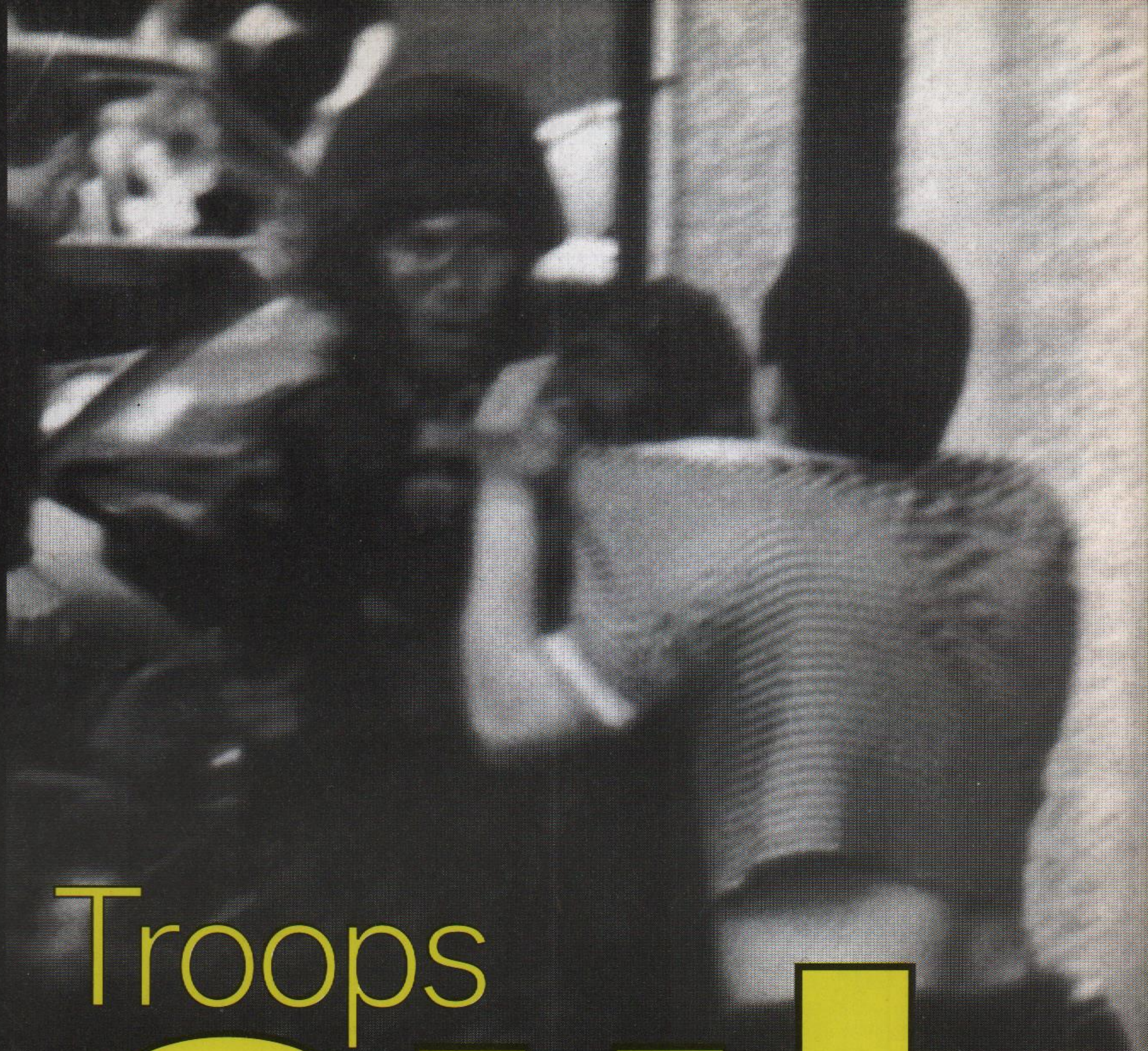
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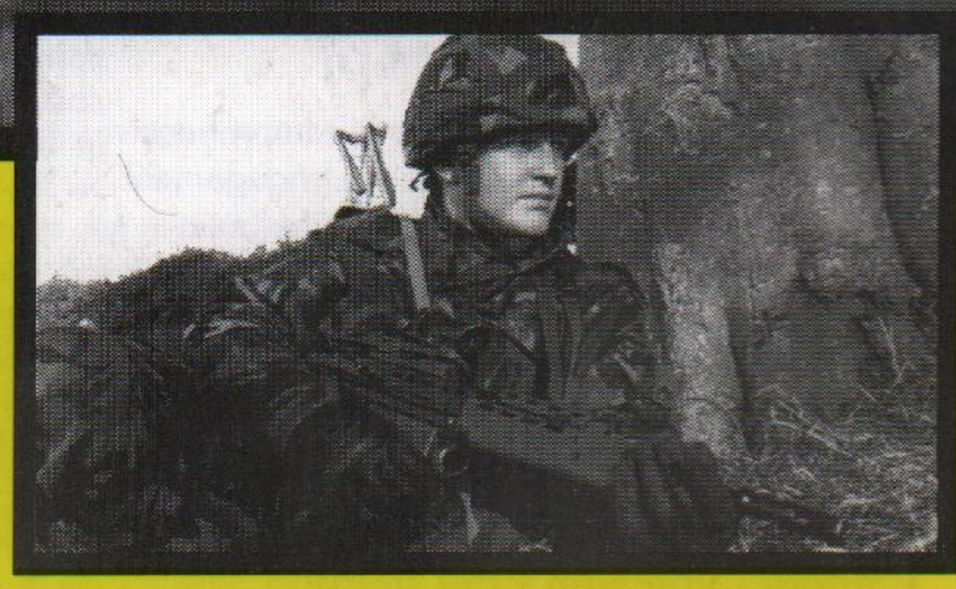


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Summer 1992

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EDITORIAL

Summer 1992

A new phase of the Irish War?

The appointments of Sir Patrick Mayhew and Michael Mates as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and security minister for the province respectively have rightly worried nationalists about the direction of British policy towards the North.

Peter Brooke, the former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was one of the first casualties when John Major reshuffled his cabinet. Since taking over Mayhew and Mates have been dubbed 'Murder and Mayhem' by Irish nationalists. By contrast, Brooke has come to be remembered as the gentlemanly face of British 'peace-making'. He is credited with initiating the process of talks between the 'constitutional' parties. Diffident and self-effacing in his manner, Brooke put a moderate veneer upon Britain's military occupation of the Six Counties.

The reaction to Mayhew and Mates has been speculation that their appointment shows that Britain is adopting a more militaristic line. Indeed, Mates' record as military advisor to the Stormont regime during the days of the 'B' Specials, when he was a lieutenant-colonel in the British Army, has sent nervous tremors through the Social Democratic and Labour Party. Mates also supports the reintroduction of the death penalty and was prominent in the demands for easier extradition of republicans from the South.

Within the first two months of their appointment, British soldiers were involved in a series of assaults on nationalists from Belfast to Derry, as we report inside. British paratroopers terrorised the small nationalist town of Coalisland in Co Tyrone. In one of the most serious attacks they battered a youth unconscious and shot three others in the legs. Headlines like 'Paras on the rampage' were splashed across the front pages of almost every national newspaper. Just the amount of press coverage made it seem that the Coalisland events were something new, given that British atrocities in the Six Counties are rarely even acknowledged, let alone criticised. It appeared to some people as an example of Britain's new 'get tough' policy towards those who still refuse to accept its rule in the Six Counties.

None of this is really new. Despite all the media attention, the harassment of unarmed men and women in Coalisland, as in most staunchly nationalist towns, is an everyday event. The British government has stuck the boot into Irish nationalists for 23 years now, and supplied the footwear to Unionists during 50 years of Stormont rule before that. It would be premature to say that a 'get tough' policy has begun with the appointment of Sir Patrick Mayhew and Michael Mates.

To talk of Mayhew and Mates as a new breed of militarists comes dangerously close to letting Peter Brooke off the hook and reduces any understanding of British strategy to a discussion of personalities. Nobody should be fooled by Mayhew's predecessor. Brooke is the man who, live on television, labelled the people of West Belfast 'the terrorist community', and has overseen countless SAS shoot-to-kill operations, resulting in the deaths of many nationalists. Just look at any edition of a nationalist newspaper during Brooke's secretariat, and you will read endless reports of beatings, harassment and house raids carried out by the RUC and British Army under his control.

More than continuing the policy of repression in the Six Counties, Brooke's careful approach to the constitutional parties has succeeded in marginalising the republicans. The appeal of Sinn Fein has been whittled down to its core of support, while Brooke, the Unionists and the SDLP have had the monopoly of the official political process at the talks. Brooke's soothing words have been as much a part of the British strategy of containment as the military repression.

What has changed about British policy is the government's assessment of the war, and that much is reflected in the new appointments. It is clear that sections of the British establishment feel relatively confident about the state of the war in Ireland, and in their ability to contain republican resistance. It looks as though they feel a solution to the 'Irish question' may be possible on their terms. Hence they have encouraged Catholic and Protestant clergy to act as mediators in talks with Sinn Fein. It is this confidence that leads the government to openly admit to SAS shoot-to-kill operations and endorse the actions of 3 Para in Tyrone. In June, the government allowed the screening of a *Panorama* programme, which exposed links between British Army intelligence and Loyalist death squads; another indication of a certain relaxed attitude towards concealing their dirty war.

The appointments of 'Murder and Mayhem' to run the war in Ireland suggests a new-found confidence on the part of the British establishment—a sentiment that with the right mix of military repression and political initiative they might even bring the war to an end. More likely is a further containment of the conflict, in the hope that by localising the struggle it will cease to be a political issue. But whatever British strategy is, the young men of Coalisland, replying blow for blow to Britain's paratroopers, show that the nationalist people are no pushover.

Irish Freedom is edited by Fiona Foster, Kevin Kelly and Vicky Rowan. It is written by supporters of the Irish Freedom Movement and is open to anybody interested in advancing solidarity work in Britain. If you would like to help, write to *Irish Freedom*, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.

Paras on the rampage

Fiona Foster met Feargal O'Donnell, one of the young nationalists hospitalised by British paratroopers in Coalisland

The Paratroop Regiment—'the Paras'— arrived in Coalisland on a Sunday morning two weeks before Easter. They came in traditional style, air-lifted into fields in and around the town in Chinook military helicopters. British soldiers have long ceased using the perilous roads around East Tyrone. About 40 of them landed in the field behind Feargal O'Donnell's family home. Feargal watched as one RUC officer pointed at the O'Donnell home and allowed several soldiers to note down details of the house including the registration number of the car parked out front.

'I looked at their arms to see what regiment they were and I saw the wings—the Paras' emblem. All I knew of the Paras was that they shot 14 unarmed civilians on Bloody Sunday. Now they were here in Coalisland.'

Later that day, Feargal and his mates were hanging around their usual haunt—an amusement arcade in the centre of town. As ever, the hi-tech surveillance camera attached to the massively fortified, imposing barracks in the centre of town was trained on the amusement arcade, 'a lot of the young people in the town congregate here—I suppose they fear young people the most'.

'Watch your backs'

A patrol of four Paras emerged from the barracks and walked straight towards Feargal and his friends who were standing outside the arcade. They had only been in the town for three hours but they knew Feargal and his friends by name. They knew that Feargal's brother, Kevin Barry, had been shot dead by the SAS in a shoot-to-kill operation earlier this year.

As that patrol moved on, another arrived and over a period of one hour, a total of seven patrols of four soldiers followed the same routine. 'The Paras were letting us know they were here in force and that they knew who we were.' The last patrol left them with an ominous message: 'Watch your backs, we'll have a night's crack some night.'

Coalisland was relatively quiet for the next few weeks. Feargal himself, used to being regularly harassed and beaten, was not hassled at all. But the rest of East Tyrone was less fortunate. In nearby Cappagh, Dermot Boyle's first meeting with the Paras in an isolated lane left him in need of 50 stitches to the face and head. He had been beaten and left for dead in a ditch. Luckily a local woman spotted his hand and got him into hospital where he lay unconscious for 24 hours.

Unprovoked attack

In Dungannon, the Paras began a campaign against local taxi-drivers, beating many and wrecking their cabs. One man had just dropped children off at a Dungannon Catholic school when he was dragged out of his cab and beaten. The unprovoked attack took place just outside a solicitor's office and was witnessed by three lawyers who have made a formal complaint.

Stewartstown is another small nationalist town in East Tyrone. Feargal has cousins living there, two of whom were driving to visit him in Coalisland one afternoon when they came across the paratroopers. Their car was overtaking a school bus when a soldier suddenly appeared on the road. The car screeched to a halt just touching the Para who promptly jumped to his feet, ran to the side of the car, and thrust his rifle butt through the open window into the driver's chest. Feargal's two cousins were dragged from the car and beaten with fists and rifle butts by the group of Paras who had arrived. As one of them scrambled to his feet to run, one of the soldiers fired a plastic bullet into his back. He made it into the nearby house of two elderly women, who were watching the events. They bolted both the doors but the Paras broke them down, grabbed the broken body and continued to beat him. Feargal's other cousin was also hit by a plastic bullet which skimmed his back, tearing his skin. As crowds gathered, another Para fired two live rounds narrowly missing onlookers. Soon after, the RUC arrived and calmed the situation down.

When Feargal's cousin went to the barracks to file a complaint against the Paras, he was held for two hours, had all his clothes taken, and his car seized. He was only released when his solicitor arrived, but the RUC refused to release his car and clothes until several days later.

The signal that the Paras were going to turn their attention to Coalisland came after the Stewartstown attacks, when several young men were stopped by the Paras and told that Stewartstown was only a 'piss-fight' and that the people of Coalisland would see a 'real fight'.

