to gain 6 council seats in 1977, 3 of them in Belfast) abandoned them in the 1981 elections, allowing PD and IRSP candidates pledged to support for the H-Blocks hunger strikers to be successful. They now have only 3 councillors, none of them in Belfast. (In the south their strategy has been only marginally more successful, with Joe Sherlock being elected a TD in the June 1981 general election.) In the South they have strongly supported the relatively small state sector of the economy, and many of their specific proposals revert at one point or other to building up that sector. They have also been to the fore in researching the activities of mining multinationals in the South, again calling for state bodies to exploit Ireland's natural resources.

PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN

Sinn Fein, founded in 1907 by Arthur Griffith, became the main voice of militant republicanism after 1916, advocating abstention from Westminster and support for the armed resistance of the IRA. Sinn Fein stood in elections in 1918 and won 73 out of 105 seats. Many of these elected were in British jails at the time. The parliament set up was outlawed, and the War of Independence followed, Sinn Fein split over the Treaty which partitioned Ireland in 1922, with the anti-treaty majority keeping the title and adopting an abstentionist policy towards the new Free State parliament as well. Following a bitter civil war with the pro-treaty forces back by the British, the republicans were forced underground. De Valera (later to become president of the Republic of Ireland) and his supporters left in 1926 and set up *Fianna Fail* to enter the Irish parliament, the Dail.

From 1930s onwards, Sinn Fein has functioned mainly as the political wing of the IRA (Irish Republican Army), militantly nationalist and absentionist. In the 1960s it swung to the left in line with the IRA and became involved in social and economic agitation. In 1969/70 it split along the same lines as the IRA into Official Sinn Fein and Provisional Sinn Fein. Since then, PSF has shifted from the postion it then held of opposing the swing to the left, and the moves to end abstentionism. They now see themselves as democratic socialists and want a new Ireland based on a democratic federal government structure, though this is the subject of fierce debate within the organisation. There is now, especially in the north, a left wing tendency who argue for greater involvement in social issues and were influential in getting the party to participate in the 'broad front' of National H-Block/Armagh Committee which has mobilised mass support for the hunger strike in Ireland and around the world. This, and the fact that IRA prisoners have stood for election even if with no intention of taking up their seats, are examples of changes in strategy. There is now recognition that the struggle for national freedom must contain elements of social/economic freedom. New developments like the Women's Affairs Department for some in the organisation are a recognition of the importance of building and developing their policy on women's struggles, and developing the struggle in the Labour Movement. It is fair to say though that over the past twelve years the armed struggle, and more recently the struggle of the prisoners for political status has been given priority by the republican movement in Ireland. It is also fair to say that the Republican Movement (ie, IRA and PSF) are leading the struggle against imperialism in Ireland. Though many criticise their lack of a revolutionary programme, they have a firm base among the nationalist working class population of Northern Ireland who have born the brunt of repression.

The South

SINN FEIN THE WORKERS PARTY

Used to be called Official Sinn Fein and often referred to as The Sticks or The Stickies. Since the split in 1969/70 (see PSF above) they have become steadily more reformist, filling the vacuum left in the South as the Irish Labour Party moves to the right, though at the time of the split they were seen as more 'socialist' than PSF. Today, they have been increasingly drawn to a 'two nations' position on the national question, and are against political status for the prisoners. They have a foothold in the trade union bureaucracy in the South as the Irish Labour Party moves to the right, though at the time of the split they were seen as more 'socialist' than PSF. Today, they have been increasingly drawn to a 'two nations' position on the national question, and are against political status for the prisoners. They have a foothold in the trade union bureaucracy in the South – they support the National Wage Agreement and opposed the recent unofficial oil strike. They argue that underdevelopment in Ireland has more to do with lack of will on part of Irish bourgeoisie than with imperialism. They welcome the introduction of multinationals and the development of state industry, essentials tools to give Ireland her proletariat, and have strongly supported the relatively small state sector of the economy and many of their specific proposals revert at one point or another to building up that sector. Although the party is in absolute decline in the North, it has grown in the South by presenting itself as a more consistent reformist party than the Labour Party and by attracting sections of the working class who have distranced themselves from nationalism.

