

IRISH FREEDOM

Bulletin of the Irish Freedom Movement No 4 May 1988 30p



SAS gunmen shoot-to-kill
in Gibraltar

WHO SAYS THERE IS NO WAR IN IRELAND?

Three IRA volunteers were gunned down by the SAS in cold blood in Gibraltar in March. The British government says they were 'evil terrorists' who deserved all they got. We say they were victims of the shoot-to-kill policy which Britain operates against Irish freedom fighters.

TROOPS OUT NOW! SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE!

CONTENTS

Build the Irish Freedom Movement	page 2
Editorial	page 3
Diary of events	page 3
IFM in action	page 4

Debating Ireland in the unions	page 5
Time to end the Irish War	pages 6 and 7
Eye-witness account of Milltown massacre	pages 8 and 9

Join the struggle for Irish freedom

BUILD THE IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Since the last issue of *Irish Freedom*, our national office has received letters from dozens of people wanting to join the IFM, and several new groups have sprung up. In London we held a very successful dayschool on 17 April (see page 4) and have signed up so many new members that we are having to divide into geographical groups.

As well as responding to issues as they arise, the IFM organises action against PTA arrests, and solidarity with Irish political prisoners. We are especially active at the weekend: every Saturday morning you will see us, armed with leaflets, petitions and megaphones, manning stalls in shopping arcades and holding street meetings demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops.

We have branches in • Glasgow • Newcastle • Durham • Manchester • Liverpool • Sheffield • Birmingham • Coventry • Nottingham • Leicester • Oxford • Leeds • Wakefield • Bristol • Cardiff • Brighton • London • If you live in an area which has no IFM activists' group don't move; set one up yourself — it's easy.

If you have workmates, fellow students, relatives or friends who want to do something, or who just want to find out more about the war in Ireland, set up a meeting and tell us about it. You could start by organising a video showing. We can send a speaker, and provide leaflets, posters, etc. to help you build the meeting.

There is no shortage of events to organise around. With the twentieth anniversary of the start of the 'troubles' coming up, we are planning some major events after our anti-internment demonstration in early August (see back page). Join us!

Dawn Levine

JOIN THE IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT NOW!

We fight around the demands:

Troops out now!

**Self-determination for the Irish people!
Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act!**

To join us, and find out more about our activities, send £5.00 to: Irish Freedom Movement, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.
Phone (01) 729 0414.

- ☐ I want to join the Irish Freedom Movement
☐ I want to find out more about the Irish Freedom Movement
☐ I want to buy an IFM enamel badge at £1.50 plus 30p p&p

Name

Address

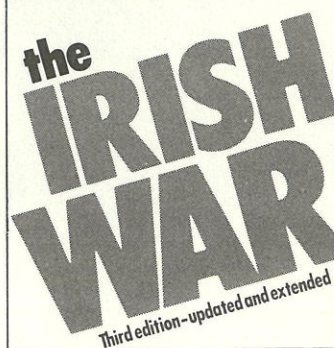
Postcode

Phone

Make cheques/postal orders payable to IFM Association and send to: IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX

WIN THE PROPAGANDA WAR!

The Irish Freedom Movement
handbook



The Irish War

Irish Freedom Movement Handbook
£4.95 (plus 85p p&p)

Now in its third edition, *The Irish War* remains the most comprehensive guide to Britain's longest military engagement. Packed full of facts and analysis, the book remains an essential guide to events in the war. *The Irish War* is a useful complement to our Irish Forums and to the Irish course at Preparing for Power (see back page).

Make cheques/postal orders payable to Junius Publications Ltd, and send to: Junius Publications Ltd, BCM JPLTD, London WC1N 3XX.

VIDEOS

The Longest War

The Irish Freedom Movement video
The Longest War is available to trade unions, Labour Parties, tenants' associations and other organisations. Made in 1983 to explain the issues behind Britain's occupation of Ireland, the film uses dramatic footage of events and on-the-spot interviews to put the case for Irish freedom.

The Funeral of Larry Marley

This video by the Sinn Fein Publicity Department tells the story of republican Larry Marley, who was shot dead by a Loyalist murder gang last year. The video traces the history of republican funerals in Northern Ireland and reveals the concerted attempts by the RUC, acting under British orders, to terrorise republican funerals and intimidate nationalist opponents of British rule.

To arrange a video showing, contact *Dawn Levine* on (01) 729 0414

GIVE GENEROUSLY!

As you will see after reading this issue of *Irish Freedom*, we have an enormous number of events planned for the near future. We need money and we need it now! Please make out cheques/postal orders to IFM Association and send to: IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.

BRITISH MURDERERS OUT OF IRELAND

When we have 'trial by television', declared Margaret Thatcher, in response to a documentary which suggested that the SAS shot dead three IRA members in cold blood in Gibraltar, 'freedom dies'. What she meant, was that if the media told the truth about British war crimes, her government's freedom to crush the Irish people's fight for self-determination would be impaired.