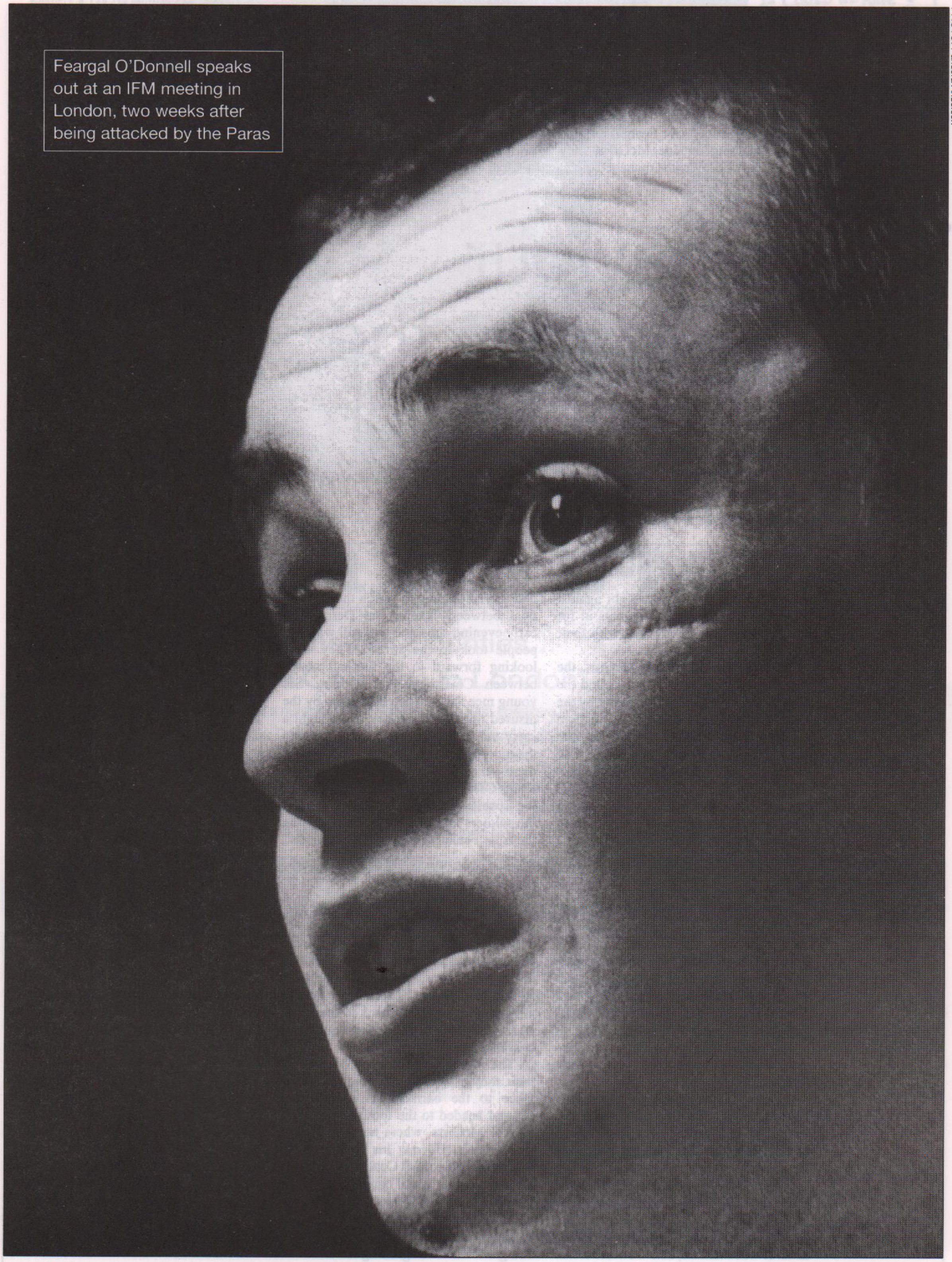
Within days of these warnings came the events that hit the headlines in Britain and Ireland.

The first assault

Feargal knew something was wrong when he arrived in town ät nine o'clock on a Tuesday night to see the town full of Paras with four-foot batons sticking out of their backpacks. 'They normally carry small batons and guns, but this night most didn't even have the guns and we'd never seen anything like these batons before.'

The Paras sealed off all roads into the town, claiming that a bomb had been found.

Feargal was having a drink in McGirrs bar when he and his mates heard screaming. They ran out to see the Paras storming The Venue, a pub across the road. ▶



Feargal O'Donnell speaks out at an IFM meeting in London, two weeks after being attacked by the Paras

PHOTO: Pandora Anderson

The behaviour of the Paras is the real face of British rule in Ireland

They dragged people out, threw them against the wall, and beat them with their four-foot batons. Inside, the soldiers went wild, smashing glasses, windows, mirrors, and people's bones. There are still large dints in the solid wood bar from the force of their baton blows.

When the Paras saw Feargal and his friends standing outside McGirrs, they charged the pub. 'We just managed to get inside and put all of our weight against the door. They were like animals in for the kill. The door is wrecked with their batons.'

Having failed to get into McGirrs, the Paras charged on another pub called the Central Bar. The Central Bar is run by the local undertaker, an elderly man with an elderly clientele. The local pigeon club had just finished its weekly meeting. The Paras beat the drinkers and when the barmaid protested, they grabbed her by the hair and dragged her across the bar. As in The Venue, they smashed everything in sight before they left.

All under control

After failing for a second time to break into McGirrs, the Paras responded to a signal from the RUC officer who had been observing the whole event, and followed him back into the barracks. Feargal was watching through the pub window: 'This idea that the RUC lost control is rubbish. I saw the RUC guy raise his hand as if to say, "that's it boys, you've had your fun", and like clockwork—like wee mice—they calmly followed him.'

For the next few days, Coalisland never seemed to be out of the news. The next day, hundreds of locals protested outside the barracks and the following day, a senior paratrooper was suspended.

From Tuesday until the following Sunday, Coalisland—for the first time in 23 years—was like a free town, 'we never saw any security forces of any kind. It was brilliant, like we were a wee town in the west of Ireland or something'.

But the peace was not to last. Despite rumours that the Paras had been withdrawn from Coalisland, Sunday night saw them reoccupying the town, and the night ended with four men in hospital with gunshot and other injuries.

It had been a beautiful sunny Sunday in Coalisland, though most of the town had stayed indoors to watch the football final between Tyrone and Derry. The early evening sunshine was still warm as people took to the streets. They were looking forward to the football match between Coalisland and Clonoe. Six young men sat on a patch of green by the disused railway line. They had bought a carry-out and their beer cans lay around them. An Army patrol approached them—this time not the Paras, but the Kings Own Scottish Borderers, known as the Kosbies. The usual behaviour ensued: the soldiers kicked over the cans, calling the lads 'Fenian scum', 'paddy bastards', and so on.

Kicking the Kosbies

What followed was not usual in Coalisland. The lads challenged the soldiers to a 'fair fist fight', and, to their surprise, the challenge was accepted. The soldiers laid down their guns, radios and helmets. Within minutes the Kosbies were getting a hammering, and fled back to their barracks, leaving the guns and equipment behind them.

The young Coalislanders boasted of their famous victory, sending an ambulance to the barracks as a reminder. Feargal headed to the football match by way of McGirrs, where he was to meet with friends. He met his enemies first. The Paras had not left Coalisland and met him with the usual greetings, 'Hey, Fenian scum, paddy bastard, remember your brother, Kevin Barry? There'll be plenty more like him in this town'. Feargal walked on ignoring the abuse he has become used to. But a second Para approached him, repeating the same words. Just as he was about to enter the pub, he was grabbed from behind and flung to the floor. As he regained his balance, he heard shots from behind and felt a massive blow to his face. The next thing he remembers is being carried into a car with blood pouring from a wound under his eye. 'I thought I was shot, but I ended up the lucky one.'

The Paras' mistake

The Paras had fired into the crowd that came out to defend Feargal. Two men were shot and another hit by shrapnel.

When Feargal got out of hospital two days later, he went straight into town to get a solicitor to lodge a complaint against the soldiers. While he was out, the RUC arrived at his house to arrest him for assault.

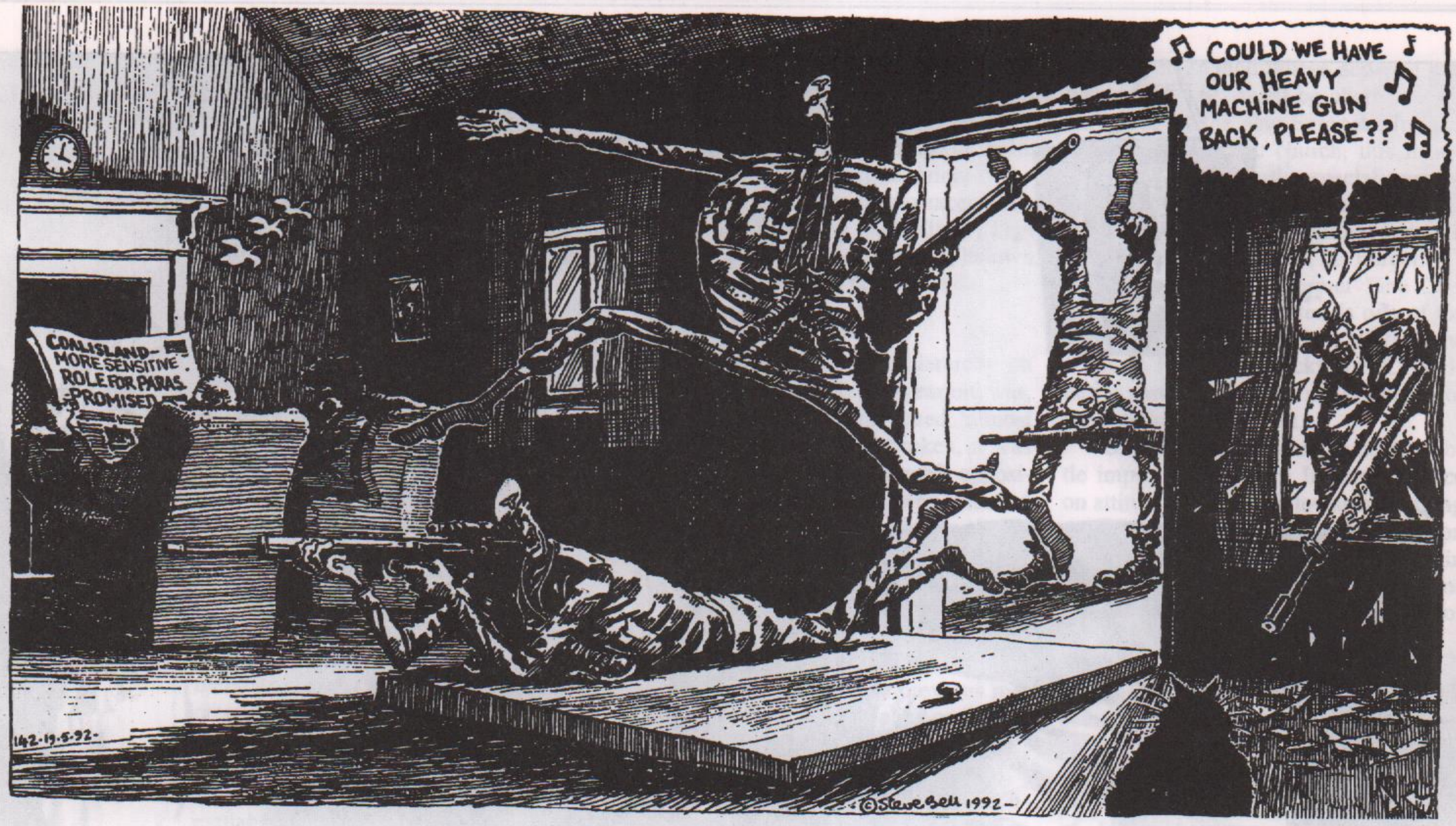
Feargal believes that the Paras' behaviour hit the headlines because it drew protests from the SDLP, the Catholic church, Unionist politicians, and the Southern Irish government. 'The Paras are no worse than a lot of other Army regiments we've had in Coalisland. My brother was shot dead by the SAS. My sister was seriously assaulted by the UDR, and I've been beaten worse by other regiments of soldiers—but none of these drew protests from the church and local politicians. The only difference with the Paras is that they were indiscriminate. If they'd restricted themselves to assaulting republicans, no-one would have heard about Coalisland.'

Mistaken identity

The Paras harassed a local Catholic priest, smashed up two pubs in the town, and launched many unprovoked attacks in front of witnesses. Perhaps most foolishly, they took Unionist MP Ken Maginnis' nephew for a 'Fenian', and beat him up as he left a disco. The Unionist MP's condemnation of the Paras ensured the story was news.

Local politicians have called for the removal of the Paras from Coalisland, and for more control over soldiers by the RUC. Feargal O'Donnell and his friends do not think that is good enough.

'The behaviour of the Paras in Coalisland is the real face of British rule in Ireland. If it's not the Paras attacking us, it's the UDR or the RUC. If it's not happening in Coalisland, it's happening down the road in Cappagh or in Derry or West Belfast or any area where the people oppose British rule in Ireland. A few "respectable" people have been subjected to a taste of what the rest of us have been putting up with all our lives. When the Paras leave, these respectable types will go back to ignoring our complaints of harassment and issuing the usual statements blaming the republican movement for all the violence in Ireland.' ●



