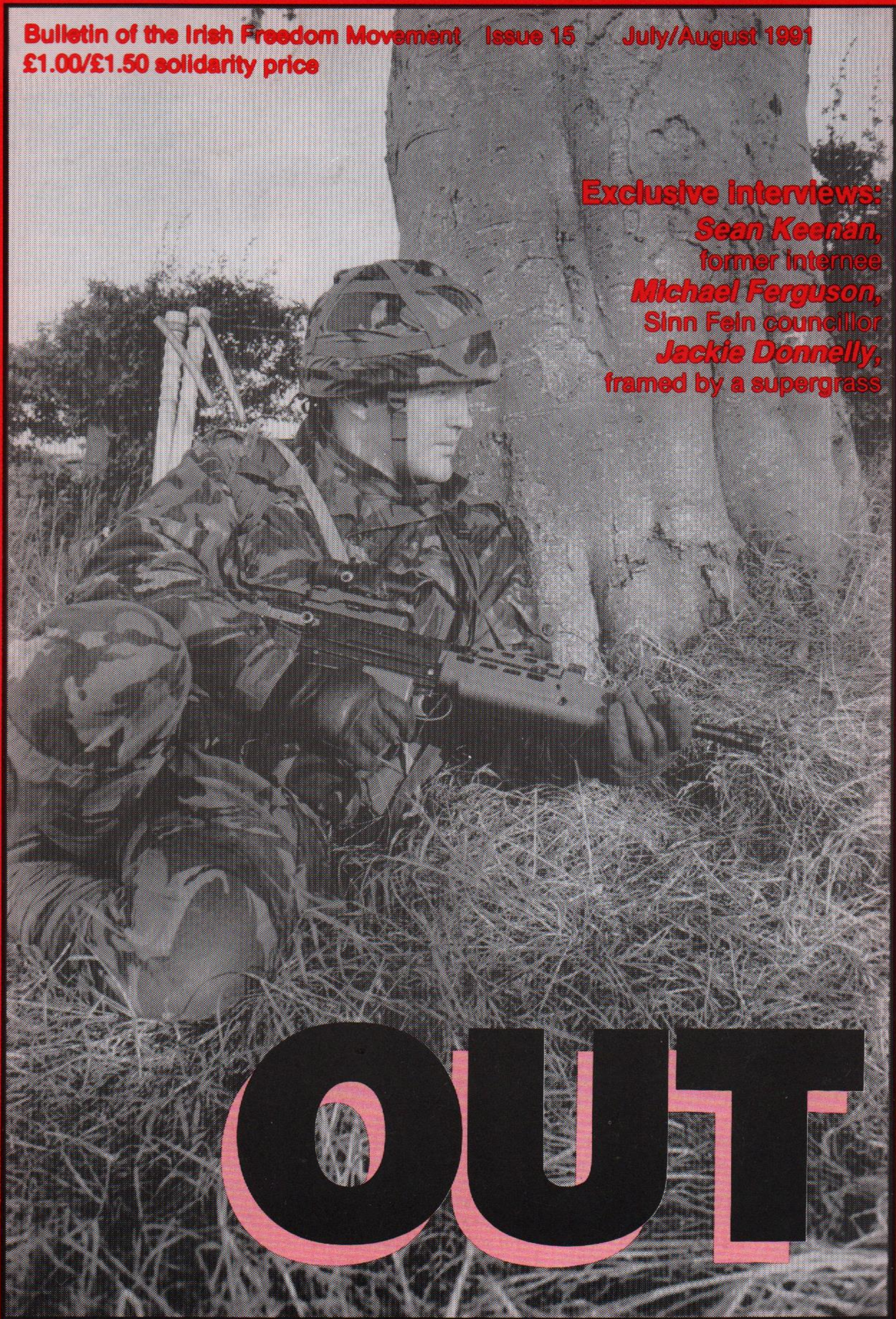


Irish Freedom

Bulletin of the Irish Freedom Movement Issue 15 July/August 1991
£1.00/£1.50 solidarity price



Exclusive interviews:

Sean Keenan,
former internee

Michael Ferguson,
Sinn Féin councillor

Jackie Donnelly,
framed by a supergrass

OUT!

March against imperialism—Troops out of Ireland!

10 August 1991

(see back page)

Win the propaganda war

Irish Freedom Movement T-shirts

Extra large size
£6 plus 60p
postage and
packing



Irish Freedom Movement Handbook £4.95 (plus 90p p&p)

The Irish War remains the most comprehensive guide to Britain's longest military engagement. Packed full of facts and analysis, the book is an essential guide to events in the war. But don't just take our word for it. This is how the *Irish Post* describes the handbook:

'Attractively produced and well illustrated...provides a tidy synopsis of what the North of Ireland is all about...you won't get better.'

Badges

£2 plus 50p p&p

To order any of these items make cheques or postal orders payable to IFM Association, and send to Irish Freedom Movement, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX. For more information write to this address or phone (071) 375 1702

CONTENTS

3 Editorial: on the twentieth anniversary of internment—march against imperialism

4 Special feature: internment

Interviews with

- Sean Keenan
- Damien Austen
- Jackie Donnelly

11 The Brooke talks

15 Stories from the war zone

- British apartheid in Belfast
- After Operation Whiplash
- Irish Freedom Movement delegation
- Sectarian murders and the UDR

21 War diary

22 Ireland's Hunger-strike video review

JULY/AUGUST 1991

EDITORIAL

On the twentieth anniversary of internment march against imperialism

On Saturday 10 August, the annual anti-internment demonstration organised by the Irish Freedom Movement will take place in North London. Since the IFM began organising this event, it has grown into the largest annual expression of Irish solidarity in Britain. However, this year's demonstration is of much greater significance. Not only does it mark the twentieth anniversary of the introduction of internment in Ireland, but it comes at a time when imperialism has been rehabilitated as a civilising force in world politics.

Commemorating the introduction of internment in Ireland at a time when western imperialism is being morally resurrected serves as a timely reminder of what imperialist rule is really all about. As we show in a special feature on internment, its introduction expressed the real content of Britain's relationship to Ireland: that of a colonial master violently engaged in crushing any and all resistance to its rule. And, as the many interviews featured in this issue of *Irish Freedom* reveal, twenty years later all that has changed is the form of that rule, not the rule itself.

While Britain's oppression of Ireland clearly expresses the real relationship between imperialism and the third world, it also highlights why the imperialists have been able to rehabilitate their system. It is the one issue in British politics over which the British left has consistently given ground to the British establishment. Ever since a Labour government sent troops on to the streets of Northern Ireland, the British left has looked to—and demanded of—the state that it sort out the Irish 'troubles'. Throughout the Irish War, the left has endorsed the one assumption which has now been resurrected

for imperialism in general: namely, that British imperialism in Ireland (and imperialism in general) can play a progressive role. From the early 'Better life for all' campaign, sponsored by the Communist Party and the Trade Union Congress, to Tony Benn's demand that United Nations troops replace British troops in Ulster, imperialism has been seen as part of the solution rather than the source of the problem.

The political weakness of the left has always meant that British imperialism has never had to look over its shoulder. The view that the British establishment has always presented of its role in Ireland—as a neutral arbiter keeping the peace between two irrational and bigoted tribes—has now become accepted as reality.

The real lesson this illustrates is that it is precisely this weakness of the left throughout the Irish War and the ground conceded in this period, which has made the rehabilitation of imperialism effortless for the British establishment today. If British imperialism could play a progressive role in Ireland then it could do this elsewhere. And if this is the case what about those opposed to imperialist intervention—like the republican movement in Ireland?

By treating imperialism as if it were progressive, the left has prepared the ground for putting those opposed to imperialism on the defensive and leaving them isolated. The catalogue of examples of how readily the British left have condemned the IRA for its military struggle has made the task of isolating the struggles of national liberation movements almost a foregone conclusion.

One only has to look at the machinations of the remnants of the British left during the

Gulf War to see this in practice. Having gone along with the notion that Saddam Hussein was the problem in the Middle East, even those who were opposed to the war ended up calling on the Western forces to go in even harder against Saddam Hussein in order to protect the Kurds. This is a most devastating turnabout. More than 20 years since Britain withdrew from 'East of Suez', the Middle East is being recolonised with British imperialism as one of the leading players. Unlike a decade ago, this new carve up of the world is earning applause rather than condemnation.

This is why this year's demonstration has such significance. The fact that this twentieth anniversary falls in the first year of the new imperialist world order makes it an even more important occasion on which to rally the crowds and raise the standard against all forms of Western intervention in the third world and all violations of national rights.

The tenth of August is a day on which to show solidarity with the cause of Irish freedom and with all resistance to imperialism around the world. It is an opportunity to oppose the redivision and conquest of the third world—a focus for those ready to take a stand against the enemy at home. Join the demonstration and march to oppose British imperialism in Ireland, the Gulf and around the world. (see back page for details)

Irish Freedom is edited by Charles Longford and Kevin Kelly. It is written by supporters of the IFM and is open to anyone genuinely interested in advancing solidarity work in Britain. If you would like to help, write to: *Irish Freedom*, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX

Imprisoned without trial Twenty years of British terror

PHOTO: Simon Norfolk



The annual demonstration to mark the introduction of internment in Ireland takes place in North London on Saturday 10 August. The march which the IFM has organised for the past six years, promises to be even livelier and bigger than ever.

This year's march is more important than ever before. The march not only marks the twentieth anniversary of the introduction of internment. It also takes place at a time when western imperialism is about to launch itself against the peoples of the third world in a new bid to reassert its global domination. Since the end of the Gulf War, imperialism has been resurrected and rehabilitated. Anti-imperialism appears to be a thing of the past. That is why the IFM's demonstration on 10 August must become a focus for anti-imperialists in Britain.

The march on 10 August—calling for troops out of Ireland and self-determination for the Irish people—is an opportunity for all anti-imperialists to come out onto the streets to show their solidarity with Britain's opponents. We aim to make this march a positive step towards the task of building a new movement which can oppose the new age of imperialism.

In this special feature we explain:

- That internment has always been at the centre of British counter-insurgency, and how it has developed from the Boer War to today
- How Britain introduced internment in Ireland in 1971—with internee Sean Keenan
- Why the supergrass trials of the eighties put more men behind bars than internment—with supergrass victim Jackie Donnelly
- How British repression continues to frame its opponents today—with Belfast detainee Damien Austen

A fine colonial tradition

Britain introduced internment without trial in the Six Counties of Ireland twenty years ago, on Monday 9 August 1971. This extraordinary attack on civil rights and the resort to mass detention, says Nigel Lewis, was an open admission by Britain that it was fighting a colonial war on the streets of Northern Ireland.

Internment is not just something that happened twenty years ago, or just a one-off occurrence. In fact it never went away. Today, in an era when the Northern Ireland secretary Peter Brooke poses as an 'honest broker' between the two sides in Northern Ireland, internment without trial is still an integral part of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act that was put before parliament in 1990. Peter Brooke even expressly ruled out dropping internment because it would 'send the wrong signal to terrorist organisations about the government's resolve to bring terrorism to an end'.

Neither was internment just an arbitrary act of repression thought up by the generals of the British army. It is a tried and tested means of defeating an insurgent civilian population and enforcing colonial rule. It was perfected in the streets of Jerusalem, Famagusta, Aden and Nairobi. It has been used in almost every decade of the twentieth century, from the Boer insurgency in 1899 to Northern Ireland today. It became the keystone of almost every set of emergency powers invoked by Britain in its unruly colonies, as the ordinary processes of the law were paralysed by revolt. Looking at the history of internment tells us a great deal, therefore, about British colonialism and its unique stranglehold on the Irish people.

There are six main areas where the special powers associated with internment were developed before their deployment in Ireland in the seventies. These were during the Boer War of 1899-1902, the Palestine crisis of 1929-39, Malaya 1948-60, Kenya 1952-55, Cyprus 1955-59, and finally Aden from 1963-67.

Boer War 1899-1902

Britain started this conflict to both seize control of the vast gold deposits of the Witwatersrand and to prevent them from falling into the hands of German imperialism ensconced in South West Africa (Namibia today). However, it very soon got bogged down in a war of attrition against the Afrikaners in the interior of South Africa. It was in the face of this intransigence that Britain was forced to develop its first counter-insurgency strategy.

