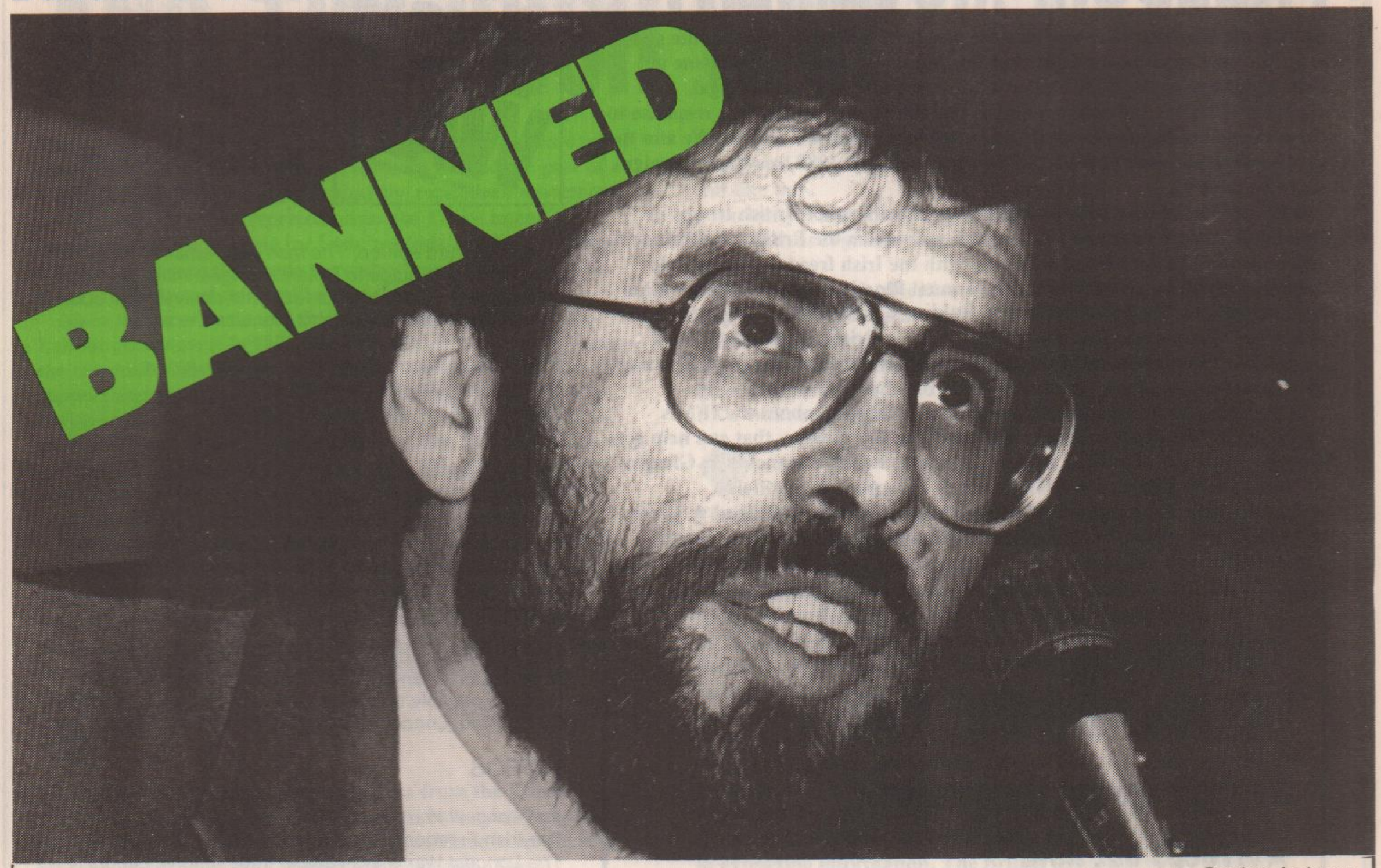
IRISH FREEDOM

Bulletin of the Irish Freedom Movement No 6 November 1988 50p



Pandora Anderson

The Tories gag Sinn Fein

SPEAK OUT FOR IRISH FREEDOM

IRISH PRISONERS INTERVIEWED – SEE PAGES 14 AND 15

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JOIN THE STRUGGLE FOR IRISH FREEDOM

BUILD THE IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT

SINCE the last issue of *Irish Freedom,* the IFM has really been on the go. Over the past months, the Irish War has become the number one issue in British politics: from the Gibraltar inquest to the long-expected legal clampdown by the government on the republican movement. Our response to these events has been to intensify our work (see pages 4, 5 and 6). We aim to continue this for the remainder of this year and into 1989 (see our campaign diary on page 6).

1989 marks the twentieth anniversary of the arrival of British troops in Ireland. We are determined to make it a year which the British establishment will remember as the year of solidarity with the Irish freedom struggle. In January we will be mobilising for the annual Bloody Sunday demonstration (see pages 9, 10 and 11). We are also holding a conference early next year: When the War Comes Home—the Irish War in British Politics (see back page). In addition we'll have our forums, weekly street meetings, pickets and protests.

If you want to find out more about these events and about the IFM's approach to building a solidarity movement in this country that can help 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 ★ West London ★ North London ★ South 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 .....

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 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.

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

New monthly review of the Revolutionary Communist Party
December's *Living Marxism* contains articles on: Individual freedom in capitalist society ★ The debate about Thatcherism ★ The US elections ★ Zionism and anti-Semitism ★ Architecture ★ Acid House and much more.

Living Marxism costs £1.50, or £15 for a 12-month subscription to anywhere in Britain or Ireland. Make cheques payable to Junius Publications Ltd and send to BCM JPLtd, London WC1N 3XX. Phone (01) 729 3771.

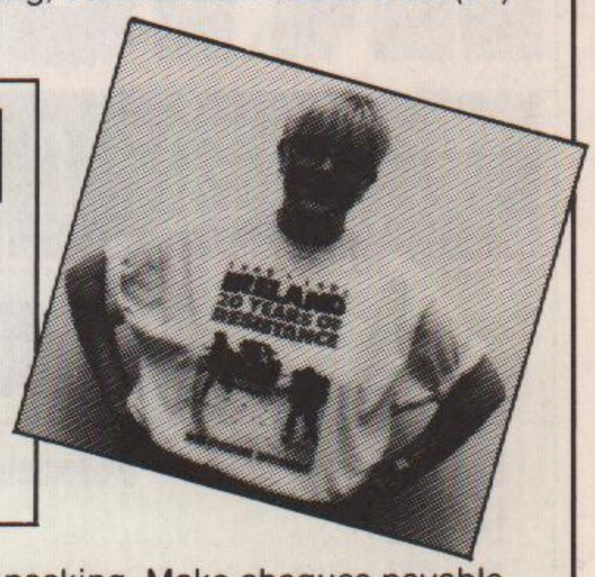
VIDEOS

The Longest War
The Irish Freedom Movement video
The Longest War is available to trade unions, Labour Party wards, 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.

IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT T-SHIRTS
Red and black logo on white
Sizes M, XL, XXXL



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

EDITORIAL

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND THE IRISH WAR

The banning of Sinn Fein from the airwaves and the removal of the right to silence of suspects in Northern Ireland are part of a long-expected Tory offensive against the republican movement. By gagging republican representatives the Tories intend to further isolate the struggle for Irish freedom, and by removing the right to silence they hope to reintroduce internment in the guise of a reformed criminal law.

Since the introduction of the criminalisation policy by the Labour government in 1976, the British state has tried to present the republican movement as a criminal conspiracy which lacks support and legitimacy. The election of hunger-striker Bobby Sands as MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone in May 1981, the 100 000 mourners at his funeral later that month and the 40 per cent of the nationalist vote that Sinn Fein has consistently captured since then have driven a horse and cart through the criminalisation strategy.

The British response since 1981 has been to try to undermine the republican movement's claim to mass support by moving the goalposts of the electoral fray. The proposal to introduce an 'oath of non-violence' in local government elections is one such measure. Getting republicans off the airwaves further extends the British policy of criminalising those fighting for Irish freedom.

◆

The Tories know that banning Sinn Fein from the British media will not make a jot of difference to its hardcore support. Instead, Britain's concern is to cut the republican communities off from wider support in Ireland and in Britain. The Independent Broadcasting Authority banned the Pogues' song *Streets of Sorrow/Birmingham Six* from the airwaves because the lyrics argue that 'convicted terrorists' are not guilty and that 'Irish people in general are at a disadvantage in British courts'. Such a suggestion, according to the IBA, might 'support or solicit, or invite support for, an organisation proscribed by the home secretary'.

In other words the slightest suggestion that Irish people might be oppressed is now an offence. The ban applies, not just to Sinn Fein, but to any organisation fighting for solidarity with the Irish people—such as the Irish Freedom Movement.

This latest clampdown should come as no surprise to supporters of Irish freedom. The IRA's success over the summer has been an embarrassment to Margaret Thatcher, who had gone on record as promising to defeat terrorism. Something had to be done. With the review of the Anglo-Irish agreement pending, a hard line had the added benefit of placating Loyalists demanding the reintroduction of internment without trial.

◆

Opposition spokesmen and liberal commentators, however, have been shocked by Thatcher's latest round of restrictive measures, which they have condemned as a gross infringement of civil liberties. But Thatcher's attack did not appear out of the blue. The Tory government has spent the past decade paving the way for strong-arm tactics both in Ireland and at home. In this period, the opposition has crumbled before the onslaught and imitated the government's posturing against everything from football hooliganism to 'mafia-style racketeering' in Northern Ireland. Now that the government is producing the punchline, those who went along with it can only flap their hands in impotence, weakly protesting that they didn't know it would all end like this.