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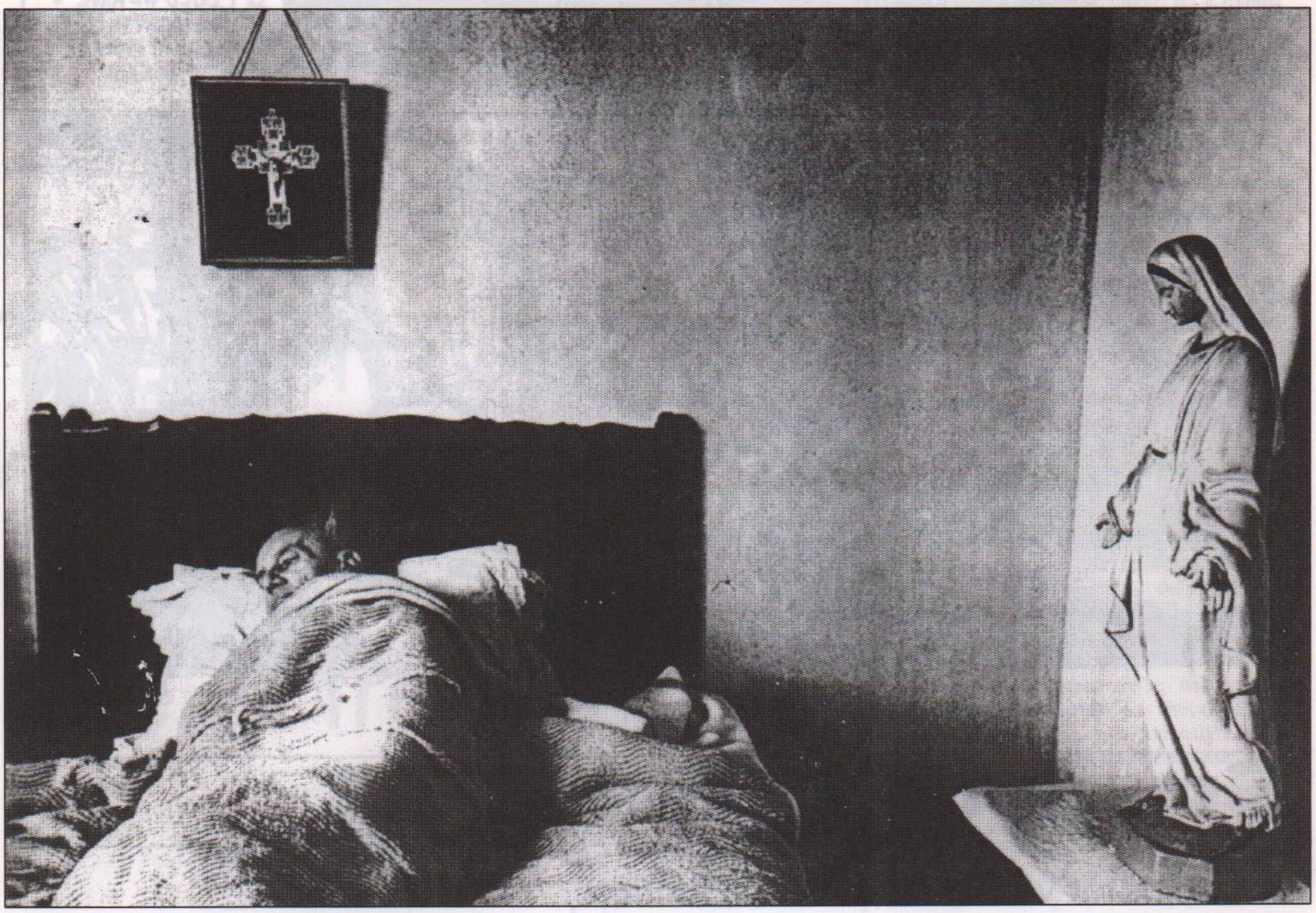
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The church and

Fiona Foster assesses the changing role of the Catholic church in a changing Ireland

'In time, we may come to see this week's events as another collision between the old Ireland and the new, a shameful episode in the struggle of the present to free itself from the clutches of the past.'

Dick Walsh, political commentator for the *Irish Times,* reflects a now widely accepted view that a 'new Ireland' is in the making. 'This week's events' is a reference to the high court ruling preventing a 14-year old rape victim from travelling to England for an abortion.

At the centre of the conflict between the old Ireland and the new is the Catholic church. The overwhelming aspiration towards modernisation suggests that the church will lose its influence in Irish society. However, the grip of social backwardness in Ireland arises out of Ireland's subordinate position, not simply the prejudices of a few priests.

In fact, hardly a week passes these days in the Irish Republic without a development which exposes the tension between the 'old Ireland' and the 'new'.

There was the Bishop Casey affair, where a senior member of the Catholic hierarchy admitted fathering an illegitimate child. There was the seizure of the *Guardian* by police at Dublin airport, because it contained a full-page advert for the services of the Marie Stopes family planning clinic. And there was the man who went to the police looking for an injunction to stop his girlfriend going to London for an abortion.

That these stories have assumed such a high profile in Irish life is itself a reflection of the new mood in Ireland. That priests have sex, that literature containing information on abortion is banned, and that the constitutional ban on abortion has allowed the authorities to crack down on women, are all well-known features of Irish life.

For supporters of the 'new Ireland', however, these features are becoming increasingly embarrassing in a country desperately trying to earn respect internationally as a modern European nation. Referring to the seizure of the *Guardian,* the *Irish Times* editorial noted:

'That it should still be the case that the law prevents their dissemination at a time when this state is on the verge of European citizenship, would be laughable were it not so shaming.'

Sections of the establishment and the middle classes of Ireland are now

the 'new Ireland'

from Irish Catholics who had seen it repressed by British colonialists. Meanwhile, its socially conservative ideas on women and the family, and its anti-communism and anti-republicanism made it the perfect force for stability in this new and unstable state.

Today, however, with no significant support for republicanism or communism in the Irish Republic, Ireland's leaders are less dependent on the Catholic church. As they seek to reforge the Irish identity away from a nationalistic one into a European one, the traditional relationship between church and state has increasingly become a barrier to progress towards the new Ireland.

Losing the high ground

Many of the New Irelanders have expressed their hope that the Bishop Casey affair will shame the Catholic church into silence about the moral dilemmas facing Irish society. The current joke in Dublin that 'it's a good time ashamed of the backward laws that have been a feature of Irish society. Their desire to become a modern European republic is now in daily conflict with the bans on divorce, abortion and homosexuality that set Ireland apart from all its European neighbours.

The leading Fianna Fail party, always identified as the more socially conservative party in Ireland, has shed this image in a move towards more liberal social policies. It has now proposed legislation to reduce the legal age for contraception from 18 to 16. It has promised to legalise homosexuality within a year, and has announced a referendum, to be held in November, on the right to travel and the right to information on abortion.

Constitutionally conservative

The Fianna Fail administration recently sacked a leading judge who spoke out against abortion and admitted to membership of Opus Dei, an extremely reactionary Catholic society.

Many outside observers of Irish society point to the close relationship between the Catholic church and the state as the explanation for the conservative laws that govern the country. Not only was the Catholic church given a special role in Eamon de Valera's 1937 constitution, but it was also given control of running the country's schools and hospitals.

For the leaders of the newly created Twenty-Six County state, the Catholic church was the obvious ally in stabilising Irish society. It had considerable respect

to go to confession', suggests that the Catholic church will no longer be able to take the high moral ground.

In reality, the silencing of the Catholic church had already begun prior to the Casey affair. With one or two exceptions, the Catholic hierarchy has willingly kept silent on key issues—expressing its own interest in forging the new Ireland.

Deafening silence

The silence of the church hierarchy on the case of the pregnant 14-year old was, as many commentators observed, 'almost deafening'. When it was broken, it was only to declare that the church's opposition to abortion had never been intended to restrict the right to travel (abortion is not 'murder', it seems, if it takes place on English soil).

When the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Desmond O'Connell, was questioned on radio about abortion, he clearly distanced the church from its previous role of dictating government policy on similar issues:

'We would be much better approaching the matter in the presence of God in prayer than in the great published kind of discussion that has been going on in so agitated a manner.'

A recently published book by the Professor of Moral Theology at Maynooth (Ireland's centre of theological study), attracted widespread publicity for its view that it is up to politicians, not the Catholic church, to decide whether abortion legislation 'will promote the common good'.

The unwelcome intrusion of the national question into Twenty-Six Counties' politics, caused by the start of the war in the North in 1969, necessitated a high-profile role for the church in condemning violence and ensuring that events in the North did not pose a threat to the stability of the Southern state.

Backing Britain

Here too the Catholic church has proved willing to move with the times and assess how its role can best contribute to the marginalisation of support for the struggle against Britain.

With support for Sinn Fein at an all-time low in the Republic, the new vogue is for recognising the varied cultures and identities that make up the 'new Ireland'. The one million Protestants up North cease to be the privileged agents of British imperialism and become the minority in Ireland whose separate culture and identity must be cherished and embraced by the new European Ireland.

For the Catholic church, this means acknowledging that the special position of their church in Ireland has alienated Northern Protestants and allowed sectarianism to flourish north of the border.

Garret Fitzgerald, former Fine Gael leader and prime minister, is one of the most influential proponents of the new Ireland. For him, backward Catholic nationalism has been a major source of the conflict in the North.

'One must not underestimate the subtle impact of Northern Ireland violence on attitudes in the state towards anything that appears to be sectarian. Revulsion against violence has led to an increase in sympathy for Unionists at the expense of the old automatic, one-sided support for the nationalists.'

Cardinal Cathal Daly, the Catholic primate of all Ireland, recently argued against the armed struggle on the basis that the British presence was not really a military one, but 'the one million people of Unionist persuasion who identify themselves as British, yet claim this island as their home'.

Self-preservation

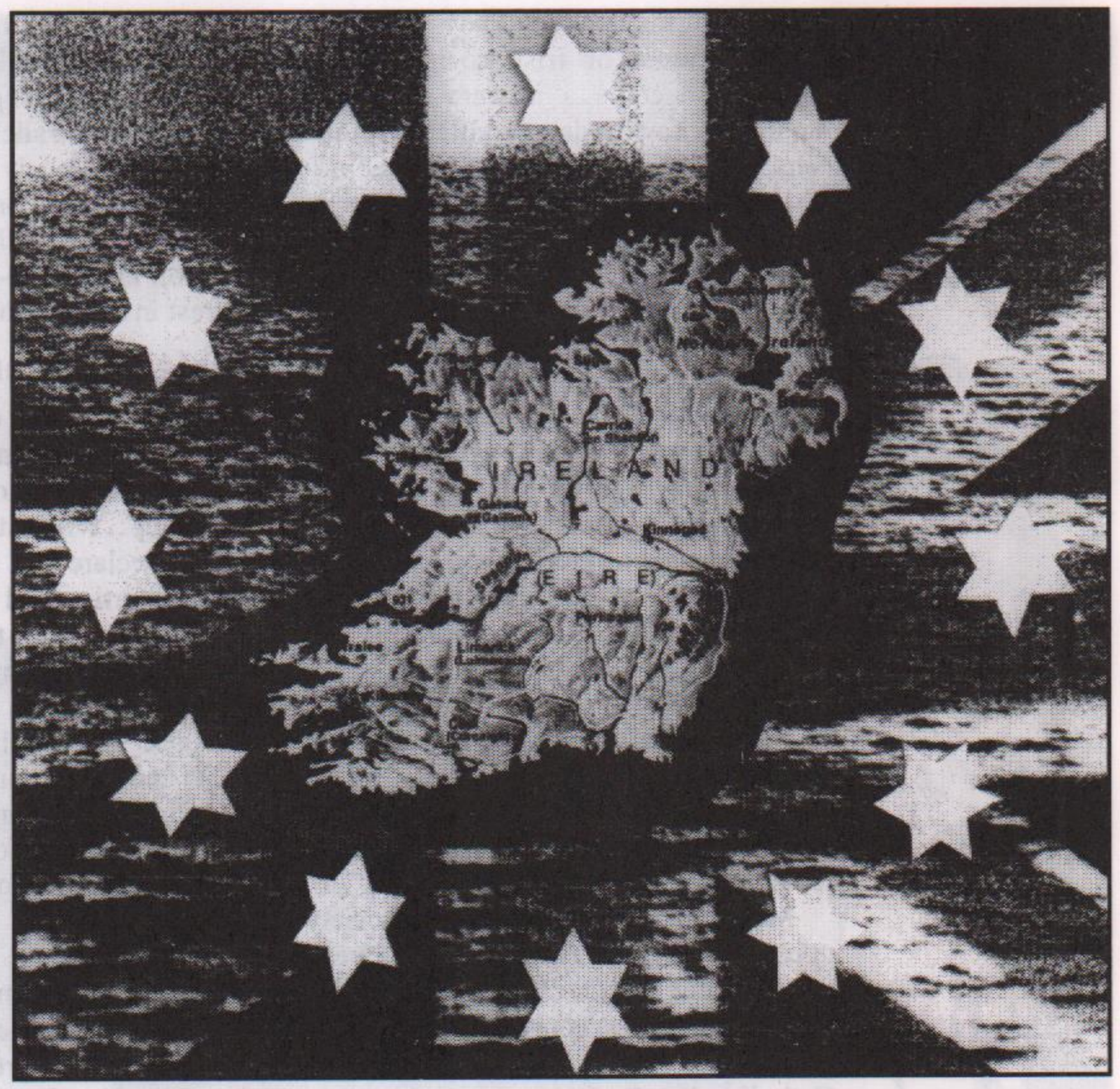
It remains to be seen how far the Catholic church will go in accommodating to Ireland's rulers by relinquishing its own central role in the Irish republic. Like the Irish government, its sense of self-preservation tells the church that a new Europeanised Ireland may further insulate it from the destabilising impact of the war in the North.

No change

Unfortunately, for the Catholic church and the South's rulers, little has changed in Ireland apart from the rhetoric. Abortion, divorce, and homosexuality are still banned. What remains is the Border that divides the country. Indeed, despite the speculation that the Border will decline in significance with European unity, it is currently being rebuilt and refortified after the latest IRA attacks.

When working class youngsters walk around Dublin sporting t-shirts saying, 'Wear a condom, just in Casey', it represents a positive aspiration to bring the country's social rules up to date. By contrast the politician's pleas for modernisation are a cynical attempt to by-pass the principle force for backwardness in the South—its division from the North. ●

Shifting out of neutral?



Andy Clarkson questions both sides in the debate over Maastricht and Irish neutrality

The issue that grabbed most headlines during the run-up to the recent Irish referendum on the European Community's Maastricht treaty was abortion. But an important underlying debate was whether Maastricht also posed a threat to Ireland's traditional policy of neutrality.

The Dublin regime claims that neutrality will not become an issue until 1996, when the formal unification of the Western European Union (WEU) military alliance and the EC is proposed. Dublin only has observer status at the WEU at the moment. Radicals counter that article J4 of Maastricht paves the way for Ireland to become a full member of the WEU. They argue that Maastricht considers the WEU to be an integral part of the European Community and that the policy of the WEU is 'compatible with the common security and defence policy of Nato'.

Uncertain future

Both the Dublin regime, and its radical opponents, are making unjustified assumptions about Irish neutrality.

Dublin wants to drop its neutrality policy because it believes the end of the Cold War has created the prospects for a peaceful new world order. Taoiseach (premier) Albert Reynolds has stated that neutrality has lost its relevance with the end of the Cold War. He imagines that Ireland's realignment towards Europe will allow it to share the benefits of a new, peacefully expanding, power bloc. But there are two major problems with this vista. Firstly, EC aggression is likely to increase in future as it constructs a Fortress Europe to keep out immigrants. The recent imposition of sanctions against 'barbarian' Serbia is another sign of the new warlike times. Secondly, given the fractious wrangles between members like Britain and Germany, together with the failure of the Danes to ratify Maastricht, the EC has shown itself to be an unstable entity and faces an uncertain future.