The army, which numbered about 240 000 men in 1900, methodically devastated the countryside to deny the Boer guerrillas

sustenance. The forcible depopulation and devastation of the land aimed to cut off the Boer fighters from their communities, to literally starve them into surrender. What was initially ad-hoc accommodation for displaced Boer families was soon replaced by a coherent strategy of concentration camps and fortified blockhouses, linked by miles of barbed wire. In this act of colonial conquest, the civilising mission of British imperialism introduced the concentration camp to Western civilisation. Like the border forts that the British have erected in South Armagh since the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985, these forts became central symbols of the repressive might of British colonialism.

Cyprus 1955-9

Faced with an anti-British campaign for *enosis*, (union with Greece), among Greek Cypriots the civil police force gradually collapsed until the British Army took control in 1958. In just one day in August 1958, the British Army rounded up 2000 men in Famagusta, ensuring that over 200 of them had to be admitted to hospital as a consequence. It was also in Cyprus that the Army developed the tactic of releasing detainees in areas where they were likely to be attacked by Turkish-Cypriot villagers, a tactic used subsequently on nationalist detainees in Ireland. Systematic physical beatings were also routine.

Aden 1963-67

Aden was forcibly incorporated into the Federation of South Arabia in 1963 to safeguard British oil interests. This resulted in a mainly urban guerrilla war which led to wholesale arrests and internment. Torture became routine, and the techniques that were used during internment in Ireland were developed in this period. Torture centres, similar to those still operating in Northern Ireland, were set up at Waterloo and Fort Morbut Barracks. Asked if all the detainees were terrorists, High Commissioner Sir Richard Turnbull said, 'How can we know? We cannot produce any evidence against them'. Having evidence clearly did not prevent Britain from interning those it saw as a threat to the maintenance of British rule—a tradition alive in the Six Counties of Ireland today.

Palestine 1929-39

Arab resistance to the establishment of an exclusively Jewish state led to a complete breakdown of law and order during Britain's mandate over Palestine. Officers from the old Royal Irish Constabulary, and the redundant Black and Tans, were brought in to prevent the Arabs taking any action against the seizure of property and lands by the Zionists. A general upsurge in violence in 1929 led to the 'pacification' of the Arab population by saturating the country with guard posts. Once the troops were established they set out, in the words of Brigadier General Dobbie, to 'punish the offenders... so as to prevent a repetition of the outrages'. What this meant was detention without trial and punitive raids throughout the Arab quarters and villages.

Malaya 1948-1960

British attempts to defeat the communists in Malaya led to one of Britain's most barbaric colonial adventures. In total, 29 828 people were interned under the notorious Regulation 17D of the emergency powers. 600 000 people were compulsorily resettled into concentration camps. The architect of this scheme, secretary of defence Robert Thompson, went on to advise the USA on the development of their 'strategic hamlets' in Vietnam. Thousands were deported. It was also in Malaya that Britain first developed the idea of using informers to undermine the liberation struggle.

Kenya 1952-55

In what were termed the 'Mau Mau' uprisings in Kenya, over 80 000 people were rounded up, of which the majority were interned without charge or trial. Seven years later, 7000 internees remained in prison. A system of emergency committees gave a free hand to joint army/police actions. The first such operation, codenamed 'Jock Scott', was just the foretaste of what was to come. In Nairobi between April and May 1954, 17 000 Africans were detained.

An elaborate series of internment camps throughout Kenya graded these internees according to how 'irreconcilable' they were: that is, on how quickly they could be forced to renounce the Mau Mau and give in. Once identified, they were subjected to the notorious 'Cowan Plan', where force was used to get cooperation. This led to many deaths in custody as prisoners were set to work digging with their bare hands and subject to the indiscriminate brutality of their guards.

It is no surprise that some of those who played prominent roles in developing counter-insurgency techniques in Kenya came to play prominent roles in the Irish War years later. Lieutenant General Sir Ian Freeland, GOC in Northern Ireland in 1969, learned his in Kenya, as did Brigadier Frank Kitson, the dirty tricks expert who was central to developing British strategy in Ireland in the seventies.

Ireland: a colony with a difference

The introduction of internment in 1971 in Ireland was the act of a colonial power. By 1971 it had become clear that the nationalist community in Ireland looked upon the British Army as a foreign occupying army. The growing levels of resistance and hostility finally forced the British state to remove its cloak of apparent neutrality. Overnight, the 'peace keeper' became a jailer and an open force of repression. Suspected insurgents were summarily rounded up and marched with arms behind their backs into Britain's newest concentration camps. The facade of British benevolence in Ireland was finally dropped.

Internment in Ireland showed that since Ireland was just another colony, the struggle against it was another war for national liberation. Yet this point also highlights why Ireland was different. In other colonies the 'state of emergency' was never simply a strategy of outright repression. Britain used these periods to identify moderate sections of the nationalist movements and to create institutions which could stabilise the situation, ensuring a smooth path to decolonisation on Britain's terms. What underlay this strategy was the understanding that Britain could recast its relationship with its former colonies because leaving them was possible. Britain's international stature might suffer, but by reconstructing the relationship on favourable terms and in the guise of a new 'commonwealth', Britain was in fact able to maintain its international standing.

Ireland was never like this. It was possible to withdraw from places like Kenya, Aden or India, but Britain cannot withdraw from Ireland. Ireland is part of the British state. Where do you go when you're at home?

It is for this reason that internment in Ireland was both similar and different to other colonial situations. The biggest difference was that Britain could never construct new institutions through which to manage its rule while resistance persisted. This is why, despite the fact that internment in its open colonial guise has not been used since 1975, *de facto* internment continues to this day. British policy in Ireland remains based upon crushing resistance to its rule.

At a time when Britain and the rest of the West seem ready to claim more colonies, from the Gulf to Africa, remembering the consequences of colonial rule has never been more important. The commemoration of internment is thus an occasion to remember the past, to salute the courage of the Irish people and their resistance to British imperialism and to declare our commitment to fighting against imperialist intervention and oppression, now and in the future.

'You can't expect justice'

Joe Boatman went to Derry to talk to Sean Keenan about his experiences as an internee in the early seventies.

In December 1972, Sean Keenan was stopped at a checkpoint on his way home from Donegal. He was arrested and charged with membership of the IRA. He was held on remand for the next nine months. This was before the introduction of the Diplock courts, and because there was not a shred of evidence to back up the charges, the jury found him not guilty. Having been told that he 'was free to go' by the judge, Keenan got as far as the front door where he was immediately rearrested. That was in September 1973. This is where his story really begins.

'First of all I was taken to Castlereagh where I was held for three days. After that they just took me straight to Long Kesh and I stayed there until the summer of 1975. We were held in Nissen huts. There were three fairly large huts—two and a half were used for sleeping accommodation—the other half was a canteen. Then there was a portacabin, supposedly for studying purposes, although at that time they had very little educational facilities in Long Kesh. Ninety men, all living in a very confined space, living together, sleeping together, exercising together and as you can imagine, at times it was very trying.

'The place was totally grey, the buildings were grey, the lockers were grey, the beds were grey, the blankets were grey, the barbed wire was grey: all you saw was total greyness.

'In October 1974 we burnt the place down to the ground, flattened it. Nothing was left. They left us there, so we slept on the concrete, in cardboard boxes. It was one time over the years where there was a real closeness between everybody, because everybody had exactly the same—nothing! And it was a good crack! The day after the camp was burnt they put us back in the cages. They were all smouldering ruins. There were bits of tin lying around from the Nissen huts. It was the British army who were serving the food and we actually saw them urinating in the food. They were giving us this stew which was in big massive containers. They didn't even try to hide it. We didn't accept the food and there were all sorts of problems over that.'

The targets

'My father boasted that he was interned in the thirties, forties, fifties, sixties and seventies. He loved that! Presumably what the British would say is that anybody who was interned was involved in something or other but a high proportion of internees were people who were just strong republican supporters or political activists, or people who were actively against British rule in Ireland. I don't

know who was "involved" and who wasn't at that particular time. It's hard to quantify exactly who was and who wasn't—and you didn't ask. At the time it didn't really matter. A lot of people who were involved in Peoples' Democracy were interned as well.

'There is no British justice when it concerns Irish people or anybody who's opposed to British involvement in Ireland'

'Anybody who was opposed to British rule was interned. You can see from the age differences. I mean there's very, very elderly people and very, very young people—some as young as fifteen, some as old as seventy.'

The iron fist

'Probably the worst part of internment from the time I went in were the very regular raids on the cages and huts. At about 6am in the morning the British Army would come in and wake everybody. You had to lie in your bed and not move. You had to put your arms out over the blankets and if you moved you got whacked with a baton. There were a lot of elderly people who were very badly beaten during these raids.

'The raids were supposedly to make sure there were no tunnels or that there was nothing in the huts that shouldn't be there. I believe it was actually nothing more than just communal punishment—psychological rather than anything else. At that stage there were a lot of elderly people interned and they

had a terribly hard time coping with all of that. They used to put us all into one hut—the smallest hut—and we would have to stay there for hours while they searched the huts. They went through all your belongings. They stole whatever little people had. They tore up photographs, family photographs. They read letters; not that that was any big deal because all letters were read anyway by censors, both going in and going out of the camp. It was all very malicious, all part of a policy to break people.'

The velvet glove

'The tribunals were a farce, because there were people giving evidence behind curtains. The tribunal I took part in was a joke. I was allowed legal representation. Your solicitor could ask questions, but you didn't know who you were questioning. A lot of the information was that somebody had told the RUC that Sean Keenan was involved in a certain incident and when they came to hear this it was third or fourth hand. It was really

unbelievable. But that's what we were all being held on. There was absolutely no evidence. You weren't charged with anything. You got a list of allegations and what actually was happening at that stage was that you had to prove that you didn't take part in any of the things you were alleged to have done.

'I always recognised that internment was a political decision and that it would take some political decision to end it. That's what did happen. We got all sorts of people running in and out of the camp, saying how bad the conditions were and how inhumane it was to keep so many people in conditions like that. When you had the Conservative government in power you had the Labour people running in and out saying "If we get back to power we will open the gates". Roy Mason was in the camp saying, "This is terrible". Then when Labour got into power and he was secretary of state *he built the camp up*. He was involved in the torture and brutality that took place in Castlereagh before people went to Long Kesh. You had different church people there. It was popular to say you'd been in and the conditions were bad. They were all very liberal until it became their responsibility.'

No British justice

'I've been lifted a few times since then—I've been shot twice. I have chosen to be a republican. I have no choice. I hate to see people being messed about by anybody, but especially by the state. When you see what's happening in this country, the way people are being treated, the way people have been forced to live, I think you have to do something. I know British soldiers' families suffer when they die, but they can go home. This is home to me.

'There is no British justice when it concerns Irish people or anybody who's opposed to British involvement in Ireland. You can see that through the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguires. When the judiciary are set up to protect the state you can't have justice. The RUC and the British Army, they're here to uphold the interests of the state. The judiciary are here to make sure that the state do not have to answer for anything they do. Looking at it from that point of view, you can't expect justice, you won't get it.'

Frame-ups in Beechmount Internment today

Twenty years after the introduction of internment the form of British repression in the Six Counties has changed. Today it is more targeted and consciously geared towards intimidating the future freedom fighters—the youth of the nationalist ghettos. Joe Boatman travelled to Beechmount, Belfast and spoke to Britain's latest internees.

The experience of nationalist youths in an area like Beechmount is far from random or indiscriminate. When an RUC patrol suffered a successful mortar rocket attack in the Beechmount area, the patrol set about taking its revenge on the local youth. In an exercise designed to frame any nationalist youth as an example to others, the RUC arrested over a dozen young people, some still in their school uniforms. They were dragged to the Castlereagh interrogation centre for questioning. To date, four have signed confessions and each now faces up to

20 years in jail. Seventeen year-old Damien Austen was among those arrested.