Thatcher's breast-beating about the SAS being put on trial is a sick joke. The SAS acted as judge, jury and executioner in shooting unarmed IRA members Mairead Farrell, Dan McCann and Sean Savage at point-blank range. And they did so with the full support of British law. There will not even be an inquiry, only an inquest, to cover up how the killings happened.

Thatcher's attack on the IBA for using television to put the Crown forces on trial was difficult to credit. 'Trial by television' is a much more fitting description of the way the British media puts Irish republicans in the dock.

Last month's media reports on the deaths of two British soldiers who threatened an IRA funeral in Andersonstown was a good example. There was no attempt to put the killings in the context of the Loyalist gun and grenade attack on the funeral of the Gibraltar Three, only days earlier. Instead, the media presented what happened as the actions of a crazed 'mob', provided the police with footage and photographs of everybody in the area at the time, and set people up for prosecution by printing their names in the papers.

But no matter how the British media distort what is happening in Ireland, recent events have exposed a truth which the Tories cannot afford to have broadcast. The British state is at war in Ireland and operates a shoot-to-kill policy against those who oppose its right to rule there. No amount of media whitewash can cover up this fact. Nor can it cover up the burning antagonism which thousands of Irish nationalists feel towards the British occupation of their country — a fury which burst into the open during the funeral in Andersonstown.

This resistance from Irish nationalists terrifies the British authorities. Thousands of nationalists trapped within the colonial hell-hole of Northern Ireland do not recognise the sovereignty of the British state, nor do they respect its laws.

The Irish Freedom Movement has always emphasised that the British working class has far more in common with the nationalist people of Andersonstown than it could ever have with the British establishment. The state whose authority is being challenged in Ireland is the same body which leads the Tory offensive against our class in Britain.

It is one of the great tragedies of British working class politics, that a force which could be among our best allies, the Irish liberation movement, is widely seen as our worst enemy. While this remains the case, the fury of Irish nationalists will be a big, but containable, problem for our rulers.

Our job is to change this state of affairs, by exposing all the media and government hypocrisy and by making state violence against Irish nationalists a cause of fury among the ordinary people of British cities. This means building a movement which takes sides with Irish nationalists against the British state and campaigns for the immediate withdrawal of British troops and self-determination for the Irish people. There has never been a more important time to take sides in the Irish War.

This issue of Irish Freedom contains some important analytical articles, as well as an eye-witness account of the attack by Loyalist Michael Stone on the Milltown funeral of the Gibraltar Three. There is more coverage of what the IFM has been doing and what we have planned for the future. We invite our readers to contribute letters or articles about their experiences or about issues raised in the bulletin. Write to: Charles Longford, IFM, BM IFM, LONDON WC1N 3XX.

IFM DIARY

7 May: March with the IFM on the Edinburgh Republican Bands Alliance Demonstration. Assemble 10.30am, King Stables Road

8 May: The IFM will be holding a stall at the Wolfe Tone Society's James Connolly/Bobby Sands Commemoration, Sunday 8 May, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

14 May: Join the IFM contingent on the Hunger-strike Commemoration march and rally. Assemble 12 noon, Sparkhill Park, Stratford Road, Birmingham. (An IFM coach will be leaving from London at 9.30am from York Way, beside King's Cross Station)

25 May: First in the series of IFM Forums in London: *The IRA*

8 June: Second Irish Forum: *Women at war*

22 June: Third Irish Forum: *The war South of the Border*

2 July: Hunger-strike Commemoration Demonstration in north London

6 July: Fourth Irish Forum: *1968-1988: 20 years of Irish resistance*

22 July: Preparing for Power begins

6 August: IFM Anti-internment Demonstration

London IFM activists meet every Wednesday evening to discuss and plan their work. For details, ring 729 0414 or write to: Charles Longford, IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.



IFM IN ACTION

We are just four months into 1988, and the Irish War has never been out of the news. As Irish issues have come to occupy the centre stage of British politics, the building of a solidarity movement has never been more urgent, and the opportunities to do so have never been better. Our work so far this year is proof of this.

The year started with the annual Bloody Sunday demonstration on 30 January, when more than 3000 marched through north London. Our 1100-strong contingent, led by the Crossmaglen Patriots flute band from Wishaw in Scotland was noisy, lively and well-organised.



On 7 February a large contingent from West Yorkshire IFM joined the annual Frank Stagg commemoration picket at Wakefield prison.

In late February we started a series of four fortnightly *Forums* in London, with in-depth discussions on different aspects of the Irish War. We sold nearly 200 tickets for the series. The only complaint people had afterwards was that there were not enough sessions. We are organising a new set, starting in May.

After the Gibraltar executions on 6 March, we organised a public meeting at Friends House in London on Friday 11 March. Mick Hume, the editor of *the next step* and author of our handbook *The Irish War*, addressed more than 200 people, exposing the lies the government put out after the killings. That Saturday, IFM activists everywhere took to the streets and organised street meetings to show opposition to the killings in Gibraltar.

On Sunday 13 March, IFM activists from around the country joined the Irish Prisoners Of War Campaign's International Women's Day picket of Durham Prison, in solidarity with prisoners of war Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer.