The false assumption that Dublin's radical opponents make is to imagine that Ireland was ever neutral in the first place. Irish neutrality has always been more rhetorical than real. Though initiated by Fianna Fail's Eamon de Valera, the neutrality policy has always been supported by the explicitly pro-British Fine Gael Party. During the Second World War, Dublin was commonly said to be 'neutral on Britain's side'. British airmen were swiftly repatriated to the North, while Germans remained interned (for an excellent account of Dublin's collaboration with London see R Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality 1939-45*). After the war, Dublin formally refused to join Nato in 1949, yet the Mount Gabriel radar station on Ireland's south-west coast is tied into the Nato network and is jointly funded by London and Dublin. More than 4000 Nato aircraft overfly the Republic annually (*Sanity*, March 1985).

No more pretending

Nevertheless, the abolition of Ireland's traditional neutrality policy does imply abandoning even the pretence of an independent foreign policy. Dublin is likely to throw off this pretence because of the decline of republicanism at home. Historically, the neutrality policy has been seen by the Irish establishment as a necessary concession to mollify powerful republican sentiments in the South. Meaningless opposition to Nato, or the Falklands War, served to distract attention from Dublin's role in helping Britain prop up partition. This domestic pressure to maintain 'neutrality' has now significantly diminished.

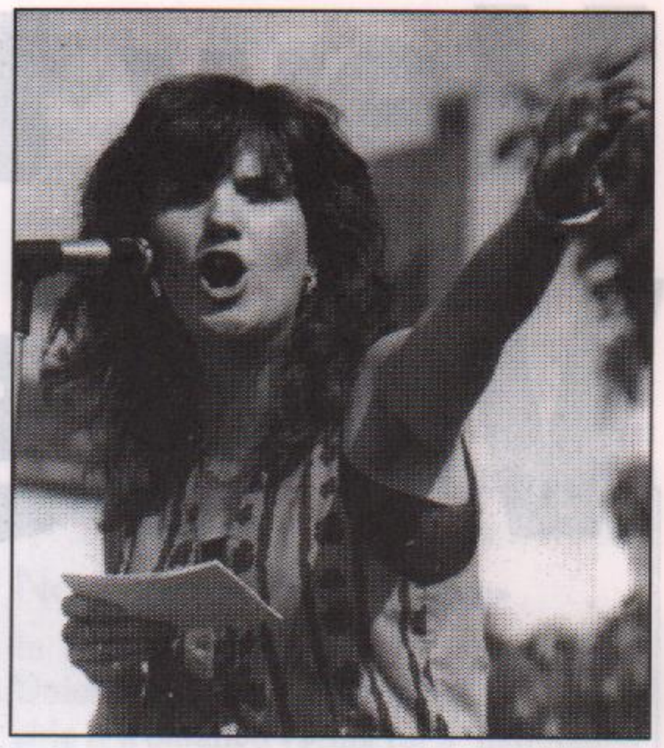
Third world

The erosion of Fianna Fail's rural base with the shift from the countryside to the towns, taken together with dwindling support for the Catholic church, has all but destroyed the old social basis for republicanism in the Republic. The demise of radical anti-imperialist movements throughout the third world caused by the collapse of the Soviet bloc has also had its ramifications in Ireland. Since the Gulf War, the tendency to resist Western imperialism has gone out of fashion throughout the third world.

Nowadays, there is less need for the Irish middle class to make any genuflections towards republican saints like Wolfe Tone. Even playing the nationalist card at commemorations of the Easter Rising is now regarded as gauche. This move away from republican traditions has been presented as part of the 'modernisation' of Ireland. In fact, it confirms Ireland's status as a typical third world country. They are now all competing with each other in an effort to get closer to the imperialist powers. The end to the traditional neutrality policy simply expresses the fact that the Dublin regime cannot afford to be even slightly ambiguous about backing imperialism any more. ●

ILLUSTRATION: St John

Fiona Foster



The cock-up theory of history

Well one thing you can say about the IRA is that they claim their victories and apologise for their mistakes. It never ceases to amaze me, the number of times the British present their war effort against the Irish as a series of cock-ups or one-off incidents where the forces of law and order spun out of control.

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In just one week of television viewing, we were told how the British had 'lost control' of the Paras in Coalisland, had lost control of Brian Nelson (their agent in a Loyalist death squad), and had lost control of those judges and police who framed Judith Ward 18 years ago.

And this got me thinking about other acts of war that were never claimed as such by the British.

There was Bloody Sunday, of course, where the Paras went out of control and murdered 14 unarmed demonstrators. There was that RUC man, who lost control and gunned down three men in the Falls Road Sinn Fein centre, and there were all those police, judges, and scientists who took the law into their own hands by framing the Maguire Seven, the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, and who knows how many others?

In recent press coverage of the 25 per cent increase in complaints against the RUC, the chair of the Independent Commission for Police Complaints explained the rise in these terms: 'at times, the RUC may be over-zealous or exceed their authority, or misbehave.'

So why is it that the British regularly disown their own tactics in the Irish War? Well, my theory is this: unlike the IRA, who describe themselves as a liberation army fighting a war in which civilians and collaborators may die as well as the obvious military enemy, the British have consistently denied fighting a war. They have gone to great lengths to present the IRA as a small group of criminal thugs isolated from popular support.

But this strategy of criminalising the republican movement (remember all the stories about gangsterism and drug-running?) is not without its problems for the Brits. And herein lies the answer to our question.

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You see, if the IRA has no support from the Catholic communities in Northern Ireland, why was it necessary to open fire on a peaceful demonstration in 1972? Why was it necessary to pay an agent £200 a week to work with a Loyalist gang killing civilian Catholics? Why was it necessary to lock up 18 innocent Irish people for up to 18 years, and why would the Paras go out beating and shooting at young people in East Tyrone? The British have two stock answers: either they say that these targets are really the IRA (like the now discredited myth that the IRA fired the first shots on Bloody Sunday); or they say that their forces were out of control, over-zealous, or plain misbehaving.

What the British cannot say is that their war really is a war against the nationalist community in Ireland, a community that owes its allegiances to the IRA.

The Paras killed 14 on Bloody Sunday in an attempt by Britain to terrorise the anti-British community off the streets of Northern Ireland. The framing of innocent Irish people was part of Britain's strategy of silencing any displays of support for the Irish cause in Britain.

Collusion between the British and Loyalist death squads has long been a policy adopted by the British as a means of indirectly terrorising and subduing the nationalist communities of Northern Ireland.

Twenty-three years into the Irish War, the British are still denying the existence of popular support for the armed struggle. As a result, they are still describing their concentrated war against these people as a series of mishaps.

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Most British people only think about Ireland when a bomb goes off. Thanks to the good services of the British media, they remain in blissful ignorance of a full-scale war against a section of people who live within the borders of Great Britain and who simply refuse to accept British rule.

Supporters of Irish freedom can start by putting the blame for British terror where it lies, with the British authorities. What they will not admit, we can pin on them. Twenty-three years of repression cannot be passed off as a cock-up.

New tactics in West Belfast



PHOTO: Hugh Mitchell

In the last issue of *Irish Freedom* we said of Sinn Fein's prospects for election in the West Belfast seat held by Gerry Adams: 'Nationalist people in West Belfast clearly see Sinn Fein as a reflection of their own views: opposition to British occupation of their country and support for the armed struggle to get them out.' Despite the election of Joe Hendron of the moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party to replace Adams, Vicky Rowan argues that *Irish Freedom's* assessment remains valid. Below Kieran Anderson reports on the defiant mood of the nationalists of West Belfast

You do not need the expertise of Peter Snow to know that Joe Hendron's victory in West Belfast was not a swing from Sinn Fein to the SDLP. Compare Sinn Fein's vote in 1987 with the 16 826 they received this year and the difference is a matter of just 36 votes. Most commentators have been forced to admit that the republican vote held solid—on this the facts speak for themselves.

It is common knowledge that Hendron's election victory was made possible by the votes of some 3000 Loyalists who decided that their interests were best served by voting tactically for the SDLP instead of the Ulster Unionist Party. This unprecedented voting pattern first seemed likely early this year when the *Belfast Newsletter* reported that the Ulster Defence Association was urging its members to vote for the SDLP. In the event Fred Cobain of the UUP polled just over half as many votes as his 1987

predecessor, Frank Millar. Since the turnout among Protestants was almost exactly the same as before it follows that nearly half of those must have voted for Joe Hendron.

Some people—notably Joe Hendron—have claimed the vote as indicative of cross-community support for the SDLP.

	1992	1987
Social Democratic and Labour Party	17 415	14 641
Sinn Fein	16 826	16 862
Ulster Unionist Party	4 766	7 646
Workers Party	750	1 819
NLP	213	

Even Irish Taoiseach Albert Reynolds said it was marvellous to see Unionists cross the line for peace: 'The people on both sides have expressed themselves in a historic way' (*Irish News*, 17 April 1992). The idea that Loyalists from the Shankill Road were holding out an olive branch to their nationalist neighbours could not be further from the truth. In case any such doubts lingered, the Ulster Freedom Fighters murdered 26-year old Catholic Philomena Hanna in the chemist shop where she worked just two weeks after the election.

The graffiti up and down the Shankill Road read: 'A vote for Cobain'—that is Fred Cobain of the Ulster Unionist Party—'is a vote for Sinn Fein'. The Loyalist vote for Hendron was based on the tactic of excluding Sinn Fein, rather than a positive endorsement of the SDLP. The interests of SDLP and Loyalist voters coincided in their shared hatred of republicanism.

In West Belfast itself, between 1987 and 1992, the balance between Sinn Fein and the SDLP, as far as their real bases of support are concerned, has changed very little. The 1987 election showed a drift of votes away from Sinn Fein of those nationalists who voted for the republican movement at the height of its electoral support in 1983—when Sinn Fein first adopted the 'ballot box and armalite' strategy. So in 1987 Adam's majority was cut from 5445 votes to 2221. These were as many votes as the SDLP could win away from Adams among the nationalist community by holding out the prospect of constitutional reform through the talks. April's results show that the drift away from Sinn Fein, in West Belfast at least, had slowed to a negligible trickle of 36.

No serious threat

In the 1987 election a tactical vote by Unionists would have been inconceivable if it entailed voting for a 'nationalist' candidate. The threat of the republican movement meant that even a vote for the SDLP's moderate, British-backed brand of nationalism would have been too much for Loyalists to swallow. It would have looked like a sop to nationalism in the face of pressure from Sinn Fein.

Loyalists in contrast now feel more relaxed that the Union is not under serious threat and are confident enough of their position to indulge in some tactical voting. When the Anglo-Irish talks started in 1985, Unionists thought Britain was giving ground to the nationalists. Now, however, it is clear to Loyalists that bolstering the SDLP was a price worth paying to undermine Sinn Fein. ●

Nationalists defiant

Following the West Belfast election, political pundits here and in Britain have been predicting the demise of militant republicanism. The picture in West Belfast was more defiant.

On election day West Belfast seemed to belong to the republican party. There was a carnival atmosphere: the Falls Road was awash with the green, white and orange of the tricolour-draped cars that delivered voters to the polling stations. Outside each station Sinn Fein workers huddled around caravans doing some last minute campaigning.

Amid the sea of flags, posters, leaflets and bunting the SDLP were nowhere to be seen—neither canvassers nor publicity. It seemed the SDLP had written off whole sections of the nationalist voters as irretrievably in the arms of the 'IRA godfathers'. It was the working class estates like Ballymurphy and New Barnsley that the SDLP chose to ignore—an ominous sign for one constituent.

The day after the election a distraught Ballymurphy woman phoned her new MP, Joe Hendron, for help as her home was being ransacked by soldiers. Where Gerry Adams was renowned for intervening on behalf of his constituents, Hendron's office refused, saying the MP was resting.

'SDLP=UDA. Who's who?', 'Stoop Down and Loyalist Party': this was the judgement of Andersonstown's graffitos. In case Hendron did not get the point, pickets demanding the closure of Lanark Way—an escape route for sectarian killers—following the murder of Philomena Hanna, barracked the new MP. The placards read: 'Joe Hendron's voters murdered Philomena Hanna.'

West Belfast's republicans came out in force to show their support for Adams at his first public appearance after the election—the commemoration of the Easter Rising of 1916. Thousands defied police and military intimidation to take part. Republicanism remains a force in West Belfast.

Breaking the silence on

Janet Sugden reviews the Irish Freedom Movement's election campaign

Election time is generally considered to be the opportunity for Britain to show the world that British democracy is the best on offer. While elections in third world countries are presented as a corrupt shambles and the US system is derisively sneered at, Britain smugly presents its election as a time when every individual over 18 can indulge in open and frank debate with the hopeful candidates on any issue of concern.

The Irish Freedom Movement's decision to stand a candidate in this general election was motivated by a desire to explode the myth of Britain as a great democracy by focusing attention on the British state's denial of democracy in Ireland.

The IFM's Alex Farrell took on Peter Brooke, the MP for the City of London and Westminster South and, of course, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

He explained the IFM's decision to stand in simple terms:

'We knew if we didn't talk about the Irish War, then nobody would. Politicians from all the main parties have agreed not to make a "political football" out of the Irish War. That means it's off the election agenda. Their silence comes from their fear of that minority of people within their borders who use the election to go out and vote against any form of British rule.

'The way I see it is if the British politicians are so scared of Irish people's desire for freedom, then it must be worth supporting.'

The Irish Freedom Movement has often pointed to the occupied Six Counties of Ireland as the real face of British democracy. No-jury courts, military police, a broadcast ban on the elected representatives of the nationalists, and a panoply of special powers that were once cited as the envy of apartheid South Africa.

PHOTO: Michael Kramer



On the streets of London, people campaigning for the IFM soon learned that to enjoy the trappings of British democracy, you must first pledge your support for it.

