

IRISH FREEDOM

Bulletin of the Irish Freedom Movement

No 5

August 1988

50p

Pandora Anderson

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with the
Holloway
Road 30

8 • 1988
ELAND
YEARS OF
SISTANCE



5 0016
ISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT

1968 • 1988
IRELAND
20 YEARS OF
RESISTANCE



5 0016
ISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT



More than
3000 people
marched on
the IFM anti-
internment
demonstration
on Saturday
6 August—
see pages
4, 5 and 6

DEFEND THE HOLLOWAY ROAD 30!—SEE BACK PAGE

CONTENTS

Build the Irish Freedom Movement page 2
Editorial page 3
Anti-internment demonstration pages 4, 5 and 6
Letters pages 7 and 8

Why does Britain stay in Ireland? ... pages 9, 10 and 11
Reviews page 12
War Diary page 13
Time to take sides pages 14 and 15

BUILD THE IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT

THE Irish Freedom Movement is on the march. The success of this year's anti-internment demonstration (see pages 4, 5 and 6 for reports and photographs) was the result of months of hard work by IFM activists. The thousands of posters we put up and leaflets we distributed, the stalls and street meetings we organised in shopping centres, all these paid off on Saturday 6 August in our best demonstration yet.

We certainly got our message across on the anti-internment march, which received extensive media coverage, but we still have a long way to go before we become a real force in British politics. That's why our work has not ended now that the march is behind us. In fact, it is only beginning. As we stated in the last issue of *Irish Freedom*, we want to make the IFM a household name before the year is out, and that means establishing local activist groups throughout the country.

The anti-internment demonstration was just the start of a year of action commemorating 20 years of Irish resistance to British rule. If you want to find out more about the war in Ireland or want to do something to get British troops out of Ireland then get in touch: we have branches in Glasgow ★ Newcastle ★ Durham ★ Manchester ★ Liverpool ★ Sheffield ★ Birmingham ★ Coventry ★ Nottingham ★ Leicester ★ Oxford ★ Leeds ★ Wakefield ★ Bristol ★ Cardiff ★ Brighton ★ London.

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 (£25.00 for organisations or trade union branches) 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

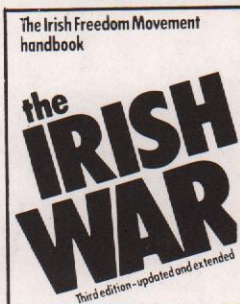
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WIN THE PROPAGANDA WAR



The Irish War
Irish Freedom
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£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.

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.

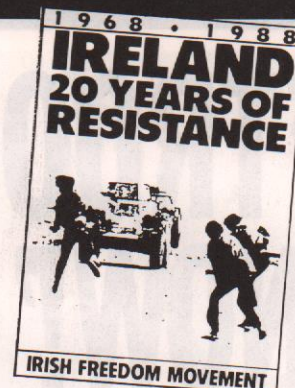
The Funeral of Larry Marley
This video by the Sinn Féin Publicity Department tells the story of republican Larry Marley, who was shot dead by a Loyalist murder gang last year. The video traces the history of republican funerals in Northern Ireland and reveals the concerted attempts by the RUC, acting 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



£6 plus 60p postage and packing.
Make cheques payable to IFM Association and send to IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX. Discount for bulk orders on request. Phone Dawn on (01) 729 0414.

1968-1988: TWENTY YEARS OF IRISH RESISTANCE



OF all the radical movements and mass protests which swept the Western world in 1968, only one is still an important factor in politics today: the struggle to achieve justice for the nationalist community in the North of Ireland.

The unrest in Ireland in 1968 is not remembered as a unique moment which passed long ago. It is noted as the beginning of a struggle which is still the most pressing issue in British politics in 1988. This is why the twentieth anniversary of the latest phase of the Irish War has such importance for the Irish Freedom Movement.

The twentieth anniversary of the start of the Irish War is a time for us to reflect on the suffering which British imperialism has inflicted on the nationalist community. But it is also a moment for us to redouble our efforts in support of those struggling to avenge the crimes of the past, by campaigning for a future free from the evils of oppression and colonial occupation.

The past 20 years have been a period of clarification. The experience of the civil rights movement convinced many nationalists that there was no peaceful or gradualist way to achieve their democratic rights. The experience of being batoned off the streets or being shot down in cold blood in January 1972 in Derry destroyed any hopes for a peaceful just solution. The re-emergence of the IRA, which had hardly existed in 1968, expressed the sad reality that Catholic nationalists could only achieve justice by destroying the sectarian state itself, and the end of British domination over Ireland. That lesson remains as relevant today as it was 20 years ago.

The resilience of the nationalist community through the past 20 years should be a source of inspiration to us all. Instead, the British labour movement has largely treated nationalists with chauvinist contempt. While the experience of Irish nationalists has made them more hostile to the British state and its initiatives over the years, the British left (which emerged in 1968) has done the opposite. It has become increasingly hostile to the Irish liberation movement and more and more impotent in the face of government attacks at home. (The latest initiative of the left, the 'Time to Go' charter, is analysed in detail on pages 14 and 15.)

Yet there is no more important issue for us to take up than the demand for Irish self-determination. It is a basic democratic right which anyone with the slightest sense of political justice should support. But there is another reason why those who want to further the cause of the British working class should prioritise the campaign for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

The struggle for Irish unity and freedom strikes at the heart

of the British state (see pages 9, 10 and 11). It is the most forceful challenge to the ruling class today. The fear which the Irish War instils in the British establishment has even gripped the left, making it wary of siding with the liberation movement. Yet our reaction should be the opposite. A liberation struggle which is seeking to defeat the British state is a natural ally of workers in Britain.

Britain's rulers have become masters at using anti-Irish chauvinism against their opponents. Today, the Tories know that they only have to accuse the official opposition of being 'soft on IRA terrorism' to bring the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions running into line behind the state. This 'united front' of all sections of British society against the Irish liberation struggle has served to rob the working class movement of any independent political outlook. This has hampered the ability of our class to take on the establishment on other issues. We cannot fight the Tories in defence of our interests as a class if we are holding hands with them against the democratic demands of the Irish people. This is the lesson we should learn from the past 20 years of the Irish War.

The Irish Freedom Movement has already begun to mark the twentieth anniversary of the latest phase of the Irish War. On 6 August well over 3000 people marched through the streets of north London to commemorate the seventeenth anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial in Ireland (see pages 4, 5 and 6). Despite a media-scare campaign, we carried off our most successful demonstration.

This is only the beginning. We are determined to make the twentieth anniversary of the war one that Britain's rulers will remember as the year of solidarity with the Irish freedom struggle. Next year's anti-internment march will mark the month when British troops went back on to Irish streets, and we want it to be bigger and better than ever before. We will be organising protests, pickets, activist meetings, video-showings, forums and conferences throughout the coming year. In September we will be organising action to coincide with the Gibraltar inquest. Our more immediate task is to raise money for the Holloway Road 30 Defence Fund (see back page).

This issue of *Irish Freedom* contains some welcome changes. As we promised in the last issue, we have extended the bulletin to include a letters page. We have also started a reviews page which will hopefully inform our readers and supporters of new books and films on the Irish question. Another innovation, on page 13, is a diary of events in the Irish War. If you want to contribute to the next bulletin, or if you want to know more about forthcoming activities, write to IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX or phone (01) 729 0414. And join the Irish Freedom Movement!

'TROOPS OUT NOW!'

Well over 3000 people joined the 6 August march in London, organised by the Irish Freedom Movement to mark the seventeenth anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial in Ireland.