In trade unions, colleges and universities IFM supporters went on the offensive by raising motions condemning the Gibraltar executions. We had some resounding successes and some failures:

At University College London, the motion was initially passed, but after the *Sun* ran a scare story, the right wing in the college went on the offensive. They went round the bars and mobilised 600 students to overthrow the motion. We might have lost the vote, but the debate we had attracted a new pool of people to involve in solidarity work;

At the Polytechnic of North London the motion was also passed after prolonged debate. Our supporters had to call a special general meeting which attracted close to 200 students;

In Hammersmith Nalco the passing of the motion caused an uproar which hit the headlines in the national press. The upshot of the excellent work done by our supporters was a 600-strong public meeting in the face of an hysterical hate campaign by the Tory press;

On Sunday 17 April the London IFM held a highly successful dayschool at the Polytechnic of North London. Over 300 people attended. We nearly had a revolt on our hands as many people attending the workshops refused to stop talking when the time was up! Mick Hume's opening speech is reproduced on pages 6 and 7.

In addition to these events, we have held 65 video showings. In many cases, like in Durham, Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Nottingham, the Larry Marley video was used as an introduction to public meetings. Video showings in workplaces like Hackney council and some London hospitals have attracted large audiences. Public meetings in Glasgow, Newcastle, Brighton and Bristol have been successful in attracting a new audience.

All these activities have attracted lots of new people to the cause of Irish freedom. Our street activities have highlighted how much more prepared ordinary people are to stop and talk about Ireland. We have signed up many new IFM members. But we have a long way to go.

Dennis Ryan

IFM FORUMS

The London IFM is organising a series of fortnightly public meetings to discuss contemporary issues that have a bearing on the struggle for freedom in Ireland.

Wednesday 25 May: *The IRA* introduced by *Joe Watson*.

Wednesday 8 June: *Women at war* introduced by *Dawn Levine*.

Wednesday 22 June: *The war South of the Border* introduced by *Mark Reilly*.

Wednesday 6 July: *1968 to 1988: 20 years of Irish resistance* introduced by *Phil Murphy*.

They will all start at 7.30pm in Room A506, Main Building, at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street (off Aldwych), London WC2. (Nearest tubes: Holborn or Temple). Entrance £1/50p unwaged, or £3/£1.50p for all four.

DEBATING IRELAND IN THE UNIONS

Hammersmith Nalgo president
John Fitzpatrick recounts the left's
recent success in raising the Irish
War in his union branch

For many years my union branch, composed mainly of white-collar council workers, has had a formal policy recognising the right of the Irish people to self-determination, and calling for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Recent events in the Irish War, in Gibraltar and at Belfast funerals, brought this policy under considerable pressure, and involved hundreds of trade unionists in a heated debate over the issues involved.

The first move came on 10 March when two members brought an emergency motion to a branch meeting, to condemn the killings four days earlier of the three republicans in Gibraltar, to send a message of support and sympathy to their relatives and friends, and to pay the costs of inviting a republican speaker from the Six Counties.

There was a furious debate. One speaker declared that he had relatives in the British Army who were currently fighting the IRA; another replied that members of his family had been killed by the British Army.

The motion was passed by 50 votes to 19 with 16 abstentions.

As president of the branch I promptly sent a letter of solidarity. That was when the backlash started. Over the days which followed, the republican deaths in Milltown cemetery and the deaths of the British soldiers in Andersonstown gave it added momentum. On 23 March a specially requisitioned branch meeting debated the motion. This time the right wing in the branch had mobilised and the meeting was packed and tense. The debate was even better than the first, and speaker after speaker defended the original action.

Those against the motion claimed that we should condemn all violence, and that the IRA were 'murdering terrorists'. I defended the Irish freedom fighters and pointed out that trade unionists had 'more in common with those fighting the British

state than with those who were running it'. This time the motion failed by 122 votes to 80, with 11 abstentions, but there was no demoralisation or dismay on the left. We knew that we had won the arguments and were delighted to have carried as many as 80 fellow trade unionists with us.

It was at this point that the *Sun*, the *Daily Mail* and the local gutter press got hold of the story, denouncing the 'lefties who back the IRA', and me in particular for the letter of solidarity. The only person who gave in to any of this was John Daly, the Nalgo general secretary, who issued a statement condemning the letter and threatening disciplinary action.

Meanwhile the debate spread to the wider trade union movement in west London, as the Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Council itself denounced the Gibraltar killings, sent its own letters of sympathy to the families and held a public meeting in Hammersmith town hall on 14 April. The meeting attracted over six hundred people to listen to Mitchel McLaughlin of Sinn Féin, Tony Benn MP, Liz Curtis of Information on Ireland, and myself speaking for the Irish Freedom Movement.

The joint shop stewards' committee at Charing Cross hospital backed the meeting, as did the Housing Associations branch of Nalgo.

Before the meeting local Tory councillors continued to whip up their supporters in Hammersmith Nalgo by asking the council to condemn Nalgo's motion and ban Sinn Féin from the town hall. The Labour council, too terrified to debate the issue with the Tories, dissociated itself from Nalgo's stand, and said it would happily ban Sinn Féin as soon as Thatcher did, but not before.