In the North, it is known as Workers Party, Republicans Clubs. The WPRC was formed in 1967 as the political wing of the pre-split IRA, and titled 'Republical Clubs' in a vain attempt to beat the proscription of Sinn Fein (as it was previously known) by the Stormont Ministry of Home Affairs. (In the South it retained the name Sinn Fein, and later

FINE GAEL

The treaty of 1921 which ended the Irish war of independence and led to partition was accepted by some in the newly-designated Irish Free State, specifically by Cumann na nGaedhael (meaning 'Party of the Irish', later changed to Fine, meaning 'family' or 'clan') who formed the first government. Falling from power in 1932, they had a brief flirtation with the Blueshirts, Ireland's own indigenous fascists. Since the 30s they have gained power three times, always in coalition. It was during one of these periods that they declared Ireland (that is, the 26 southern counties of it) a Republic. They are presently in power in coalition with the Irish Labour Party.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish Fine Gael from the other leading party. Fianna Fail, on programmatic or other substantial grounds. People remember the fascist past of Fine Gael, but that is no longer a live factor in the party. Similarly, Fine Gael's reputation of being more repressive than Fianna Fail is slightly misleading; they are (as their introduction of a battery of repressive legislation in 1976 shows) more eager to repress Republicans in the south than is Fianna Fail, but the latter's approach often brings them to the same point, even if at a slightly slower speed. It was also once true that Fine Gael's philosophy was much less Republican than Fianna Fail's, but again the difference seems to be lessening, with Garrett Fitzgerald standing in the June 1981 general election on the slogan that he was the only party leader *both* of whose parents fought in the 1916 Rising.

Lastly, Fine Gael is no longer so clearly the party for 'West Britons' that it has been in an era when Charles Haughey (of Fianna Fail) was willing to work with Thatcher in order to contain the 'troubles' to the North. Fine Gael's conscious effort to be less 'parochial' than Fianna Fail has led it recently to look beyond Britain, and to model itself on some of the social or Christian democratic parties of Europe. It is a party which prides itself currently on its professional image, and woos the upward-aspiring young Irish business*man* whose eyes are turned towards Europe because that is the source of much of the multinational capital which his business can service in Ireland.

FIANNA FAIL

Some of those who did not accept the 1921 Treaty decided to take the constitutional path. Despite opposition from former comrades in Sinn Fein, De Valera took the oath of allegiance to the King in 1928, and by 1932 his new party Fianna Fail ('Soldiers of Destiny') was in power. It has remained in power for most of the years since. During the 40s it became involved in what even it later judged to be the debacle of 'protectionism': protective barriers were erected around the Irish economy in an attempt to break the economic dominance of Britain.

Unlike Fine Gael, Fianna Fail has not needed to engage in coalitions. Its support has been broad enough (in both geographical and class terms) for it to form governments unaided. Also, its ability to tap the Republican sympathies of 'the nation' (or at least of the Southern 26 counties of it) has enabled it to represent itself as '*the* Republican party', and the only true ancestor of the combatants of 1916.

That Republican heritage has been called into question by events in the North. Party leaders Jack Lynch and, later, Charles Haughey each had to walk the tightrope of negotiating with the old enemies, the British, while at the same time representing the Republican rump in their own party. This led to a sort of political schizophrenia, with Fianna Fail as willing to repress Republicans as Fine Gael, and simultaneously calling on the British to state their intention to see Ireland ultimately reunited. By June 1981, with the H Blocks crisis at boiling point, Haughey was no longer able to continue the balancing trick. The election of two H Block prisoners (Agnew and Doherty) put Haughey in the invidious position of attempting to buy the votes of those 'independents' who (unlike the prisoners) could take their seats in the Dail. He was unable to get their support, and could not form a government. Power went to Fine Gael, and with it the problems of weathering the H Blocks storm.

IRISH LABOUR PARTY

The ILP's origins are in the syndicalist ideas of James Connolly and Jim Larkin. Formed as the Irish Trades



Loyalist parade in Glasgow. Photo: Troops Out.