'It was about 8am in the morning. I knew I was going to be arrested because my friends had been arrested. They came to the house and arrested me under Section 14—arrested me for murder. I was taken to Castlereagh and thrown in a cell.

'I was in for three and a quarter days. They interrogated me six times a day, each time for about two hours. They were saying that I was a terrorist and I was doing scout, that I

tapped the rocket man's shoulder and told him to fire the rocket. They said that I'd get four years if I signed a statement, but if I said nothing, I'd get 20 years.

'On the first day that they took me in there, there were two big cops who just kept saying "you're a murderer, you're a terrorist". Then another two came in and just walked round me, didn't even talk to me, you know. They just tried to put pressure on me, just walking around me. Then the two heavy ones came in, you know—hard men—and they slapped me, hit me, punched me. Throughout the

following sessions I was beaten, threatened and they tried to make deals with me. They said I was an apprentice and that I would be firing rockets and shooting guns in a few years.

'On the third day I saw my solicitor. He said that I was doing alright and that I'd probably get out the next day. After that they brought me back up and hit me harder because I'd seen my solicitor. So they kept punching me, wouldn't let me sit down. One of them grabbed me by my throat—I couldn't breathe—and punched me in the stomach. I had to see the doctor, got my inhaler sent up. They said that I had TB and that I was going to die, that they were going to bring me up a wee hill, make me dig a grave and shoot me in the back of the head. If I got out, they said that the IRA would punish me for being a tout.

'I wasn't talking. I just sat there. They slapped me, bent my fingers back, burnt my face with cigarettes. They pulled my trousers down and my trunks, and got a lighter and tried to burn me. It's very scary. I think some people signed because they were scared. They're like saying to you: "Four years or 20 years. You're going to take the four years."

'I knew my friends were in there. They said that they'd touted on me. I didn't see them, but I heard them screaming. They knocked the two front teeth out of one. They said to one of them that his mother had had a heart attack, and if he signed a bit of paper he'd get out to see her—so he signed. That's why he's in. He'll do twenty years.

'I think that after the rocket attack, they just picked on Beechmount as one area so they could scare the whole of Belfast. They arrested four or five to scare the rest of us. It's always happened, but this makes us realise what they're doing more because we're young. All the adults in Beechmount know to say nothing in Castlereagh. The RUC are trying to turn people away from the IRA. I think that they're turning people towards it.'

Damien Austen's opinion of British justice is simple: 'there is none.' His advice to anyone arrested is say nothing and you'll walk out. Prior to his arrest he was constantly harassed by the RUC. On his release, they promised to shoot him and his friends within two weeks, and warned them to go home before dark each night.



Damien Austen's experience reveals how little has changed in twenty years. Indeed, it might not be called internment any longer, but the methods employed by the British state have the same effect—far from driving the youth away from the IRA, they educate them in the necessity for taking up arms against the British presence. Damien Austen's last words summed up the defiance of Ireland's nationalist youth: 'We've lived with it all our lives, but these are our streets. They'll not keep us out of them!'



Beechmount's nationalist youth: standing up to British intimidation

or how to break the people's determination', running out regarding how to break the 100-
assassination. He believed their (assass) and
After this I began to believe using selective
30 factors and we have very strong families.
family's used to it, it's becoming on the
will, and break your friends' will. But my
trying to break your will, break your family's
think they could get away with it. They're
book and could do it again any time they
They're kept themselves on the stage
informed again on the word of a paid person.
I was interested, interested by reward and
that it's important that I was not going to
looked up. I was very happy enough with

Beechmount's nation

st youth: standing up to British intimidation

The supergrass trials

A legalised form of internment

In the early eighties the British state supplemented its traditional brutality against republicans with a new tactic—supergrasses. The term originally came from the use of inside informers against armed robbery gangs in London in the seventies—a practice which British courts ruled out of order as unreliable and disreputable. But in Ireland supergrasses proved highly effective in putting nationalists behind bars: internment in all but name.

In November 1981 the RUC produced its first supergrass—a former Belfast IRA man Christopher Black. In return for immunity from prosecution, a new life abroad and permanent protection at British expense, Black told all about his past in the IRA and informed on his former comrades. A total of 33 men and five women charged on Black's word stood trial in Belfast Crown Court on 2 December 1982. 117 days later, 35 were convicted and sentences totalling more than 4000 years were handed down. The Black case was a model supergrass show-trial. Large scale round-ups of named suspects followed, with prolonged periods in custody and summary convictions. Although many were later quashed after appeal, most of those convicted in this way had already served their prison sentences by the time their convictions had been overturned.

Black was the first of a subsequent 12 supergrasses, whose actions resulted in the arrest of 600 nationalists. The supergrass phenomenon was thus remarkable in that it resulted in almost twice as many internees than in 1971.

Joe Boatman spoke to Jackie Donnelly, a nationalist who had been interned between 1972 and 1975 and who was one of the 33 convicted on the word of Christopher Black at the trial mentioned above.

'In January 1982 I was arrested and brought into Castlereagh. On the third day I was brought into an interview room and told to sit down. The door opened—two uniformed RUC men at the door, two plain clothes men behind them and a really dishevelled figure in between them. He looked as if he hadn't been sleeping, you know, really ghastly looking. One of the plain clothes RUC men said to him, "Do you recognise this man to be John Joseph Patrick Donnelly?". He said "yes". After six days I was formally charged with being a member of the IRA.

'Out of the 38 people that were connected with the Christopher Black trial there were only three of us charged solely with IRA membership. Normally if you're charged solely with being in the IRA the only way

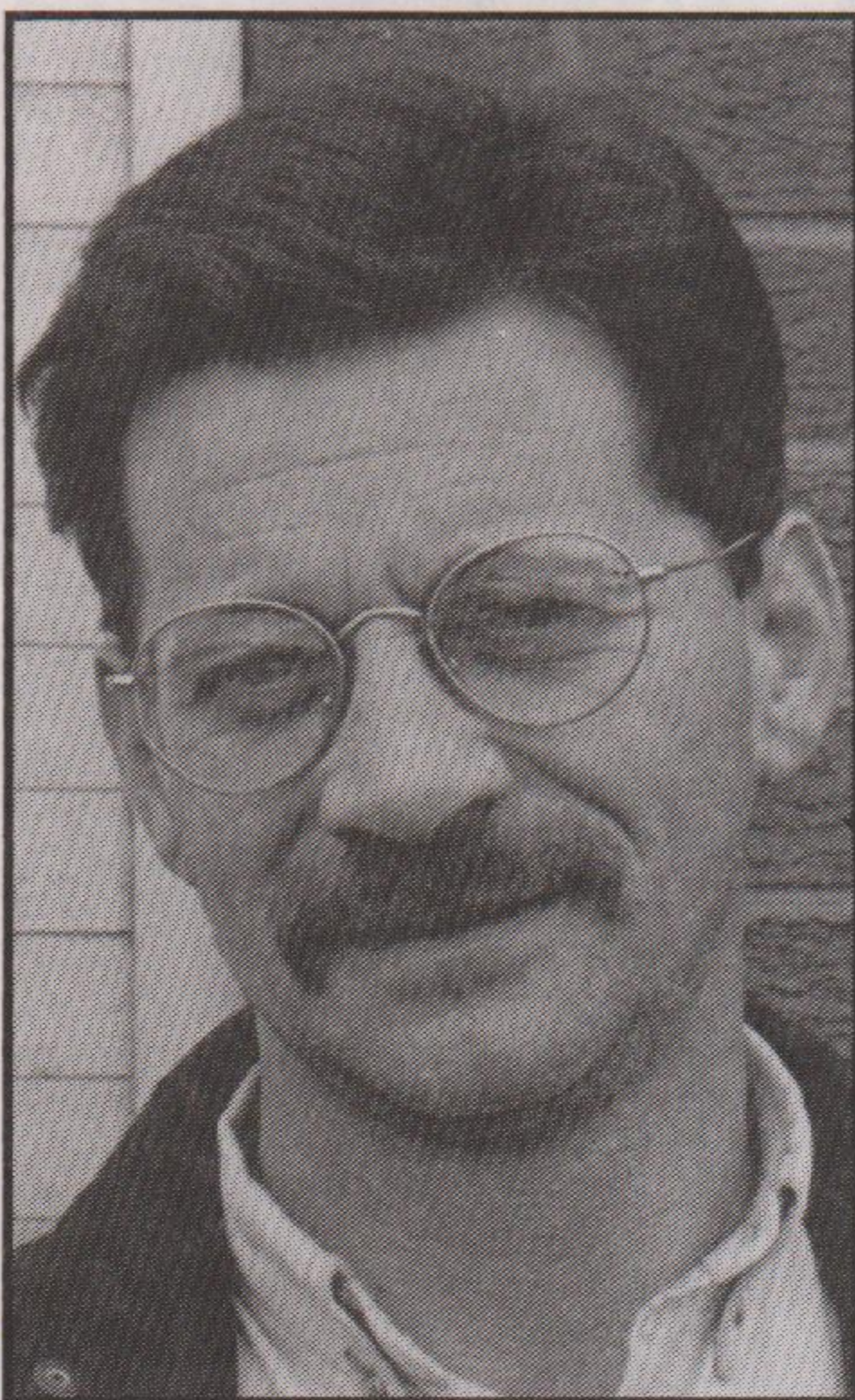


PHOTO: Joe Boatman

they can substantiate the charge is through a statement of admission. I had never admitted it. There's no way on a membership charge you can create an alibi. They're saying you're a member and I'm saying I'm not a member. So the only evidence was that of Christopher Black.

'It was literally a show trial. There were 38 of us in the court. The judge, it was plain to be seen, was wearing a flak jacket under his robes. The first part of the trial consisted of background and then eventually they brought Christopher Black in and he was not allowed to sit facing us. We weren't allowed to choose where we sat. From day one we were given a position in the court to sit and we had to remain in that and from this we knew that this was for identification purposes for Christopher Black. We had no doubt that he was shown a plan of the seating arrangements. As and when he was asked to turn around it was for the least amount of time so that he could just say "yes, so and so is sitting on the back seat, third from the right". Many's the time our defence asked him to turn around but he refused and the judge refused to direct him to do so.

'His evidence was always vague. This was all part of a planned trial by the prosecution and the RUC. But in my case his only argument against me was that he knew me to be a member of the IRA. He never said I'd

done anything to show this, except this one thing: he said the IRA were planning an operation against the RUC which was to be held on the day of the FA Cup Final. He said the day that the operation was planned I had walked in through the back door of a certain house, through the working kitchen, straight into the living room, looked around as if looking for someone and then I walked out again. That was his evidence against me.

'They went into my background to try and discredit me. I had a brother who was an IRA volunteer who was killed. So we knew that they were going to bring that up. The funny part about it was that I also had a cousin who's a uniformed inspector in the RUC, who was in charge of the RUC men during our trial. So what we thought was if they say "are you going to tell us you're not a member of the IRA after your brother had been killed?", then our answer would be "but sure, there's my cousin, and I'm not in the RUC". Somehow they got wind of this and the day that they came to bring that question up he had suddenly disappeared.

'Black had mentioned the FA Cup Final which tied down the date he'd seen me. This happened to be the 18 March and on the 17 March I had broken my leg so it was in plaster cast. So we were able to produce the medical reports. Black had insisted there was nothing wrong with me.

'So came the day he [the judge] found us all guilty. He said that the defence had pointed out that I had a broken leg and that Christopher Black couldn't fail to have seen that I had a broken leg. But he put it that I had hobbled in through the back door, left my crutches in the yard, walked to the door in such a position that I was only leaning in from the kitchen to the living room so Christopher Black couldn't see my broken leg, so Black was absolutely right! They accepted his word, right down the line, whatever evidence came up to contradict it. It really was a show trial.

'The thing about the paid perjurers, the supergrasses, is that it legalised a form of internment.

'They got as long out of the paid perjurers as they did out of internment. Alright, at the end of the day the convictions were quashed, but it had still taken people off the streets, still separated people from their families. They were aware of my politics, I never made any secret of them. I make no qualms about it, still don't. I was no exception, at that particular time they thought that I was undesirable, that I'd be better off being locked up. They were happy enough with that. I'd emphasise that I was no exception.