Emboldened by their earlier success and all the media attention, the right wing in Hammersmith Nalgo called a further meeting for 19 April. They now demanded

that a public retraction of the letter be issued and that branch policy on Ireland be rescinded.

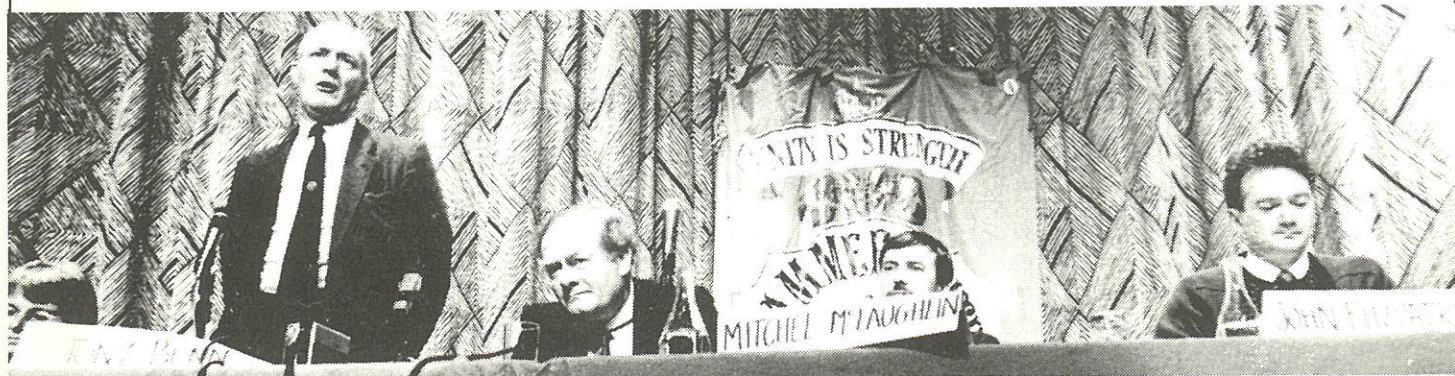
I explained how the Irish people were denied their democratic rights by partition and British force, and insisted on the importance of campaigning for *immediate* withdrawal because we wanted an open acknowledgement that Britain had no right to be in Ireland at all. Another left activist denounced the hypocrisy of those who claimed to be in favour of non-violence, but 'washed their hands' of responsibility for what British troops were doing in the Six Counties. This time the vote was 87 to 86 on a ballot in favour of our amendment, after three recounts had produced a tie.

We know that we have a long way to go to convince all 1700 members of the branch, but winning and holding more than 80 people is a good start.

For the first time in years we have drawn hundreds of members into a full discussion on Ireland.

The left has fought together on the issue with great effectiveness. Only two Socialist Workers Party members spoilt things with a bit of petty sectarianism. When our branch secretary asked the branch executive committee to express their support for branch officers, the SWP moved an amendment blaming the officers for the backlash and accusing them of not conducting an open debate with the membership. The right wing on the executive lined up behind the SWP, but their attempt at sabotage was defeated by the left, by 15 votes to eight.

The battle is by no means over. The right wing is preparing a motion of no confidence in the branch officers. We are ready for them. We know their arguments are incoherent and dishonest. We have learned that if you stand your ground and put forward your politics boldly and openly it is possible to win wide support.



TIME TO END THE IRISH WAR

On Sunday 17 April the London Irish Freedom Movement held its 'Time to end the Irish War' dayschool. Here we reprint extracts from Mick Hume's opening plenary speech on British strategy

The conflict in Ireland is the longest war which the British Army has fought this century. It is also the longest-ever confrontation in the 700-year struggle between the British Crown and the Irish people. Since "the troubles" began in 1969, seven British governments — three Labour and four Tory — have pursued various strategies which were supposed to end it.

On the military/legal battlefield, British governments have used everything short of Cruise missiles in the attempt to defeat their Irish enemies. In the political arena, British governments have supported one sham "democratic" institution after another in an effort to stabilise the occupied Six Counties.

Today we can see these two strands of British strategy being pursued alongside each other again.

The shootings in Gibraltar and the dismissal of the Birmingham Six case are followed by another round of political initiatives and talks with the Unionists and the moderate nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party. Yet for all of these British twists and turns and tactical manoeuvres, the war continues.

There are two basic facts about the Irish War which ensure that it continues, and which dictate the pattern of British strategy. First, British imperialism cannot win. And second, it cannot afford to lose.

One week last month, anybody with a television set will have seen a dramatic display of the reason why the British authorities cannot win the Irish War. You will have seen the republican people of West Belfast chase a well-armed Loyalist murderer out of Milltown cemetery, and then disarm two British soldiers who

threatened another funeral three days later. Those people are the rock on which every British attempt to win the war is dashed to pieces. Their bitter resistance to British rule, and driving aspiration for freedom, ensures that no British government can impose its will in Ireland.