So long as Thatcher's opponents support Britain's war in Ireland, their arguments against restrictions on civil rights hold no water.

The opposition's objection is that the new measures will not help to defeat the IRA or defend the British state. But if the official opposition truly believes that Irish republicans are 'evil Godfathers', argue the Tories, then surely it makes sense to get them off the box and into jail by whatever means are necessary? It's a winning argument.

◆

For the duration of the Irish War, the British media have been active accomplices of the British state. The number of disinterested media investigations into the war can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Programmes which have contradicted the official view of the IRA as 'murdering psychopaths' have never been shown. Instead, journalists have faithfully reproduced RUC and British Army press releases. The 'independence' the British media bosses claim they want to uphold has never existed in relation to Ireland.

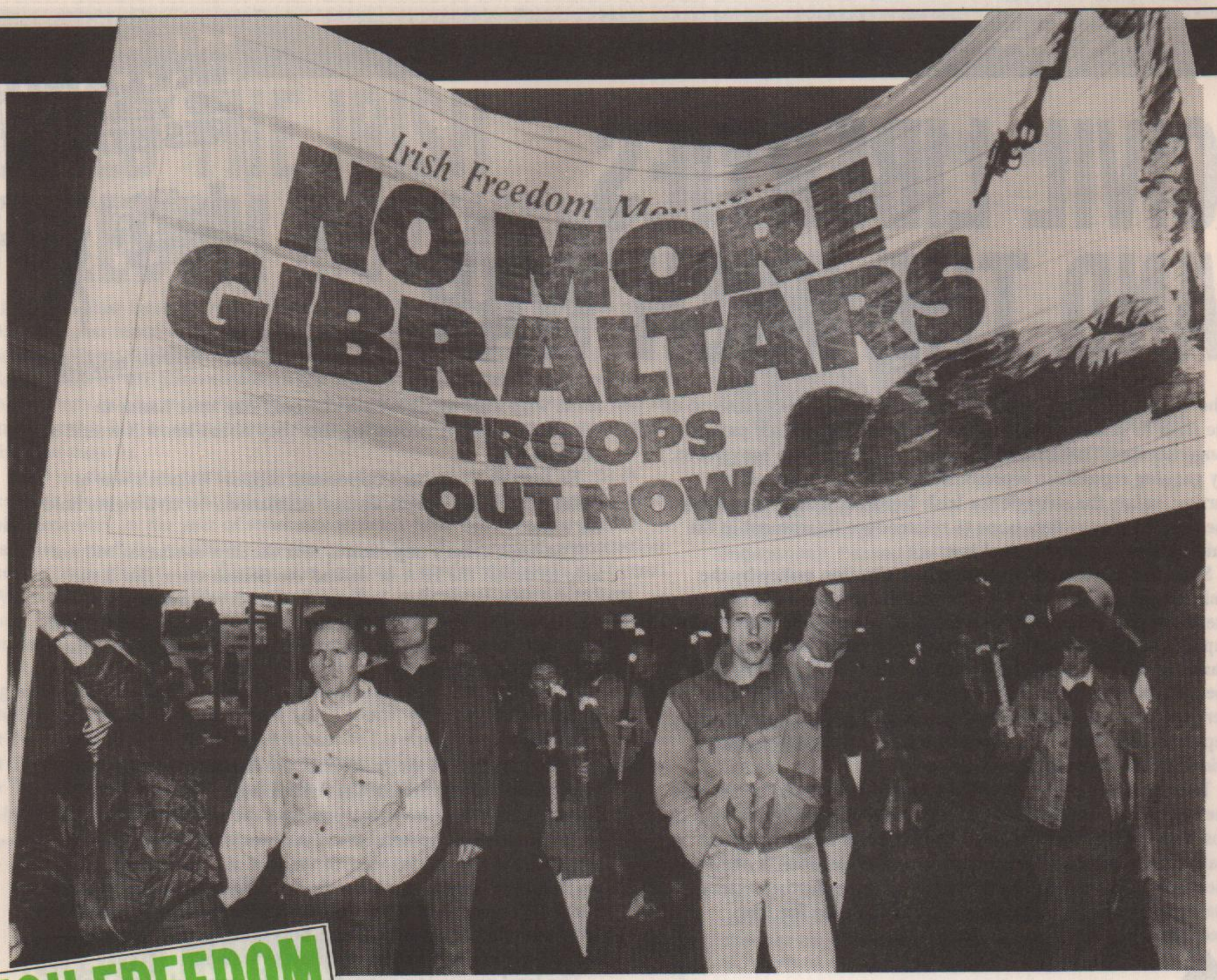
The legal profession correctly sees the removal of the right to silence as a gross infringement of civil liberties. It discusses this, however, as if a normal jury system operated in Northern Ireland. But court cases there are little more than a procedure for establishing how successful police interrogations have been in extracting information. The British legal system in Northern Ireland is, in the words of former British commander-in-chief General Frank Kitson, 'little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public'. The British legal system, which many fear is now being brought into disrepute, has been in disrepute for many years in Ireland.

The real lesson to be drawn from recent events is that we cannot resist these repressive measures by defending the very institutions which have long been used to attack the nationalist people and deny them their rights. For us then, the way to oppose state repression in Ireland and in Britain is to take sides in the Irish War. Through exposing the myth that the Irish liberation movement is a criminal conspiracy, and upholding the right of Irish nationalists to fight for freedom from British colonial rule, we can make a convincing case against every instance of British state bans and interference in Irish affairs, and ultimately, in affairs at home.

◆

To help turn the tables in the propaganda war, the IFM is organising a national conference in London early in 1989. Called When the War Comes Home, the conference will examine the role of the Irish War in British politics (see back page for details). The best way we can oppose the Tory clampdown on civil liberties is by building a solidarity movement in this country that can help end the Irish War.

If you want to contribute to future issues of the bulletin, or find out more about our activities, including the conference, write to *Irish Freedom*, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX, or phone (01) 729 0414.



Pandora Anderson

IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN ACTION

The Irish Freedom Movement has been very active over the past weeks. Here we report on some of the major initiatives we have organised. If you want more information about our future activities, look on page 2 for details of an IFM branch in your area, or contact us on (01) 729 0414 or write to IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX

NO MORE GIBRALTARS!

Almost 500 people marched through north London on Friday 7 October on a torchlit demonstration called at short notice, to mark the end of the Gibraltar inquest into the SAS executions of three unarmed Irish republicans.

The march, demanding 'No more Gibraltars! Troops out now!', was our answer to the inquest verdict that the killing of Mairead Farrell, Daniel McCann and Sean Savage was 'justified'. For supporters of Irish freedom, Gibraltar was the latest act in Britain's unjust war of occupation in Ireland.

Two days before the demo, 300 people packed into London's Conway Hall to hear Mick Hume, author of the Irish Freedom Movement's handbook, *The Irish War* and barrister Anthony Jennings discuss Gibraltar's implications.

Jennings showed how judges have given the Army and police the legal right to shoot Irish suspects. In the key case, the shooting of a young Irish farmer with no IRA connections in 1974, Lord Diplock ruled that it was 'reasonable' for a soldier to kill him on the assumption that 'he was likely sooner or later to participate in acts of violence'. Hume said Gibraltar confirmed that the law is, in the words of General Frank Kitson, 'little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public'. He outlined the aims of the Irish Freedom Movement: to convince people that there is a war on, and that they should support the struggle for Irish self-determination.

A collection at the meeting raised almost £800 for the Holloway Road 30 Defence Campaign.

The torchlit demonstration was not the only quick-response action we organised in connection with Gibraltar. On 6 September, the day the inquest began, the Irish Freedom Movement held a picket of the Army Careers Information Office in London. Our message was that the Gibraltar Three were soldiers in a war between an oppressed people fighting for their freedom and an occupying military power. More than 60 people attended the picket, and then went on to a slide show and discussion held at Conway Hall in central London. The slide show 'Derry: a people at war' was presented by Joe Boatman and was followed by a lively discussion.

Denis Ryan

Holloway Road 30 Defence Campaign

FIGHTING ALL THE WAY!

The Holloway Road 30 were arrested and charged under the Public Order Act when right-wing thugs attacked the Irish Freedom Movement's anti-internment march in north London on Saturday 6 August. The police who had harassed marchers throughout with riot vans, waded in to arrest stewards and others as they moved up to defend the demonstration from these attacks.

The IFM has launched a defence fund and we have been fighting the frame-ups in the courts. The campaign has received widespread support from trade union branches, Labour Party wards, student unions and solidarity organisations. Over £3000 has been raised as a result.

At the preliminary hearings we had a taste of what we could expect from the courts. In the case of one Irish defendant a discussion took place between our barrister and the magistrate over bail conditions. The barrister explained that the defendant was unemployed, saying that this was not unusual given the difficulties many recent Irish immigrants to London faced in finding work. The magistrate demanded to know why, if it was not unusual, was the defendant in England in the first place, and persisted in asking why 'these people come over here if they can't find jobs'.

This outburst highlights what we are up against. As far as the courts are concerned, our defendants are guilty simply because they are Irish or because they attended a demonstration demanding that British troops get out of Ireland. So far three defendants have been found guilty and handed hefty fines. Another defendant has been threatened with a custodial sentence. The magistrate is awaiting a probation report before sentencing him.