The demonstration, called to demand 'Troops out of Ireland! Prisoners out of jail!', was attacked by the gutter press, Tory politicians, right-wing thugs and the police. Yet it was the best display of solidarity with the fight for Irish freedom seen in Britain for years, and a great start to a year of action to mark the twentieth anniversary of the start of the Irish War. Crowds joined the demonstration as it made its way from Islington Town Hall to a rally in Whittington Park, led by the Crossmaglen Patriots Republican Flute Band from Wishaw, near Glasgow.

The anti-internment march won wide sponsorship from labour movement and political organisations, many of whom turned out on the day under their own banners.

These included the Wolfe Tone Society, the Birmingham Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee, the Stop the Strip Searches Campaign, the Birmingham Six Campaign, the Connolly Association, Newcastle Women and Ireland, East London Troops Out Movement, Handsworth People's Campaign, Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, Workers Against Racism, Kashmiri Independence Movement, City of London AAM, Hammersmith Nalga, Crook Ucat, Oxford Trades Council, Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Council, Camden Unemployed Action Committee, Hackney Nalga, the Revolutionary Communist Party, the Leninist, Red Action, the Workers Revolutionary Party (*Workers Press*), Workers Power, the Revolutionary Communist Group and the Workers International League.





Flying the flag for the Crossmaglen Patriots Republican Flute Band

ANTI-INTERNMENT RALLY, WHITTINGTON PARK

Mick Hume
Irish Freedom Movement

'On the seventeenth anniversary of internment, we hear the Loyalist gangsters calling for the nationalist community to be caged in concentration camps once more. On the twentieth anniversary of the explosion of Irish resistance in the civil rights movement, we see dramatic examples of the modern Irish resistance of the IRA. Those who carry arms for

Irish freedom today are the same as those who carried placards for civil rights 20 years ago. But they have learned that paper placards are no protection against an Army of occupation. They have taken up arms to defend their people, and we support their struggle.

'The British state is no nearer to winning the Irish War today than it was 20 years ago. So it seeks to denigrate Irish republicans to isolate them from support elsewhere. This week we hear

more lies about the IRA being cowards. Where was the cowardice in Mairead Farrell, who went on hunger-strike rather than be labelled a criminal, then went to Gibraltar and made the supreme sacrifice? And when she was buried, where was the cowardice among the unarmed republican youth who chased a Loyalist murderer out of Milltown cemetery? If these people are cowards, then God help the British state when the Irish get brave men and women to fight for them.

'Next year's anti-internment march, 20 years after the troops went in, must be bigger and better still. Let's help ensure that, when the internment camps are opened again, it is not for Irish freedom fighters but for British war criminals. They must pay the price for 20 years of bloodshed in Ireland. And the payment is long overdue. Victory to the Irish people! Troops out now!'



Joe Beelman

John Doyle, Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle: 'The IRA has the ability to reorganise, to rejuvenate and to strike back'

John Doyle Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle (Executive Committee)

'There are some people, and perhaps understandably, who are a little wary of the current talks between the Sinn Fein leadership and the SDLP leadership. I would like to take this opportunity to say that, after 20 years of struggle, we know where we stand. We're not going to sell out that struggle.

'These talks are about increasing the pressure on the British government. And if we feel there's even the slightest hope that elements of the SDLP can be brought on board the national liberation struggle, and that they can be brought on board on specific issues, then the pressure is on to get them on board.

'Recent months have been very difficult for the Irish Republican Army. Almost everything they touched seemed to turn to tragedy. Event after event went wrong. We have to say, of course, that we regret every single death. Every tragedy. Even those of our enemies, the British troops. But at the end of the day the responsibility for that lies with the British government. It is the British government that has forced us towards armed struggle, that has forced the Irish people to fight for our liberation.

'The last week has shown that despite all the repression the British government forces on Irish republicans, despite all the threats, despite the shootings, despite the murder of nationalists, despite the

sectarian gangs, the IRA has the ability to reorganise, to rejuvenate and to strike back where it hurts. We still have the ability to strike back at Margaret Thatcher through her own back door.'

John Fitzpatrick President, Hammersmith Nalgo

'I am proud to be at this rally on behalf of Hammersmith Nalgo and Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Council. It is vital that we get the message across that there are sections of the trade union movement in this country which will not remain silent in the face of Britain's savage war against the Irish people.

'We've got to build a movement in this country which can provide decisive assistance to the Irish people. We can't just preach to the converted. We've got to convince our most natural ally and our most powerful ally—the rest of the working class in Britain. And believe me, that task gets easier every day.

'It doesn't take a political genius to work it out. The state forces which are rampaging up and down Britain, breaking strikes, crushing communities, from Orreave to Tottenham to Dover, are the same state forces which are stalking the streets of Derry and the fields of South Armagh.

'It doesn't take a political genius to work it out. "Them and us" does not mean them, the Irish people, and us, the British people. "Them" is the British

state, the British Crown and the murderous British soldiers and police. "Us" is working people everywhere, in Britain, in Ireland and throughout the world.'

Theresa Stop the Strip Searches

'Irish republican women have not been intimidated by strip-searches. The last 20 years have seen the struggle for women's liberation and national liberation become inextricably linked. It is no longer possible to drive a wedge between them.'

Basil Hinton Vice-chair, Labour Committee on Ireland

'I've come on this demonstration to protest against the Tories and Neil Kinnock calling the IRA "terrorists". The real terrorists and murderers are the Tories themselves—in Ireland, South Africa, Palestine and all over the world.'

Pádraic ó Caisdé Crossmaglen Patriots

'I'd like to thank everyone that stewarded the band when we came across the fascists. We in Britain can play a part in helping the Irish people achieve the right to self-determination by showing our support at marches as this one today.'

A VISIT TO BALLYCOLMAN

I HAVE recently returned from a visit to Ballycolman in Strabane. My experiences there brought home the reality of what the Irish Freedom Movement correctly calls the Irish War. I thought it would be useful to relate these in *Irish Freedom*, particularly for British readers.

Any stranger approaching Ballycolman, which is a nationalist estate in Strabane, would consider the setting of this housing estate rather more pleasant than most of its kind. It is set on the steep incline to the River Mourne. It was a pleasant afternoon and provided for a pleasant journey. It was not long, however, before strangers appeared on the horizon and shattered the appearance of normality.

Our journey was halted by a roadblock manned by Her Majesty's armed forces dressed in green combat gear with sten guns scanning all movements and surrounded by armoured saracens. It soon became obvious that Ballycolman was no ordinary British working class estate but a nationalist enclave in nationalist Strabane at war with the British occupation forces.

A roadblock may not appear to be any great act of aggression. Indeed on most occasions it passes by without incident. But as we were to be told later, for Irish nationalists, roadblocks represent a daily humiliation, a reminder of the denial of their basic democratic rights, an invasion into their communities.

A four-year old child, unfamiliar with such scenes innocently asked 'Who is the soldier going to shoot?'. 'Shh!' was the nervous reply of a war-weary veteran who detected the awesome truth the

question implied and remembered only too well what had happened to Eamonn McDevitt, Mary Doherty and Tobias Molloy (and more recently, just down the road, to Aidan McAnespie). We passed by without incident, but later that day in Strabane we witnessed a scene which brought the reality home with a vengeance.

Two youths innocently walking down the street were confronted by an Army patrol. They were stopped in their tracks, pushed against a wall and frisked. Spread-eagled, their bodies were subjected to the humiliating search of foreign hands. The degradation and invasion of basic liberty and dignity became apparent once again. One of the soldiers patted one of the youths on the cheek and ruffled his hair and said, 'We'll see you later'. 'Not if we see you first' was the retort. The glib remarks masked a very real threat to the enemy in the other camp.

This exchange brought home the reality of the war for me. An armed foreign invader harassing one section of the native population, denying them basic democratic rights. A young civilian who had grown up experiencing nothing but struggle. A youngster who could not walk his own streets without being harassed and humiliated. A teenager, like all his fellow teenagers, who correctly sees the British armed forces as an enemy who must be driven from their soil.