Against opposition of this sort, the usual tactics which the Tories have used to defeat their mainstream opponents at home are useless.

The British ruling class is paying the price for its past strategy of integrating Ireland into the "United Kingdom". The Six Counties come within the direct jurisdiction of the British state. This means that the war in the North of Ireland is unlike any other colonial struggle. It threatens not just the government's international prestige, but its national power base — the British state. The guns of the IRA are pointed straight at the heart of the British Empire. As Harold Wilson once said, the war is not in Britain's back-yard, it is in the front room. And as Margaret Thatcher discovered at 3am one October morning in 1984, sometimes it even enters the hotel bathrooms of the British war cabinet.

To withdraw from Ireland and dismantle the state would do irreparable damage to the power of the British establishment throughout the "UK".

Because the British state is not divisible; you cannot destroy one part of it and expect the rest to remain intact. Suppose the striking miners had driven the police out of Yorkshire and seceded from the state. Does anybody imagine that the Tory government would have been able to ignore this defeat for the state and carry on lording it over the rest of us regardless? It would have caused an unprecedented political crisis. And the same goes for a defeat in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland, which are ruled by the same state as the rest of the "UK". It would strike a mortal blow against the British establishment.

The British authorities understand that they cannot afford to have their state

defeated and dismantled in Ireland. That is why they sent the troops there in 1969. There is a popular misconception that the troops went in to separate warring religious communities. In fact the Loyalist mob which attacked the nationalist Bogside district of Derry in August 1969 was led by the Royal Ulster Constabulary — the local armed wing of the state machine. The RUC was defeated by the Bogsiders, nationalists elsewhere rose up in support, and the Unionist regime at Stormont was in danger of losing control. Thus the Labour government was faced, not with a sectarian conflict, but with the impending collapse of British state authority in Ireland under the impact of nationalist resistance. That was why the troops went in, and that is why they remain there still.

The British government cannot win the Irish War, but neither can it afford to lose. So what can it do? The answer has become embodied in a strategy known as *containment* — a combination of military and political measures designed to hold the conflict down at what one British minister called "an acceptable level of violence". This involves fighting the campaign on three fronts — Northern Ireland, Southern Ireland and Britain itself.

Within the war zones of the North, the British seek to limit the effectiveness of the republican movement through a hardline campaign of coercion. And in the rest of Ireland and in Britain, the imperial authorities seek to stem any support for the republican struggle by political manoeuvres designed to portray the IRA as isolated trouble-makers and Britain as an even-handed peace-maker. In other words, the containment strategy means waging a dirty little war on one front while trying to disguise it on the other two.

Within the core republican areas of the North, the Tories have honed their military strategy to deal with the more efficient IRA of today.

This has meant a higher profile for the SAS. The Royal Ulster Constabulary now has its own elite execution squads. The result has been an increased emphasis on shooting-to-kill in the last few years, beginning with the six killings in Armagh in 1982 which have since been at the centre of the Stalker affair.

The latest shoot-to-kill campaign differs from earlier ones in that it is directed more professionally against known republicans.

This ruthless approach has brought some military success for the British state. But it also has negative political ramifications. The experience of up-front British oppression over recent years has hardened republican support in committed nationalist areas. The cohering of public support for the IRA brings increased political pressure to bear on the British state within the Six Counties. It also embarrasses the British authorities outside of the North,

suggesting to more people in Ireland, Britain and around the world that "the troubles" are a conflict between a colonial power and a popular liberation movement.

To combat this threat to containment, the Tories have brought the other strand of their strategy into play — the "political initiatives" designed to re-isolate the republicans and restore Britain's credentials as a force for democracy.

One part of this Tory political ploy is the continuation of the criminalisation campaign begun by the last Labour government, branding republicans as gangsters, terrorists and all-round men of evil to discredit their struggle as a criminal conspiracy. The other side of it is the pretence of searching for a "political solution", to give the impression that the British government is doing its best to bring peace. To this end the Tories set up the Ulster Assembly in 1982 and signed the Anglo-Irish agreement with Dublin in 1985. Their current "talks about talks" with the constitutional parties in the North have the same diversionary aim.

The problem the British authorities face, however, is that these paper political initiatives cannot do away with the reality of oppression.

The most successful British political initiative was partition in 1921. It divided the republican movement, created the impression of a democratic settlement, and effectively ended large-scale resistance to British rule for almost 50 years. Contrast this to the criminalisation policy of the seventies.

In 1976 the crackdown which accompanied the Labour government's withdrawal of political status for republican prisoners did severe damage to the resistance movement. Gerry Adams later admitted that this was the closest Britain has come to defeating the IRA. Yet just five years later, the hunger-strikes against criminalisation sparked an explosion of

public support for the IRA and the beginning of republican electoral success. In 1985 the Tories tried to put the lid back on by promising reforms under the Anglo-Irish agreement, which helped to undermine republican support. Only two and a half years later, according to polls, 81 per cent of Northern nationalists are disenchanting with the deal and say that it has made no difference to their experience of British rule.