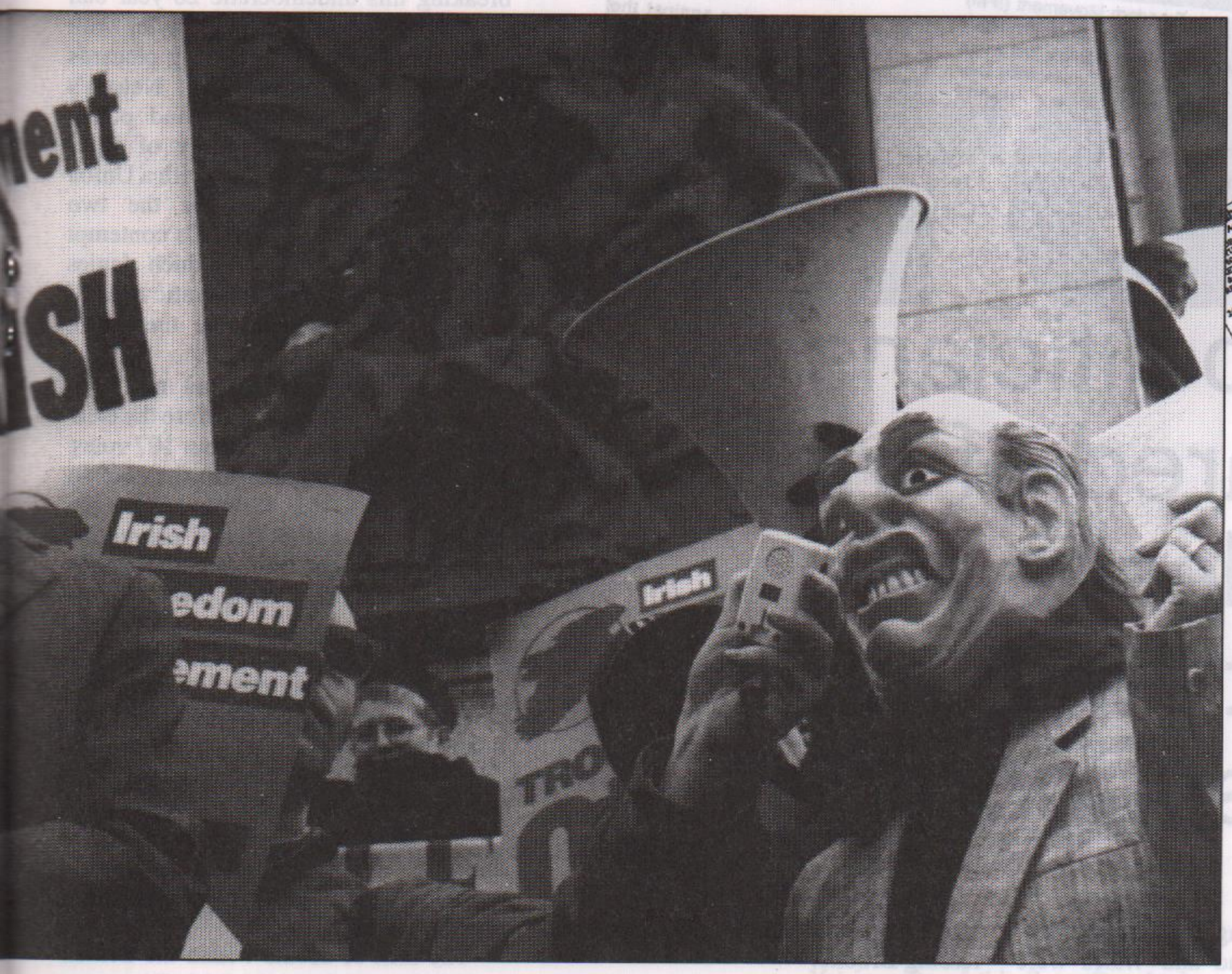
Supporting a candidate who challenged Britain's right to rule in Ireland meant regular police harassment and threats of arrest. Every attempt to raise the Irish War at public candidates' meetings was met with hostility or silence by the organisers and the party hopefuls.

Far from restricting ourselves to winning votes in the exclusive Westminster constituency, IFM activists attended meetings, ran elaborate motorcades and held street meetings and protests all over London.

Hunt the candidate

John Major's boasts of a more open society appeared to conflict with the secrecy surrounding many of the public appearances of Tory candidates. When our offers of a debate with Brooke were

the Irish War



Bipartisan policy—recreated by the Irish Freedom Movement, as part of breaking the 20-year ban on Irish demonstrations in Trafalgar Square

ignored, we began a hunt for the elusive candidate which eventually got us on to the platform with him at a very select meeting called by the Westminster Council of Churches.

Despite Brooke's portfolio, the meeting was restricted to issues of housing and homelessness and the Northern Ireland secretary's only mention of Ireland was a reference to the over-breeding of Ireland's Catholics which is exacerbating Britain's housing crisis.

We soon discovered that the practice of restricting public debates to one subject (never the Irish War!) was used widely as a means of keeping contentious issues off the agenda.

Refusing to be silenced in this way, IFM supporters soon became experts at engineering a connection between the Irish War and the environment, taxation, and a long list of other issues acceptable to the main parties.

Having forced the Irish War on to the agenda, the IFM was left in no doubt that the silence was masking a strong consensus of support for British rule in Ireland among all the parties, including the self-professed radicals in the Liberals and Greens.

Ducking the question

Even Ken Livingstone, one time darling of the left and vocal supporter of 'Troops out', had obviously decided that a Labour victory was more important than an Irish one, and disappointed many by refusing to support the liberation struggle of the Irish. Significantly, the meeting was televised by the BBC for a programme on the demise of the British left.

Former Northern Ireland secretary Tom King's election meeting brought to mind TV images of third world elections with polling booths surrounded by nervous-looking armed men. Special branch officers and armed police with sniffer dogs greeted the IFM team. We


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MP FACES NEW IRISH CHALLENGE

■ by SASHA JEFFREY

ONE OF Westminster's sitting MPs Peter Brooke faces an unusual challenge on April 9th as the Irish Freedom Movement stand against him in the General Election.

The Irish Freedom Movement is fielding just one candidate in the General Election and have chosen the City of London & Westminster South constituency as

and believe that action must be taken to give the people of Northern Ireland the right to self-determination.

Alex Farrell said: "If you consider the situation which is being held to other issues in the election, notably Scottish


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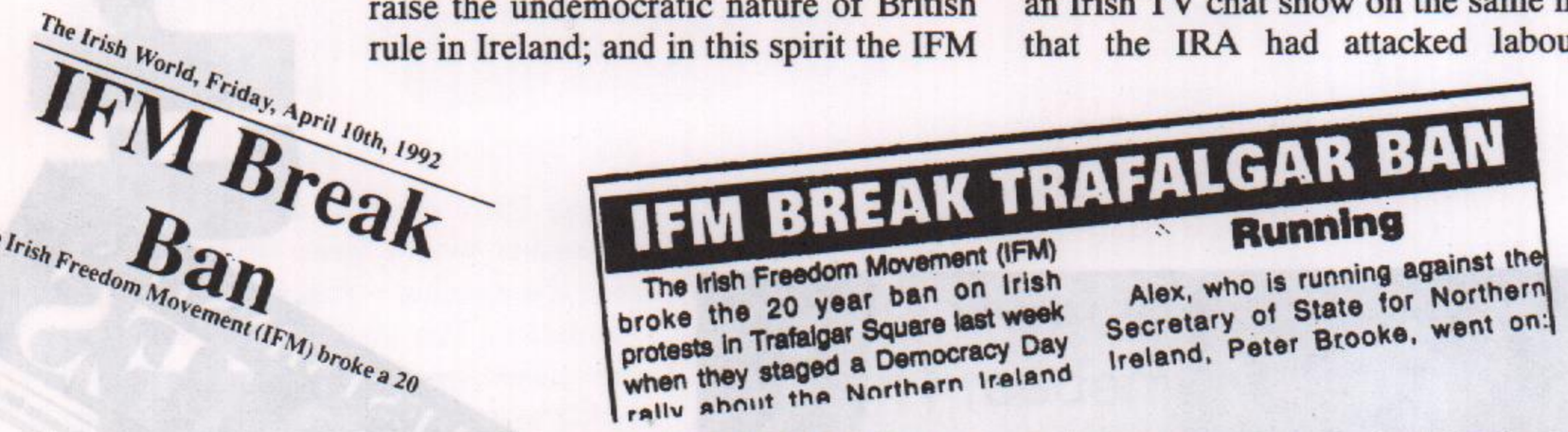
IRISH CARPENTER CHALLENGES BROOK

Irish candidates for British General Election

Extensive coverage of St. Patrick's Day Events in colour on the centre spread.

Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Brooke face a symbolic challenge in the forthcoming election from Irish carpenter Alex Farrell, who standing for the Irish Freedom Movement (I in Mr Brooke's constituency of City of Lond and Westminster South.

Home Secretary Kenneth Baker will be challenged in his Mole Valley constituency by 31-year-old second generation Irishman Dr. Tim Walsh.


The Irish World, Friday, April 10th, 1992

IFM Break Ban

The Irish Freedom Movement (IFM) broke a 20

IFM BREAK TRAFALGAR BAN

The Irish Freedom Movement (IFM) broke the 20 year ban on Irish protests in Trafalgar Square last week when they staged a Democracy Day rally about the Northern Ireland

Running

Alex, who is running against the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, went on:

'If British politicians are so scared of Irish people's desire for freedom, then it must be worth supporting'

got as far as the door.

The first of April was declared Democracy Day by the radical constitutional reform group Charter 88, which called special meetings across the country to press the candidates on their plans for democratic reforms and constitutional change.

What better place, you may say, to raise the undemocratic nature of British rule in Ireland; and in this spirit the IFM of *Irish Freedom* and handing out manifestos morning, noon, and night in the streets and on the doorsteps of working class areas in the constituency.

Tory Party headquarters was treated to a singing picket early one morning as 50 IFMers made sport of Peter Brooke. Brooke had got himself into trouble for singing 'O My Darling Clementine' on an Irish TV chat show on the same night that the IRA had attacked labourers

turned out in force to many of the London meetings. But our hopes that the question of Britain's right to govern Ireland would be heard were once again dashed. Independence for Scotland and Wales were constitutional matters. Britain's occupation of Ireland was, we were told, 'a more complicated issue', not up for debate.

At a well-attended Charter 88 meeting in Balham, South London, the sitting Labour MP, Tom Cox, lost his temper with an IFM supporter who questioned the commitment to democracy of a party that sent the troops into Ireland and continued to support the military enforcement of British rule against the wishes of most Irish people. Red-faced and flustered, he jumped to his feet demanding that the questioner denounce the 'murderous activities' of the IRA. The questioner politely declined to do so, at which stage the bi-partisan approach of Labour and Tory was put on grotesque display when the upper-class Tory candidate overcame the obstacle of a leg in plaster to hobble to his feet and give a standing ovation to Cox for his passionate defence of the British state.

When the IFM wasn't causing havoc at public meetings, it was selling copies repairing an Army base. The Irish Freedom Movement's version of 'Clementine' concentrated upon the British repression that ought to be embarrassing Brooke:

'Oh you Tories/Oh you murderers/Oh you Tory terrorists/Where's the self-determination/In your guns and your hit lists?' (Song-sheets with the full 10 verses available on request.)

Aside from entertaining the band of journalists headed for yet another soulless, boring Tory press conference, curtains twitched at windows and Tory politicians—including John Major—watched aghast at the musical spectacle on their hallowed doorstep.

The object of breaking the silence on the Irish War was also achieved by attracting national and local publicity for our imaginative campaign.

The *Irish Post, Irish World,* and *Irish in Britain News* all gave coverage to our electoral challenge to Peter Brooke, and the police harassment of our canvassers, and our singing pickets. The *Guardian* and *Independent* both reported the actions of IFM supporters at our early morning protests outside each of the party's daily press conferences.

The *Times* produced a large action photograph of our 'Break the Ban' protest in Trafalgar Square.

All demonstrations of support for Irish freedom have been banned from Trafalgar Square since police and demonstrators clashed at the 10 000-strong protest march after Bloody Sunday in 1972.

Brooke burns

The IFM publicly announced that it would be marking Democracy Day by breaking this undemocratic 20-year ban and we did so in dramatic style, with more than 100 people carrying placards and banners standing on Nelson's Column. Bemused tourists and police watched as a life-size effigy of Peter Brooke was set alight along with a Union Jack. Protestors cheered as the two burned, a symbol of the IFM's contempt for a British government which denies Irish people the most democratic right of all—the right to determine their own future.

Given that the IFM had not been active in the constituency before the election, we were pleased with our 107 votes. But far more important than the number of votes was the feeling of having achieved our central aim of preventing British politicians from keeping a total silence on the Irish War in their election.

Just a taste

Though we antagonised many politicians and meeting organisers, we met hundreds of people who expressed their admiration for our determination not to be silenced on this issue, and hundreds more who realised for the first time the amazing lengths to which politicians were prepared to go to silence any support for the Irish cause.

The lack of debate within the British establishment about the Irish War, coupled with the traditional failure of the British left to accord Ireland the same importance as South Africa and other national liberation struggles, has left many ordinary people feeling indifferent towards Britain's longest-running war.

War on the doorstep

The IFM used the climate of enhanced political debate around the election to remind British people that there is a war raging on their doorstep in their name.

As Alex Farrell said:

'We used the opportunity to spell out to people that they've got more in common with the Irish fighting for a bit of peace and democracy and justice, than with the British leaders currently making them pay for their recession. More people know about us; more people are working with us—and we've given the establishment a small dose of what's to come.' ●

Mayhem and Murder

Stuart Sharp asks whether the arrival of Sir Patrick Mayhew and Michael Mates at the Northern Ireland Office reflects a change in British strategy

When the 'constitutional politicians' of the Six Counties emerged from crisis talks with Peter Brooke and John Major earlier this year, the Unionists were jubilant. They claimed that the prime minister and the Northern Ireland secretary had agreed to much of their anti-IRA agenda and that a few surprises were in store. Within a week four IRA volunteers had been gunned down in Coalisland Co Tyrone.

Yet in spite of this Peter Brooke has been widely presented as the last of a dying breed of great English gentlemen, who played out his Northern Ireland role with dignity and respect. In May this year he told a BBC radio interviewer that he regretted not having the chance to talk to Gerry Adams and profoundly hoped that Sinn Fein would renounce its support for violence as a means of entering the political process.

The replacement of Brooke by Sir Patrick Mayhew, or 'Mayhem' as Irish nationalists have named him, and Michael 'Murder' Mates, has alarmed Irish nationalists and surprised many who favoured the softly softly approach of the cuddly song and dance man.

Mr Brooke's approach seemed to rely on presenting Britain as the neutral arbiter in an essentially sectarian war. His talks process was seen by commentators as a genuine attempt to find a solution which would please all parties and lay the basis for peace. In fact, it was nothing but a continuation of the British strategy, pursued since the 1985 Anglo-Irish agreement, of marginalising the republican movement by excluding them from a political process aimed at stabilising British rule in Ireland.

Are the new appointments a change of policy? Before April the *Times* had suggested that Mayhew would be regarded as 'too close to the Unionist camp' to be considered for the job and warned against selecting someone who would antagonise the constitutional nationalists and hamper the road to compromise.