Whether it be a roadblock, a body-search, an arrest-interrogation, torture or imprisonment on the words of an informer, or indeed, simply to be mown down by a sten gun, it is abundantly clear that there can be no peace in Ireland while Britain remains there. At least one thing came home to me as a result of these experiences—the real strength the Irish people have over us is that they are safe in the knowledge that they can never be safe in the hands of the British invaders. It's time we learnt that lesson too.

Michael and Jenny
Ealing

NEVER TRUST THE LABOUR PARTY

WHEN Sir John Hermon, RUC chief constable for the past eight years, had the 'threat of disciplinary action' against him removed by the Northern Ireland Police Authority over alleged misconduct in the Stalker cover-up, the response of the Labour Party drove home the disgusting role the Labour Party continues to play in the Irish War.

Kevin McNamara, Labour's Northern Ireland spokesman, was reported in the *Independent* to have complained that the decision would 'damage Britain's reputation in the world and undermine confidence in the security forces'. This patriotic response, which is what you would expect from the Labour Party, simply exposes where Labour's allegiances lie. They are more concerned with protecting 'Britain's reputation' and upholding 'confidence' in the forces of repression than they are in defending the democratic rights of the Irish people.

What the Labour Party always ends up doing is apologising for British



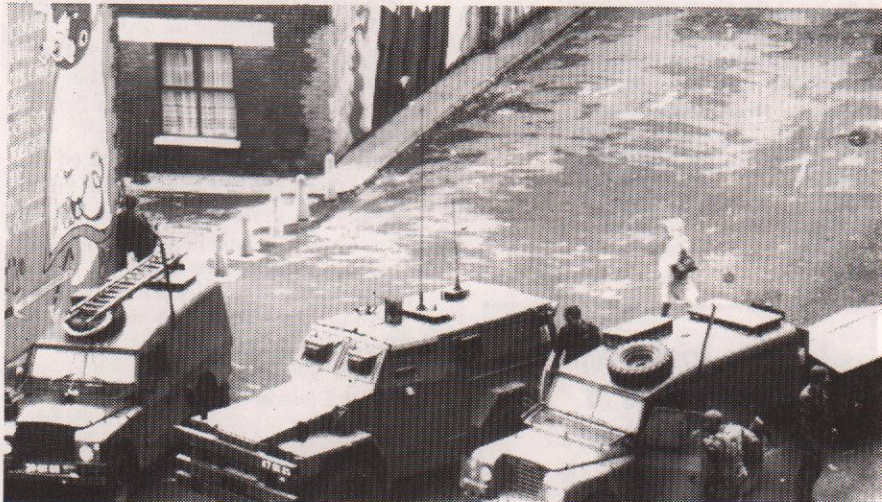
John Stalker

imperialism's barbarism in Northern Ireland. They continue to peddle their patriotic message which alleges that the shoot-to-kill policy is not a policy, that the armed forces and the RUC are a force for peace and progress etc. With opposition like this, it is no wonder the Tories feel free to expose the brutality of their occupation of the Six Counties to the world.

Britain's bloody reputation (which the Labour Party wants us to ignore) has been built up through hundreds of years of oppression and brutality against Irish nationalists. The nationalists have no concern about cleansing reputations or building confidence in the armed forces, but want them out of Ireland. So should we. And in building a movement to get them out we should be clear that the Labour Party stands firmly on the other side.

Steve
North London

Camerawork



Don Reed

IRISH IN BRITAIN

CONGRATULATIONS on the last issue of *Irish Freedom*. It is reassuring to know that there are organisations in Britain who at least understand what is happening in Ireland and are seriously engaged in building a movement in Britain.

I have recently come over to Britain from the South and would like to tell you and your readers about the realities of what life is like for young Irish people like myself who have been forced to leave home and find work, particularly in London.

Andrew Calcutt



England has always depended on Ireland for an unlimited supply of casual labourers for the building trade. This supply reached its peak in the fifties, but now it is dramatically increasing again. Economic problems in Ireland have worsened and resulted in a large mass migration of young workers to both the USA and Britain.

My experience is typical. I arrived in London with very little money and with nowhere to stay. All I had was good intentions to make a good living and send some money home for my family. The two problems I had to overcome were finding a decent job and shelter. The only job I was easily able to find was as a labourer in the building trade. In fact, this is where the majority of Irish immigrants end up.

In London, there are many jobs available in the building industry. This is because of the rebuilding of the infrastructure. But the jobs on offer are all unskilled or semi-skilled. It is the same in other areas of construction, particularly in the private sector. In the early seventies, the bottom fell out of the building industry. So the big firms like McAlpine, Taylor Woodrow and Laing dramatically cut their direct labour to the bone. This left room for sub-contractors. It is with the 'subbies' as we call them (most of whom are Irish),

where many of the Irish immigrants find jobs. These jobs, however, are again unskilled labouring jobs, which pay badly and demand long hours.

The 'subbies' squeeze their young workers. The job is insecure, with no safety requirements and there are no unions. In order to meet high rent costs, we are forced to work seven days a week for approximately 10 to 12 hours a day. Rates of pay are very low. I take home approximately £22 a day (seven days a week). The subbies mostly employ 'townies'—lads from the same village or town. Often pay cheques bounce and any time off, for sickness or whatever, is deducted. There is no such thing as sick pay.

The only solution is to try to pick up a trade. Although these jobs pay more, the insecurity remains. Some lads resort to claiming DHSS money, by signing on with false names to get the rent money paid. But this has been cracked down on and now it is almost impossible to get dole even if you are genuinely unemployed. The other area where Irish labourers suffer is in terms of rent.

The average rent per person per room in London is £35 per week. That is before bills. So when you are earning only £22 per day it is hard to survive. There is no possibility of getting a mortgage. Even to rent a decent flat requires a lot of money up front: £600 deposit plus £600 rent in advance. The result is that hundreds of immigrants end up in hostels which, despite their shortcomings, offer a better living environment than many flats. North-west London is where the largest concentration of Irish immigrants are. Because of all these conditions, you will find many living in overcrowded and rundown accommodation.

With no secure jobs or permanent living conditions, the future looks bleak for Irish immigrants in London. As long as the 'subbies' have the power on the labour market and rent is exaggerated, the job as a labourer is a dead end. It can and does result in either going home to poverty or living in poverty in London. Like many of my friends and family, after years of hard grind, we have nothing to show for it except ill-health or a room in a hostel like Arlington House in Camden.

The sooner we end the partition of Ireland the better!

Phil

Forest Fields

WHO ARE THE REAL SECTARIANS?

THE gunning down of two Catholics in the Ardoyne area of Belfast on Monday 8 August—the eve of the seventeenth anniversary of internment—has once again given the British propaganda machine an excuse to label the 'troubles' as a sectarian feud. Following the events in March, the Gibraltar executions and the Loyalist attack on the funerals in Milltown Cemetery, followed by the murder of three Catholics in the Avenue Bar in Belfast, the view of a mindless religious/sectarian conflict has appeared to gain ground.

The notion that sectarianism affects both Loyalist and nationalist communities is very useful for the British state. By obscuring the real nature of its dirty war in Ireland, Britain portrays itself as the crusading peace-keeper in a sea of random terror.

But this is far from the reality. To the British state and the Loyalist community, all Catholics are disloyal and are thus by definition a threat to the status quo. Both have a vested interest in crushing nationalist resistance. The random terror campaign pursued by the Loyalist paramilitaries is a direct consequence of British rule in Ireland.