As each of the Tories' political initiatives is exhausted, the credibility of Britain's self-styled image as a force for progress sinks lower among nationalists. It should also be harder today for the Tories to pose as neutral umpires refereeing local conflicts between the nationalists, the Loyalists and Dublin. Events over the past 19 years have shown how British imperialism is the most active player in the conflict, pulling together the Loyalist community and the Southern state in a combined effort against the Northern nationalists.

It is now clear that the Loyalists are British agents, and not an independent community.

British claims that they would correct the anti-Catholic discrimination of the old Stormont regime have been fully exposed. Protestants continue to have privileged access to jobs, housing and power in Northern Ireland. In return, the Loyalist militias of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment have become the frontline of the imperialist British forces in many parts of the Six Counties. And the Loyalist paramilitaries launch sectarian attacks, like the recent murderous assault on the republican funeral in Belfast.

It's a similar story with the Southern Irish state. For more than 60 years Dublin governments have tried to pretend that they are independent from Britain. Yet

today it is clear that the Republic is still a British satellite, operating under London's influence as part of the British war machine. In 1969 the Dublin government sent troops to the Border and said it would protect Northern nationalists. Today, under the security arrangements of the Anglo-Irish agreement, the pretence is over. The thousands of Irish troops patrolling the Border work hand-in-glove with the British occupation forces against republicans.

The contradiction about British strategy which we have to grapple with is this: at a time when all objective factors suggest that the truth about the Irish War should be clear, many people in Britain and elsewhere in Ireland are as confused as ever about events in the North. This is due to purely subjective factors; the lack of a political movement in Britain — and indeed in the South of Ireland — that can hammer home the truth about the Irish War and the reasons why ordinary people should support the struggle for Irish self-determination.

Building such a movement in Britain is the task to which the Irish Freedom Movement is committed.

The lesson of surveying British strategy should now be clear. British imperialism is not in the position of strength in Ireland which the over-confident pronouncements of Tory ministers might suggest. It is trapped in a cycle of oppression and resistance, fighting a rearguard action to save its skin. Its containment strategy is at full stretch. It is no nearer to defeating the nationalists than it was 19 years ago, and its task of disguising the truth about the Irish War is becoming harder. The one thing in Britain's favour is the lack of active opposition in Britain and the South. Our job is to create a movement for Irish freedom that can break through the political wall which the British state has constructed to contain the Irish War.



DEATH AND DEFIANCE

Joan Phillips and Phil Murphy were in Milltown cemetery on the Wednesday when Loyalist Michael Stone made his murderous attack on mourners at the funeral of the three IRA volunteers shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar

It was twenty past one and many mourners had already left the cemetery. The only hitch in a day when everything had gone better than anybody might have expected was a delay because the single grave was not deep enough to hold the three coffins. IRA volunteer Dan McCann was about to be laid to rest when the silence was shattered. You could almost hear the hearts stop beating as the first grenade exploded, sending a pall of black smoke into the cold air above the cemetery. The throngs of mourners froze for a moment, as the screams began to echo around the gravestones.

In that first split second before their minds got control of their senses, many people standing away from the carnage mistook the explosion for an IRA salute to the fallen volunteers. Most had not even heard the two gunshots which rang out seconds earlier. But when the second grenade went off, and then a third, and a fourth, everybody knew, no matter where they were standing, that somebody was out to kill them. After the second grenade landed, everybody dived for cover.

From where we stood and scanned the cemetery you could not see what was causing the explosions. It could have been a mortar attack from the expanse of waste land adjacent to the graveyard, or the cemetery could have been mined. There were desperate shouts of 'get down, stay down' from Sinn Fein stewards, clashing with cries for help from the injured, and terrified screams from all around us.

At this stage we did not know how many people had been injured, or whether any had been killed. But the horror of what happened was etched on the faces of the men, women and children who came stumbling past with tears streaming down their faces. Long after the initial blasts little children were still crouching, their faces pinched and hands clenched with fear, behind the gravestones.

By now all eyes were fastened on the figure of a man running towards the perimeter of the cemetery clutching a gun, with hundreds of young men closing in on him from all directions. You could feel the mood of the mourners change within minutes from one of shock and bewilderment to outrage and anger. From across the cemetery cries of 'get the bastard' swelled into a chorus of 'kill him, kill him'.



MOURNERS RUN FOR COVER AS ANOTHER GRENADE GOES OFF

Nobody standing amid the devastation the gunman had wreaked, not even pressmen, could have disagreed with this sentiment.

Moving down the sloping cemetery towards the motorway, a good way behind the young men leading the chase, it was like watching a slow motion video. The anonymous intruder was making halting progress towards the path leading out of the cemetery, with an almost casual disregard for his pursuers. As he walked and ran he turned and lobbed more grenades, reloaded his gun and opened fire indiscriminately, occasionally taunting the youth behind him.

Later, people from the media said they found it hard to comprehend the courage of those young men who risked their lives on that half-mile chase through the cemetery. They forgot that those same people have spent every day and every year of their lives defying the armed might of the British state in the struggle for Irish freedom. They were not going to be cowed by a lone Loyalist gunman who came to defile their dead and send more of the living to the grave.