Orange rally on 'security' at City Hall, Belfast, 15 March 1980. Photo: Derek Speirs/Report.

Union Congress and Labour Party in 1912, it was 1918 (by which time Connolly had been executed for his part in the 1916 Rising, and Larkin was in jail in the United States) before the Labour Party as a separate entity emerged. Its first independent act, however, was to stand down from the 1918 General Election in favour of Sinn Fein candidates. After partition it lost its northern members (who had never been too happy at cutting themselves off from the British labour movement in the first place) with the formation of the Northern Ireland Labour Party. In 1930 its syndicalist origins were left behind when the ITUC and the Labour Party separated.

The party has always been small and relatively inconsequential, not a mass Labour Party. This has not been because of any backwardness on the part of workers in the 26 counties (their strike record is greater than that of the workers in Northern Ireland or Great Britain, for example) but because of the unique history of Ireland. The 'bread and butter' issues which Labourist groups focus on have been subsumed within wider questions such as the continuation of partition, the economic dominance of Britain, and the advantages and disadvantages of membership of the EEC. On these wider questions the ILP has no independent voice. It has found itself most happily joined with Fine Gael (an apparent paradox, given Fine Gael's fascist roots), possibly on the grounds of equating its 'internationalism' with Fine Gael's desire to be cosmopolitan. In effect this has meant that their unity has been in opposition to the supposed parochialism of nationalists. Such a theoretical proposition fails to acknowledge why nationalism should be a strong influence among Irish people, working class included. And if Labour needed a practical confirmation of that failure, it came in the June 1981 general election when its support slumped as many working class voters turned to H Blocks candidates. (Party leader Frank Cluskey lost his seat.) Despite that, Labour has formed the government in coalition with Fine Gael once again, and new party leader Michael O'Leary has become Deputy Taoiseach (Prime Minister).

COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND

Formed in 1933, the Communist Party split during World War II (in which the South remained neutral) into the Communist Party of Northern Ireland and the Irish Workers' Party. Reunification did not come until 1970.

In the 60s CPNI members (especially Jimmy Stewart, Edwina Stewart and Betty Sinclair) were leading civil rights activists in the North. The reunification of the Party coincided with the move of the struggle onto a more violent plane, and with the birth of the Provisionals. Since that move the CPI has continued to argue for stages in the Irish road to socialism, the initial stage involving civil rights in the north, and the ultimate stage a united socialist Ireland. This position is close to the arguments of Sinn Fein the Workers' Party, and consequently CPI and SFWP were organisationally close in the early 70s. In recent years they have moved further apart, the CPI's differences with SFWP being mostly on the grounds of the latter's uncritical acceptance of the constitutional road, as well as their blindness on instances of repression and injustice in Ireland north and south. Programmatically, the difference boils down to the CPI's avowal of an anti-imperialist position, and SFWP's rejection of anti-imperialism.

The CPI's stance has thus led them to be outspoken (either directly, or indirectly, through groups such as the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, in which their influence has been strong) against British repression in Ireland. On this, and on their commitment to such policies as political status, they have appeared to have something in common with their siblings, the Provisionals. However, in the last analysis, their acceptance of a stages theory over-rides all else, and the Provisionals' violence (as well as that of all other paramilitary groups) is seen as being the ultimate mortal sin: i.e. jumping stages. That has required CPI to be religious about distancing themselves from the Provisionals, perhaps paradoxically, most so when they say things that are closest to the position of the Provisionals.

Loyalism

Origins

Few aspects of the Northern Ireland situation baffle outsiders more than the intransigence of loyalism and the political allegiance of the Protestant working class to ultra conservative politics.

By the late seventeenth century Ulster had seen a number of attempts at plantation of Protestant English and Scottish settlers, which failed because the Irish peasantry maintained control at a local and cultural level. However, following James II's defeat by William of Orange in 1690, not only a landlord class, but also a new tenant farming class were imposed on Ulster. English rule thus established its own mass base, maintained by the new tenants' reliance on the patronage and protection of their landlords. Fears of Catholic encroachment ensured the planters' continuing loyalty to their ruling class. Gaelic culture went into decline in the eighteenth century and religion became one of the most important distinguishing features at a cultural level between the two communities.