The motivation for the republican movement taking up arms is very different. The Northern Ireland state built by Britain is based upon the oppression of Catholics. Britain institutionalised sectarianism in the Six Counties by systematically discriminating against Catholics and by favouring Protestants. Thus, the republican movement's guns are aimed not at Protestants, but at the source of nationalist oppression—the British state. It becomes clear once the sectarian nature of the North is understood that by opposing British rule in Ireland, the republican movement is actively fighting against the sectarianism it is so incorrectly and consistently accused of.

Ending sectarianism in Ireland means ending British rule now. And in Britain, we can start by building a movement that can challenge the lies about sectarianism in the North every time Irish people strike a blow against the British occupiers.

Steven Williams
South London

Write to *Irish Freedom*,
send letters to:
IFM, BM IFM, London
WC1N 3XX

Why does Britain stay?

WITHDRAWAL PROBLEMS FOR IMPERIALISM



Frank Richards answers the question that has haunted British left wingers and even had Margaret Thatcher stumped once: why does the British government hang on to Northern Ireland anyway?

Sustaining the police state of Northern Ireland and funding the war there now costs the British authorities almost £5 billion a year. The human cost is even higher. Nineteen desperate years of fighting between the British state and its Loyalist allies and the Irish nationalist community have left almost 2700 dead and 10 times as many injured. The expense and bloodshed of the British Army's longest engagement this century is apparent to all. It is less obvious why there are troops in Ireland, and why Britain must continue its war of occupation.

'Why are we in Northern Ireland anyway?', Margaret Thatcher is said to have asked her new cabinet shortly after her first election victory in June 1979. The same question has been asked by every prime minister during the past 19 years. In May 1974 Harold Wilson complained bitterly about the cost of the war: 'British parents have seen their sons vilified and spat upon and murdered. British taxpayers have seen the taxes they have poured out, almost without regard to cost...going to Northern Ireland.'

Yet despite such frustrated outbursts, one cost-conscious government after another has financed the Irish War. No major political party has seriously considered the option of troop withdrawal. The remarkable consensus on Ireland stands in marked contrast to the squabbling that characterises parliamentary debate on more mundane matters.

The explanation of why this war is not an issue in British politics lies in the unique and explosive relationship between the British state and the Irish people.

Ireland has always been a British colony with a difference. Historically, Ireland's geographical proximity meant that Britain's vital strategic interests were at stake there. Expansion into Ireland was seen merely as an extension of the United Kingdom. But even the settlement of the north-eastern part of Ireland by English and Scottish planters from the seventeenth century (the forebears of today's Loyalist community) could not keep the national aspirations of the Irish people in check. In the end the British ruling class opted for a policy of political integration. The 1801 Act of Union constitutionally

fused Ireland with the British state. At least in legal terms, Ireland was no longer a colony but part of the 'United Kingdom'.

Despite Britain's constitutional manoeuvres, the majority of the people continued to see themselves as Irish. The Act of Union could not define the national movement out of existence. What it did was to turn an anti-colonial struggle into a domestic British issue. The domestication of the colony brought the struggle for Irish freedom right into the heart of British politics.

In reality, Ireland could not be domesticated. The movement for national independence went from strength to strength and by 1920 Ireland was engulfed in the Tan War against British occupation. Since that time the British ruling class has been prepared to consider various solutions to its Irish problem—with the proviso that British domination over Ireland remains intact.

In 1921 Britain partitioned Ireland, creating a formally independent state in the South—the Twenty-six Counties. The 'province' of Northern Ireland (the Six Counties) was integrated into Britain. In 1949 the integration of the Six Counties went a step further with the Labour government's Northern Ireland Act. And since the war broke out in 1969 every government has taken every opportunity to declare that the Six Counties will remain part of the United Kingdom. In 1985, Tory Northern Ireland secretary Tom King declared that the newly signed Anglo-Irish agreement meant Ireland would be divided and Ulster British 'in perpetuity'.

The British ruling class has been prepared to accept any constitutional formula that preserves British control over Ireland. Westminster understands that legal arrangements are often a fiction that obscures the real relations of power.

The British ruling class has never regarded the Twenty-six Counties as an independent country.



The British state is not divisible



Eamon de Valera: from prisoner of the Crown 1916, to premier of a partitioned Ireland 1932

When the Irish government formally declared a Republic in 1949, Labour prime minister Clement Attlee assured his cabinet that the South 'was not in future to be regarded as a foreign country even though she had ceased to be part of His Majesty's dominions'. The British ruling class also understands that the Six Counties statelet is not like any other part of the United Kingdom. The Labour government's 1975 white paper, 'Our Changing Democracy', discussed devolution for Scotland and Wales, but made it clear that Northern Ireland was in 'a different category':

'Its history and geography distinguish it from other parts of the United Kingdom as does the presence of two separate communities. Its problems are not those of Scotland and Wales and therefore do not necessarily require the same treatment.'

The white paper could not go on to explain the unique status of the Six Counties without admitting that Northern Ireland was not only a part, but also a colony, of the United Kingdom.

Much has changed in Anglo-Irish relations during the 200 years since the Act of Union. Ireland's agricultural resources and industry are no longer important for the maintenance of Britain's economic prosperity. In the age of high technology and nuclear weapons, Ireland's strategic importance for Britain has diminished considerably from the days when naval armadas posed the biggest threat of invasion.

Yet the Act of Union remains the basis for the incorporation of the North into Britain and continues to influence Anglo-Irish relations. To understand the permanence of these relations it is

necessary to examine the nature of the British state.

As Karl Marx argued, capitalism is underwritten and defended through the institutions of the state. The state is the most precious instrument the ruling class has for preserving its domination. In Britain, the expansion of capitalism and the consolidation of the state took place through the incorporation of Wales, Scotland and later Ireland.

The incorporation of Ireland into the Union meant that capitalist relations in Ireland were supervised by the British capitalist class.

The stability of those relations was guaranteed directly by the power of the British state. The Act of Union and the resurgence of the national movement meant that, from the nineteenth century, the integrity and coherence of British state institutions were at stake in the battle for Ireland.

The state machinery represents the interests of an entire class. It is not divisible into any sectional or geographical units. That is why Irish nationalism has not been a problem of foreign relations but a direct threat to the state. The anti-colonial struggle in Ireland threatens the integrity of the United Kingdom itself.

The British ruling class cannot disengage itself from Ireland without severely damaging the state institutions that are essential for the exercise of its class power. At the same time Britain is permanently tied down in Ireland. National oppression ensures a steady stream of recruits for the IRA, provoking the national resistance which has plagued the political life of the British establishment.

At home the British ruling class has

shown a remarkable talent for solving new problems and adapting to new circumstances. It has dealt with opposition in Britain through a careful combination of coercion and reform. Throughout the past 60 years the British state has had a perfect track record against its opponents. But the opponent that it has failed to contain is the nationalist community in Ireland. It is always possible to compromise with trade unions and other social groups seeking reforms. Indeed reforms have the advantage of giving these groups a stake in the existing set-up. However, when it comes to the integrity of the state, compromise is out of the question.

Every aspect of social life under capitalism is governed through the acceptance of the legitimacy of the state. Once that legitimacy is called into question all capitalist social conventions are at risk. There is only one British state, whose institutions are intimately bound up with the running of the United Kingdom. Anything that compromises the state in one part undermines the institution as a whole. The fusion of Ireland with Britain rules out the possibility that the British authorities could grant Irish independence voluntarily.

Withdrawal from Ireland would cause such damage to the state that no section of the ruling class is prepared to countenance pulling out of its own accord.

In a sense, the financial costs of the Irish War are irrelevant. The British ruling class cannot afford to lose in Ireland. Capitalist stability in Britain depends on its domination of Ireland. The danger the Irish War represents to British capitalism underlines the importance of the question for all those who oppose the British ruling class. Yet the importance of the war has been continually underestimated by the left and the working class movement in Britain.