The pockets of his blue anorak were stuffed with grenades, guns and ammunition. He had more grenades stashed at the corner of the fence, at the entrance to the path leading to the motorway. He had been told that there would be no Army or police presence at the funeral. He knew that he was armed to the teeth against unarmed and defenceless mourners. He reckoned that nobody would have the nerve to give chase. That was his mistake.

Bullets and grenades were never going to be enough to save him. Three young men were killed trying to stop him, and others were injured running into exploding grenades as they closed in on their quarry. But none of this deterred the rest. Young boys blockaded the motorway to prevent him hijacking a vehicle, while the rest pursued him along the M1. His flight ended when his gun jammed and people jumped him. A huge cheer went up, and in the cemetery crowds of youth began chanting 'I-I-IRA'. After being given a going-over, the man was bundled into a car and driven off, before being taken into custody when the drivers were challenged at a police road-block.

The hundreds of youths who had joined the chase were coming back. Some were saying 'We stifled him,' others said 'We danced on his head.' The faces of some of the younger boys were streaked with tears, sweat and dirt. They had caught their man, but they had seen their friends cut down in front of their eyes. Suddenly panic surged through the crowd, as everybody started running back up the cemetery, weaving their way through the grave-stones. It was a false alarm, the police were nowhere to be seen.

Back near the republican plot, 20 yards from where the first grenade landed, people were still dazed. Many of the injured had already been taken to hospital in funeral cars, taxis and private cars. Ambulances were just arriving. This part of the cemetery resembled a battlefield; the ground between the graves had turned to mud; there were shallow blackened craters where the grenades had landed; young boys bleeding from shrapnel wounds in the legs, stomach and back waited patiently to be attended to; some were in a state of hysteria, shaking uncontrollably, not knowing where they were or what had happened.

One thing was clear to everybody — whoever the attacker was, he had acted on a tip-off. It was the first republican funeral in five years which had not been hemmed in and harassed by the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British Army. Nobody would have believed it if you had told them the night before, when soldiers and police were swarming outside the houses of the three dead volunteers, that there would be no presence at the funerals the following day. The last thing we expected as we drove into Belfast from Derry that morning, past Army roadblocks and RUC check-points, was that we would not see



A YOUNG WOMAN
HIT IN THE
BACK BY SHRAPNEL

one single military uniform throughout the four-hour journey to Milltown cemetery. The two British Army helicopters overhead were all they sent. It had been a set-up, people said, it was as simple as that.

If the press thought that Wednesday's massacre would frighten people away from Thursday's funeral of Kevin McCracken, shot dead by the British Army on Monday, they were wrong. The spirit of defiance which has sustained the nationalist community through nearly 19 years of British bloodshed and violence was on display the next day. Mourners turned out in their thousands to pay tribute to the fallen IRA volunteer. The mood was sombre but determined as the funeral cortege snaked its way from the McCracken home in Norglen Parade, Turf Lodge, down the winding route to Milltown cemetery.

Sinn Fein stewards were everywhere, searching pressmen and scouring the streets. They took up positions all around the cemetery, and told people to be vigilant. Nobody needed telling. As the ceremony started the crowds of mourners fidgeted, looking over their shoulders towards the motorway. The atmosphere was tense. Everybody stayed to the end this time, but everybody was glad to leave the cemetery gates behind them. But they'd be back — they had another republican funeral to go to on Saturday — and they wouldn't ever forget what happened on Wednesday.

That morning as we drove into Turf Lodge eight-year old Deirdre had asked 'When will they take the black flags down daddy?' 'Good question,' came the reply. 'The way things are going they'll be up permanently.' They'll come down for good when the red, white and blue flag is permanently removed from Irish soil.

A TALE OF TWO FUNERALS

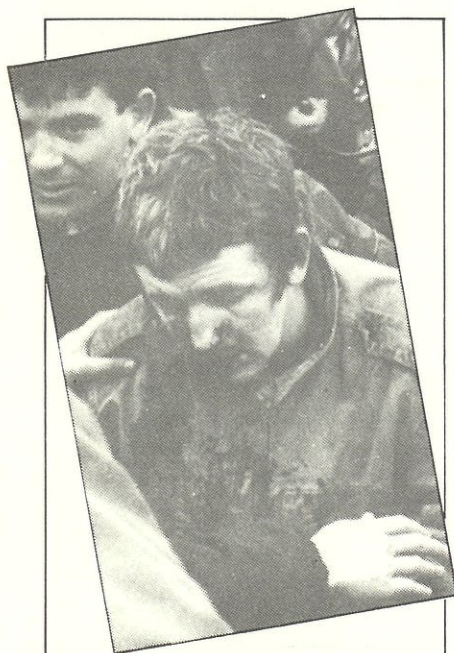
'I am not a violent man. But when I saw a group of Sinn Fein sympathisers chasing the man responsible for this attack, I hoped they would catch him. I am not proud of those feelings.' Peter Bond has been covering events in Northern Ireland for the *Sun* for 15 years. Like most of his fellow pressmen he has concocted most of his stories in snug hotel bars, away from the war-torn streets of Andersonstown and Turf Lodge, Bogside and Creggan.