'I was interned, interned by remand and interned again on the word of a paid perjurer. They've kept those powers on the statute book and could do it again any time they think they could get away with it. They're trying to break your will, break your family's will and break your friends' will. But my family's used to it, it's been going on for 20 years and we have very strong families. After this I can see them using selective assassination. I believe their avenues are running out regarding how to break the IRA or how to break the people's determination.'

Behind the Brooke talks

Isolating the Republicans

Readers of *Irish Freedom* may regard the talks between the constitutional parties of the Six Counties, the Twenty-six Counties government and the British government as a long-running joke. Certainly the sight of Paisley, Hume and Brooke dancing around each other from one press conference to another without being seen together, is pretty ridiculous. But as Hugh Mitchell argues below, the Brooke talks have the deadly serious purpose of further marginalising the Republican movement and reconstructing British rule through 'political' rather than overtly military methods.

Strand one of the Brooke talks, between all four of Northern Ireland's 'constitutional' parties, finally started on Monday 17 June, six weeks behind schedule. After the delayed start, the talks appeared to be heading for the rocks until an eleventh hour agreement was reached on the 'independent chairman' to arbitrate during strand two. The chairman finally agreed upon, Sir Ninian Stephen, a former Australian governor general, shows the talks are not independent of the British government but an exercise in colonial control.

The talks were formally announced by Peter Brooke in the house of commons on 26 March. They were preceded by an apparently endless series of talks about talks that had started soon after Brooke's appointment as Northern Ireland secretary in July 1989. The announcement was heralded by politicians and the media as a breakthrough in Irish politics. According to the *Financial Times*, 'Ulster's tribal enemies are about to discuss their shared problems for the first time in 15 years'. (26 April 1991)

As if to underline the historic difficulty of reconciling these 'two tribes' the talks process has been stalled, interrupted and then restarted by a series of petty arguments and objections. The media has speculated about every twist and turn, every obstacle, and every last minute agreement. However, we should not allow these diversions to obscure the real process that is going on, and who is really in control of it.

The talks involve the governments of the Irish Republic and Britain and the four Northern Ireland parties who have committed themselves to 'constitutional

politics'—James Molyneaux's Official Unionist Party, Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, John Hume's Social Democratic Labour Party and the Alliance Party (see boxes for party profiles). Sinn Fein, however, have been excluded because of their support for the armed struggle of the IRA.

The IRA bogey

This exclusion has little to do with support or not for the concept of armed struggle. All the constitutionalist parties involved in the talks have openly expressed their support for the continued military British occupation of Northern Ireland. Sectarian murders and shoot-to-kill operations carried out by the British Army and Loyalist death squads since the talks about talks began have not caused any raised eyebrows or threats from any of the participants to withdraw from a process overseen by the perpetrators of violence. The exclusion of those who support the armed struggle against Britain highlights the fact that the talks are all about reshaping Britain's occupation of Ireland—not ending it.

What arguments there have been confirm the diversionary and peripheral nature of the talks. The arguments between the parties have all been over the chairman, locations, standing orders, and timings. No objections have been raised to the fundamental issue at the heart of Irish politics—the position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom, or the right of the British Army to keep it there through terror and military occupation.

By excluding Sinn Fein, Brooke has been able to reinforce the idea that it is republican violence which lies at the source of the Irish 'troubles'. With this established as the common wisdom, Brooke is free to present himself as the neutral arbiter simply trying to bring Ireland's two religious communities to the same table to work out an equitable solution. The source of the problem, Britain, presents itself as the sole arbiter and agent capable of a solution.

Loyal at any cost

The behaviour of Britain's Loyalists constantly reinforces the prejudice that Ireland's war is simply a 'tribal' inter-community conflict. With Sinn Fein out of the way, the biggest barrier to the talks is presented as Loyalist intransigence and their unwillingness to take part in negotiations with the Dublin government. The familiar image of the Brooke talks has been Molyneaux and Paisley reading out a prepared press statement raising yet another objection and once again trying to impose their own agenda.

In fact the very opposite has been the case. The most striking point about the Brooke talks has been the willingness of the Loyalist parties to compromise, and the obvious transparency of their objections.

The main objections of the Loyalists have been the location of the talks with Dublin, and who should chair them. The Loyalists initially demanded that all talks be held in 'their capital'—London—and that the talks be chaired by Britain. Brooke wanted a venue and chair more acceptable to the SDLP and Dublin and more appropriate for domestic and international consumption. A deadline was finally set by Brooke for agreement to his terms: first at 5pm Tuesday 14 May and then at 10am the next day. After much huffing and puffing, culminating in a meeting with John Major at Downing Street the Loyalists agreed to Brooke's terms in private while denying that they had done so in public.

The venues for strands two and three, which bring Dublin into the process, will rotate between London, Dublin, and Belfast and the talks will involve an independent chair. Nominations for this chair came thick and fast—at one point over 50 names were in the hat, ranging from former cabinet ministers to Oxbridge academics. Once again the Loyalists attempted to stir up trouble by submitting their own list of candidates, and

delaying as long as possible their agreement. The OUP and DUP turned up on 17 June still insisting that they could not agree to the choice of chair. Brooke sent Paisley back to his party headquarters to get the formal acceptance of Sir Ninian Stephen that day and the talks went ahead.

While there is no doubt that the Loyalist parties have done their best to achieve the most favourable terms for themselves at the Brooke talks, when all is said and done they have fallen in behind Britain. Moreover, they appear to be ready to do what many commentators a few years ago would have thought unthinkable—negotiate with Dublin about the role that they can play in the Six Counties.

The reasons for the Loyalist apparent change of heart have been presented by the media as ranging from war weariness amongst grassroots supporters of the parties, to the emergence of younger politicians such as Peter Robinson of the DUP who are less willing to 'accept the old battle cries of "no surrender"'. (*Financial Times*, 26 April 1991)

This 'new realism' of the Loyalists is not, however, a willingness to give up their social and political position—but simply a sober assessment of who guarantees it. In 1986 Peter Robinson led a mob of Loyalists armed with clubs over the border to attack the village of Clontibret during the height of Loyalist protest against the Anglo-Irish agreement. The failure of that campaign did nothing to dampen Robinson's sectarian bigotry, but it did forcefully demonstrate to the Loyalists that ultimately it is Britain, and not them, who calls the shots in Ireland.

Southern Loyalists

The Anglo-Irish agreement has also clarified the part that Dublin can play in Britain's plans for Ireland. The agreement gave the Twenty-six Counties government a direct role in Britain's occupation of the Six Counties through cross-Border collaboration and new extradition laws. At the same time it could be presented as a British concession to Irish unification, by having Irish diplomats working at the Maryfield secretariat in the North. However, the willingness of Dublin to bow to Britain's every wish is obvious. A ten week 'suspension' of Anglo-Irish consultations was agreed, and now that the Brooke talks have run well over schedule a further extension of this 'suspension' seems inevitable.

The Brooke talks have provided an opportunity for the Southern establishment to publicly air the debate over articles two and three of their constitution. These two clauses were a fundamental part of Eamon de Valera's 1937 constitution and formed the backbone of the Irish Republic's pretence to be an independent state. Their constitutional claim to the whole of Ireland, including Northern Ireland was an important way for the Dublin regime to pay lip-service to aspirations of Irish unity, and give the appearance of legitimacy in the early, difficult years of their existence.

That the South can consider dropping these clauses, and no longer feels the need to

play the 'green card' as it used to, indicates the success that both Britain and the Dublin regime itself have had in undermining and sidelining republican sentiment in the South.

Target IRA

It is the republican movement itself which faces the greatest danger from the Brooke talks. The whole point of these talks is to give the impression that some form of political solution can be found without the involvement of Sinn Fein or the IRA.

Sinn Fein command about a third of the nationalist vote, they gain a higher proportion of the vote, and have more elected representatives throughout the whole of the Six Counties than the tiny Alliance party, which is represented at the talks. Any 'agreement' reached at the Brooke discussions is no solution to the Irish War without the involvement of those who bear the brunt of British occupation and oppression.

However the very existence of these talks shows how much Britain has already isolated

the republican movement and made the political landscape safe enough for Paisley to meet Haughey. In fact the Brooke talks are only the latest ploy by Britain to contain the republican threat. The bolstering of the SDLP with the Anglo-Irish agreement started the public process. It continued with the 1988 broadcasting ban; electoral barriers such as the anti-violence oath; a programme of limited investment in construction; part-time, low paid jobs in nationalist cities such as Derry and the selective funding of community groups. (See *Community groups under attack* p16)

Britain is unable to follow a policy of incorporating sections of the republican movement into the 'peace process' and giving them a role in the state, because Sinn Fein and the IRA are for the destruction of the Six

Stormont: all roads lead to Westminster



PHOTO: Simon Norfolk

Counties state, not its reform. What Britain has been able to do, however, is to try and push republicans into the margins of the 'normal' political process. The Brooke talks are an exercise in publicly demonstrating this marginalisation. The crucial point is the fact that the talks are happening at all. Whether an agreement between the parties emerges or not is entirely secondary.

That the Irish War is a constant thorn in the side of Britain is obvious. Less obvious are the various stratagems Britain employs to remove that thorn. Its attempts to militarise the conflict in the early seventies failed and gave way to the more sophisticated strategy of criminalisation and normalisation later in that decade. The hunger-strikes of 1981 which led to the electoral rise of Sinn Fein severely undermined that approach. Britain has spent the last 10 years regaining the ground it lost in that period.

While Britain's main aim for the Brooke talks is simply to keep them going, any agreement reached would be a considerable bonus—it would open up possibilities for Britain previously unattainable. An accord

between Loyalists, constitutional nationalists and Dublin for a new political arrangement which would disguise direct rule, offers the prospect of Britain containing the Irish War in a less overtly military manner.

This strategy is not without its risks, for Britain's occupation of Ireland will always elicit a response from nationalists. If one thing remains clear after 22 years of war it is the fact that Britain has not been able to defeat the republican movement. Britain has not been able to break the spirit of resistance displayed by the nationalist working class in areas such as West Belfast, South Armagh and the Bogside of Derry. Thus while the talks hold great possibilities for the British ruling class their fears are best expressed by the fact that as the talks began a further 500 British troops were sent to the Six Counties. With 11 000 British soldiers in the province their number is at its highest since the open street fighting of the mid-seventies.

Along with the relative isolation of the republican movement the key factor in giving Britain a free hand in Ireland has been the lack of an effective, domestic opposition

to British imperialism. Critics of British policy have too often fallen short of outright opposition to the occupation of the Six Counties. Rather than seeing the British presence as the problem, they have aspired to lobby for a more equitable British solution. Now such critics find themselves sitting alongside Tory and Loyalist die-hards waiting in expectation for British imperialism to act as a force for progress. The media and the establishment will back Brooke's tricks to the hilt. Those who claim to be for Irish freedom have a responsibility to expose the real strategy behind the Brooke talks.

The Irish Freedom Movement have opposed—with arguments and protests—the Anglo-Irish talks and the Brooke talks they have led to. We will continue to oppose any British solution to the Irish War. As long as ordinary British people acquiesce to the occupation of Ireland, Brooke can get away with undermining the only force for progress in Ireland, the nationalist community. The extent to which Britain can continue to do so now depends on us in Britain as much as those fighting for their freedom in Ireland.



The Democratic Unionist Party

Ian Paisley's political organisation. Founded in 1971 by Paisley on a platform of militant populist loyalism. In the 1973 assembly elections the DUP won 10 per cent of the first preference votes, which it then increased to almost 13 per cent in the 1975 convention elections; in both contests the DUP stridently repudiated power-sharing. Paisley established his position as the dominant figure in Loyalist politics through his massive votes and victories in the 1979 and 1984 Euro-elections, which had fallen back to 160 000 votes by 1989. But while the party has increased its support, particularly at local level, it has not matched Paisley's meteoric rise. The DUP share of the vote doubled to 20 per cent between the 1979 and 1983 general elections, but its representation at Westminster held steady at just three MPs. The party lost some support in the eighties because of the more moderate, statesmanlike demeanour of its fiery leader.