We set up the Holloway Road Defence Campaign for two reasons: first, we uphold the principle of taking responsibility for defending people who attend events we organise in support of the Irish liberation struggle; and second it is vital that we win the remaining cases to establish our right to demonstrate free from police harassment. We need funds to carry on the fight. Show your support by rushing donations to the defence fund (make cheques or postal orders payable to the Holloway Road 30 Defence Fund). Get your trade union/student union/political group to pass a motion in support of those arrested. Send donations to: Holloway Road 30 Defence Campaign, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.

Charles Longford

Courtney

The following organisations have passed motions in support of the Holloway Road 30:

NUM Calverton branch; Stockport NUR; TGWU 6/522 branch, Liverpool; Wakefield Hospital Nupe; Middlesex Hospital Cohse; Crook Ucatt; Wolverhampton NUJ; Birmingham NUJ; Hackney NUT; CPSA North West Region DHSS; CPSA South East London DHSS; Camden Nalgo; Ealing Nalgo; Waltham Forest Nalgo; Hammersmith Nalgo EC; Nalgo Met District Black Workers' Group; North London Polytechnic Nalgo; MSF Manchester; Hammersmith Trades Council Irish sub-committee; Stop the Strip Searches Campaign; Clifton/Hotwell ward Labour Party, Bristol; Claremont ward Labour Party, Salford; Longsight ward Labour Party, Manchester; St Peters ward Labour Party; Haringey Labour Group; Polytechnic of North London SU; University College London SU; St John's College, Manchester SU.

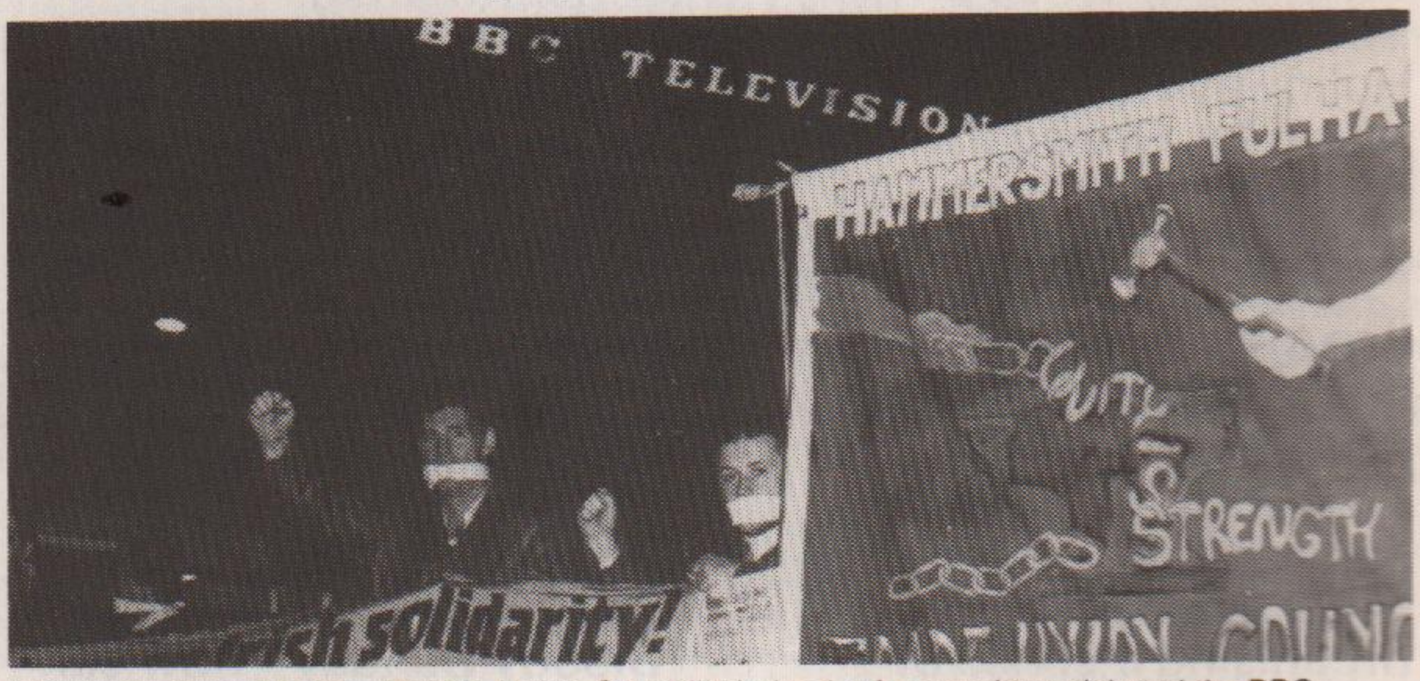
SHOOT-TO-KILL IN DRUMNAKILLY

On 30 August 1988 the SAS shot dead three IRA volunteers in Drumnakilly, County Tyrone. The three volunteers were set up for assassination by Margaret Thatcher who threatened a 'new policy' against the IRA after eight British soldiers were killed in a bomb blast on the Omagh Road.

The executions in County Tyrone proved yet again that the only 'new policy' the British government can come up with to deal with Irish resistance is the age-old strategy of military repression. This was the message we took to Downing Street when we organised a 120-strong picket the very next day.

Paula McCarthy

Charles Longford



Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Union Council's Ireland sub-committee picketed the BBC Television Centre in west London on Wednesday 9 November in protest at the media ban on Sinn Fein. The picket, supported by West London IFM, handed out over 500 leaflets to BBC employees. The picket was one in a series of events organised by the Trades Council which will culminate in a public meeting in Hammersmith Town Hall on 6 December. Speakers at this meeting include Sinn Fein councillor Brendan Curran, Lord Gifford, Jake Ecclestone (NUJ), John Fitzpatrick (IFM), Janet Clarke (Broadwater Farm) and John Simmance (Trades Council). The meeting, chaired by Oliver Donohue, starts at 7.30pm and admission is £1 waged/50p unwaged.

SCOTTISH BAN ON IRISH SOLIDARITY

Labour-controlled Strathclyde regional council banned a Glasgow march in support of Irish freedom at the beginning of October, then tried to intimidate those attending a rally by organising a huge police presence outside. Despite this, 350 people crowded into Glasgow City Hall to hold a rally which was chaired by IFM organiser Derek Owen. The speakers were Jackie Donnelly of Sinn Fein, Una Gillespie of the Lifers Campaign, NUM member Dave Temple, Josie O'Kane from the Republican Bands Alliance, and Alan Harding of the Holloway Road 30 Defence Campaign. Every speaker denounced the ban and declared their support for the Irish liberation struggle.

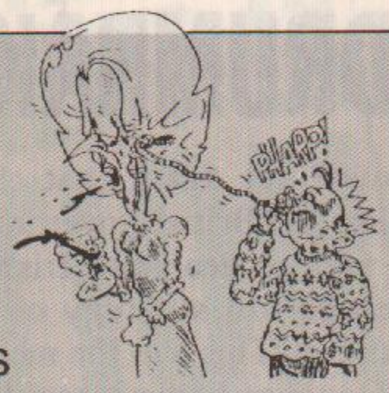
Media bans
'YOU CAN'T SILENCE THE IRISH WAR!'

Fifty people attended an IFM picket of the home office on Friday 21 October to protest against the government's media ban on Sinn Fein and its supporters. The picket, organised at short notice, broke the government's latest attempts to silence opposition to its war in Ireland.
Alex Farrell

JOIN THE LONDON IRISH FREEDOM FLUTE BAND!

The IFM has set up a flute band in London.

If you want to join (no previous experience necessary but preferable) and get involved in building the band contact Nat on (01) 729 0414 or write to LIFFB, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.



Spoil Maggie's Christmas

IFM CHRISTMAS BENEFIT SOCIAL
Wednesday 21 December
The Victoria
Holloway Road
Music by *Finnegans Wake*
8 'till late Entrance £2
(includes buffet)

LONDON IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT FORUMS
To mark the twentieth anniversary of the start of 'the troubles' we are organising a series of forums to discuss the issues raised by the struggle for Irish independence.
The meetings will be held fortnightly, starting on Wednesday 30 November, at 7.30pm in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (Holborn tube)

The forums will include:
Wednesday 30 November: The civil rights movement—how the war began?
Wednesday 14 December: Law and the Irish War
Wednesday 18 January: Women at war
Wednesday 1 February: Seventeen years after Bloody Sunday—how can the war be ended?

Entrance £1 waged/50p unwaged or £3/£1.50 for all four

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 30 November: First Irish Forum (see opposite)
Tuesday 6 December: South London IFM video showing: 'The funeral of Larry Marley'
Wednesday 14 December: Second Irish Forum
Wednesday 21 December: Christmas benefit social
Wednesday 18 January: Third Irish Forum
Friday 27 January: *No More Bloody Sundays!* rally at Caxton House, 7pm
Saturday 28 January: Remember Bloody Sunday demonstration
Saturday 28 January: Social after the Bloody Sunday march: Sidings Community Centre, Kilburn, 8pm
Wednesday 1 February: Fourth Irish Forum
Saturday 18 February: IFM conference: When the War Comes Home (see back page)

Pandora Anderson

SELECTIVE OPPRESSION?

THE IRA's recent offensive against British forces in Ireland, Britain and Europe led to a growing chorus of demands for the reintroduction of internment without trial. The whole debate this generated highlights the absurdity of the arguments and, more importantly, how worried the British establishment really is.

The notion of selective internment (called for by Unionist politicians and supported by sections of backbench Tories) is absurd. Whatever it is called, everybody knows who internment would be aimed against; nobody imagines that the Army is going to pick up Catholic bishops. Internment in 1971 was also selective—it's just that the selection was not a very good one from the Army's point of view.