Urban Loyalism

During the nineteenth century the sectarian divisions of rural Ulster were reproduced in the towns. This was a product both of the divisive policies of the ruling class and the 'underdevelopment' of Ireland by colonial rule. Ireland was marked by tremendous poverty, high unemployment and high emigration, with minimal industrial growth concentrated in the north-east. In this situation, the old caste divisions re-emerged: Protestant workers organised in the Orange Order to secure the exclusion of Catholics from industrial employment and built up an 'historic compromise' with the capitalist class: in return for promoting a system of discrimination against Catholics, the employers were guaranteeed industrial peace and the political allegiance of Protestant workers.

The rise of nationalism threatened this situation. In an independent united Ireland there would have been irresistable popular pressure to end the system of discrimination against Catholics in the north-east. A majority of Protestant workers resisted Irish independence as a threat to their privileged position. The capitalist class stood to lose the benefits of industrial and political 'peace', and the security afforded by the British state system. Unable to block nationalism completely, Northern Unionists had to accept partition.

The Sectarian State

With the establishment of the six counties, the division within the working class was greatly exacerbated. Catholics were shut out at every possible level of employment. The new state took upon itself the task of maintaining sectarian divisions. Discriminatory policies were applied to state employment, housing and welfare. New industries established by multinationals were invariably allocated to predominantly Protestant areas. Few financial resources were given to Catholic areas.

Protestants were subjected to loyalty tests. Protestant radicals and socialists were pressured on pain of losing job and home into declaring their loyalty to Britain, and by doing so they had to abandon any real programme for radical change.

The State of Loyalism

All of these measures secured the continuing loyalty of the Protestant workers until the emergence of the Civil Rights movement in the late sixties. By focusing on the pervasiveness of discrimination the Civil Rights movement threatened the very heart of the six-county state. Until 1969 unionism had been a monolithic political formation: under the pressures of Civil Rights movement and the rebirth of militant republicanism, the monolith began a long process of disintegration. Throughout the 1970s the strength of the Official Unionists, the party of respectable, traditional unionism, has steadily declined in the face of the parallel rise of the Paisleyism of the Democratic Unionist Party and the militant loyalism of the Ulster Defence Association.

The Official Unionist decline began under Northern Ireland Prime Minister Terence O'Neill in the mid 60s, and was accelerated by their loss of power when the Westminster parliament assumed responsibility for the province. O'Neill's leadership and his apparent conciliatory attitude towards the southern state had always been mistrusted by rank and file loyalists; as early as 1965 his meeting with Sean Lamass, the Taoiseach of the time, resulted in demonstrations led by the relatively unknown Ian Paisley. When, in 1969, O'Neill appeared to be making concessions to the Civil Rights marchers, this was taken as the final proof that he lacked the political will to curb this threat to the loyalist state. In April of that year he was replaced by Major Chichester-Clark, like O'Neill very much a part of the Unionist 'landed gentry'; and like O'Neill he rapidly found himself out of touch with the party's grass roots. By 1971 loyalists were seeing their worst fears realised in the growth of the republican military campaign, and in March Chichester-Clark was deposed in favour of Brian Faulkner. In many ways Faulkner was the Official Unionists' last hope; a relatively hard line loyalist by Official Unionist standards, he was widely seen by the party as a leader able to counteract Paisley's claims that they had 'gone soft'. However, despite his introduction of internment and toughening of the police force, Faulkner and the Official Unionists were caught between republican insurgence and a loyalist reaction which was increasingly finding its voice in Paisley's mixture of Protestant fundamentalism and hard line unionism, and in the UDA's paramilitary activities.

Since Faulkner's resignation in 1974 the Official Unionists have had two leaders, Harry West, who lost his Fermanagh South Tyrone seat in the last general election, and James Molyneux, neither of whom have displayed the ability to lead the party back to the central position in loyalism which it once held.