The DUP has won the support of working class Loyalists by its intransigent defence of the union and its intense sectarian hostility towards Catholics. Any compromise on these principles damages its popularity. When Paisley accepted Thatcher's offer of a compromise on the Anglo-Irish deal in February 1986, he was howled down by Belfast shipyard workers. He promised never again to negotiate with Thatcher while the accord still existed.

The DUP was at the forefront of the Loyalist campaign against the Anglo-Irish agreement, and won much support for its rabble-rousing resistance. In the aftermath of the failure of the campaign, however, Loyalist populism has fallen into a period of disrepute and the DUP has been thrown into a leadership crisis. Up to 50 activists staged a walkout at a strategy meeting in protest at Paisley's plan to have an election pact with the OUP, in April 1987. Their chief whip quit politics the following month after he was blocked from standing against the OUP in the safe unionist seat of East Antrim. The pact could not stop the spread of Loyalist demoralisation, however, and the DUP vote dropped heavily in the June 1987 poll. Again in the 1989 local elections the DUP lost a further 6.5 per cent of its vote, and some 30 seats. The DUP appeared to suffer from Loyalist abstentions in a poll that was 5 per cent down on that of 1985. The OUP gained only 1.9 per cent on its vote, much less than the DUP's decline.

As there have been no local elections in the north since 1989 the DUP has been able to sit tight. However, an ominous sign came with Paisley's protest in April 1990 against Charlie Haughey's visit to Belfast which attracted barely 200 Loyalists. A row in the DUP at the start of the Brooke talks also threatened to cause ructions over Peter Robinson's new-found moderation, when he let on that Dublin would have a role in discussing the new internal structures of the provinces before devolution.

The Democratic Unionist Party's dilemma is that they have made a virtue of their intransigence but remain dependent on British support. The DUP's hard line reinforced the radical prejudice that British strategy in Ireland was subject to a 'Loyalist veto'. The taming of the DUP demonstrates that it is Britain that exercises a veto over Loyalist strategy.

Hardline Loyalists have responded in traditional fashion to this apparent softness of their leadership by carrying out 15 sectarian murders in the first three months of 1991 alone. A recent poll taken on the Shankill also indicated that Loyalists are not impressed with the DUP or Paisley's bluster. Even Paisley's recent antics over deciding venues and chairman for the Brooke talks have been denounced by the press as solely directed towards keeping his supporters 'on side' at home. Temporarily at least, the DUP looks set to remain marginalised as it tows Britain's line throughout the Brooke talks initiative.

Chris Sweeney

The Official Unionist Party

The majority representative of Loyalists in Northern Ireland, led since 1979 by James Molyneaux. Renamed Official Unionist Party in 1974 to distinguish itself from breakaway groups such as Brian Faulkner's Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (formed 1973) and Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party.

The party has undergone a series of factional splits, especially since the growth of the civil rights and nationalist movements after the late 1960's. Tensions have usually centred around the extent of concessions given to the nationalists in the days of Stormont or, since direct rule, during various power-sharing initiatives. Has become increasingly sensitive to hardline Loyalist sentiment, as various leaders have been ousted over the years for making too many concessions. Particularly sensitive to Paisley's DUP which represents the more hardline, uncompromising loyalism and which is now the major contender to the OUP for the Loyalist vote. Consequently has manoeuvred to confront what it sees as damaging gestures from London and Dublin in addition to attempting to avoid alienating its own supporters.

The OUP is split between two main factions. One, led by party leader James Molyneaux, favours complete integration into the UK and believes any moves towards devolution should be administrative rather than legislative. The other, fronted by Upper Bann MP Harold McCusker, calls for a return of some devolved government to the Loyalist establishment in Northern Ireland.

Opposed the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985, and now requires the withdrawal of articles two and three of the Republic's constitution before considering any relationship between Dublin and the North.

In its latest temporary alliance with the DUP, the OUP has concentrated on the issue of an internal settlement for the North, while dragging its feet on preliminary talks on the role of Dublin. It thereby stresses 'the union' ahead of any discussion involving the Republic.

Austin Cameron

The Social Democratic and Labour Party

Middle class Catholic party. Formed in August 1970, in response to British requests for a single moderate nationalist body to deal with, it incorporated a number of Catholic nationalist groupings and several Stormont politicians. The party included Gerry Fitt who became its first leader (and later a lord for services rendered); civil

rights campaigners like John Hume, Ivan Cooper and Austin Currie; Paddy Devlin, formerly Northern Ireland Labour Party MP, expelled from the SDLP in 1979 and Paddy Wilson, murdered in a sectarian attack in 1973. Set up to promote reforms through Stormont, the SDLP was forced to withdraw from the Loyalist parliament in July 1971 in response to pressure from the nationalist community after the security forces killed two youths in Derry.

The SDLP has participated in every charade performed by the British state to disguise its coercive strategy in Northern Ireland. They have participated in talks with every British minister from Roy Mason in 1976-78 to Peter Brooke today.

The SDLP have bent over backwards to accommodate the British government, their reward—recognition of their status as a legitimate political party. When the people of Northern Ireland threatened this legitimacy in the early 1980's by turning to Sinn Féin, the SDLP came under severe pressure. London stepped in to save the day for the SDLP. The Anglo-Irish or Hillsborough agreement with Dublin was to bolster the SDLP's fortunes by pretending to offer a few crumbs to Northern nationalists. In the January 1986 by-elections, SDLP candidates considerably improved their performance, while Sinn Féin dropped.

The SDLP's participation in the Brooke talks has further boosted them as a legitimate political force while strengthening the notion that Sinn Féin remains marginal. Whatever the outcome of the Brooke talks their position remains tenuous: any power-sharing formula will only expose their acquiescence to Loyalist privilege while a collapse of the talks would confirm the futility of constitutional politics. Either way the SDLP's future is by no means secure.

Debbie Mills

The Alliance Party

Launched in 1970, the Alliance was formed out of the faction that supported O'Neill, the moderate leader of the Unionists. Despite its 'non-sectarian' appeal, the Alliance has rarely been more than a marginal Protestant middle class organisation. Its few high points have been when it initially attracted some support away from the Official Unionist Party and the Northern Ireland Labour Party. In the mid-seventies' power-sharing assemblies the Alliance won about 10 per cent of the vote. It also won ten seats in the 1982 assembly elections. In a community at war there has been little space for the Alliance's moderate approach. Because of the electoral threat from Sinn Féin in the early to mid-eighties, the Alliance revealed their commitment to anti-republicanism by not standing in West Belfast and asking their supporters to vote tactically for the SDLP to try to unseat Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams.

Ironically, the Alliance's moderation could marginalise them further if the Brooke talks succeed in stitching up a deal. On the other hand, the Alliance could benefit from any breakdown as they can project their 'non-sectarian' appeal as a step above the petty wrangling of the other constitutional parties. Playing upon their past record, they hope to attract moderate unionist and nationalist votes from those likely to be fed up with the current political impasse.

Floyd King

INSIDE THE WAR ZONE

Twinbrook

British apartheid alive and thriving

In a recent feature in an Irish current affairs magazine, Social Democratic and Labour Party councillor Brian Feeny argued that the problems encountered on the nationalist estate of Twinbrook in West Belfast resembled those on hundreds of council estates throughout Britain. Fiona Foster visited Twinbrook and spoke to the elected Sinn Fein councillor for the area, Michael Ferguson. She found Twinbrook more like a black South African township than a deprived English estate.

In his article in *Fortnight* magazine, Brian Feeny's central argument is that the obvious decay and deprivation visible on the Twinbrook estate, a large nationalist estate about six miles outside Belfast city centre, is a product of bad urban planning and underfunding.

The misery for the Twinbrook community, he goes on to claim, is compounded by the activities of the IRA. According to Feeny, in all other respects the Irish War is quite irrelevant: 'of course paramilitary organisations make things worse in Twinbrook, but their problems are essentially no different to Tallaght in Dublin, Kirby in Liverpool or a host of similar developments in Britain.'

The attempt to marginalise the impact of British occupation on nationalist estates like Twinbrook is a crude attempt to isolate and undermine the SDLP's political opponents, Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein represent many such communities and have strong support in the areas which Feeny claims are just like Kirby or Brixton.

Approaching Twinbrook for the first time immediately brings home how different it is to any other British council estate. The newly built road into Twinbrook has been constructed to allow the British security forces quick and easy access into this enemy territory. The ridiculously wide road designed specially for RUC and army jeeps is the first of many signs that Twinbrook is no ordinary estate. Far from bad planning by urban developers, the area has been carefully erected to allow British forces to control its hostile community.

Twinbrook estate is grey and grim. The rundown flats, burned out cars and general decay make Twinbrook look no worse than some estates in Liverpool and London. But how many British estates do you know of that have a heavy presence of armed RUC men and British soldiers patrolling the streets with military helicopters hovering overhead?

Feeny questions the rationale behind building these 'soulless, structureless' estates in outlying areas as a way of housing the overspill from inner cities. Twinbrook, however is not the same model. Though

originally built by the Loyalist-run Lisburn council to house Protestants, the estate became a refugee camp for Catholics from all over the city who'd been burned out of their homes during the anti-Catholic pogroms in the late sixties. Some of the houses were not fully built, only half had central heating installed—and to this day many remain in the same condition showing the Loyalist council's disregard for its nationalist tenants.

Michael Ferguson, one of two Sinn Fein members elected on to Lisburn council, argues that Twinbrook bears more resemblance to a black South African township than the English inner cities. Deprivation is the result, he argues, of a deliberate 'apartheid' system—sectarian discrimination by Britain's local policemen—the Loyalists.

Ferguson points to the deliberate policies of sectarianism practised by the council as proof of his stark comparison. Lisburn council have refused any resources to the Twinbrook estate for 20 years. Six swings and a couple of football pitches with no facilities service the estate's 7000 strong community. Loyalist estates in the same borough are well serviced with shops, leisure centres and youth clubs. One Protestant area has just benefited from a £26 000 leisure complex with tennis courts and floodlit all-weather pitches. In contrast, Twinbrook's 85 per cent male unemployed residents don't even have their own dole office. The three schools are chronically overcrowded and the only buses in and out of the estate are school buses and the daily minibus that takes relatives to visit republican prisoners in Long Kesh.

Despite overcrowding few houses have been built in 20 years. Ferguson claims the denial of any kind of resources to Twinbrook is the Loyalist's way of punishing the people for voting for Sinn Fein and supporting the IRA. He claims that the refusal to build houses for Twinbrook is a continuation of the gerrymandering of local government: 'twenty years after the civil rights movement, Lisburn council is refusing to build houses because more houses means more votes.' Ferguson claims to have heard Unionist

councillors expressing regret at having to give any houses to nationalists: 'this is what happens when you give them houses, they vote Sinn Fein.'

When a French company took over the disused de Lorean plant on the outskirts of Twinbrook, Catholics seemed sure to benefit from some of the hundreds of jobs created. A requirement that all applicants have one year's work experience excluded all but a few of Twinbrook's long-term unemployed. Just six nationalists from Twinbrook now work in this new plant. When the council streamlined its refuse collection as a prelude to putting it out for tender, two thirds of those laid off were nationalists—many from the Twinbrook estate.

The undeniable evidence that Twinbrook is an estate in Northern Ireland and not south London is the military occupation.

In a community that continues to give a bigger vote to Sinn Fein than the combined vote of the SDLP and Workers Party, no one is exempt from British repression. British soldiers and RUC men constantly patrol the estate in armoured jeeps. People are regularly stopped and searched and house raids on entire streets are a regular occurrence. Michael Ferguson is often woken up at 5am in the morning and asked to come to a house search: 'you have to experience one to portray what it's really like.' His own home is a regular target. Doors are beaten down, personal belongings are inspected, families are put under room arrest, having to ask permission to go to the toilet or use their telephone. Children are often separated from their parents and given loaded rifles to play with.

Even more sinister is the security forces latest tactic of taking photographs, confiscating personal videos and making diagrams of the layout of the house. The aim

is to terrify families into thinking these details will be passed on to Loyalist death squads. This fear is not the result of Catholic paranoia or anti-Protestant bigotry—Twinbrook is an area where three Catholics have been murdered and many beaten up by Loyalist death squads.