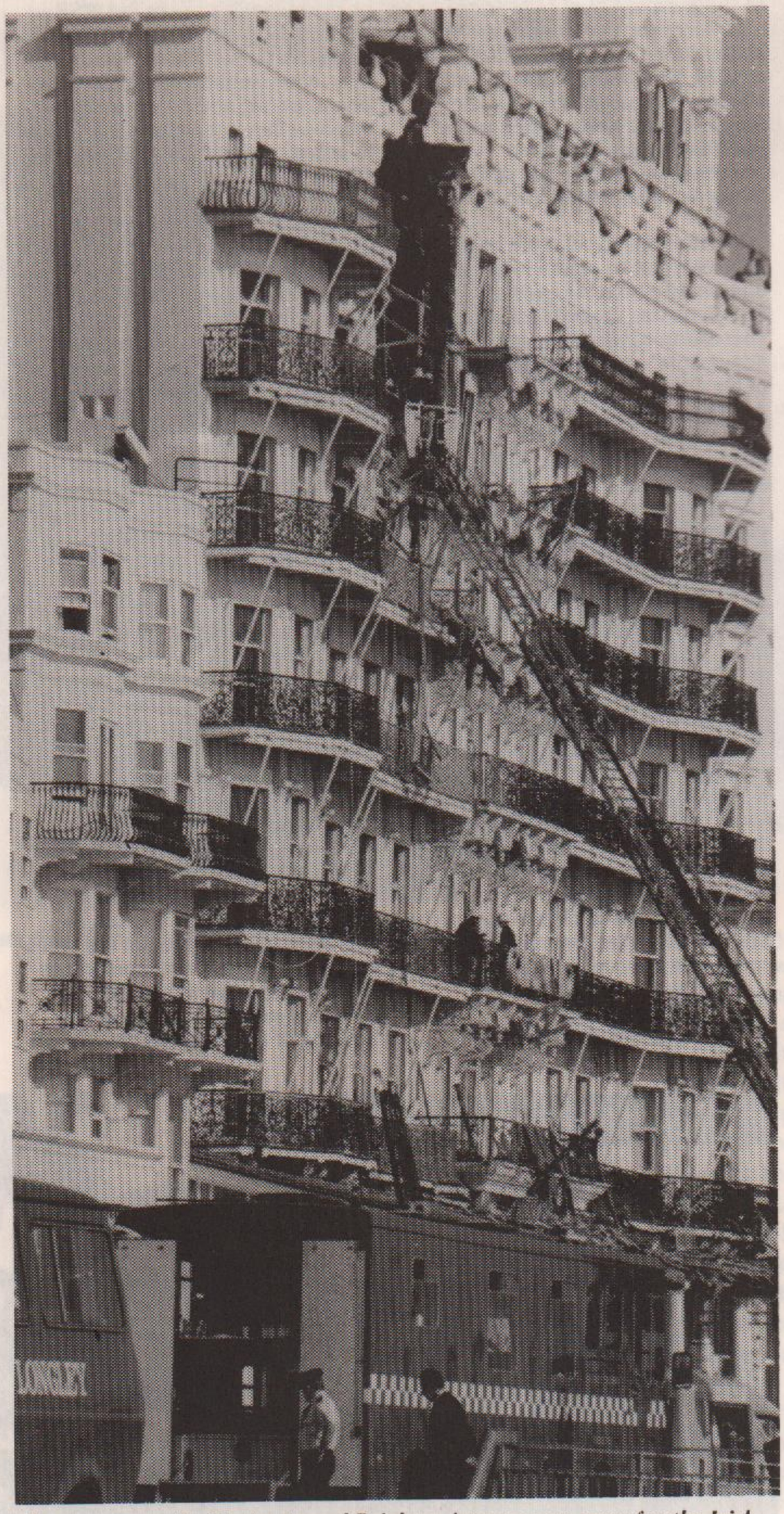
Many of those arrested had not been active republicans since the forties and fifties. Among those lifted was a blind man and a man of 77 who had been jailed in 1929. In Armagh troops arrived to pick up a man who had been dead for four years. Although these errors were soon rectified, the problem for Britain was that every repressive raid only created a new layer of angry republicans ready to take up the gun.

The implication behind the call for selective internment is that the nationalist people who took on the British Army after 1971 and queued to join the IRA did so because they were outraged by the Army's inefficiency in picking up the wrong people. This is nonsense. The nationalist people took up arms because they rejected Britain's right to drag any Irishman out of his bed at four in the morning to be locked up at her majesty's pleasure.

No doubt after 20 years of war, British intelligence would be better than it was in 1971, but that underlying conflict remains. Internment is internment, no matter how selective. A selective armed swoop on nationalist areas in the dead of night could not be anything other than an attack on the entire community. The danger of a similar response to last time is always on the cards. This is why the Tories have rejected the call.

What this debate revealed is that no matter how hard the British establishment tries to contain the struggle, it is always forced back to consider the use of a classic weapon of colonial warfare. The fact that senior Tories are debating the question proves that they not only cannot escape the reality of the war, but they haven't a clue how to defeat the Irish resistance.

Kevin Hughes
London



David Rourke

Four years on the Tories turned Brighton into a no-go zone for the Irish

FORTRESS BRIGHTON

MARGARET Thatcher may arrogantly declare that she is beating the 'terrorists', but she still needs 2000 police, submarines, the SAS and an unspecified number of Army personnel to walk 'freely' to her own annual conference in Brighton. But it was not only the Tories, but local Irish people who were under siege in Brighton this year. The operation was part of the continuing law and order panic to justify increasing state surveillance and repression.

The IRA bombed the Tory cabinet at Brighton's Grand Hotel in October 1984. The authorities used the Tories' return to Brighton to launch 'Operation Radcot', an exercise in military policing and creating a public paranoia. Posters plastered all over Brighton urged people to report anything suspicious to the police. For 'suspicious', read Irish.

Long before the conference, the police orchestrated a campaign to raise public fears. The sea front was closed off outside the Ramada Hotel after the IRA bombed Mill Hill barracks in north London. The fact that this operation took place two months and 60 miles away from the Tory conference was never raised. A duplicated letter was sent out by the police asking all bed and breakfast landladies to report immediately anybody leaving suddenly or paying by cash. Irish residents were picked up and interrogated in their homes.

Brighton was like a police state. Ludicrous false alarms maintained the panic and the atmosphere of strict surveillance. Suitcases of clothes on the beach were blown up, as was white witch Margaret Bristow's book of spells–left in a briefcase on a coach from London.

The Tory conference has been a clear example of how the Tories will use the Irish question to step up their repressive apparatus at home.

James Heartfield
Brighton

BEWARE OF INFORMERS

THE latest government bans on republican speakers and the confiscation of republican funds are not the only way state attacks on the supporters of Irish freedom in Britain take place. In the last few months several incidents of Special Branch informers and harassment have come to light.

In Edinburgh the Special Branch used the pressure of drug convictions to recruit one Maurice Sweeney to infiltrate and inform upon the Rising Phoenix Republican Band and the local Revolutionary Communist Party supporters' group. He was discovered when another young man was approached by the Branch. This man, however, wisely exposed Sweeney and the Branch—and now faces regular police harassment.

Young members of the band in the west of Scotland have been picked up and submitted to interrogations and propositions of informer work and money. Friends of republicans visiting from Ireland have been arrested and interrogated. In each case the police have used threats to family, past convictions and bribes to pressurise their victims.

They don't need to put laws through parliament to criminalise supporters of Irish freedom. To them we are criminals to be bullied and harassed at their leisure. 'John', the Special Branch man controlling informers in Edinburgh, apparently has been boasting that he was among the right-wing thugs at the August anti-internment march stirring them to attack the IFM and helping to frame the Holloway Road 30.

Thatcher's state is willing to use every underhand method against us. We have to be on guard. But the frequency and clumsiness of their efforts to date shows they are getting scared by our movement. It is a sign we can put them on the run.

Nick Flynn
Edinburgh

DUNGARVAN ANTI-STATE OPPRESSION COMMITTEE

I AM writing on behalf of the Dungarvan Anti-State Oppression Committee to expose the blatant example of state oppression against a political activist. He is Terence Moroney, a 27-year old married man of Dungarvan, County Waterford.

Mr Moroney became politically active during the H-Block Campaign of 1981. He worked in the general election campaign when the late hunger-striker Kevin Lynch was a candidate in the Waterford constituency. During this period he joined the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

On 15 February 1988 his home was searched by plain-clothes and uniformed police. As a result of the search he was charged with possession of 'incriminating documents' contrary to Section 12 of the Offences Against the State Act 1939, and on the basis of these he was also charged with membership of the Irish National Liberation Army.

These so-called 'incriminating documents' were simply five 1988 calendars, 17 posters, three booklets on the recent history of the IRSP and two song books. All of these items can be purchased openly, not only in the Republic of Ireland, but also in Britain and America. He received these charges on 18 August to appear in court on 14 September 1988.

This ludicrous situation can only be put into one category and that is it's a backdoor form of internment. It's in the tradition of McCarthyism in the USA in the 1940s and 1950s. It also shows the naked fear of the Twenty-six County establishment of anything that may endanger the status quo and bring forward the day of the emergence of the working class into the political arena.

This is an obvious attempt by the state to smash the left and if the state is not stopped in its tracks on this latest tactic of oppression, anyone involved in campaigns perceived by the state to be a threat is liable to be jailed on a trumped up charge.

This is no time for complacency as it's obvious that the long-term implications of these types of charges hold frightening prospects for progressive movements and the working class in general. If they get away with this who will be next? We would ask people to bring up these types of cases in their trade unions, organisations etc, and get them greater publicity before it's too late to confront them.