Partition has failed to solve Britain's problems in Ireland, but it has created a

widespread consensus within Britain. Partition is generally seen as a reasonable arrangement designed to guarantee the democratic aspirations of the Protestant majority in the Six Counties. Britain's presence is portrayed as legitimate and its troops are depicted not as aggressors but as peace-keepers. As a result the status of the Six Counties is accepted as above discussion and beyond the realm of party politics.

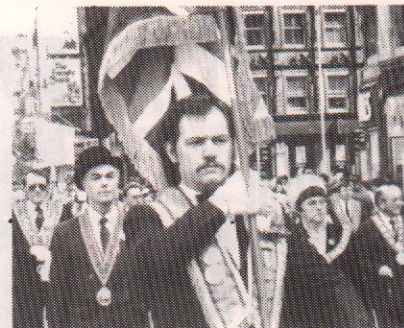
The British consensus behind the legitimacy of Ulster is in full accord with the hopes of establishment politicians in the years leading up to partition. Unionist leader Lord Carson lobbied privately to have Britain's control of Ireland struck off the agenda of Westminster bickering: 'Ulster wants... above all things, to be removed from the area of party politics in the imperial parliament.' (Cited in VS Armour, *Ulster, Ireland, Britain*) Carson's dreams were realised in the post-partition years. To this day Ireland remains outside party politics, and a bipartisan policy between the Labour and Tory parties prevails.

Even critics of British policy in Ireland come under Carson's spell. The radical and Labour left argue that it is the 'Loyalist veto' which prevents Britain implementing a progressive solution to the problem. This view is compatible with the outlook of the ruling class.

The state claims that its responsibilities to the Protestant majority force it to remain in Ireland: the left accepts that the Protestants are at the root of the problem, but argues that the views of the Protestants should not override those of the Irish people as a whole. Both left and right regard the Protestants as the reason why Britain stays in Ireland.

In reality, a sentimental attachment to the Loyalist population is a bizarre explanation for Britain's dogged commitment to the war in Ireland.

Westminster's allegiance to the Loyalist population is less than whole-



David Rourke

Loyal to Britain

some. In the debates before partition, Liberal governments were quite prepared to propose a United Ireland run by the nationalist majority—so long as such an Ireland did not become an independent state. Over the last three years, the Thatcher government has engaged and faced down the Loyalists in the battle over the Anglo-Irish agreement, which the Tories regard as vital for securing British control.

The British ruling class is not in Ireland out of concern for the welfare of the Loyalist population. It stays in the Six Counties to defend its state and to preserve its social and political power over the whole of the United Kingdom.

After the Second World War, the cabinet secretary to Labour prime minister Attlee advised the government that Britain could never let the Six Counties become 'part of a territory outside His Majesty's jurisdiction', with or without the formal excuse of a 'Loyalist veto'.

'Indeed it seems unlikely that Great Britain would ever be able to agree with this even if the people of Northern Ireland desired it.' (Cited in S Cronin, *Irish Nationalism*)

Attlee accepted this view, and so has every other British prime minister. Over the past 19 years the Irish War has raised the stakes further still. War on the streets of Derry and Belfast has shown the world the instability threatened by the break-up of the United Kingdom. More than ever before, domestic peace in Britain depends on the continued occupation of Ireland.

Once we understand the importance of the Irish War for the British authorities, we can see that it is doubly important for ordinary British people to fight for Irish freedom.

The Irish people, like every other nation, have the right to self-determination and to run their country free from foreign interference. And by aligning ourselves with those waging war against the British state in Ireland, we can strengthen the ability of the British working class to strike hard against its enemies in Whitehall. A defeat for the oppressive British state in Ireland would be a mighty step forward for real freedom and democracy on both sides of the Irish Sea.



David Rourke

British workers are up against the same state forces as the Irish people

YOU CAN'T REFORM BRITISH RULE

Labour Committee on Ireland, Temporary Provisions?

The Case Against the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 60p

There can be no doubt that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) is a draconian piece of legislation. Its hurried introduction in 1974 after the Birmingham bombings, marked a new stage in the offensive against the Irish liberation struggle. This pamphlet, which is a summary of a report submitted to the recent Viscount Colville review of the PTA, outlines the Labour Committee on Ireland's (LCI) opposition to the act. But while it correctly recognises the draconian nature of the law, it fails to understand why it was introduced and the role it plays in Britain's dirty war in Ireland.

'Our opposition to the act is shared by all those concerned with the principles of justice' states the pamphlet. The basic injustice of Ireland being divided and oppressed falls by the wayside as the LCI complains about the violation of 'internationally accepted standards on human rights'. For the LCI it is this which makes 'the search for a political solution...more difficult to find'. At least the LCI realises that the act is 'not being used for its stated purpose': only 2.5 per cent of those detained under the PTA are charged. So why does it exist?

The LCI never answers this question. What it fails to understand is that Britain needs the PTA to terrorise those with sympathies for Irish freedom. The PTA is just one weapon the British establishment uses to maintain the status quo. The LCI may moan about the 'excesses' of British rule in Ireland, but its faith in British 'democracy' is unswerving. The authors 'strongly urge a reduction of the duration of



Smash the PTA/Irish Freedom Movement picket outside Paddington Green police station

detentions' and appeal to the home secretary to 'use more circumspection in authorising extensions after the initial 48 hours'. Yes, Britain, the source of the problem in Ireland, is the solution to the problem for the LCI.

This pamphlet is worth buying for two reasons. First, for the two case histories it

provides, which highlight British repression in action; and second, for the sheer hypocrisy of Kevin McNamara's introduction. Here is a politician who condemns the struggle of Irish freedom fighters as 'criminal' masquerading as an opponent of the PTA!

The Irish Freedom Movement is opposed to the

PTA, and makes a priority of protesting against its use. But our task is not to change *how* Britain maintains its occupation of Ireland, by modifying the terms of the PTA, but to help end British rule and overthrow the entire apparatus of repression. This important point is missed by the pamphlet.

Steve Williams

REDUNDANT RHETORIC

Paul Teague (ed), *Beyond the Rhetoric: Politics, the Economy and Social Policy in Northern Ireland*, Lawrence and Wishart, £6.95

Beyond the Rhetoric is a collection of essays, written by academics from England and the Six Counties. The first four essays review the impact of the Anglo-Irish agreement since November 1985; the second five examine the Northern Ireland economy.

Despite Teague's claims to avoid any desire to 'uphold or entrench pre-determined positions', most of the

authors proceed to entrench views which accept partition and end up advising the British government on how to fine-tune the Anglo-Irish agreement.

Bew and Patterson castigate the government for not including Unionists in the discussions which preceded the deal, and advocate their future participation. Gafikin and Morrissey see a solution only if there is the ending of 'persistent nationalist claims which drive Unionist workers into a beleaguered reactionary response'. Most of the authors offer 'critical support' to the agreement and ignore developments since: shoot-to-kill, the Birmingham Six appeal and the increasing sophistication of Britain's repressive machinery.

The authors provide some useful material despite their prejudice. Mair, for example, offers evidence of attitudes in

the South to the North. O'Dowd's investigation of the economy confirms the consolidation of discrimination against Catholics, and the high price the British state pays to prop up the Northern Ireland economy.

Nonetheless, these academics reveal how well they've been sold the dummy by the British political sideshow. Despite their prescriptions for remedying the problems, which all depend on a positive contribution from the British state, the role of the working class both in Ireland and Britain is conspicuously ignored. To do the contrary, however, would confront partition and the sectarian state of Northern Ireland. But unless this problem is tackled and placed at the centre of any analysis, the rest is rhetoric.