There is a monument on the estate to twelve year-old Anne Marie Kelly, killed by a rubber bullet fired indiscriminately from the back of an army jeep one afternoon. Other monuments, murals and graffiti are dedicated to the IRA—not a familiar site on Britain's council estates. Several of the murals feature Bobby Sands. The people here are proud that this IRA leader, who died leading the 1981 hunger-strike against criminalisation, came from their community and hold special marches and commemorative events every year in his honour.

Another similarity Feeney highlights is the high crime rates common to all the estates he cited. While Twinbrook has had problems with joy-riders and petty criminals over the last few years, a closer examination of this crime shows that Feeney's selective evidence of similarity is a deliberate mask on the obvious differences.

Crime in this area is encouraged by the security forces and dealt with by the IRA. Recognising the demoralising effects of crime on a community already living in fear and poverty, Sinn Fein and the IRA work quickly to warn criminals that their anti-social behaviour will be punished. Punishment shootings are a last resort but the low crime figures in Twinbrook relative to British inner cities are a testament to the success of these tactics.

In contrast, the security forces who never relent in their campaign of harassment against the ordinary residents of Twinbrook, turn a blind eye to the activities of the hoods

and attempt to form friendly relations with them as a means of gaining information about the community.

Even more striking is the fact that Michael Ferguson cannot live like an ordinary British councillor. His home is like a fortress with iron bars on the doors and a grill on the stairs. A trip to his own council meetings means wearing a bullet proof flak jacket and travelling in an armour plated car. His predecessor and his fellow Sinn Fein councillor Pat Rice have both been hospitalised after physical assaults inside the council chambers.

Most local radio and television stations in Britain are delighted to feature local councillors in debates and talkshows on the air waves. Michael Ferguson is banned from the air waves—even if he restricts himself to talking about housing and blocked drains.

As an elected spokesman for a community who overwhelmingly refuse to accept British rule in Ireland, Michael Ferguson is a target for every institution that maintains that rule, whether it be the police, the army, the courts, the council or the media.

Brian Feeney's attempts to ignore the undemocratic and repressive impact of British occupation on the people of Twinbrook are part and parcel of his party's attempts to persuade Northern Irish nationalists to accept a British solution to the Irish War. 'Government intervention' he claims, 'is required to improve the situation'. But government intervention in Twinbrook means British Army patrols not leisure centres, state censorship not housing schemes. The intervention of the British government is just what the people of Twinbrook have rejected for the struggle for Irish freedom.

Community groups under attack

'Keeping the boot on the jugular vein'

In the last issue of *Irish Freedom* we reported on the government strategy of cutting funding to organisations it considers unacceptable, like the Irish language group Glor na nGael. On a recent trip to Britain, Noirin ui Cheirigh, chairperson of Glor na nGael, spoke to Nigel Lewis about the impact of this political vetting, and Glor na nGael's campaign to resist it.

Nigel Lewis: What was your response when you discovered that Glor na nGael had lost its funding?

Noirin ui Cheirigh: Well, when we received the letter with a copy of Douglas Hurd's 1985 statement [that the government would not fund any groups connected with the IRA], we were a bit incredulous, you know. We considered ourselves a very respectable group—even too bloody respectable! After this we very quickly started to get threatening phone calls in our office. Some of these were

quite strange—for instance, someone ringing up and playing a tape recording of a radio interview I had done defending Glor na nGael... very sinister. In November, we had all of our accounts taken by the Northern Ireland office. Our accountant had been raided in "Operation Whiplash" (see *Irish Freedom*, January 1991). This caused us lots of problems, because we couldn't present our files to the city hall for auditing. They threatened to take us to court, while all the time they knew that the police had our files. It

was harassment really. More generally, the singling out of Glor na nGael has had a very intimidating effect. Suddenly you're not this anonymous person anymore. We'd been noticed. We all felt vulnerable when we were about the place because we'd been singled out in this way.

Lewis: Why do you think that the Northern Ireland office picked on you?

Cheirigh: This happens quite a lot in Northern Ireland. When an organisation is going quite strongly, and it is a grassroots

organisation, the government usually sets up an alternative group. They leave it running for a while, and then pull the rug out from under the independent group. This happened at Conway Mill, which became a very popular community educational centre. After quite a struggle, it has now been sidelined by the government pouring masses of money into the Whiterock centre. As far as the Irish language is concerned, the government approved body is the Ultach Trust. When it was set up, it was run by genuine people who hoped to be independent. They went into Europe thinking that in some way this was outside the government's control. But of course the money arrived with a copy of Douglas Hurd's statement, which meant that they weren't really in control of their own funds. However, they accepted it, and the government then matched the £500 000 from the EC with £250 000 of their own money. They made a big show of presenting it, with all the publicity—RTE, BBC and UTV. The whole lot were in with a big production to show how sympathetic Peter Brooke was to the Irish language, to try to counteract the sort of campaigning we do that is critical of the government.

Lewis: Do you think that what has happened to your group has any wider significance?

Cheirigh: As far as the government agencies are concerned, it's all about control really. I relate it to other issues in the North where they set up factories here and there and use them for publicity to make out that they're

creating jobs. They want a stranglehold on the economy and on community groups. They want to keep their boot on the jugular vein. Nobody has a chance to get up off their knees. And just as you think you are, everything is pulled out from under you. Other groups that have been vetted have been given hints that if they change the people on their committee, the money would come back. Some groups have done this, and they've ended up with a government attached observer on their committee, to ensure that nothing untoward is agreed there.

I think that this is what they really want from us, for us to say: "Yes, there was something wrong with us, but we've sorted it out. Can we have our money back now?" Unfortunately this has had a very big impact on community work in Northern Ireland. People have started to vet themselves, to tone down their ideas so that they know that the government won't cut them off. There's no one on our committee who is a problem, but that's not really the point, it's just the government wanting to have their say in the way that we organise and in the work we do. It's about control.

Lewis: Will you change to suit the government?

Cheirigh: No. We have heard that offer before and we have rejected it. Of course, you will get people in the community saying "Let's play them at their own game, let's be pragmatic", but we've decided it's better to stand up to them. After all, we set up our

group without any help from them, and we've kept it going since. If we have to, we can do without their money.

Lewis: What has the government action taught you about community work in Northern Ireland?

Cheirigh: Mainly that it is essential to keep what you do at grassroots away from the government. While we've always wanted proper funding, we now know that funding can be a very dangerous thing. It can backfire on you. What we've learnt is that the government doesn't like our approach, because we involve ordinary people in building and maintaining our projects. They don't like this because it gives people a sense of self-respect, a sense of self-determination that's denied them elsewhere.

Lewis: What is the next step for you?

Cheirigh: We have been in the process of challenging the government's action through a judicial review. This was the first of its kind because in the past other groups were lulled into thinking that if they kept quiet they'd get their money back, not realising that they had to apply for a review within a certain time limit. This, and the claim that we made for unfair dismissal, was very embarrassing for the government. But really, we see now that the most important thing is to show them that we can see nothing wrong with either our committee or our campaigning, and take a stand against them to show they can't push us around.

Irish Freedom Movement delegation

Repression and resistance

In May this year, the Irish Freedom Movement organised a delegation to Ireland to attend the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the hunger-strikes.

Penny Robson reports on what they found in British-occupied Ireland

As we left Britain, newspaper and TV commentators were expressing pious hopes that the new Brooke talks could bring about peace in Ireland. Arriving in the Six Counties, we quickly discovered first hand what it feels like to live in a war zone and why, whatever the outcome of the current talks, there can never be peace so long as Britain remains in Ireland.

Driving from Dublin to Derry, we were stopped on the Border at an Army checkpoint. A British soldier brandishing a gun made a feeble attempt to search the bus. Quite clearly we were in hostile territory as far as the British authorities were concerned—not long before we arrived, the IRA had killed a soldier at the checkpoint.

This was 'bandit territory', where British troops fear to move on foot and are transported everywhere by helicopter. You can instantly recognise an RUC station. The

ones that have not been left as smouldering ruins by the IRA are immense fortified bunkers—no chance of a Dixon of Dock Green kind of chat with the desk sergeant here. And it's not just police stations which require such protection. Such is the local hatred of anything British that even 'Her Majesty's post offices' and British Telecom buildings need to be ringed by high security.

Arriving in Derry we received a warm reception from local activists, from families who have lost many loved ones in the course of 22 years of war, from former prisoners tortured and beaten in Britain's notorious interrogation centres. Staying with local families, drinking in local pubs and talking with republican activists we began to understand what it is like to live under the shadow of British occupation.

During our visit two aspects of life in the Six Counties became clear. On the one hand

the British authorities are becoming increasingly confident about their ability to contain the nationalist struggle. On the other hand it was clear Britain would never be able to crush the spirit of resistance which for more than two decades has defied everything the British authorities have thrown at the nationalist community.

'The security forces apologise for any inconvenience. Blame the terrorists.' So read the welcome sign at the Army checkpoint as we crossed the Border that divides Ireland. The sign summed up the current British strategy in the Six Counties. The authorities aim to pin the blame for the 'troubles' not on the British occupation of Ireland but on the resistance to that occupation and to drive a wedge between active republicans and the rest of the nationalist community.

Repression in the Six Counties today is much more targeted and sophisticated than

in the past. In general the profile of the security forces is so low that a stranger standing in front of the famous gable end on Free Derry corner might be forgiven for thinking that the Bogside remained a no-go area for Crown forces or that the British Army had left the city. However if he were to look up the hill, on one side he would see the British Army stationed on Derry city walls and on the opposite hill he could spot Rosemount RUC station. Both are spy posts, sporting some very sophisticated surveillance technology. From these two points the authorities can follow the movements of every republican in the Bogside. Surveillance and intelligence have to a large extent replaced foot patrols. House raids and searches still take place, but they are far more selective, targeting Sinn Fein activists in particular.

One Sinn Fein councillor from Belfast told us that on one stretch of road he may be stopped eight times by members of the security forces—the penalty for being an active republican. 'Well, at least if they are doing it to me', he said, 'everyone else can get on with their lives'.

Not far from Rosemount RUC station is the home of John Hume, leader of the pro-British Social Democratic and Labour Party. The British authorities have spent a lot of effort bolstering the SDLP as the voice of the Catholic community. Hume's press agent spends much of his time generating stories

about the employment and finance the SDLP has been able to attract to the area. Any British or European Community funds for the area are organised through the SDLP in an attempt to boost its credibility. Even when the SDLP fails to deliver the goods, its officials claim to be 'working behind the scenes'. Sinn Fein activists admit that the SDLP has eaten into some of its working class nationalist support.

But however much the British authorities might try to promote the SDLP and the idea that it is possible to bring about 'peaceful change' in Northern Ireland, it cannot change the reality of oppression facing the nationalist community. At the root of the 'troubles' is the forcible partition of Ireland, the British occupation of the Six Counties by force of arms and the denial of the right of the Irish people to determine their own future. So long as Ireland remains unfree, so the nationalist people will continue to fight back against their oppression.

In West Belfast the atmosphere seems more tense than elsewhere. The walls bear witness to nationalist intransigence. 'FTQ [Fuck the Queen]...IRA...Brits Out' run the slogans on every available space. The British Army and the Loyalists try to destroy the nationalist murals by throwing paint at them, the Catholic Church by painting the Virgin Mary over them. But as soon as one comes down, another goes up.

In West Belfast, the authorities seem

virtually to have given up on the policy of selective repression. The election of Gerry Adams as MP for the area and the solid support for the republican movement have convinced Britain that it can never win the battle for 'hearts and minds' in the area. Hence the security forces have returned to a policy of collective punishment and the authorities make little attempt to cloak their sectarian policies.

Just off the nationalist Falls Road is a factory where 90 per cent of the workforce is Protestant. Most nationalists are excluded from such employment and have to survive on the dole or on short-term state 'training scheme' handouts. In Poleglass, voters elected a Sinn Fein councillor. As punishment the Loyalist-run local council cut off all local authority services to the area.