Mayhew has been the MP for (Royal) Tunbridge Wells since 1974 and a knight since 1983. His upbringing and career place him firmly in the British upper class. He was the president of the Oxford Union, commander in the Royal Dragoon Guards and is a member of three highly exclusive mens" clubs. During his period as attorney general from 1987 to 1992, he was responsible for the decision not to prosecute eight RUC officers who had been accused of obstructing the Stalker inquiry into Britain's shoot-to-kill policy.

The Irish government had expressed 'deep dismay' at Mayhew's decision and he was accused of being an 'accomplice to murder' in the House of Commons by Ken Livingstone.

In May 1988 Mayhew struck a deal with the Irish government to ease the extradition of suspected 'terrorists' to face British courts. He angered nationalists ▶



Sir Patrick Mayhew, Northern Ireland secretary in John Major's reshuffled cabinet

still further later that year by denying that no-jury courts were an issue of concern in the Six Counties: 'You could walk for a week in West Belfast before you heard any anxiety about the quality of justice in the Diplock courts. It is not a real issue.' (*Irish Times,* November 1988). It's hard to know what's more ridiculous, the equation of the Diplock courts with justice, or the thought of Sir Patrick Mayhew wandering around West Belfast courting the views of the people.

After the quashing of the convictions of the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six, Mayhew rejected criticisms of the British courts saying that, 'any judicial system is only as good as the quality of the evidence that is fed into it' (*Guardian,* 15 March 1991). The following month Mayhew faced questions in the House of Commons about his role in blocking an inquiry into allegations of a 'dirty tricks' campaign in Northern Ireland. Mayhew was also involved in the banning of *Spycatcher,* Peter Wright's memoir of MI5's skulduggery.

All the signs are that Michael Mates the new 'security minister' (as opposed to junior Northern Ireland minister) will get on just fine with his new boss. Mates has the military background and anti-Irish credentials to match Mayhew's, joining the Army in 1954 and quickly rising to the rank of lieutenant-colonel before leaving in 1973. He was secretary and then vice-chair of the Tory Northern Ireland Committee between 1974 and 1981 and chaired the all-party Anglo-Irish Group from 1979.

Mates has the dubious honour of being the Tory backbencher who has made the most appearances on TV. In fact whenever a reactionary, pompous ex-Army man was needed, Mates could be called upon to demand harsher action against the IRA.

Mates once complained that the British Army was fighting in Ireland with 'one arm tied behind its back' and expressed disgust at the failure of the Irish government to extradite freely any Irish people wanted by the British.

Far from assuaging the openly voiced fears at his appointment, Mates used his first weeks in the post to confirm his anti-Irish credentials. On ITV's *This Week* investigation into Loyalist paramilitaries, Mates said that Loyalist death squads were a justifiable reaction to IRA violence.

It is undoubtedly the case that Mayhew and Mates represent a new more open approach to the war in Ireland. Their unswerving endorsement of the Paras' activities in Coalisland in the face of criticism from all the constitutional forces throughout Ireland is a measure of their confidence at having marginalised the threat from the republican communities in the Six Counties.

The coalition of pro-British forces that ousted Gerry Adams from his Westminster seat and Sinn Fein's poor performance in the general election provided the green light for a more aggressive, military policy.

But to suggest that Mayhew and Mates represent any fundamental change in British policy would be wrong. Media coverage of the shoot-to-kill policy, politicians calling for inquiries into the events of Bloody Sunday and the open discussion about the option of reintroducing internment have all reflected the growing confidence of British imperialism. At a time when most national liberation struggles are on the defensive or have collapsed, the British establishment sense new opportunities to shift the balance in its favour in the Six Counties, too.

However, the people of Coalisland are not getting any more beatings under Mayhew and Mates than they did under the cuddly Mr Brooke. While the so-called Brooke talks are kept alive only to keep up the appearance of a political solution, Mayhew and Mates carry on with the real business of smashing those Irish people who will not accept British rule. That business has not changed for 23 years for the simple reason that, open or covert, repression has failed to defeat the nationalist communities. ●

The Casement Accused

After the release of Judith Ward, Dennis O'Dwyer looks into a new British frame-up

Within hours of the release of Judith Ward, senior government ministers congratulated the judiciary for having 'righted' the wrongs of the final 'unsafe' conviction of the 1970s. Irish people, we are told, can now be assured of getting justice in British courts.

Indeed some establishment figures have even expressed fears that suspected Irish terrorists may go free as wary British juries hand out not-guilty verdicts for fear of framing more Irish innocents.

Rotten as ever

The truth is that for Irish nationalists British justice is as rotten as it ever was. In the generation it has taken the British establishment to free the Guildford Four, Birmingham Six, Maguire Seven and Judy Ward, thousands of other people have gone through the conveyer belt of British injustice in the occupied Six Counties of Ireland. For them there has been no international outrage and the campaigning bishops, pop stars and MPs have been nowhere to be seen.

The story of the Casement accused encapsulates the real face of British justice when applied to those who are opposed to British rule in Ireland.

On March 14 1988, an unmarked car sped into the funeral cortege of Caoimhin MacBradaigh on the Andersonstown Road in West Belfast. Caoimhin had been shot dead three days earlier in Milltown Cemetery when Loyalist gunman Michael Stone attacked the funeral of SAS murder victims Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage and Danny McCann.

The unmarked car containing two men in civilian clothing accelerated into the crowd at high speed and mounted a pavement scattering terrified mourners. As the car jerked into reverse, one of the men produced a revolver which he promptly fired above the terrified crowds.

Assuming they were faced with a second Loyalist attack, funeral stewards and young men spontaneously converged on the car. The two men were dragged out of the car, beaten and disarmed. They were then taken to some wasteground where they were shot by the IRA.

The British Army later revealed that the men were in fact off-duty British soldiers but no explanation has ever been given as to what they were doing at a funeral in a republican part of Belfast.

In the four years since the incident took place no fewer than 200 people have been arrested and detained in connection with it. Forty-one have been charged and 34 have been convicted of offences ranging from murder to perverting the course of justice. Over 250 years of custodial sentences and five life sentences were handed out by Belfast's no-jury Diplock courts.

Relatives of the convicted were so outraged that they set up a campaign called The Casement Accused which seeks to expose the sham of the show-trials and subsequent convictions which, had they occurred in any other part of the world, would have sparked an international outcry.

Parallels have already been made with the infamous Sharpeville Six trial in apartheid South Africa in which six men were sentenced to death for the murder of a black collaborator because they were in 'close association' with the crowd at the scene of the murder. The court ruled that despite the absence of evidence implicating them in the actual murder, they had 'common purpose' with the murderers and should therefore meet the same fate.

Exactly the same logic was used in the convictions of three young Irish men, Patrick Kane, Michael Timmins and Sean Kelly, to life imprisonment for 'aiding and abetting' the murder of the British soldiers. The judge admitted that there was no evidence to suggest that the three men killed the soldiers, but ruled that they must have 'contemplated murder' as one outcome of their 'joint enterprise' with the surrounding crowd. In other words, they had 'common purpose' with the killers.

In fact the only 'purpose' of the mourners' 'enterprise' that day was to bury a friend peacefully and defend the funeral from a second murderous attack. But, in contrast to the grudging acknowledgement of the bravery of those who had chased Michael Stone out of Milltown Cemetery, these mourners were vilified and denounced as 'savages' by the judge. Self-defence against Loyalist attack is just about acceptable, but self-defence against an intrusion by armed British soldiers is apparently murder most vile.

Judicial contempt

In acting as judge, jury and prosecutor, judge Carswell made no secret of his contempt for all the mourners describing them as 'shoe-string' republicans. Having admitted that the photographic and film evidence of the crowd which formed the only evidence against the men was 'unclear' and of 'poor quality', he stated his reservations about identifying Sean Kelly from the film. He therefore convicted him on a clause in the Northern Ireland Criminal Evidence order which infers guilt from silence during a trial. Sean Kelly got a life sentence because he could be neither seen nor heard.

The judgements in the cases of the Casement accused reveal the lengths that the British establishment will go to frame and convict Irish nationalists whose only crime is that of self-defence. It would be cold comfort for the Casement accused if they were exonerated 15 years from now. British injustice remains to be fought today. ●



PHOTO: Courtney

Divided nation, divided class

In May the Irish Freedom Movement debated the anti-republican peace group New Consensus. Here we give a summary of the main points

When there were no seats left people sat in the aisles and when they were full, people huddled around the doorway straining to hear. The spectacle that attracted such large numbers into a college lecture theatre on a hot sticky night in May was a debate between the Irish Freedom Movement and New Consensus.

'Divided Nation, Divided Class' was a debate sponsored by the Polytechnic of North London Irish Studies course and chaired by the editor of the *Irish Post,* Donal Mooney.

Speaking for New Consensus was Austen Morgan, historian and author of recently published books about James Connolly and the Belfast working class. Speaking for the IFM was Eve Anderson, long-time campaigner for Irish freedom, currently researching Irish national historiography.

Austen Morgan's first statement was a denunciation of the IRA, 'whose latest legitimate target was a busload of building workers in Teebane'. He went on to deny the existence of British imperialism in Ireland claiming the term was just one used by socialists to legitimise their anti-British sentiment. Britain, he said, no longer has any decisive economic, social, political or strategic interests in Ireland, 'it stays because it cannot get out'.

Who's to blame

Anderson responded to Morgan by acknowledging the current vogue for his view that imperialism, and therefore nationalism, are out of date in the Irish context, 'the national question is out, and Mary Robinson and trade union politics are in'. But she firmly rejected the idea that British imperialism was no longer the problem in Ireland. Rather, the enforced maintenance of the partition of Ireland means that Irish people remain politically and physically divided, 'whether it's bombs and sectarianism in the North or the internment of a 14-year old rape victim in the South, imperialism effects every person in Ireland'.

Rejecting Morgan's argument that the Irish Republic is now a fully developed independent democracy, Anderson again pointed to the common misconception that partition was a compromise that left Ireland with a bit and Britain with a bit.

'Partition was a solution that allowed Britain to dominate the whole of Ireland. By dividing Irish people between those who agreed with the Treaty and those who wanted to hold out for 32 counties, Britain was able to deal with her traditional enemy in the tried and tested manner of divide and rule. Add to this the divisions between Catholics and Protestants in the North, and the division between Irish people living in the so-called Free State and those under British rule, and Britain had achieved a historic victory—an Ireland weak and divided that she could now dominate.'

Morgan argued that even the concept of an Irish nation is wrong and has excluded Protestants from Irish nationality. He rejected the 'Marxist' idea that sectarianism results from economic privileges and instead argued that sectarianism has developed from those in the IRA who call for a British withdrawal, 'which must perforce include the expulsion of one million Ulster Protestants'.

Anderson responded by clearly locating the blame for sectarianism with the British state which created an artificial undemocratic statelet based on Protestant privilege. She poured scorn on those, like Morgan, who would accuse the victims of sectarianism, Northern Ireland's nationalists, of being sectarian, 'far from being sectarian, the demand for an Irish nation is the only means of dispelling sectarianism'.

Having presented his allies as Northern Ireland's Protestants and the New Irelanders like Mary Robinson, Morgan clearly identified his real enemy: 'I oppose everything about the IRA's vision for Ireland. Firstly, the daily killing, with dishonest justifications which has seen the freedom fighters kill twice as many Catholics as their alleged British oppressors.'

Allies and enemies

Anderson too was happy to clearly identify her allies and enemies: 'As long as Irish republicanism is committed to the destruction of British imperialism in Ireland it will always have a progressive tendency within it that goes beyond the parochial and narrow-minded.'

Anderson summed up the debate by playing on Morgan's support for a new, modern and exciting approach to the Irish question. For Morgan that heralds an approach that recognises the national question as a thing of the past, and looks to a changing Republic and European unity as the way forward. For Anderson, however, a new approach means an examination of the contemporary experience and forms of national oppression experienced by Irish people today: 'This would hasten the day when Ireland can forget about Britain and get on with her own development, because Britain would be off her back.' ●

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Stan Woods Notes from the USA

Well, the rebellion is over, for now. The whole world—via CNN—really was watching. Approximately 25 000 arrests nationally: 17 000 in LA, at least 3000 here in the San Francisco Bay area; 61 killed, mostly by police and National Guard; hundreds injured. States of emergency declared in LA, San Fransisco, Berkeley, Seattle, and even Las Vegas—this truly was a social explosion.

Everyone, bar none, has an opinion on the verdict and the response that shook the country. How did Irish-Americans, both US and Irish-born, view the April-May events? While both blacks and Irish have been victims of oppression many Irish-Americans have had great trouble grasping that common thread with African-Americans. From the 1863 New York City riots, which started as a legitimate expression of working class rage at the grossly class-biased military conscription system but swiftly degenerated into anti-black pogrom, to the 1974 Boston 'Southie' anti-bussing eruption, many Irish-Americans haven't been able to break free of racist bigotry.

With that history in mind, I decided to carry out a very unscientific survey, in a few San Fransisco pubs and restaurants, on the King verdict and its aftermath. Here's a few of its responses:

John Campbell, a baker and active union member, from Belfast in his mid-30s:

'I followed the case from the first and I thought the beating was vicious and uncalled for. The verdict was a crime....While I don't necessarily agree with it [the rebellion] it's completely understandable. People will go out on to the streets when they're excluded from the system.'

Speaking about his experiences with the Belfast RUC which causes him to empathize with African-Americans:

'In the mid-seventies you had these tartan gangs, fascist skinhead-type gangs affiliated to the Loyalist UDA, that would hang about the city centre waiting for nationalist youth. They spotted me and threw me through the plate glass window of a shoe shop. The RUC finally arrived, pulled me out of the store-front and I told them I would point out to them which direction the gang went and also identify them if we caught up with them. Well, they put me into their mini-van and drove slowly towards the republican neighbourhoods, the opposite direction from where they—the assailants—had gone! I said to the cops that I told you they were Loyalists and you know that anyway but you just want them to escape clear.'

Colm Riley, a bartender, born in Dublin, though he lived in London for many years, in his early 50s:

'Of all the people that came into the pub during the riots, both Irish and Irish-American, not one supported the verdict, not one. There were different levels of understanding about the riots, some disagreeing completely, some agreeing completely—especially the lads from Belfast—but no-one was very upset about the riots, you know. People know the blacks are treated terribly.'

Tom and Donna O'Neill, small business owners from Dublin, now US citizens, both in their early 40s:

'As for the verdict, outrage but no surprise. Some people won't believe their own eyes when it comes to the police. The bumper stickers say 'Question authority', but some people never do. As for racism, it's for real. A few lads from Dublin were saying, 'well, what about the gangs, the police have to be tough' and so on. And I said to them, 'have you forgotten all about Dublin? You talk about gangs; blacks have no monopoly on that.