The loyalists/unionist bloc is now so deeply split into three different factions that the terms 'loyalist' and 'unionists' are no longer interchangeable. While the Official Unionists and the DUP fight for the mantle of 'true unionism' and the 'spirit of Carson', the UDA, with the formation of the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party, has adopted the radically different goal of an independent six county state. The loyalty of the UDA is not the traditional unionist loyalty to the Queen and the UK, but to the concept of the six county state itself.

Many of the political differences between the three groups are rooted in their separate power bases. The Official Unionists draw their support mainly from the Protestant, and in a few cases, Catholic, middle class. While they always depended on the votes of the Protestant working class to stay in power, the actual structure of the party, and therefore the rulers of the province, came from the professional class and wealthy farmers. When the Protestant working class in the late sixties thought that they might lose their economic advantages over the Catholic working class through Official Unionist weakness, they began to withdraw their support in favour of the DUP politically, and the UDA militarily. The resulting rise of the DUP has been fuelled by a mixture of largely working-class and lower middle-class loyalist fears and a strict and fearsomely reactionary protestant fundamentalism. This is held together by Paisley's ability to appear to some loyalists as an almost messianic figure. The DUP is not really a political party, but a vehicle for Paisley's proposed ride to power and a strict protestant state which would make the old Stormont regime seem positively liberal.

The DUP has effectively claimed the bulk of the old unionist support in the country areas and the smaller towns, but in loyalist working class areas in Belfast it is strongly challenged by the UDA. The UDA is by far the largest of the loyalist paramilitaries, claiming a membership of 50,000, although the true figure is probably more in the region of 15,000, much of which membership is nominal. Formed in the early 1970s, the UDA has been responsible for most of the 300-odd assassinations of Catholics in recent years; most of these are claimed by the front organisation of the Ulster Freedom Fighters, thus enabling the UDA to conduct paramilitary activities whilst maintaining its own legality. Although loyalists claim such attacks are directed against the IRA, very few of those Catholics killed have had any direct political involvement. In fact, the number of sectarian attacks on Catholics has always been higher than those on Protestants. The UDA itself now admits that it carried out random attacks on Catholics in the early 1970s in the belief that 'they're all in the IRA'.

In the early 1970s, as loyalist working-class allegiances changed, it was easy to equate Paisleyism with the UDA; this is no longer accurate. Since the 1974 Ulster Worker's Council strike brought down the Loyalist-Catholic 'power-sharing' executive, the UDA has become increasingly aware of its potential political muscle; with the forming of the New Ulster Political Research Group, and latterly, the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party, the UDA and Paisleyism have diverged so as to become opposing forces. Paisley's attempted loyalist strike in 1978 failed partly for lack of clearly defined objectives, but also because the UDA refused him the physical support required to bring the province to an industrial standstill. Paisley and, increasingly, the Orange Order, have no real support in urban working class areas like Belfast's Shankill Road, which consistently returns UDA-backed 'independent loyalists' to the city council.

It has been said that the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party is merely a front organisation formed in case the UDA were to be proscribed; the evidence of the last ten years, however indicates otherwise. The UDA has managed to retain its legality, and this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. The UDA have gone to much greater lengths to establish the ULDP than is needed to organise a 'front'.

What the ULDP really represents is an attempt by the loyalist working class to consolidate their position, having been failed by traditional unionism. They recognise that they cannot rely either on the British state or on what they see as Paisley's political opportunism; they also find the prospect of a Paisley-dominated fundamentalist protestant state unattractive.

Of the major loyalist groupings the UDA/ULDP are by far the most politically astute although as yet electorally the weakest of the three. While both the Official Unionists and the DUP believe that by simply hanging on, demanding stronger 'security measures; and returning to Stormont rule they can survive the crisis, the ULDP recognise that such policies have failed before. Distrusting both their erstwhile unionist leaders and the English establishment, they realise that their only hope of preserving their position is through the establishment of a strong loyalist party with its roots in the urban working class protestant areas.

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OPPRESSING THE MASSES FOR FUN AND PROFIT