The hunger-strike commemoration march demonstrated the depth of support for the republican cause. One of the feeder marches started in Twinbrook, the home of hunger-strike leader Bobby Sands. As the demonstration proceeded through West Belfast thousands joined the procession. It was a collective act of defiance by a community which knows the reality of British rule. It was a stirring reminder that however much the British authorities may think they have secured the upper hand, the nationalist people will never submit to colonial rule.

The Ulster Defence Regiment

Britain's Irish death squad

In March of this year, four Catholics were brutally gunned down and killed in the nationalist heartland of East Tyrone. Local people have pointed to the fact that immediately following the departure of a Crown saturation patrolling force, Loyalists were able to move unhindered and undetected into a staunchly nationalist area, murder four people and then leave just as easily. Kieran Anderson explains the relationship between security forces like the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and Loyalist paramilitaries and why they represent the more overt face of British oppression in Ireland.

To understand why incidents like that at Cappagh, of collusion and cooperation between unofficial loyalist murder gangs and their uniformed comrades in the UDR happen, it is important to know a little about how and why Britain set up the UDR, and their predecessors the Ulster Special Constabulary. Collusion is not surprising, since the UDR is the direct descendant of the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), whose men were first recruited into the notorious 'B' Specials of the Ulster Special Constabulary. When their sectarianism led to disbandment, the men were drafted into the part-time Ulster Defence Regiment of the British Army.

The UDR was formed in 1970 to replace the Ulster Special Constabulary, or 'B' Specials as they were more commonly known. The Specials were an exclusively Protestant and Unionist police auxiliary force established after partition as a means of arming 'loyal' Protestants in order to defend British imperialism in the newly created Six County state. Catholics who had backed the demand for a free Ireland were established as 'disloyal' by definition. Arming the Protestants was thus a sure way of keeping the Catholics in their place.

Loyalists swapped paving stones for rifles and won British support for their pogroms

against Catholics.

Recruits for the Specials were drawn extensively from the Loyalist paramilitary groups as Michael Farrell notes in his book *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*.

'The recruitment [of the 'B' Specials] was based so closely on the UVF... that whole UVF units formed Special platoons. The 'B' Specials retained the hierarchical structure of the old UVF. The Specials were entirely Protestant and where there weren't enough UVF men they were recruited from the Orange Lodges.'

Receiving the stamp of approval from ex-prime minister Margaret Thatcher



Given the nature of the recruits to the Specials it will come as no surprise that they were responsible for conducting a reign of terror against the nationalist community from 1921 to 1970. From blatant sectarian murder to daily harassment, the role of the 'B-men' was to ensure that nationalists were constantly kept in fear and reminded of their second class status in the Orange state.

It was the 'B' Specials who led the Protestant pogroms in the late sixties and were responsible for appalling crimes against Catholics including the vicious attacks on peaceful civil rights marchers, first at Craigavon Bridge and then at Burntollet Bridge.

In August 1969, following the Loyalist assault on the Bogside led by the 'B' Specials, and the near collapse of the Northern Ireland state, the British establishment recognised that their local repressive apparatus could no longer deal with nationalist resistance. Having sent the troops into Northern Ireland, they immediately set about reorganising their local military and paramilitary apparatus. They set up what became known as the Hunt Commission. The commissioner's brief was to 'examine the recruitment, organisation structure and composition of the RUC and the USC ('B' Specials)'.

The commission recommended the immediate demobilisation of the 'B-men' and their replacement with a part-time regiment under the control of the British Army's general officer commanding. A previous British sponsored commission of enquiry—the Cameron Commission—had described the USC as 'a partisan and paramilitary force recruited exclusively from Protestants'. Hunt however, saw no problem in encouraging all former 'B-men' to join what was to be called the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Even when the 'B' Specials were disbanded the same men were recruited to the Ulster Defence Regiment: of the 2440 new recruits accepted into the UDR, nearly 60 per cent were serving or former 'B' Specials. All that had changed was the name, the commanding officer and the uniform. The tactics and

methods of the UDR began and continued from where the 'B' Specials had ended.

Moderate middle class, nationalist politicians, particularly from the newly formed Social and Democratic Labour Party were keen to encourage Catholics to join the new regiment. Initially many Catholics were recruited. However most of these recruits quickly came to realise that the UDR was in no way impartial. This realisation struck with a vengeance in August 1971 when internment without trial was introduced, and used exclusively against the nationalist population. Catholic membership of the regiment plummeted at that point and has remained negligibly low ever since.

The SDLP found itself having to make an abrupt about-face in its attitude to the regiment when it was confronted with overwhelming hostility towards the UDR from the party's potential constituents. The SDLP's political opportunism led them to call for a 'tightening up' of recruitment procedures, rather than for the disbandment of the regiment. For these middle class moderates the danger in calling for the disbandment of the UDR was that it could be construed as an endorsement of the IRA's armed campaign against the UDR.

With the advent of the Ulsterisation policy in the mid-seventies, a policy which aimed to present the 'troubles' as a problem of law and order by reducing the high profile of the British Army, the UDR found themselves operating more and more in the front line. But behind the scenes there was a major rethink of the role of the UDR. The regiment was made much more of an autonomous, sophisticated and professional local garrison. Local Loyalists were appointed to senior positions within the regiment that previously would have been held by English soldiers on secondment from other regiments. What was more sinister however, was that the UDR received training from SAS instructors on intelligence gathering. Non-commissioned officers from the UDR were now being used as 'indigenous intelligence gatherers'—mixing in pubs and clubs in nationalist areas in order to collect low-level intelligence for later use against republicans.

Dual membership of the UDR and Loyalist paramilitary groups is an open secret and often the butt of army humour. The former UDR commandant, Brigadier David Millar once said that if he sacked members just because they belonged to a Loyalist paramilitary group, he would be left without a regiment.

Dual membership is widespread. This is in keeping with the deadly logic of the UDR and the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Volunteer Force, who all share the same goals; namely, to preserve the sectarian state of Northern Ireland. All share the same hatred and fear of Ulster's 'disloyal' Catholic population. It is this logic that loyalist murderers use to justify the killing of innocent Catholics like the four men slain at Cappagh.

The UDR provides military training, access to intelligence material on suspected republicans and access to firearms and ammunition. Indeed over 700 rifles and submachine guns have gone missing from UDR bases, many of which have later been identified as Loyalist murder weapons. As for ammunition, UDR soldiers can request up to 20 rounds per visit to practice firing ranges. No checks are made to ensure that all or any of these rounds are used on the range. Consequently it is easy for UDR members to quickly amass a personal supply of ammunition. Small amounts of ammunition have also been used to frame up nationalists.

In the 20 years the regiment has been established, over 320 of its members have been convicted of criminal offences, many of which relate to sectarian murders and other Loyalist paramilitary activities. This figure is just the tip of the iceberg, as few of the multitude of crimes committed by UDR members while in uniform have ever gone to court, let alone resulted in convictions.

Uniformed UDR squads also actively assist Loyalist murder gangs by omission and collusion. Time and time again Loyalist assassins have moved freely and struck within nationalist areas that are usually crawling with Army and RUC patrols. Such was the case in Craigavon in May of this year, when Loyalist gunmen slaughtered two teenage girls and a man on the Drumbeg housing estate. In the weeks before the murders the owners of the mobile shop, where the killings took place, had received nightly visits from the UDR and the RUC as well as numerous death threats from the Crown forces. During these preceding weeks the Army's presence had been greatly increased—until the night of the murders—when the absence of any security force personnel was particularly noticeable.

The killers of the four Catholics on the Drumbeg estate in North Armagh this March, either had the full cooperation of the local security forces or at the very least, had detailed internal knowledge of their movements and plans. Either way through active involvement or collusion the Crown forces were clearly implicated in the murders. Given the sectarian history of the security forces their involvement is not surprising—attacking nationalists is what they are there for.

CHARADE PICTURES
PROUDLY PRESENT

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

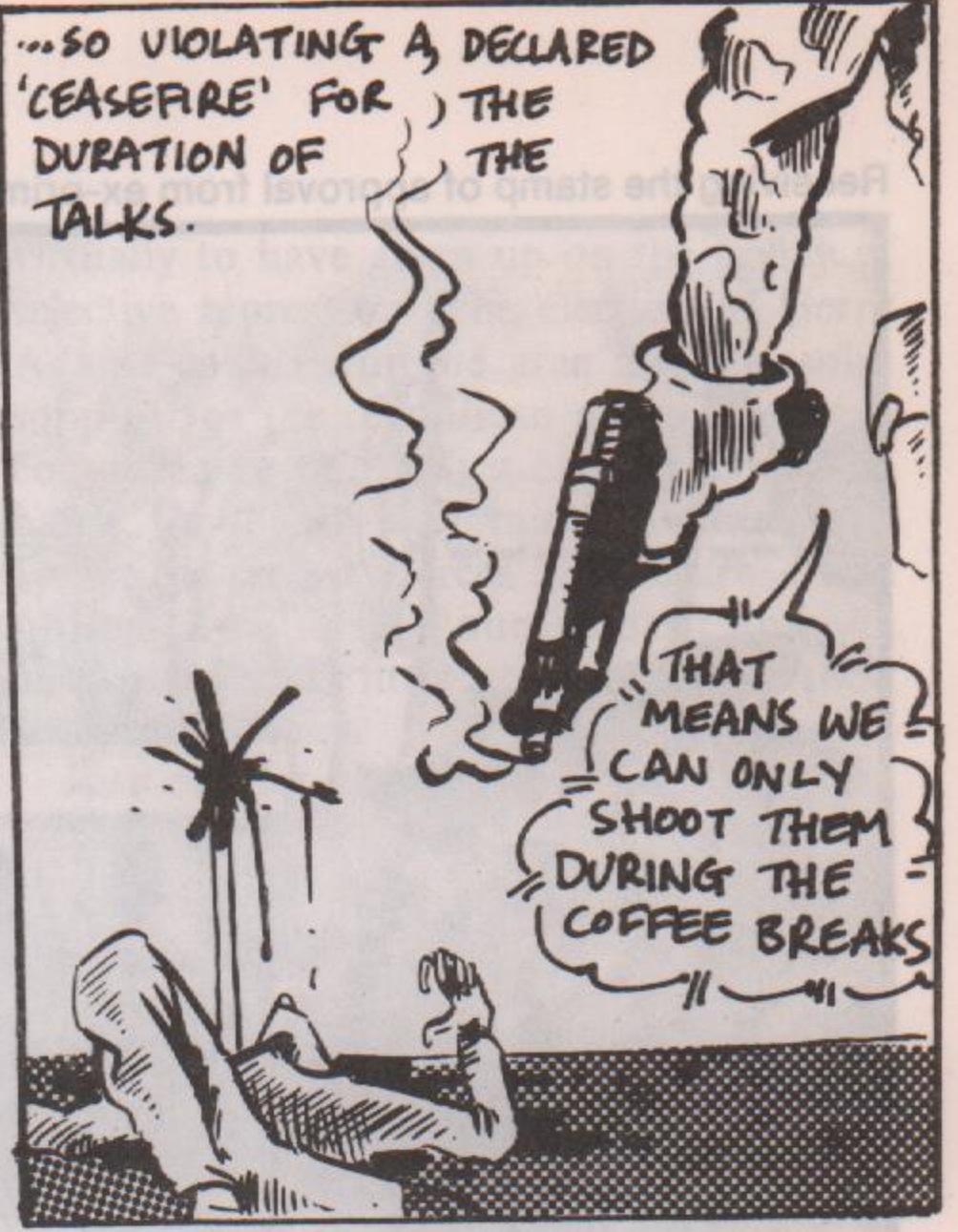


BEFORE LOYALIST REPRESENTATIVES HAD COMPLETED THEIR VETTING OF NINIAN STEPHEN AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS, THEIR ARMED WINGS, THE UFF AND UVF HAD MURDERED A DONGGAL COUNCILLOR AND SERIOUSLY WOUNDED ANOTHER CATHOLIC...

"D'YE THINK THAT'S A CATHOLIC HE'S TALKING TO?"



...SO VIOLATING A DECLARED 'CEASEFIRE' FOR THE DURATION OF THE TALKS.