You can hear their plummy voices, as we did last week, telling stories about how they managed to grab the claret from the dinner table before they were evacuated from their hotel after a bomb scare. Last Wednesday's massacre at Milltown cemetery was the nearest they

have come to losing their lives. And many more than Peter Bond had cause to swallow their pride and salute the courage of the republicans who ran after Michael Stone.

When two armed plain clothes soldiers drove their car at the funeral on Saturday of one of the republicans killed chasing after Stone it was back to bigotry as usual for the British press corps. The republican heroes of Wednesday became the murdering mob of Saturday. There is nothing like a grenade attack in a graveyard to clear the mind, and nothing like another bottle of claret to put the Irish War back into British focus.

Joan Phillips



SHOCKED AND BLEEDING

PREPARING FOR POWER



Revolutionary Communist Party
summer school

Friday 22 to Friday 29 July
Central London

For some years the Irish Freedom Movement has organised a special five-session course on the Irish War during Preparing for Power, the Revolutionary Communist Party's annual summer school. Phil Murphy, this year's course convenor, explained to *Irish Freedom* what the course aimed to achieve:

'The course is designed to go beyond the superficial way in which the Irish War is often discussed in the British media or by the British establishment. The Irish course at Preparing for Power is always a popular one. Many of the people who attend are activists, but even more are new to Irish politics. We encourage questions and debate, and this benefits everyone.'

The Irish sessions will be held in the early afternoon, starting on Sunday 24 July. This year's course includes the following sessions:

- The meaning of partition
- Loyalism
- The peculiarities of the South
- The IRA
- The British working class and Ireland

These are not the only sessions on Ireland at this year's Preparing for Power. There are speakers coming over from Derry who will lead workshops on the Republican Congress, the trade union movement in the North, and on Irish culture. If you want to win the arguments on Ireland, then Preparing for Power is where you should be during the last week in July.

REGISTER NOW!

It's worthwhile booking early for **Preparing for Power '88**. The quicker you order your tickets, the less you have to pay. The scale of ticket prices is as follows.

	Before 1 June	After 1 June	
Waged	£22	£25	☐ I need transport
Unwaged	£14	£16	☐ I need accommodation
Weekend only	£13	£15	☐ I need creche facilities
Irish Course Only	£ 9	£10	☐ Number of children coming
			☐ ☐ ☐ Ages of children

Please send me tickets for the full week/weekend/Irish course at **Preparing for Power** priced at £ each

Name

Address

.....

Postcode Telephone

Preparing for Power, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX.

FREE IRISH PRISONERS OF WAR!

IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT ANNUAL ANTI-INTERMENT DEMONSTRATION

**Saturday 6 August
Central London**

On 9 August 1971, the British authorities introduced internment without trial in Northern Ireland. This marked a new high-point in the repressive campaign which Britain had been running since the troops went back on to Irish streets in 1969.

Today there are still 1000 Irish men and women imprisoned in inhuman conditions. Their only crime was to fight for the freedom of their nation from British imperialism. We want them out. On 6 August 1988 the Irish Freedom Movement is marching in London to mark the seventeenth anniversary of internment, demanding 'Troops out of Ireland! Prisoners out of jail!'

Last year over 100 councillors sponsored the march; 20 trade union branches passed motions supporting the demonstration; and six Labour MPs gave support. This year we aim to double our sponsors. If you are in a trade union, a Labour Party ward, a tenants' association or a students' union, raise the motion below at your next meeting, and invite a speaker from the IFM.

This union notes:

- 1 The continued military occupation of Northern Ireland by a force of nearly 30 000 — including soldiers, paramilitary police, the SAS and auxiliaries.
- 2 The deaths of more than 2500 people since the troops went in 19 years ago.
- 3 That 9 August 1988 marks the seventeenth anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial in Northern Ireland in 1971, when troops dragged hundreds of Irish nationalists into concentration camps.

This union believes:

- 1 That today Britain uses a different form of internment in Ireland — imprisonment on remand — using no-jury courts, behind the smoke-screen of political initiatives like the Anglo-Irish agreement.
- 2 That there is a war going on in Ireland as a

result of Britain's denial of political independence to Ireland as a whole.

- 3 That Britain can play no progressive role in Ireland.
- 4 That the only way to bring peace in Ireland is to support the right of national self-determination for the Irish people and to campaign for the immediate withdrawal of British troops.

This union resolves:

- 1 To campaign for 'Troops Out Now' and 'Self-determination for the Irish People'.
- 2 To sponsor the anti-internment demonstration in London on 6 August 1988 calling for 'Troops Out Now' and 'Irish Prisoners Out of Jail'.
- 3 To donate £..... to the costs of the demonstration.
- 4 To affiliate to the Irish Freedom Movement.

For more details and for information about transport from around the country, phone (01) 729 0414.