'As for the riots, well, I suppose it was bound to happen. As small-business people we naturally sympathised with the Koreans, though. But then again, who knows exactly who did all the destruction? Some had to be insurance fires. Some, who knows, maybe were done by police provocateurs, as an excuse to go in shooting every black in sight. The account isn't clear yet.'

Terri O'Donnell, an Irish-American, San Fransisco native, university student, in her early 20s:

'On both my parents' side, both families came over after the Potato Famine, that is, what was left of their families.

'On my Dad's side, they landed in Charleston, South Carolina. My Dad told me once about a letter his great-great-grandfather wrote back to Ireland about how shocked he was by slavery and how un-Christian it was. Other members of the family weren't so shocked, I guess because several ended up fighting with the confederate army during the civil war.

'As for me, my family were pretty liberal, pretty cool. My dad's a plumber and he told me he always argued against Archie Bunker types who were upset about blacks coming in the union. I even have one great-uncle who was in the Communist Party back in the 30s. Anyway, I got my dad to join me in the march the police decided not to stop [17 May, 1992]. It was great! You know, even if you're not political you have to take a stand sometimes.'

Sam, a San Fransisco fireman, second generation Irish-American, whose parents came from County Armagh, in his late 20s:

'Well, I don't know if you want to interview me, being a fireman and all. I'm no socialist, no liberal, definitely not a faggot! I think the jury gave the right verdict, the guy [King] did look like some weight-room King and he probably was on PCP; labs make mistakes all the time.

'Racism, I don't ever want to hear the word again. Blacks and their buddies like Bruce over there throw that word around all the time in the department and its bullshite. I'm the one that wants 'equal opportunity', they want 'special privileges.'

Bruce, also a fireman, of Irish/German descent and about the same age as Sam interjects. Sam listens for a minute, snorts, and then stumbles up to the bar for another margarita.

'Sam's good at his job but he's full of shit when it comes to race. Those Simi Valley guys should have got a hard time. I sure don't hate all cops. How could I? We work with them all the time, but the ones who don't agree with all that crap have to get away from that 'code of silence' and break ranks. Otherwise we're going to have a major civil war.'

Jane, a waitress from Derry in her mid-20's:

'I'd rather not give my last name. My immigration status isn't quite [laughs] kosher, you know. But I'm a lot better off than those poor bloody Haitians out there in them boats, you know. You can imagine that the coast guard is sending them back to that bloody hell!

'As for Rodney King, I sympathise totally. When I heard the verdict I called all around and found out about the 30 April march. I got two other girls to go with me. One of their older brothers, Liam, tried to stop us from participating. He said all this racist garbage about blacks and praised the bloody coppers. We told him he sounded like one of the most ignorant Orangemen back home and to fuck off. He hasn't learned a thing. We have.'

Postscript: Jane was clubbed to the ground and kicked in the side by the San Francisco Police Department at the demonstration on April 30. Her ribs were broken. She is presently writing long letters to all her relatives and friends back in Northern Ireland about the 'other side of America'. ●

Remember Loughgall!

Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle Against the IRA,* Faber & Faber, hbk £14.99, pp266.

Conor Foley, *Legion of the Rearguard: The IRA and the Modern Irish State,* Pluto Press, pbk £10, pp241.

Mark Urban, a former member of the Royal Tank Regiment and defence correspondent for the *Independent,* has written a fascinating survey of undercover military operations in Northern Ireland between 1976 and 1987. Urban claims that the notorious Loughgall massacre of May 1987, when the SAS shot dead eight IRA volunteers, prompted him to write the book. His underlying motive, however, is the familiar liberal desire to prevent excessive actions by the security forces that might 'tarnish Britain's reputation abroad'.

Euphemisms for murder

Urban rejects the idea that the security forces operate a 'shoot-to-kill' policy, yet he charts the steady transformation of the Army and the RUC into shadowy death squads plus logistical back-up. 'Big boys' rules' is covert jargon for a killing, as is 'hard arrest'. According to one SAS volunteer that Urban interviews about Loughgall, there is institutionalised cynicism about the Army's 'Yellow Card' rules purporting to make the use of firearms the last resort:

'The Yellow Card rules are officially seen to cover Loughgall, but of course they don't. You put men in the [Loughgall RUC] station. That way the IRA are threatening you without them even knowing it. That's how you get around the Yellow Card.' (p230)

Blackmail and lies

Indeed, Urban demonstrates in detail that, after every instance of shoot to kill, a publicity machine swings into action to show that the Army's covert death squads had no option but to open fire. Hence the proliferation of excuses in case after case, when the victim is said to have 'made a sudden move', 'spun round to face me', 'reached up and pointed at me'. Urban passes on the Army myth that cover-ups of covert actions help protect informers (though the typical method of recruiting them is said to be 'usually blackmail'), and the interesting information that the security forces believe that telling lies to the media is 'not illegal'.

Urban had to interview anonymously many sources in the intelligence community to write his book, but his best research seems to have been done in the library—looking up references to individual agents in regimental magazines. He also recounts a number of compromised intelligence techniques used by both sides in the present war.

In many ways, *Big Boys' Rules* serves as an unofficial history of the clandestine 14 Intelligence Company. Its origins, its personnel and their activities in Ireland are dealt with in glowing terms. In his conclusion, Urban tries to distinguish between this secret surveillance team and the so-called 'Green Army', and the activities of the SAS and the Parachute Regiment. For Urban, the ordinary soldier on patrol and the observation team hidden in a ditch are the civilised way to defeat the IRA. In his view, the ruthless ambushes set by the SAS and the rampages of the Paras only help recruit more volunteers for the IRA.

Whitehall gives the orders

This attempt to depict the SAS as excessive, out of control and unrepresentative of the security forces in Ireland is unsuccessful. It is the British government in Whitehall, not the training sergeants at the SAS's Hereford depot, that determine the regiment's operations. Luckily, the division of labour that exists between the SAS and the rest of the military machine in Ireland becomes obvious from reading Urban's book, despite the author's prejudices. For example, the book reveals that literally hundreds of ordinary soldiers and police were involved in ensuring that the SAS ambush at Loughgall was successful.

Leading Sinn Fein member Martin McGuinness told mourners at one of the funerals of the Loughgall eight that 'we will remember Loughgall forever and we will see to it that the British government does as well'. With the mortar attack on Downing Street during the Gulf War and the bombing of the City just after the election, the IRA has shown that no combination of British death squads can stop the liberation struggle.

Left in the thirties

Conor Foley also opposes the current armed struggle of the IRA, though he is considerably more sympathetic to the aims of the republican movement than Mark Urban. The national organiser of the Connolly Association, the former Communist Party of Great Britain's solidarity movement in Britain's Irish community, Foley sees the liberation struggle as redundant because the South is 'clearly independent' (p217), while the end of the Cold War and the moves towards Western European integration makes the North 'increasingly anachronistic' (p221). But that does not mean that republicans should sit back and wait for a united Ireland to be delivered to them on a plate.

Foley has no time for the 'effete' revisionists that have recently come to fore among Irish intellectuals. Their attempts to downplay the republican tradition in Irish history are misguided in his view. The vast bulk of *Legion of the Rearguard* is devoted to the IRA in the thirties, when the left's influence over the republican movement was at its most powerful. At first, Foley's concentration on this period looks like nostalgia for the 'good old days'. In fact, his aim is to prove that the IRA can transform itself into a radical left movement.

More than militarism

The thrust of Foley's argument is that there is more to the IRA than simple militarism which can be 'banished to the history books'. There can be no settlement in Ireland that ignores republicanism because the IRA reflects the interests of a social force that goes beyond its weaponry, the working class. Maybe that is why there never will be a united Ireland if Britain can help it.

Andy Clarkson

Six out, Branch down, Five takes over

The secret services are fighting each other for the job of repressing Irish republicans. Alex Farrell investigates

On a Tuesday morning in late April a plain envelope flopped on to the doormat of the *Irish Times'* Dublin office. Inside was a copy of the minutes of the Metropolitan Police policy committee. The minutes included the embarrassing confession that the Special Branch had little intelligence on IRA units and operations in Britain. Next day it was front-page news. The leak was organised by MI5 (or 'Five', the security service). Two and a half weeks later, home secretary Kenneth Clarke announced that MI5 was to take over from the Branch the control of intelligence gathering on the IRA in Britain.

Political preparation

The leak had nothing to do with the decision. It was designed to prepare political opinion for the announcement of a decision that had already been taken. It slotted in neatly with the picture of incompetence widely publicised when the Staffordshire Special Branch was revealed to have unwittingly assisted in the magnificent escape from Brixton prison of Pearse McAuley and Nessan Quinlivan in July 1991.

But why has MI5 been given the lead role? Is it part of a wider reorganisation of the intelligence services? What effect will the change have on the ground?

The Special Branch was formed on St Patrick's Day in 1883, as the Special Irish Branch of the Metropolitan Police, to take on the Fenian Brotherhood. Despite 109 years of experience, its recent record is frankly pathetic. Since the current IRA military campaign in Britain started in 1988 with the Mill Hill barracks bombing in north London, the Branch has failed to put one IRA volunteer behind bars. And, as the MI5 leak handily revealed, the prospects were looking none too good.

MI5 is responsible for domestic counter-intelligence—against foreign powers and home-grown subversion, as distinct from MI6 (or 'Six', the Secret Intelligence Service) which holds the franchise on international work, usually under diplomatic, press or business cover. Between 1972 and 1975, in an unintended recognition that Ireland is a foreign country, MI6 was at work in the Six Counties. But since 1975, when it won a vicious struggle to kick Six out of Ireland, Five has been responsible for anti-IRA intelligence in all of Ireland and in Europe. In the North, Five works in parallel—but often in conflict—with Army intelligence and the RUC Special Branch.

The disintegration of the Stalinist bloc, following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, was celebrated with mixed feelings in MI5 circles. As their traditional targets turned pro-West with alarming speed, MI5 officers faced the prospect of mass redundancy and a dread search for work in the private dick sector. And let's face it, how much work is there for Bulgarian-speaking flatfeet on London's mean streets? Hence the vigorous and successful campaign by MI5's new boss, Stella Rimington, to secure control of the anti-IRA franchise from the Special Branch.

Is the expansion of MI5's role the first step in a more comprehensive reorganisation of Britain's secret services? Two things at least are certain. First, their tangled lines of command make Spaghetti Junction look like a perfect circle. Second, the existing set-up is riddled with infighting and inter-service vitriol. For both of which we give thanks.

Endless conflict

Britain's anti-IRA campaign involves MI5, RUC Special Branch (under a unified command), Army intelligence, British Special Branch (with a regional command structure), and the Anti-Terrorist Squad (which is meant to catch and prepare the cases against republican volunteers). Then there are the Metropolitan Police, home office, Ministry of Defence and Association of Chief Police Officers counter-terrorism sub-committees. Above them all is the Joint Intelligence Committee, which brings together the military, intelligence and political leadership, but not their underlings with any great success.

The opportunities for conflict are endless. The RUC Special Branch now feeds information to regional Special Branches, rather than through the distrusted Met. Senior RUC Branchmen greeted the news of MI5's promotion with 'hollow laughs', according to British journalist and black propaganda conduit Chris Ryder, and slagged Five's agents as 'Whitehall Warriors'. Ex-Sixer Captain Fred Holroyd tells in his book *War without Honour* how one Army agent handler shot himself after seeing 10 of his informers killed within days of MI5 taking over Six Counties operations from MI6. So it goes.

Cleaning up the mess

Faced with this mess, there are various proposals on the table. Some favour the creation of a national police intelligence service with its own operational arm, along the lines of the American FBI. This might be achieved by bringing the Special Branch into MI5's spanking new office-block, with the Anti-Terrorist Squad as part of its operational arm, all under MI5 control. A related notion being floated is the abolition of local council-led police authorities and their replacement with 'independent' (ie, unelected) regional police councils. This would further erode even the facade of democratic accountability, as does Five's victory over the Branch, and so enhance the security of the whole operation.

MI5 is not famous for its finesse. Because it works on home turf, with guaranteed protection, it favours the direct approach. Five was behind the shoot-to-kill murders and the shooting-down of the Gibraltar Three. The standpoint of MI5 officers can be gauged by the fact that many regard MI6 as a den of dangerous pinkoes and liberals.

Alongside the appointment of Patrick Mayhew and Michael Mates to the Northern Ireland office, MI5's assumption of control over anti-IRA operations in Britain certainly suggests a more no-holds-barred offensive against those fighting for Irish freedom. But we should remember that it is not the successes but the failures of Britain's secret services which have prompted the latest reorganisation—and have a care that they continue. ●

LETTER

If you have comments or criticisms of any of the articles in *Irish Freedom* we'd like to hear them. Keep your letters short and send them to The Editors, *Irish Freedom,* IFM BM, London WC1N 3XX

Articles 2 and 3

Congratulations on the production of your IFM bulletin (issue 18). It is a stimulating read and deserves all the credit it receives. However, I'm afraid I would have to take issue with Fiona Foster in her opinion column, when she states that she 'will shed no tears over the ditching of articles 2 and 3' of the South's constitution.

While agreeing with many points raised in the article, Foster misses one fundamental point. That is, that the people of the Twenty-Six Counties are being asked to officially, by referendum, remove any claim to the unity of the Irish State.

We all know that none of the Free State parties is serious about the reunification of Ireland, and that many elements of the Irish constitution are flawed and indeed reactionary. But is Fiona Foster seriously suggesting that if the majority of people in Southern Ireland vote to remove the last official claim to unity it is irrelevant? The piece of paper articles 2 and 3 are written on may indeed be worthless, but if the majority of Irish people state in a referendum that they no longer wish to see the unity of their country it is far from irrelevant.

The anti-republican movement in Southern Ireland has to be taken on where and when it raises its ugly head. It is for that reason that supporters of Irish freedom should support the fight to retain articles 2 and 3. By persuading Irish people to vote for their removal, pro-British forces in the Twenty-Six Counties hope to marginalise Irish republicanism still further. Voting for the retention of articles 2 and 3 will not, as Fiona Foster states, 'serve to reinforce peoples' faith in their politicians', but will instead send a signal to the world that they wish to see the reunification of their country, and by extension, see Britain's occupation of north-eastern Ireland as illegal and illegitimate.

It is for that reason that I would support the retention of articles 2 and 3 in any referendum.