DESPITE COMPLICITY IN, AND OFTEN MORE THAN TACIT SUPPORT FOR, SECTARIAN TERRORISM, BRITAIN WELCOMES, CELEBRATES AND PANDERS TO THE LOYALIST PRESENCE AT THE "PEACE" TALKS.

"AND THE WHORE OF BABYLON SHALL SIT DOWN WITH THE ONTICHRIST AND FEAST ON HUMAN BLOOD AS TWO FACED DEVILS BORTER THE LOST SOULS AND REVEL IN THE STEAMING PITS OF SLAUGHTER AND BRING DORKNESS AND SOFFERING..."



"THOSE ARE EXACTLY THE CONDITIONS WE HAD IN MIND FOR THE TALKS"



REPUBLICANS REMAIN, OF COURSE, BARRED FROM ANY DISCUSSION OF THE FUTURE OF THEIR COUNTRY...

"WE'LL HAVE NO MEN OF VIOLENCE HERE!"

VOTE SINN FEIN

... WHY THESE DOUBLE STANDARDS?



SIMPLE...

"BRITAIN TAUGHT THEM EVERYTHING THEY KNOW."



War diary

Saturday 6 April: An RUC detective was killed by an IRA bomb placed under his car at Ballycastle, North Antrim.

Monday 8 April: A woman who worked at the RUC station in Belleek, Co. Fermanagh was forced to carry a bomb into the barracks in her hand bag. The RUC were alerted and cleared the area before the explosion.

Tuesday 9 April: The IRA shot dead a man they say was a member of the UVF at his home in Coagh, Co. Tyrone.

Wednesday 10 April: IRA volunteer Colum Marks was shot dead on active service in Downpatrick, Co. Down. It appears he was the victim of an RUC shoot-to-kill operation.

Friday 12 April: A bomb placed under the car of a Portadown man caused him serious injuries. The IRA said they had identified him as a member of the UVF.

Saturday 13 April: An RUC sergeant who had been in the force for 36 years was shot dead by the IRA at a shop in Lisburn, Co. Antrim. Ian Sproule, a civilian, was shot dead by the IRA outside his home near Castlederg, Co. Tyrone. The IRA claimed he was a member of the UVF.

Masses of riot-clad RUC personnel swamped the funeral of IRA volunteer Colum Marks in Newry. Mourners refused to allow themselves to be intimidated from their wish to give the IRA man a dignified burial.

Tuesday 16 April: A bomb exploded at the Shorts factory in Belfast.

Wednesday 17 April: The UDA/UVF announce a ceasefire during the Brooke talks starting on April 30th.

Friday 19 April: The heavily fortified Gortmullen border post in the village of Kinawley, Co. Fermanagh came under sustained machine gun fire from an IRA active service unit.

Ian Philips a Catholic taxi driver was shot and seriously wounded near Belfast Castle.

Sunday 21 April: A women's march from West Belfast was prevented going into the city centre by the RUC.

Monday 22 April: The IRA announced that it will not attack Loyalist paramilitaries as long as their ceasefire—which they have said will

last for the duration of the Brooke talks—holds.

Thursday 25 April: The IRA placed and exploded a bomb at the Europa Hotel in Belfast.

Friday 26 April: Carrickmore barracks in Co. Tyrone, one of the British Army's and RUC's most important and strategic bases in the mid-Ulster area sustained a direct hit from a horizontal directional mortar fired by the IRA.

Monday 29 April: Three Irish people are convicted in Belgium of conspiracy, possession of arms and false documents. Gerry Roche is sentenced to three years, Kieran McCarthy to two years and John Daly to one year suspended.

Tuesday 30 April: Brooke talks begin at Stormont.

Wednesday 1 May: An RUC armoured jeep was attacked and hit with an RPG rocket seriously injuring the four occupants (one of whom died two days later) in the Beechmount area of West Belfast.

Sunday 5 May: A large rally in Belfast commemorated the hunger-strikes of 1981.

Wednesday 8 May: Danny Morrison, publicity director for Sinn Féin, and six other people were acquitted of conspiracy to murder self-confessed RUC spy Alexander 'Sandy' Lynch, but convicted on the charge of falsely imprisoning him. A week later Morrison was sentenced to eight years imprisonment.

Friday 10 May: A British soldier was injured by rifle fire as his foot patrol emerged from the White Rock fort on Upper Springfield Road, Belfast.

Saturday 11 May: A ten person active service unit of the IRA attacked British troops who were guarding the home of Unionist Lord Caledon in North Armagh.

Monday 13 May: A leading member of the Orange Order, Robert Orr, who the IRA said was a UDR officer, was killed when a bomb exploded under his car in Armagh City.

The IRA fired several shots at construction workers carrying out repairs to the law courts near the centre of Belfast.

Thursday 16 May: The headquarters of the British crown prosecution service in central Belfast became a target for the IRA when despite heavy security they managed to get a 3lb semtex bomb inside.

Friday 17 May: An RUC man was killed when an IRA bomb exploded under his car outside his home at Lisbellaw, Co. Fermanagh.

Monday 20 May: An RUC landrover parked at the Unity flats in Belfast was attacked by the IRA with rocket and rifle fire.

Tuesday 21 May: A director of a fruit and vegetable firm which had been supplying produce to Crown forces was executed by the IRA in Belfast.

The Dutch justice ministry approved the extradition of Sean Hick to Germany. In April he was acquitted on charges over the killing of two Australian tourists in Roermund last year.

Friday 24 May: An RUC chief inspector was shot and wounded by the IRA at his home near Enniskillen.

Saturday 25 May: Sinn Féin councillor Eddie Fullerton was shot dead at his home in Buncrana, Co. Donegal. The attack was claimed by the Ulster Freedom Fighters.

A British soldier was killed when a grenade was thrown over the wall of the North Howard Street barracks in West Belfast.

Earlier an RUC man was killed near Queens University.

A 300 lb IRA bomb exploded outside the home of an RUC man in Cookstown, Co. Tyrone.

Sunday 26 May: Over 200 local people from the Beechmount area of West Belfast held a meeting to decide what to do about intolerable RUC harassment and intimidation that people, mainly the young, have been receiving since an IRA attack on an RUC jeep on 1 May.

For the third time in six weeks the RUC banned a women's march to Belfast city centre. This time on the grounds that it would clash with a scout parade.

Monday 27 to Friday 31 May: 1500 homes were raided in a five day operation in Strabane.

Friday 31 May: Three UDR soldiers were killed and several injured in a massive bomb blast at the headquarters of the UDR's second battalion at Glenanne, Co. Armagh.

Sunday 2 June: A senior civil servant was seriously injured when a bomb planted under a car exploded. She had not been the IRA's intended target.

Monday 3 June: Three volunteers of the IRA, Tony Doris, Lawrence McNally and Pete Ryan were shot dead by undercover British forces while on active service in Coagh, Co. Tyrone.

A British army helicopter base at Ballycassidy near Enniskillen was attacked by IRA mortars.

Thursday 6 June: The IRA shot dead a man in Derry they said was an RUC informer. Local man Ruairi Finnis had been one of

their members but had been informing for three and a half years.

Friday 7 June: Later in the early hours of Friday morning, Derry Sinn Fein councillor Hugh Brady was arrested and taken to Castlereagh.

Saturday 8 June: The IRA in South Down said its volunteers had placed a 600 lb bomb which exploded in the village of Donaghcloney causing damage to many homes.

Sunday 9 June: The three IRA volunteers shot dead by undercover troops were buried over the weekend. In Monaghan and Tyrone where they were buried the state security forces behaved in a similar fashion—hundreds of riot police, helicopters and intimidation. The families and mourners fought back the whole way making sure that

these thugs couldn't take over the funerals.

Sunday 16 June: A 38-year old man was seriously wounded in a sectarian attack by the UVF in West Belfast.

Monday 17 June: The four constitutional parties in Northern Ireland sat down together for the first time in 16 years.

A UDR soldier was shot dead by the IRA in North Belfast.

Tuesday 18 June: It was confirmed that 500 extra troops had been sent to Northern Ireland (a battalion of Green Howards for the border).

Wednesday 19 June: An off duty soldier from the parachute regiment was shot dead by the IRA at a house in East Belfast while he was in the province on a private visit.

Review

Hunger-strike video

Irish freedom fighters are not British criminals

Ireland's Hunger-strike is a new video produced by the republican movement in West Belfast. Mixing archive footage, commentary and interviews with people who participated in the struggle at the time, the video captures the drama, excitement and tragedy of the momentous events ten years ago.

The story of the hunger-strikes really begins in 1975 with the withdrawal of special-category status by the then Labour government as part of its struggle to crush republican resistance. This is described in the video by Brendan Hughes, IRA OC in Long Kesh prison at the time. He tells of his transfer to the newly constructed H-Blocks. Overnight 'Mr Hughes', who had enjoyed cups of coffee and negotiations in the governor's office, became 'Hughes 404'—another common criminal according to Her Majesty's government.

The criminalisation strategy provoked resistance from the prisoners. Kieran Nugent was the first to be sentenced under the new regime. In September 1976, his refusal to wear prison uniform sparked off the blanket protests which subsequently became the 'dirty' protests. By 1978, there were between three and four hundred men on the blanket. Current and ex-prisoners describe in sickening detail the barbaric attempts by the

screws to break them with beatings during slopping out and meal times. Thus they were forced to start the dirty protest. The video shows footage rarely seen in Britain of the blanketmen in their cells, defiantly calling out their demands to the passing camera.

In an attempt to up the stakes, the first hunger-strike for the prisoners' 'five demands' started in October 1980 and lasted 53 days until it was called off after apparent concessions from the government. The film vividly recalls the moment when Danny Morrison came to tell Brendan Hughes of the duplicity of the government and their realisation that it was now a fight to the finish. The second hunger-strike, which ended after ten deaths, started in March 1981 under the leadership of Bobby Sands.

Admiration for Sands shines through the interviews with those prisoners who were with him in prison. They describe their certainty that he would go right through to the end. But they also reveal the humour with which they were able to battle against all odds. For instance after one week on the fast, Bobby Sands' comrades recall how his birthday was celebrated by the prisoners, all individually locked in their cells—by tap dancing and singing way into the early hours.

More importantly though, the video shows the strength and determination, not just of the

hunger-strikers, but of the nationalist community itself, who refused to accept criminalisation. What comes through is the sheer pugnacity of the prisoners' resistance to the dehumanising conditions. The shouted political discussions through cell doors, the story-telling of the prisoners to overcome the barbarity of their imprisonment serves as an inspiration to all.

Ten years on, this film is a remarkable testament to the bravery and resilience of the nationalist community in Northern Ireland. It is an important film because it shows the true story of ten men murdered by a government determined to criminalise any resistance to its rule in Ireland. It deserves to be seen as widely as possible to kill the lie that is still peddled by the government that the IRA are common criminals.

The Irish Freedom Movement screening of the video at its film Festival 'Gunmen and gangsters—imperialism and resistance' in June, received thunderous applause from the audience. We aim to show the video around the country in the run up to the annual anti-internment march on August 10 1991. Keep an eye out for publicity, or ring our office for details of the showing nearest to you.

Ben

join the

IFM!

There is plenty of work to be done if we are to get the message of Irish freedom across in Britain. Join the Irish Freedom Movement and helping us to campaign in the labour movement, in your communities and on the streets. We have branches in:

Glasgow • Newcastle • Manchester
Liverpool • Sheffield • Birmingham
Nottingham • Oxford • Leeds • Bristol
Cardiff • Brighton • West London
North London • South London
East London • Haringey

Don't delay—sign up today! Annual membership costs £10 for individuals, £25 for organisations/union branches and includes a free subscription to *Irish Freedom*. Contact us at the address on page 2.

Irish Freedom Movement

The twentieth anniversary of the
introduction of internment
without trial

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND PRISONERS OUT OF JAIL

Saturday 10 August

Assemble: 1pm Islington
Town Hall (rear),
Upper Street, London N1
(Highbury and Islington tube)

For more details and information
about transport from around the
country write to IFM, BM IFM,
London WC1N 3XX or phone
(071) 375 1702