Sean Thomas

★ **Sunday 1 May:** In Roermond in the Netherlands, IRA volunteers machine-gun a car carrying British airmen, killing one and seriously injuring two others. In Nieuw-Bergen a bomb kills two airmen and seriously injures a third.

★ **Tuesday 3 May:** A bomb explodes under an RAF car near Bielefeld, West Germany.

A programme produced for BBC Northern Ireland reveals how Gibraltar police hardly bothered interviewing eye-witnesses.

★ **Wednesday 4 May:** At the Anglo-Irish conference in Dublin, London and Dublin governments declare war on 'IRA racketeering' in another attempt to discredit the republican struggle.

★ **Thursday 5 May:** The British government announces its intention to introduce new laws to convict people accused of 'handling terrorist funds'.

★ **Sunday 8 May:** Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness states at a ceremony to mark the anniversary of the deaths of the eight IRA volunteers executed by the SAS at Loughgal, that the talks between his party and the moderate nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party had 'nothing whatsoever' to do with ceasefires.

★ **Tuesday 10 May:** Terry McDaid, a Catholic from the Newington area of North Belfast, is murdered by Loyalist assassins.

★ **Wednesday 11 May:** The IRA claims responsibility for a blast-bomb attack on Craigavon RUC station in County Armagh.

★ **Friday 13 May:** Two British soldiers are injured in a bomb attack on a patrol in the Falls Road area of West Belfast. Three civilians are also hurt.

★ **Sunday 15 May:** Loyalists gun down three Catholics in the Avenue Bar, North Belfast.

★ **Monday 16 May:** A UDR soldier is seriously injured in an IRA bomb attack on his farm in County Tyrone.

The IRA issues a warning to the Loyalist murder gangs while making clear that British warlords are ultimately responsible.

★ **Tuesday 17 May:** The RUC announces that since the start of the year there have been 109 bomb incidents in the Six Counties.

★ **Wednesday 18 May:** Irish troops fire shots as Patrick McVeigh, wanted by Britain on bombing charges, is released from Portlaoise prison. He is recaptured pending extradition to Britain.

★ **Thursday 19 May:** An explosion wrecks the RUC stall at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Show.

★ **Saturday 21 May:** The IRA blows up Army dog-handler and Labrador in Crossmaglen, while authorities celebrate defusing a 1400lb bomb there the day before.

★ **Monday 23 May:** Gibraltar coroner Felix Pizzarello announces the postponement of the Gibraltar inquest to August, feebly claiming that an earlier date would interfere with his holidays.

★ **Wednesday 25 May:** Whitehall issues a white paper outlining new legislation on equal opportunity of employment in the North. The most significant innovation is the changing of the name of the Fair Employment Agency to the Fair Employment Commission—a far more feasible proposition than ending job discrimination.

★ **Thursday 26 May:** Denis McClean, deputy commander of the Ulster Volunteer Force, receives three life sentences after confessing to 40 crimes, including four murders (two Catholics and two Protestants).



★ **Friday 27 May:** Tories invite tenders from private firms to buy ailing Belfast shipyard Harland and Wolff.

★ **Monday 30 May:** The Northern Ireland office announces that special category status for political prisoners is to be phased out.

★ **Friday 3 June:** Democratic Unionist Party leader Ian Paisley is fined £200 for refusing to give an undertaking not to take part in illegal parades against the Anglo-Irish agreement.

★ **Saturday 4 June:** Ulster Defence Regiment Lance-Corporal Michael D'Arcy is shot dead by the IRA at Castlederg, County Tyrone.

★ **Sunday 5 June:** All 85 prisoners serving sentences under special category status are to have their cases reviewed.

The British Army announces its new General Officer Commanding in Northern Ireland, Lieutenant-General John Waters. His strong point is counter-insurgency. He served in Cyprus during the EOKA independence uprising in the late fifties.

★ **Monday 6 June:** Social Democratic and Labour Party councillors join forces with Loyalists on Fermanagh District Council to stop Sinn Féin member Paul Corrigan being elected chairman.

★ **Thursday 9 June:** Nationalist politicians accuse the RUC of provoking riots in the Ballymurphy area, West Belfast.

★ **Monday 13 June:** Patrick McVeigh runs from Portlaoise court, knowing that a moment's hesitation could mean re-arrest. True to form, gardai waded into a band of supporters protecting him, but are beaten off as McVeigh makes good his escape.

★ **Wednesday 15 June:** Six soldiers die after a daring IRA attack at the heart of the British Army's command centre in Lisburn. A 7lb bomb had been placed under their vehicle after it was tracked 80 miles from its base in Derry.

The IRA kills Ulster Volunteer Force leader Robert Seymour in East Belfast.

★ **Friday 17 June:** 400 anti-extradition demonstrators disrupt the unveiling of a fountain to mark Dublin's millenium. The unveiling turns to farce as the crowd joins in the demonstration.

★ **Sunday 19 June:** In Cork City in the South of Ireland, a second man is charged with possession of a republican poster. Sinn Féin organiser Freddy O'Doherty is charged with possession of an

'incriminating document' (the poster) and sentenced to five years imprisonment for membership of the IRA.

At the annual Bodestown commemoration for Wolfe Tone, the founder of Irish nationalism, Patrick Doherty of Sinn Féin reiterates that there will be no end to the armed struggle until Britain gets out of Ireland.

★ **Tuesday 28 June:** Tom King dismisses Amnesty International's call for a judicial inquiry into the RUC's shoot-to-kill policy.

★ **Wednesday 29 June:** The Northern Ireland Police Authority announces that RUC chief constable John Hermon will not face disciplinary charges for obstructing the Stalker/Sampson inquiry.

★ **Thursday 30 June:** Labour MPs and dignitaries launch the 'Time to Go' initiative.

★ **Monday 4 July:** 20 members of the RUC face internal disciplinary proceedings for the murder of six unarmed nationalists in Armagh in 1982. All officers are to remain in the force.

★ **Wednesday 6 July:** Terence Delaney, a 30-year old Catholic, is murdered by the Ulster Freedom Fighters, a cover for the legal Ulster Defence Association.

★ **Thursday 7 July:** A Catholic taxi driver is seriously injured after a sectarian attack in the Markets area of Belfast. Two civilians are killed when an IRA bomb explodes at a swimming-pool in West Belfast. A soldier killed by a booby-trap bomb five hours later was the 400th to die since British troops returned to Irish streets in 1969. The IRA loses its 21st volunteer in the past 18 months as Seamus Woods dies after the mortar bomb he was preparing goes off prematurely.

★ **Tuesday 12 July:** In protest at their exclusion from the corridors of power, Loyalist demonstrators attack police in Belfast.

★ **Wednesday 13 July:** A bomb explodes at a British Army barracks in Duisburg, West Germany.

★ **Friday 15 July:** Gardai find a Russian-made heavy machine gun on the banks of a river near Borris-in-Ossory. Six weeks previously, an Army helicopter was brought down by an IRA unit using two heavy and three general purpose machine guns.

★ **Monday 18 July:** SDLP leader John Hume promises to disclose the contents of his talks with Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams.

★ **Thursday 21 July:** Tory home secretary Douglas Hurd says he will consider re-opening the cases of two of those convicted of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings in 1974.

★ **Sunday 24 July:** Three members of one family die when a bomb explodes near Killeen, South Armagh. The bomb was intended for a judge returning from holiday in the USA.

★ **Monday 25 July:** Volunteer Brendan Davidson is shot dead by a Loyalist squad wearing RUC uniforms.

★ **Wednesday 27 July:** Tom King announces that the SAS gang responsible for the Gibraltar assassinations may attend the inquest after all.

Five members of a joint British Army/RUC patrol are injured when volunteers of the South Armagh brigade of the IRA detonate a landmine near Cullyhanna.