Letters of solidarity or financial support are more than welcome.
Jon Gaezley
Dungarvan Anti-State Oppression Committee

(This letter has been shortened. Messages of support will be passed on to the Committee.)

JOHN 'PADDY' DONOVAN

JOHN 'Paddy' Donovan of Bow, London was buried in Leyton on Monday 22 August. As the coffin was lowered into the ground, the Jacket Potatoes played many of his favourite tunes, and mourners paid tribute to a man whose life was given to the struggle for freedom particularly for his native Ireland.

Born in 1907, he witnessed at first hand the brutal effects of the Black & Tans and the regular British Army on the population of West Cork during the fight for independence. Emigrating to the United States in 1923, Paddy returned to Europe to fight against the fascists in the Spanish Civil War. George Orwell comments upon his bravery a number of times in his book *Homage to Catalonia.*

Coming to Britain in 1936, he immediately plunged himself into the many workers' protests such as the hunger marches which were occuring at the time. After the Second World War he again resumed activity in anti-imperialist politics and was a friend of many of the African revolutionaries such as George Padmore, who inspired the many struggles for independence in Africa in the fifties and sixties.

Paddy was also very active in the fight to end partition, such as the Anti-Partitionist League of the fifties. He was at the founding conference of the Troops Out Movement in 1974, and actively supported the building of a withdrawal movement until illness kept him housebound six months before his death.

Many Irish political activists remember Paddy for the encouragement and inspiration he gave them. The many messages of sympathy and floral tributes also showed the wide range of friendships Paddy had formed during his life, ranging from as far afield as New Zealand to Ireland, and in particular amongst the Irish community in his own area of east London. Appropriately the largest floral tribute was in the form of the Irish tricolour.

The Friends
of John 'Paddy' Donovan

FINE GAEL ARD FHEIS

IN Dublin last week the theme of the Fine Gael Ard Fheis was its commitment to a 'Just Society'. Sean Barrett, the party's spokesman on justice, made it clear during the extradition debate that this commitment did not extend to 'terrorists' and pledged that republicans 'would find no refuge here'.

This statement was hardly surprising. Fine Gael's 'Just Society' has always been based upon the repudiation of the republican struggle in the Six Counties. The aspirations of the nationalist minority have been contemptuously disregarded in favour of placating Whitehall. The 'Just Society' is borrowed from the Tory administration which has shamelessly denied any form of justice to 'its' Irish community, either in Northern Ireland or in Britain.

The Ard Fheis was an occasion for Fine Gael to celebrate its continued subservience to Westminster. Alan Dukes, Fine Gael's leader, reiterated his commitment to that 'monument to the struggle for Irish freedom'–the Anglo-Irish agreement. Conceived by his predecessor Garret FitzGerald as a diversion from a worsening economic crisis, its stated objective was to boost constitutional nationalism in order to isolate and defeat the armed struggle. The sole achievement of the agreement has been to commit the Irish security forces to abetting the imperialist Crown forces in suppressing nationalists. The role of the so-called Free Republic has never been clearer.

Anti-republican allies: Garret FitzGerald and Margaret Thatcher

The present Fianna Fail administration is no exception. Its collusion with Thatcher, particularly with regard to extradition, has been a major plank in suppressing republican sentiment in the South. They in fact pose a greater threat to the republican movement than do Fine Gael. They hypocritically manipulate the Irish working class into believing that Irish freedom can be achieved only in consultation with the British colonisers of Ireland. Like Fine Gael, their 'just society' is based upon the biggest injustice of them all–the forcible partition of Ireland.

The Irish people have every interest in establishing a 'just society'. But in the context of a divided Ireland dominated by British imperialism, such a society can only be forged through the removal of partition. When the objective of self-determination has been realised, then hopefully the role of these charlatans and cheats, who for so long have sabotaged this realisation, will be remembered. In a post-partition society, it is they who will 'find no refuge here'.
Colm O'Hanlon
South London

Bloody Sunday taught Irish nationalists that they would have to fight for their freedom

NO MORE BLOODY SUNDAYS!

Sunday 30 January 1989 marks the seventeenth anniversary of the day British troops shot dead 14 men on a peaceful demonstration in the Irish city of Derry. *Mick Hume* talked to one man who lost a loved one on that Bloody Sunday, and two women whose relatives have since been shot by the British forces of occupation

They say that everybody in America knows where they were on 22 November 1963, when president Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. The Irish equivalent is Bloody Sunday. Everybody knows where they were on 30 January 1972, the day 14 men were assassinated by British paratroopers who fired upon a massive civil rights march in Derry, Northern Ireland. Everybody you ask in Derry knows they could have died that day: one tells you he slipped running from the firing just as the boy next to him got hit, another says he would have been walking beside his best friend who died, but stayed home to look after his children instead. In Britain, Bloody Sunday may be a blurred memory. But the people of Derry have not forgotten. And few will ever forgive.

Cities like Derry in occupied Ireland are a dark mystery to most British people, shrouded in clouds of government propaganda. It's an atmosphere added to by the smog that hangs over the city on a winter evening. Derry has no natural gas and no smokeless fuel. As a colonial outpost, it is denied the comforts its British overlords enjoy at home. So the chimneys of the nationalist areas pump pollution into the Irish sky. By dusk the air in the backstreets of the Bogside district is as black as Jack the Ripper's London.

But on Bloody Sunday, the London government reached out to the edge of the Bogside and committed a crime that killed twice as many people in the space of 10 minutes as Jack did in his whole career.

'The British government planned at cabinet level, to put our people off the streets, to shoot them if necessary', remembers Jim Wray. 'They were prepared to take that chance, they took that chance, and they gave us Bloody Sunday.'

Jim Wray lives in the Bogside. He was on the march on 30 January 1972. So was his oldest son, also named Jim. But when Jim junior came home, he was in a coffin with five British bullets in his body. Now his father sits in front of the fire, waiting to start his night shift at work. He lights another Woodbine and begins his version of the events of Bloody Sunday. You can tell it's a story that has run through his mind a thousand times before.

'The civil rights movement was people on the streets, looking for justice which we're denied in the North of Ireland. We were not "terrorists", we weren't even

armed, 20 or 30 000 people marching at a time. We were an embarrassment to the British government, who had no answer to it. So the British government planned to scare us off the streets for good.'

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The British media say Bloody Sunday was the fault of 'IRA terrorists' who fired at troops from the march. But there were no IRA men on the march. And according to Jim Wray, it was only when the paratroopers knew for sure they had a 'soft' target that they went in for the kill.

'During the parade the British Army shot two members of the public, to find out if the IRA were part of the parade. If the IRA had returned that fire you wouldn't have had a Bloody Sunday. The British Army would have known that the IRA were there and, make no mistake, they hadn't the guts to face the IRA. They say they were shot at first. I've photographs of the British Army entering the area on Bloody Sunday in bunches of a dozen. Well, if the IRA had been firing at them they would soon have sorted themselves out, they wouldn't bunch.'

When the British Army opened fire, Jim Wray's son was one of seven Bloody Sunday victims shot in the back. 'My son had been brought down, he was hit in the back, and he lay wounded on the ground. One man saw Jim move and knew my lad was only injured. So he made an attempt to get out to Jim, and as he approached the Army opened fire.

'Jim's body was lying there as a trap and anybody that went to save him was going to be shot.

'Well later the British Army came into the area, they passed over his body, walked into an alleyway. One of the paratroopers took up position about nine feet behind Jim, the other two went through the alleyway. They shot—murdered—three young people, and as they came back again one of them kicked Jim's body into the gutter. Jim lay there, he waited for a minute, then he

Phil Murphy

Jim Wray lost his son on Bloody Sunday

raised his head to look in the direction of the soldiers. He didn't know there was one still behind him. As he looked up they shot him, from a distance of nine feet, in his back, as he lay in the gutter. He was a wounded man already. My son was shot five times on Bloody Sunday, three times in the back. He was 22 years old.'

Jim Wray scoffs at the idea that the Army was out of control that day. He knows the British government deliberately murdered his son. But he doesn't only blame the Tory regime of Edward Heath that ordered the executions. He blames Labour premier Harold Wilson—'the raincoat gangster'—who sent in the troops in 1969 as 'peacekeepers'. 'They didn't come in here waving olive branches, they came in here with high-velocity rifles trained on the nationalist areas.' And he blames every British government that has continued the occupation of Ireland since his son's death.

The bitterness and contempt the Irish feel for the British authorities is a monument to Bloody Sunday as obvious as the stone memorial that stands at the edge of the Bogside. As Jim Wray spoke a young girl came in delivering milk. The bottles reminded him of the battles the Bogside had seen since the 'troubles' began. 'The cheapest weapon the Irish people have had to fight back with', he says laughing, 'is a milk bottle and a spot of petrol. Yet Britain has not thought to tell the dairies to put their milk in cartons. The brutality of the British Army is only matched by its stupidity'.

The brutality of the British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary on Bloody Sunday and since showed people like Jim Wray that the Irish have to fight for their freedom. 'The British government takes no notice of elections. They say "Vote, but vote the way I tell you to vote". Where's the democracy in that? The IRA is the only way we'll win democracy.

'The freedom fighter of the IRA is fighting to give us back our dignity.'

As I left Jim Wray to get ready for work, I passed his graffiti-covered gable wall. Scrawled at the centre is the legend 'JOHN WRAY YOU'RE DEAD MEAT'. It's a threat to another of Jim's sons, written by a member or members unknown of the British security forces. And it's a reminder, if any were needed, that Bloody Sunday was no one-off act of British terror. A lot of people in Britain who were outraged by Bloody Sunday don't even blink when British Army and RUC gunmen shoot republicans in cold blood today. It's different, they say, these men are terrorists. In fact it's just the same.