Brendan Catney
East London



War Diary

Compiled by Austin Cameron

Friday 10 April The IRA detonated a 100lb semtex device (the biggest they have ever used) in the heart of the City of London, outside The Baltic Exchange. Three people were killed and upwards of £1.5 billion of damage was caused. Many offices were wrecked and 12 500 phone lines were destroyed.

Saturday 11 April At 1pm a second IRA bomb destroyed a principal road junction at Staples Corner on the M1 motorway on the outskirts of London. The blast caused chaos, with repairs expected to take up to a year.
John Major appointed a new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Barnabus Burke Mayhew (62) to replace Peter Brooke. He later appointed a new junior minister, Michael Mates, to replace Richard Needham at the NIO. The two ex-military men have since been dubbed 'Murder and Mayhem'.

Sunday 12 April In the village of Maghera, Co Derry, IRA volunteers fired a single shot in the village centre. As Crown forces approached to investigate, other volunteers detonated a three pound anti-personnel device, placed under a trailer on wasteground. The bomb only partly detonated.
Loyalist gunmen kicked in the door of a house in Upper Springfield Road, Belfast; just 200 yards from New Barnsley British Army barracks. The four attackers rampaged through the house, firing into the living room and all the bedrooms. Nobody was in the house and the gang fled.

Monday 13 April In a series of operations in Belfast, the IRA stretched security forces to the limit, forcing them to withdraw from some nationalist areas to deal with security alerts. The city's two motorways and northbound rail line were closed. At around midnight, volunteers placed a 500lb car bomb outside the main gates of Castlereagh interrogation centre in East Belfast, in full view of cameras and observation posts. British Army technicians took seven hours to defuse the device.
The Irish National Liberation Army shot Royal Signal Corps soldier, Sgt Michael Newman, in Derby near the army recruitment office. He died the following day.

Tuesday 14 April In Fermanagh, IRA volunteers placed a bomb under a car belonging to a member of the Crown forces in Florence Court. The device was spotted and defused.
An arms and explosives cache was discovered in a garage in Uxbridge, West London.

Wednesday 15 April IRA volunteers left a bomb in a shop in Pomeroy, Co Tyrone. They claimed that the owner had ignored repeated warnings to stop serving Crown forces personnel, and had informed on IRA volunteers to the RUC. A second device intended to catch members of security forces who came to investigate only partially exploded.

Friday 17 April Volunteers of the North Armagh brigade executed Catholic Brendan McWilliams (50). They said he had passed on information about republicans to the Army, and had refused to stop work on the UDR's barracks at Drumadd.

Sunday 19 April IRA volunteers placed incendiaries in two shops in Linaskea, Co Fermanagh. They were discovered at 2am.
Incendiaries caused smoke damage to a clothes shop in Ann Street, Belfast. Two other devices were defused in the BBC shop in Arthur Street and a clothes shop in Castle Street.

Wednesday 22 April Loyalists returning from an Orange parade in Bangor ran riot in Friendly Street, in the Markets area of Belfast, hurling insults and bricks at nationalist homes. RUC and UDR personnel intervened with riot shields and batons when residents came out to confront their attackers.
Belfast IRA volunteers claimed responsibility for an explosion at City Centre Ulster Bank.
In Stewartstown, Co Tyrone, British paratroopers attacked 24-year old nationalist Adrian Devlin with rifle butts and shot him in the back with a plastic bullet. When locals pulled Devlin into a nearby house, the paras forced their way in to pursue him. A woman placed herself between Devlin and the soldiers, one of whom opened fire. Two bullets lodged in a wall.

Thursday 23 April In West Belfast, 17-year old nationalist Paul Hughes was attacked by British soldiers only hours after an official complaint about an earlier incident had been made to the RUC. His parents were also attacked when they intervened.
A civilian woman in a car sustained a leg injury during an exchange of gunfire between IRA volunteers and a British Army foot patrol in Beechmount, West Belfast.

Friday 24 April Paul Hughes was attacked again—the second time in seven hours—by British soldiers who threatened to kill him.
Derry brigade IRA fired on an RUC/Army checkpoint on the top deck of Craigavon Bridge.

Saturday 25 April The IRA's Tyrone brigade fired several dozen rounds at a British foot patrol from high ground overlooking Loughmacrory near Carrickmore. One active service unit engaged the troops while the other held the area secure.
UVF gunmen smashed into a house in Ballymurphy, firing repeatedly and narrowly missing a young girl when a shot was fired through her bedroom door.

Monday 27 April IRA incendiaries severely damaged Belfast Castle and the Bellvue Arms bar, visited regularly by high level RUC and NIO officials.
Belfast brigade left a bomb at Northern Bank in the city centre. Four RUC personnel were injured in the explosion.
A bomb exploded on the North-South line at Belfast Central Station. One at York Road failed to go off. Hoaxes added to disruption to the rail network.

Tuesday 28 April 26-year old Catholic Philomena Hanna was gunned down and killed by UDA/UFF gunman in a chemist shop where she worked in Upper Springfield Road, Ballymurphy. The UDA said she was killed because she was the sister of Sinn Fein's Richard McAuley (her maiden name). This was untrue.
In Dungannon, Catholic Barney McDonald was assaulted by paratroopers. There were numerous other accounts of harassment and beatings by paras all across Tyrone. In another incident, a Greencastle man was told 'It's nothing personal, we've been ordered to do this' as paras attacked him.
A British soldier suffered shrapnel wounds from an impact grenade lobbed at a foot patrol in North Belfast.

Wednesday 29 April A UVF gang entered a house/community centre in Ligoniel, North Belfast, and shot dead IPLO member Conor Maguire (22). Members of his family were refused access to the scene by the RUC.

Friday 1 May A major border post at Killeen, outside Newry, was destroyed by a 1000lb bomb delivered on the adjacent railway line using an adapted rail bogie. One soldier was killed and several injured, including two RUC members. The attack was described by a senior RUC officer as a 'feat of engineering'.
In the garrison town of Carrickfergus, IRA volunteers placed a large bomb at commercial premises in a shopping centre. A warning was issued and Army technicians later defused the device.

Saturday 2 May Loyalists stoned the funeral of Conor Maguire in North Belfast.
An arms cache, including 51 kalashnikov rifles and 20 000 rounds of ammunition, was found in a bunker near Newmarket, Co Cork.

Monday 4 May An RUC/British Army patrol was hit with an improvised grenade near their New Barnsley base in Belfast.

Tuesday 5 May IRA volunteers in Derry drove a horizontal mortar on a van up to an observation post at Rosemount barracks. The mortar smashed through the wall and blew off the roof. Several British soldiers inside were treated for shock and shrapnel wounds.
In one of several attacks in Belfast, IRA volunteers detonated a bomb beside a British Army mobile patrol.
An IPLO gunman entered a bar in North Belfast—used by Protestants—and opened fire, killing 65-year old Billy Sargeant and injuring two others.

Wednesday 6 May An improvised grenade was lobbed at a patrol in the Markets area of Belfast.

Thursday 7 May Three ASUs from south Fermanagh brigade IRA drove a 1000lb bomb on a tractor to the wall of the RUC barracks in Fivemiletown, Co Tyrone, under cover of rain and wind. It demolished a large part of the barracks at an estimated cost of £10m to the British exchequer.

Friday 8 May IRA volunteers ambushed an Army foot patrol in Belfast's Beechmount area, firing over 40 shots with automatic rifles. In the exchange a building worker was slightly injured.

Saturday 9 May An IRA improvised grenade failed to detonate properly when it hit an unmarked armoured car near RUC barracks in Linaskea.

Sunday 10 May Seven incendiaries caused an estimated £1.5m worth of damage to premises in the Gateshead Metrocentre complex on Tyneside, north-east England.

Monday 11 May IRA volunteers half wrecked a British Army armoured personnel carrier in North Belfast, lobbing an improvised grenade from only a few feet away and injuring the occupants.
Judith Ward was released on bail by the Court of Appeal.

Tuesday 12 May A British paratrooper lost both legs and others were wounded when an anti-personnel landmine exploded as their foot patrol passed a derelict building in Cappagh, Co Tyrone.
In the latest incident of Crown forces violence, British paratroopers of 3 Para sealed off Coalisland in Co Tyrone and rampaged through the town wrecking several bars and attacking locals.

Thursday 14 May IRA volunteers placed two blast incendiaries at Ross's Auction House in Belfast. Both exploded causing extensive damage. Other devices also damaged McCunes Showrooms on Shore Road, and the Ulster Bank in May Street.

Friday 15 May Belfast brigade carried out a series of hoax bomb alerts across the city causing extensive disruption. A lone volunteer lobbed a grenade at a joint Army/RUC patrol in Belfast's Short Strand injuring a British soldier.
Incendiaries caused extensive smoke damage to Frank and Parkers clothing store and a Co-op furniture store in the Yorkgate shopping complex in Belfast.
Also in Belfast, the Botanic Inn, frequented by members of Crown forces was targeted with incendiaries by IRA volunteers.

Saturday 16 May An IRA active service unit launched a horizontal mortar at an RUC mobile patrol in the Beechmount area of West Belfast. It struck an armoured vehicle but glanced off and was detonated by remote control.
IRA volunteers threw an impact grenade at an RUC mobile patrol in Thomas Street, Dungannon, wrecking the vehicle and injuring three RUC personnel.

Sunday 17 May On Sunday evening in Coalisland, Co Tyrone, a foot patrol of Kings Own Scottish Borderers started abusing some local youths, headbutting one of them, then discarding their weapons to engage in a fist fight (not an uncommon event). On receiving a good hiding they ran to the nearby RUC barracks, abandoning their weapons, including a (soon to be famous) machine gun which the RUC and Army later announced to be 'missing'.
Later that evening paratroopers were again deployed in the town and two of them attacked a young man in the street. As locals came to his aid, they were faced by 20-25 paras who attacked several people before one of them opened up with rounds hitting three people, including the owner of the Rossmore Bar who was wounded in five places.
Security minister, Michael Mates, described the Paras' activity as 'entirely justified' and in 'self-defence'.
Attacks such as these have been going on since the Paras were deployed in Tyrone in April, and have led to demands for their removal.

Tuesday 19 May IRA incendiaries caused millions of pounds worth of damage to the Argos store in Belfast's Cornmarket.

Thursday 21 May IRA volunteers placed three pounds of explosives next to an RUC officer's house in Ascot Park, Knock; where the RUC have their headquarters. Following a warning, it detonated in the early hours of the next morning.

Friday 22 May A four pound bomb was defused at the house of John Alexander Whiteside MBE OBE, former RUC Assistant Chief Constable and head of Special Branch. The IRA said that despite RUC denials, he still maintained a close working relationship with British intelligence. A warning had been issued by the IRA after placing the device.
A UVF gang fired into the house of the chairman of Divis Tenants Association in the Lower Falls, West Belfast, after failing to break down the door. He was injured in the groin and leg. This area is under constant surveillance from an Army observation post on top of Divis Tower, and is only a few hundred yards from Grosvenor Road Army barracks.

Sunday 24 May IRA volunteers placed incendiaries at commercial premises in Cookstown and Dungannon, Co Tyrone; and in a city centre bar in Belfast.

Monday 25 May In the Shantallow estate in Derry, members of the Royal Anglian Regiment attacked Paddy McGlinchey with rifle butts. Another man who intervened received the same treatment. McGlinchey's friend was told he would be shot. When Paddy's father and brother appeared they also received beatings. All five needed hospital treatment. The soldiers threatened others with cocked rifles. This was the fourth such incident in the area within three days.

Wednesday 27 May Nationalist John McGuiness (25) from Poleglass, Belfast was attacked and arrested by RUC members. At Woodburn barracks he sustained internal ear injuries, a broken nose, and severe bruising before being told he would be charged with defacing a police cell.
IRA volunteers in Belfast ambushed a leading UDA member who they said commands the Ballysillian area. They fired several shots, but he escaped uninjured into a Loyalist area.

Friday 29 May IRA volunteers placed a number of incendiaries in Belfast city centre, one of which caused extensive damage to the Index catalogue shop in the Castle Court complex.

Sunday 1 June Volunteers of the Tyrone brigade were forced to abandon a 200lb bomb in Cookstown due to a high level of security force activity. It was later defused by Army technicians.

Monday 2 June Volunteers in Tyrone left a 200lb car bomb outside the Killymoon Golf Club. It detonated after an hour warning, causing extensive damage. The IRA stated that the club had been targeted for holding a dinner dance for the RUC two weeks earlier.
In Belfast a Catholic taxi driver was hit twice by a burst of automatic gunfire when a UDA gunman attacked his car.

Sunday 7 June At 12.40am an IRA bomb detonated at the rear of the Royal Festival Hall in London. There were no casualties. This attack followed a series of unpublicised hoaxes in the city.

Monday 8 June In Belfast the Plaza Hotel in the city centre was attacked by IRA volunteers. A two pound bomb detonated on the third floor, bursting a water main and causing extensive damage. Another bomb (one pound) failed to explode in the restaurant.
Later in the day, the Europa Hotel, near the Plaza, received a hoax call disrupting the 'Miss Northern Ireland' competition.
Away from the city centre IRA volunteers threw two blast bombs at an Army mobile patrol in the New Barnsley area. Both exploded but there were no casualties.
Belfast brigade attacked a leading UVF member, placing a bomb under his car opposite Tennant Street RUC barracks. The bomb was defused.

Thursday 9 June Just after midnight volunteers in North Belfast placed a hoax bomb outside the house of a UDR man in the Antrim Road area. As RUC mobile patrols approached, an anti-personnel device exploded outside the home of an RUC-CID inspector. Five RUC personnel who were outside the vehicle sustained multiple injuries.
Incendiaries slightly damaged two of Belfast's largest shops—Primark, in Castle Place, and Littlewood's in Ann Street. In another attack, a hardware shop in North Street was badly fire-damaged in an incendiary explosion.
A series of hoax bombs in commandeered vehicles caused traffic and rail chaos all over Belfast throughout the morning.
A blast incendiary severely damaged a garage at Bridge End, East Belfast, targeted for continuing to supply fuel to the RUC.

Wednesday 10 June IRA volunteers placed blast incendiaries in the Berkeley Restaurant in North Belfast causing slight damage.
In the early morning a small IRA bomb exploded in Victoria Street, near the houses of parliament in London, just as politicians were discussing the renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. No one was injured.
Other security alerts, some deliberate hoaxes by the IRA, caused further disruption throughout the day in London.

IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Led by republican flute bands

March

for troops out

Saturday 8 August 1992

1pm Islington Town Hall,
Upper street, London N1
nearest tube Highbury and Islington

For further details contact the IFM on (071) 375 1702