★ **Friday 29 July:** Gae Scanlan, a Conservative candidate in the 1983 and 1987 elections, dies as a result of wounds received in the IRA bomb attack on the Grand Hotel in Brighton in 1984. Mark Reilly

Labour's latest Irish campaign

TIME TO TAKE SIDES

To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Labour government's decision to send the troops into Ireland in 1969, the Labour left has launched a new 'Time to Go' charter. Phil Murphy reports

'Next year will be the twentieth anniversary of British troops being sent to Northern Ireland to suppress the brutal local response to the Northern Ireland civil rights movement. It is important that we should mark this anniversary and reflect on what, if anything, has been achieved in that time.' This is how Labour frontbencher Clare Short motivated the 'Time to Go' charter initiative in an article in *Tribune* on 24 June.

It is important to begin any discussion of the past 20 years of the Irish War by clarifying why the British government sent in the troops in the first place.

The object was not, as Short believes, to crush Loyalist reaction against the civil rights movement. Loyalists had launched pogroms against the nationalist ghettos in the Six Counties on several occasions since the partition of Ireland in 1921, without British troops being sent in to protect the Catholic population.

Labour prime minister Harold Wilson sent in the troops in 1969 because the revolt of the nationalist people against the structures of British rule had reached such proportions that it threatened the foundations of the Northern state. The troops went in to contain nationalist resistance, not to suppress Loyalist reaction. From the first, Labour ministers admitted that their aim was to defend the status quo, not the Catholic community. Home secretary James Callaghan put it straight during a trip to Belfast at the end of August 1969:

'The Border will remain.... That is as flat and as unequivocal as I can make it, and any policies that are pursued derive from that beginning.'

Any policy which began from protecting the Border, and thus defending the sectarian state of Northern Ireland which Britain had built behind it, could only operate at the nationalists' expense. Every British initiative in Ireland during the past two decades has had the same

starting point.

What has been achieved by 20 years of British occupation? The Labour left's charter describes it as '20 wasted years', as if British governments could have been doing something more constructive with their time. From the point of view of the imperialist British state, however, quite a lot has been achieved in Ireland since 1968. It has succeeded in preventing the nationalist revolt from ousting the occupation forces and ending British domination over Ireland. The British establishment has thus staved off the break-up of the 'United Kingdom' and the consequent catastrophic loss of authority of the British state itself (see pages 9, 10 and 11).

It is worth noting that the Labour Party has made a substantial contribution to this project.

Not only did Labour send in the troops in 1969, it has loyally supported every aspect of British military strategy ever since. It backed the introduction of internment in 1971, and itself introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974. A Labour government withdrew political status from republican prisoners of war in 1976, and the Labour opposition stood by while Thatcher forced 10 hunger-strikers to death in 1981 in the struggle to regain it. Labour introduced SAS shoot-to-kill squads to Ireland in the seventies, and has since supported their deployment from South Armagh to Gibraltar.

It is also important to note that the reactionary achievements of British imperialism in Ireland have been bought at a cost much greater than anybody envisaged in 1969. Maintaining the integrity of the 'United Kingdom' through enforcing the oppression of the nationalist people of the Six Counties has cost 400 soldiers' lives, billions of pounds and the loss of international prestige that has resulted from the repeated exposure of the injustice, discrimination, torture and terror inflicted by the British authorities. The British military occupation has led to the re-emergence of the Irish republican movement, the most resourceful and resilient guerrilla army ever encountered by British imperialism in its long and bloody history.

The prolonged stalemate between these rival armies is the central feature of Irish politics 20 years after the war began. The Labour left's nostalgia for the days of the civil rights movement

reflects a wish to return to a time when the British state maintained stability without direct military occupation and, more importantly, the nationalist people did not have to resort to firearms to defend their communities.

The Labour left's 'Time to Go' charter aims to appeal to the war-weariness of the British establishment and middle class public opinion.

But this approach fails to take account of the fact that, over the past two decades, the tremendous and mounting burden of maintaining the collapsing Northern Ireland economy as well as paying the costs of the war have failed to produce the slightest sign of a tendency towards withdrawal within the British establishment.

The monolithic commitment of the British establishment, political, economic and military, to the continuing occupation of Ireland reflects its fundamental understanding of the mortal threat that the Irish national struggle represents to the British state itself. For 20 years the British left has been waiting for war-weariness to overwhelm the authorities and lead to the withdrawal of troops from Ireland. It is about time it realised that this is not going to happen.

For 20 years, too, the left has been quoting opinion polls which are supposed to show the strength of popular sentiment for withdrawal. At its house of commons launch, the 'Time to Go' charter campaign published a series of such polls, and Short expressed her conviction that such views were gathering strength. There is no doubt that most British people are heartily sick of the Irish War, fed up of seeing television reports of bombings and shootings, and sympathetic towards any attempt to achieve a peaceful solution. But throughout the Irish War such general aspirations for peace have had little consequence when, on every day-to-day issue in the conflict, the establishment has succeeded in rallying British opinion against 'IRA terrorists' and in support of the British 'security forces'. These are the only 'opinion polls' that matter, and British politicians and the media have consistently succeeded in polarising opinion over here between the vast majority who support the British forces and a small minority who back the struggle for national liberation.

The 'Time to Go' charter is the latest in a long line of British left campaigns

on Ireland which have attempted to get around the polarisation of public opinion on the war by appealing to some supposedly objective middle ground. The problem for the left is that when fundamental issues are at stake there can be no middle way and no objective positions. The Irish War involves two irreconcilable positions—either Ireland is free, or it remains under British rule.

After 20 years it should be abundantly clear that any attempt to build a movement for withdrawal by appealing to a mythical middle way is doomed to failure.

The Tories understand the Irish War much better than the Labour left. When some MPs protested feebly about her demand that television companies

and the Campaign Group. The way the campaign has been launched, following prolonged intrigues and manoeuvres within the Labour Committee on Ireland, seems calculated to exacerbate the sort of personality clashes and factional squabbles that have long dogged Irish solidarity work in Britain.

The selection of Clare Short to front the charter campaign is revealing. It is well-known that Short's first loyalty is to her own career and her position on Neil Kinnock's frontbench. To secure this, she abstained in the vote on the Anglo-Irish agreement in November 1985 when the left voted against it; she spurned black candidate Sharon Atkin when she was ditched by the leadership in the run-up to the last election; and she recently

The masses can only be won to the cause of Irish freedom by a campaign that goes out to appeal to working class solidarity with the threat posed by the Irish republican movement to the British capitalist system.

But the Labour left has no conception of *campaigning* to change public opinion—it simply puts its trust in external forces doing the job. But this approach has not worked for 20 years; why should it work now?

While projecting an image of concern to rally a united campaign to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the British invasion, the charter campaign has a darker sectarian edge. In an interview at the time of the launch, Short indicated that one of the concerns of the Labour campaign was to 'draw new supporters for Britain's withdrawal, to avoid leaving it to the far left with everyone else feeling paralysed' (*Independent*, 25 June). The simple fact that has increasingly alarmed the Labour Party over the past few years is that the only organisation that has mobilised 'new supporters', and particularly young people, to the cause of British withdrawal is the Irish Freedom Movement.



Pandora Anderson

Labour's Clare Short launches the 'Time to Go' charter in parliament

surrender film of the recent funeral killings in Belfast, Thatcher told them that they had to choose whether they were 'on the side of justice or the side of terrorism'. Yet Short expresses the main complaint of the sponsors of the charter that 'anybody who talks about British withdrawal is immediately charged with being a covert IRA supporter'. Thatcher understands that in a war it is a matter of taking sides, and she knows which side she is on—although 'justice' is as inappropriate a label for the British regime in Ireland as 'terrorism' is a propaganda slur on the armed struggle against British rule. Short, however, wants to have it both ways. She wants to oppose British rule in Ireland without supporting the fight for Irish freedom. This is a position which lacks coherence and integrity: it could never hope to command popular support.