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Before Bloody Sunday, many nationalist men and women in Northern Ireland still hoped they could achieve justice by demonstrating peacefully. After that act of slaughter, many more were convinced that the British authorities would only bend before armed resistance. Those who support the republican movement today are the same as those who marched for civil rights: ordinary people trying to cope with the extraordinary situation of life in a British colony. People like Julie Doherty and Lynne Brown, whose husband and brother were two IRA volunteers shot dead in Derry, in December 1984.

Julie Doherty works for a photography outfit in the Bogside. She is a war widow with a young son. Her husband Danny was on active service when

THE ROAD TO BLOODY SUNDAY

● BEGAN in the late sixties when Catholics in Northern Ireland started a peaceful civil rights movement to protest against Britain's sectarian system that gave Protestants privileged access to jobs, houses and political power in the 'province'. Their marches were met with ferocious repression from Loyalists and the sectarian Royal Ulster Constabulary.

● CONTINUED in 1969 when Loyalists launched an anti-Catholic pogrom, with the RUC leading mobs in attacks on the Bogside district of Derry, and the British government sending in troops to keep its Northern Ireland colony under control.

● REACHED the last mile in August 1971 when the Unionist regime and Edward Heath's Tory government imposed internment without trial, rounding up hundreds of nationalists in concentration camps, and the nationalists launched a series of anti-internment marches in defiance of government bans.

● ENDED on 30 January 1972 when, after top level consultations between the government and Army chiefs, the paratroop regiment attacked a huge civil rights march in Derry. Troops shot dead 13 Irishmen on the spot and maimed many more, one of whom died within weeks. Bloody Sunday led to the virtual collapse of the Northern Ireland state and the imposition of direct rule from Westminster. On the nationalist side it caused strikes across Ireland, a riot in Downing Street, and had people queueing to join the IRA to fight for Irish freedom.

undercover troops and police shot him 30 times in the back, as he rode a motorbike into the grounds of Derry's Gransha hospital. She is suspicious of foreign journalists. 'I had an American interview me once. When I saw his article it was like a storybook, I was waiting for a romantic IRA man to start running across the hills to the sound of romantic music. Don't write it like that, it's not like that. It's too painful to be romantic.'

I don't suppose there's anything romantic about meeting your husband in prison. 'Danny had been in jail since he was 17 when I got to know him,' says Julie Doherty. 'He was in Portlaoise in the South, and republicans get it even worse there than they do in the British jails. I visited him for three years. Five months after he got out we were married. We'd been married a year when he was shot.'

Julie Doherty doesn't think any specific incidents made her husband join the IRA. It 'just seemed natural' for a young nationalist who wanted to build a better Ireland. As a youngster Danny Doherty was a Catholic altar boy, in a town where being Catholic means being at the bottom of the pile.

'Danny was the same as a lot of young people in this town, he grew up with British soldiers everywhere, that's the thing that hits you.

'And you want to know why there are Brits walking your streets, you want to know why the RUC beat up your people, because when you're a wee'un you don't realise you're a second class citizen. And when you know why, you want to change it.'

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She is angry at the British media idea that IRA men are cowards who kill for kicks. 'I think for him to join the IRA it took a big kind of person', says Julie. 'You have to sit down and think "What if I killed a man?". People say the IRA are cold-blooded murderers, but with our Catholic upbringing and all, it's hard enough for the IRA to go out and shoot soldiers or policemen. It's hard being an IRA man, you have all these things to consider. I think you would have to be a special kind of person, really dedicated. Danny was really committed. He put the IRA in front of me. I minded coming second, I was his wife, but I supported them 100 per cent and I would never have said, "I don't allow you".'

Talking to Julie Doherty as she fiddles nervously with the wedding ring on a chain around her neck, you start to see what being 'an ordinary person in an extraordinary situation' means. 'We have the pressures of war', she says, 'and we still have the pressures of growing up, being married, you know the normal pressures you would have in England, on top of the war. I remember saying to him once when I was mad, "You think more of the 'RA than you do of me. I'm stuck in this house on my own. Why do you have to go out?". And he said, "Julie, I don't want my kid to have to go out and fight when he's 16. Do you want to sit here in 16 years time telling me you think our son's involved? I don't want that for him so I'm doing it now".

'He knew he wasn't going to win the war on his own, but he wanted to do something about it. And the way he knew to do something about it was to go out with a gun. And I really admired and respected him for it. It wasn't like "Oh, my hero" or anything. But he was really brave.'

Julie Doherty knew the dangers of being married to an IRA man in a war-zone.

She wasn't surprised when he was shot, 'but that didn't ease the pain. I think if it had been my son it would have hurt but I could always have another wee'un. But not another Danny. I used to wake him up at night and say, "If you die on me I'm gonna kill you". We're surrounded by death but you never get used to it. Every death's different to cope with. And his death was the thing I feared most of all.'

'Coping with it' is what a lot of Derry families have had to do in the years since Bloody Sunday. And the Fleming family from Gobnascale have had to cope with more than most. Sitting in the front of her family home with her sick mother coughing upstairs, Lynne Brown (née Fleming) told us about her brothers. Their pictures cover the walls. Three of them have been jailed by the British authorities for their belief in Irish freedom. And her youngest brother, William, died for the same cause, with 38 British bullets in his back, on the back of Danny Doherty's motorbike. In the same week her cousin, Kieran, drowned escaping from another British assassination squad.

'William was 19 when they shot him. All he'd known through his life was the war, the troubles started when he was only a child.' His face smiles down from the mantlepiece, a sharp young man dressed for a wedding. 'With my brothers being involved and being in jail, the family was always getting harassed, you know, the house getting raided. It wasn't really harassment to us after a while, that was just life. Sometimes we were raided four times in one week, twice in one day.'

British propagandists like to portray young men like William Fleming as the victims of 'tribal loyalty', who fought for an outdated cause just because their family expected them to.

Lynne Brown's not having any of that: 'William was very politically aware, always reading. It wasn't just that he went out because his brothers were in prison or because of family ties. He had his own reasons, he wasn't pushed into anything, he did it because he wanted to do it, believed in it.'

Julie Doherty and Lynne Brown don't pretend their men were 'innocent bystanders'. But they were war casualties, and the British government is to blame for the war. 'The way I look at it', says Lynne, 'William was a soldier and he was in an army, the IRA. If they hadn't got William he would have got some of them, that's war. The IRA aren't murderers, they're just fighting the enemy'. Julie takes it further. 'I would say my husband was murdered by the RUC and the British Army, because I believe these are war crimes. There was no warning or nothing, he hadn't even a chance to draw his weapon.'

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Both women still grieve for their loved ones, but neither wishes they had kept out of the conflict. Lynne: 'If William had been killed in a road crash you'd think it was a wild sorry way to die. But because he believed in what he was doing, it eased the burden on us.' Julie: 'Danny died fighting and when they fired the volley of shots over his grave I near burst with pride. I'd have been more content if he'd got a shot back at them.'

Jim Wray junior, Danny Doherty and William Fleming are just three of the many Derry people who would still be alive if Ireland was free and united.

Bloody Sunday may have been 17 years ago, but the nationalist community in Northern Ireland still lives with the fear of foreign assassins every day.

And, like Julie Doherty, thousands of them are 'more content' that their young men and women are getting a shot back at the British forces of occupation. Those in Britain who would call themselves socialists but condemn the IRA as 'terrorists' should mark Jim Wray's parting words, as we left him with his Woodbines and his memories: 'If you haven't the courage to walk with the freedom fighter, at least have the shame not to criticise him.'

RALLY

NO MORE BLOODY SUNDAYS!

Friday 27 January 7pm
Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19

THE LONGEST WAR

Kevin J Kelley, *The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA*, Zed Press, £9.95

A revised and updated edition of Kevin Kelley's *The Longest War* has recently been published. John Fitzpatrick spoke to the author, and reviews the book.

Kevin Kelley, as the name suggests, has Irish roots. They were, however, transplanted to the United States several generations back, and it was just another radical American student doing a tour of Europe who wandered over to Northern Ireland in 1971. 'I had been arrested by Mayor Daley's police at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, but even that bore no comparison to what I found on the streets of Belfast, which was war.' The impact of this experience led Kelley, years later as a freelance journalist, to embark on a history of the Irish War 'to inform a left audience in the US mostly, but also in Britain and Ireland'. *The Longest War*, which concentrates on the period from the sixties up to 1987, is a thorough and readable account of the whole business.

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At the centre of the book is the story of the development of Sinn Fein and the IRA into the organisations they are today. Kelley has done his research, and synthesised a wide range of sources, including many interviews with people on the ground. For anybody wanting the facts about the Irish War it is a book well worth reading.

Kelley describes himself as a 'socialist' with no formal links to any organisation. He has worked for a Democratic congressman, he backed Jesse Jackson in the Democratic primaries and he is supportive of Noraid's activities in the States; but he sees himself first and foremost as a writer. He is in fact an old-fashioned liberal, as the new epilogue, 'On the need for non-violence', makes clear. He argues for the IRA to lay down its weapons and for the republican movement to mobilise the whole population in a campaign of peaceful direct action and civil disobedience, such as refusal to pay rent, rates and fines.

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He appears to have forgotten much of the material in the main body of the book, from Burntollet to the hunger-strikes, about those who passively resist, even to the death. He has forgotten too the rent and rates strike of 1971 which involved a staggering 23 190 households. It was broken by the Payment for Debt Act which allowed the state to recoup rent and rates arrears by deductions from benefits. That sort of experience educated nationalists as to the limitations of passive resistance and the need for more forceful methods. To call for a return to the 'non-violent' tactics of the civil rights movement is to forget the lessons of the past 20 years.

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It is more than a memory lapse, however. In the short snatches of analysis in the book, such as those subtitled 'Why does Britain stay?' and 'The Provos move left' Kelley reveals an uncertain grasp of the political imperatives which bear both upon the British state and upon the republican movement. He does not really appreciate how little room for manoeuvre each side has. In one breath he can declare the necessity for the destruction of the Northern Ireland state, and in the next express his 'amazement' that Britain has not followed the US example of 'anti-poverty initiatives and affirmative action programmes to create a loyal clientele to buy off resistance'.

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Kelley vigorously defends his advice to the republican movement, claiming that violence is no longer 'politically effective or morally acceptable'. It can never succeed in defeating Britain and innocent deaths are 'inevitable and inseparable from the type of campaign' the IRA is forced to wage, so non-violent resistance must be tried. There is no doubt that war-weariness affects those who observe as much as those who participate, but moralistic wishful thinking is obviously easier to indulge in in Vermont than in the Six Counties themselves. It is as well that Kelley's political judgement is mostly confined to the concluding pages of an otherwise valuable book.

Joe Boatman

GETTING BEHIND THE LIES

John Conroy, *War as a Way of Life: A Belfast Diary*, Heineman, £12.95

John Conroy, an American journalist, spent many months in Belfast between 1980 and 1985. As a neutral observer, Conroy arrives at conclusions which are much closer to those of the republican movement than of the British establishment. As the title of his book suggests, his first and crucial difference with the British establishment's portrayal of the Irish struggle is that he acknowledges the existence of the war.

The British ruling class likes to conceal the fact that it is at war with the nationalist population of the Six Counties by portraying the 'troubles' as civilian strife between two equally bigoted and backward communities. In this scenario, the British Army is presented as magnanimously carrying out its duty of maintaining peace between the communities. It is a view which Conroy successfully criticises in his book.

Conroy recognises that there are distinct differences between the nationalist and Loyalist sides in the Six Counties. He notes that the Paisleyite journal the *Protestant Telegraph* refers to Catholics as 'Irish negroes'. Graffiti in the Loyalist Shankill area runs 'Kill all Taigs' (ie Catholics). The nationalist struggle, on the other hand, is a show of defiance against oppression, not a celebration of it. Nationalist graffiti is directed at the British presence, not Protestants.

Conroy poses the question as to why Catholics and Protestants should be so hostile in the Six Counties when they can live side by side in peace all over the world:

'In Catholic districts and lately in some Loyalist areas it is the British who are held to be at fault. At the end of World War II Britain gave the Unionists a guarantee saying that the North would remain part of the UK as long as a majority of its citizens wanted to belong. That sounds like the British sense of fair play only if you forget that the British ignored the wishes of the majority in order to create the state. That guarantee gives Ulster Unionists great licence. They have no reason to negotiate with Catholics and no need to share power with them.' (p125)

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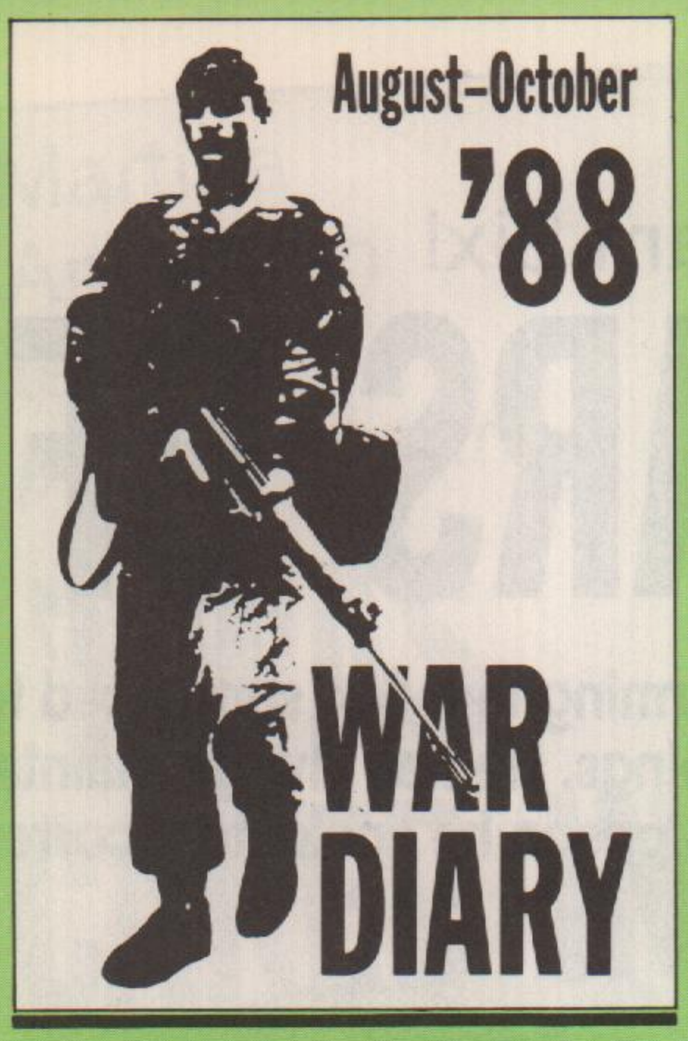
This explains the nature of the freedom struggle. Conroy correctly highlights two realities of the war which successive governments have attempted to conceal. First, the IRA's war is not against the Protestant community but against the nationalist community's real oppressor, the British state itself. And second, Britain, not the Loyalists, calls the shots in the Six Counties. Loyalist intransigence results not from an attachment to mystical religious sentiments, but from the material privileges which the connection with the British state guarantees.

It is no coincidence that the neutral Conroy should come to much the same conclusions as the republican movement about the role Britain plays in Northern Ireland. Conroy's objectivity is precisely what the British establishment fears. For years it has erected a wall of lies and distortions about the conflict in Ireland. By exposing the truth about Ireland, Conroy's book is a useful contribution to clarifying the issues at stake for people over here.

Donacha Clarke

THREE MONTHS IN THE IRISH WAR

★ **Monday 1 August:** One soldier dies and eight are injured in an IRA bomb attack on Inglis barracks, north London.
★ **Tuesday 2 August:** Six UDR soldiers are injured in a landmine explosion on the main Coalisland-Dungannon road.
★ **Wednesday 3 August:** The IRA executes a UDR soldier near Cookstown.
★ **Thursday 4 August:** Two building workers are shot dead after working on repairs to an RUC station in Co Fermanagh.
★ **Friday 5 August:** The IRA bombs a British Army barracks near Dusseldorf, West Germany. Unionist MPs and RUC spokesmen call for the reintroduction of internment without trial.
★ **Saturday 6 August:** More than 3000 people march on the annual anti-internment demonstration in London organised by the IFM after a week in which the press and politicians called for the march to be banned. Thirty marchers are arrested after right-wing thugs are allowed by the police to attack the march.
★ **Monday 8 August:** Two Catholics are gunned down in a random attack by a Loyalist murder squad in North Belfast.
★ **Wednesday 10 August:** Inla member James McPhilemy is shot dead by security forces at a checkpoint near Clady, Co Tyrone.
★ **Friday 12 August:** A regimental sergeant-major in the British Army is shot dead by an IRA unit in Ostend, Belgium.
★ **Monday 15 August:** Peter Rooney, charged with IRA membership by a Dublin court, is released on £12 500 bail. The *Sun* names Rooney as the fourth man in the Gibraltar IRA unit; in its earlier reports the 'fourth man' was supposed to be a woman.
★ **Tuesday 16 August:** Republican prisoners in Long Kesh protest against restrictions on free association and the transfer of 'high risk' prisoners within the jail—riot police go in.
★ **Wednesday 17 August:** The Inla kills Fred Otley, a member of the UVF involved in numerous recent sectarian murders.
★ **Saturday 20 August:** Eight soldiers are killed and 30 injured when the IRA bombs their coach near Omagh, Co Tyrone. Margaret Thatcher abandons her holiday in Cornwall to call a conference of her security chiefs.
★ **Monday 22 August:** A car-bomb kills a Royal Navy recruiting officer in Belfast.
★ **Tuesday 23 August:** Gardai secretly hand over Gerard Harte to the RUC, the first republican to be extradited under new laws. A car-bomb in Belfast city centre causes £4m damage to property.
★ **Wednesday 23 August:** Eight nationalists are interrogated at Gough barracks about the Omagh coach bombing. Thatcher and King meet at Downing Street to discuss how to respond to the escalating IRA campaign.
★ **Saturday 27 August:** Dublin extradites Robert Russell, one of 38 IRA men to escape from Long Kesh prison camp in 1983. Within hours violence erupts in Belfast and Derry.
★ **Tuesday 30 August:** The SAS assassinates three IRA volunteers at Drumnakilly in Co Tyrone. After weeks of IRA successes, the British media is exultant—'SAS rub out IRA rats' (*Daily Star*).
★ **Wednesday 31 August:** Two Irishmen are arrested on the German/Netherlands border.
★ **Sunday 4 September:** Talks between the SDLP and Sinn Fein, aimed at reaching a common nationalist strategy, break down.