The 'Time to Go' charter is a misconceived initiative. It claims to be 'non-party' and 'broad-based' but it is neither. It is a Labour Party campaign, which has already failed to win the support of long-established groups such as the Irish in Britain Representation Group or the Troops Out Movement. Indeed it draws its support from only a small faction inside the Labour Party. Key figures in the campaign are Peter Hain and John McDonnell, aspiring soft-left MPs active in the space between the Labour Coordinating Committee

resigned from the Campaign Group in protest at the decision by Tony Benn and Eric Heffer to challenge Kinnock and Roy Hattersley. Yet Short's opportunism and lack of principle are no embarrassment to the charter campaign. They hope that her more respectable image, by comparison with, for example, Ken Livingstone, will enable the campaign to win more support from Labour MPs, union bureaucrats and assorted media celebrities.

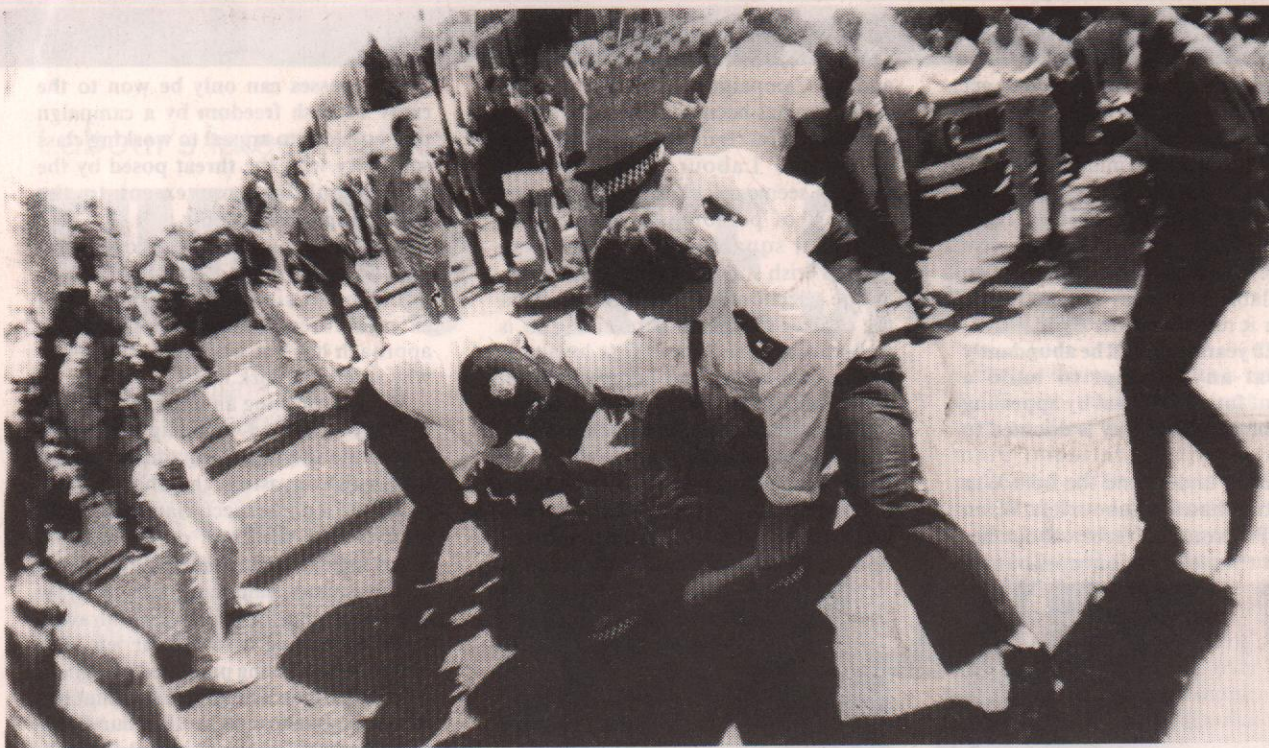
According to a recent interview in *Labour and Ireland*, Short's model for the campaign is a successful social starring Billy Bragg which was held at last year's Labour Party conference. From his remarks at the house of commons launch, Hain envisages a repeat of his youthful experiences in the Anti-Apartheid Movement or the Anti-Nazi League. The charter organisers hope that a combination of celebrity sponsors, a concert featuring big-name rock bands and an anticipated sudden upsurge in popular war-weariness will transform two decades of public hostility and indifference and rally the masses to the cause of withdrawal. After 20 years they still cannot grasp that because the stakes for the British state are so high in Ireland, it can never attract the sort of casual liberal sympathy that allows the Anti-Apartheid Movement to mobilise tens of thousands without any great effort.

Since 1985 the Irish Freedom Movement has organised the August national commemoration of internment in London and turned it into one of the major events in the Irish solidarity calendar. The recent rally in Hammersmith in which the IFM played a prominent role attracted more than 600 people, the biggest turn-out at an Irish event in London for several years. Regular IFM dayschools and smaller meetings around the country have attracted a new generation to the Irish cause. The best-selling IFM handbook, *The Irish War*, now in its third edition, has helped to raise awareness of the Irish War among thousands of people in Britain. As Short, perhaps unwittingly, acknowledged, one of the main objects of the charter campaign is to attempt to spoil the success of the Irish Freedom Movement. Hence one of the first steps of the charter campaign was to declare unilaterally its intention to take over the August demonstration.

The Irish Freedom Movement has always taken the view that the cause of Irish solidarity cannot be the property of any organisation.

We have readily cooperated with other groups in organising pickets, demonstrations, and other events, and we intend to continue to do so during the coming year. It is unfortunate that Labour left wingers already risk squandering the potential of the twentieth anniversary through their sectarian manoeuvring. It is particularly ironic that a faction of the party which sent in the troops in 1969 should have the gall to try to monopolise the struggle to get them out 20 years later.

(Additional research by Dawn Levine)



Courtesy

● Four on to one: police pile in to arrest demonstrator on Holloway Road

DEFEND THE HOLLOWAY ROAD 30!

At least 30 demonstrators were arrested on Saturday 6 August in north London, as police and right-wing thugs attacked the annual anti-internment march organised by the Irish Freedom Movement.

Most were arrested in Holloway Road, as the 3000 marchers approached Whittington Park for a rally. Eye-witnesses describe what happened:

'Hundreds of police had hemmed the march in with their vans. Then when these fascists appeared with Union Jacks and started throwing bottles, the police just got out of the way and let them attack us. But as soon as the march stewards moved up to defend the demonstration, the police waded in and arrested the marchers. They let the attackers run away.'

Sue, Islington

'The cops were clubbing and kicking marchers while the Loyalists threw things at us. They knew exactly who they were arresting—the people who

took on the right wingers. I heard policemen saying "I'm glad we got this bastard" and "He's the one we wanted", as they dragged people into the vans.'

Brendan, Luton

Most of those arrested have been charged with 'threatening behaviour' under the Tory Public Order Act. The cases come up at the end of August. It is vital that we win them, to establish our right to demonstrate free from harassment by police, and our right to defend ourselves against attack.

● We need funds to help fight these frame-ups and defend democratic rights.

Show your support for the Holloway Road 30 by making a donation to the Defence Fund. Get your trade union/student union/political group to pass a motion in support of those arrested. Petitions are available from the Irish Freedom Movement.

Send donations and messages of support to: Holloway Road 30 Defence Fund, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.

(Make cheques payable to Holloway Road 30 Defence Fund.)

If you were arrested on the 6 August march but have not contacted us, or if you witnessed/photographed any arrests, please ring the Irish Freedom Movement on (01) 729 0414.