★ **Tuesday 6 September:** The Gibraltar inquest begins.
★ **Thursday 8 September:** An IRA attack on Coagh RUC station, County Tyrone, injures 14 people, including five RUC men.
★ **Friday 9 September:** The IRA executes Colin Abernethy, an executive member of the Ulster Clubs, a Loyalist paramilitary outfit. The SDLP meets Fianna Fail leaders in Dublin and invites Unionists to open talks.
★ **Monday 12 September:** Two bombs explode at the home of top British civil servant in Northern Ireland, Kenneth Bloomfield.
★ **Wednesday 14 September:** West German police say IRA mole may have infiltrated the British Army of the Rhine.
★ **Tuesday 20 September:** Home secretary Douglas Hurd announces to the police superintendents' annual conference in Blackpool his proposal to seize IRA funds in British banks.
★ **Wednesday 21 September:** A 20lb IRA bomb explodes close to the heavily-guarded Belfast City Hall.
★ **Thursday 22 September:** Sinn Fein's Mitchel McLaughlin from Derry says that the British Labour Party's new policy document 'Towards a united Ireland' does not recognise the Irish people's right to self-determination and is 'out to lunch'.
★ **Monday 26 September:** The director of public prosecutions decides not to proceed with manslaughter charges against a soldier who shot dead nationalist Aidan McAnespie at a Border post in Aughnacloy, Co Armagh, last February.
★ **Wednesday 28 September:** Thatcher ventures into Northern Ireland protected by thousands of police and troops and visiting only the most secure Loyalist bastions. The visit is aimed at restoring the flagging morale of the security forces.
★ **Friday 30 September:** The Gibraltar inquest jury decides by nine to two that the three IRA volunteers gunned down by the SAS in March were 'lawfully killed'.
★ **Saturday 1 October:** The BBC withdraws *Panorama* programme which alleges that the SAS is not accountable to the Northern Ireland office.
★ **Tuesday 4 October:** The IRA blows up Brian Armour, vice-chair of the Northern Ireland Prison Officers' Association, in East Belfast for torturing republican prisoners. Labour Party spokesman Kevin McNamara condemns IRA for 'killing a trade unionist'.
★ **Thursday 6 October:** To coincide with the Tory conference, the trial begins in Winchester of three people found in the grounds of Northern Ireland secretary Tom King's home last summer. The Labour conference throws out a motion calling on it to 'set a date for British withdrawal'.
★ **Saturday 8 October:** Patrick McVeigh is arrested by gardai in Dundalk in the South.
★ **Monday 10 October:** A Portlaoise court orders the extradition of James Pius Clarke, one of 38 republicans to escape from Long Kesh in 1983.
★ **Tuesday 11 October:** An RUC man is shot dead by the IRA while working at an ice-cream parlour on the Lisburn Road, Belfast.
★ **Wednesday 12 October:** Home secretary Douglas Hurd tells the Tory conference in Brighton that a new Prevention of Terrorism Act would make it an offence to handle IRA money.
★ **Saturday 15 October:** Two men, including James Craig, a Belfast UDA commander, are killed in a gun attack on a pub in the city, claimed by the Ulster Freedom Fighters.
★ **Sunday 16 October:** An IRA car-bomb blows up a Belfast sales manager responsible for supplying materials for RUC barracks.
★ **Monday 17 October:** A police witness confirms that there is no evidence to link the three accused of conspiring to kill Tom King with the IRA.
★ **Tuesday 18 October:** Douglas Hurd announces a ban on television and radio interviews with members of the IRA, its youth and women's wings, Sinn Fein, Republican Sinn Fein, Saor Eire, the Inla, the Loyalist Red Hand Commandos, the UVF, the UDA and the UFF. The Winchester Three decide not to give evidence.
★ **Wednesday 19 October:** Sinn Fein representative Gerry MacLochlainn breaks the ban on interviews with republicans by appearing incognito on the BBC's *Kilroy* programme.
★ **Thursday 20 October:** Tom King announces that a suspect's right to silence is to be withdrawn in Northern Ireland.
★ **Sunday 23 October:** Sinn Fein spokesman Richard McAuley describes government plans to allow convictions on the word of a senior RUC officer as 'internment under another name'.
★ **Wednesday 26 October:** A Belfast post office transport manager, a part-time UDR member, is blown up in his car by an IRA booby-trap bomb.
★ **Thursday 27 October:** The Winchester jury finds Finbar Cullen (27), John Paul McCann (24) and Martina Shanahan (22)—all from the South of Ireland—guilty of conspiring to kill Tom King, by a majority of ten to two.
★ **Friday 28 October:** The Winchester Three are sentenced to 25 years each. Labour's Northern Ireland spokesman, Kevin McNamara, defends the Anglo-Irish agreement in a debate at Durham university, saying its success lies in 'stemming the seemingly irresistible rise of Sinn Fein'.
★ **Sunday 30 October:** Hundreds of Loyalists rally at Hillsborough Castle, Co Down, where the Anglo-Irish agreement was signed in 1985.

Mark Reilly

Free the Birmingham Six!

'14 YEARS OF HELL'

John Walker is one of the Birmingham Six, sentenced to life imprisonment for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings. He has always maintained that he was wrongfully convicted. From Long Lartin prison he spoke to a correspondent of *the next step*

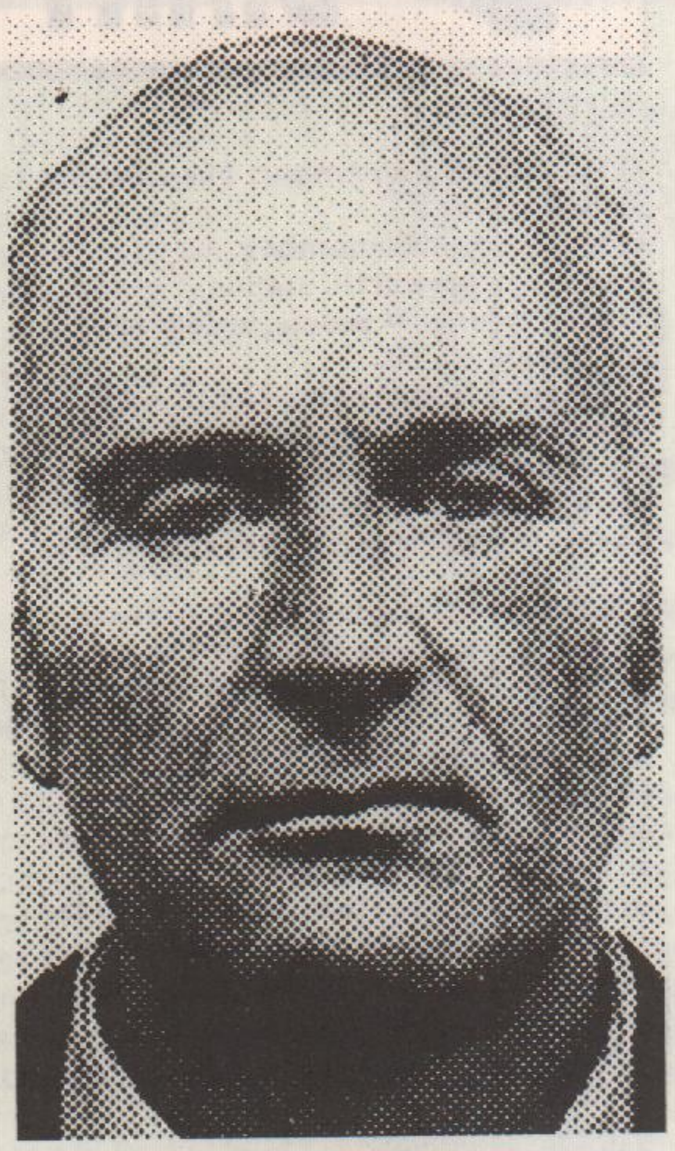
As you approach the fourteenth anniversary of your imprisonment, what are your thoughts about your case, especially since the house of lords rejected your appeal this year?

John Walker: 'The appeal was a watershed in an important way for me. All six of us went to the appeal with an open mind; we believed that the case for our innocence was sufficiently strong to budge them, and we were understandably quite hopeful about the outcome of the appeal. In other words, we felt that all the important legal arguments had been won. Nothing that happened during the appeal caused us to change our feelings about that. But of course our appeal was eventually rejected out of hand. That was a terrible blow, and one that made us realise that the whole thing was a charade, a game that we were never going to be allowed to win anyway. Now I'm more convinced than I've ever been that there is no such thing as British justice.

'You know, at the end of the day, the establishment just closed ranks on us in order to uphold our wrongful conviction. They conspired behind the scenes to pervert justice. What we were confronted with at that appeal was a deliberate and calculated cover-up, a brick wall that simply wouldn't listen or respond to the truth; in fact wasn't really interested in it. As far as I was concerned it only illustrated what so-called British justice amounted to: injustice and lies.'

How closely affected is the fate of your case, do you imagine, by Britain's military involvement in Northern Ireland?

'Well, it's obvious that the British government is intensifying its war against the IRA, and I think that this is reflected in the legal system's attitude towards our own case. At the time of our arrest and original trial we were alleged to be IRA members, and as far as the government is concerned we are now IRA prisoners. At the very least we



John Walker: 'Prison is a killer'

are here in prison because of the war in Ireland, and the question of whether we remain here or are released is bound up with what happens in Ireland. I don't think what happens or has happened to us can be separated or looked at in isolation from what Britain is doing in Ireland.

'We had hoped that the Free State government would take a more active role on our behalf, but the extent of its collaboration with Britain, highlighted in particular by the extradition business, prevents it from genuinely supporting us or the campaign for our release. Before our appeal we got all sorts of messages that the Free State government would be really pushing to get us out, but at the end of the day they've done basically nothing to help or support us.'

How broad-based would you like the campaign for your release to be?

'Let me answer that in the following way. Public opinion immediately after the Birmingham pub bombings allowed the police to pick up six innocent Irishmen and torture confessions out of them. It allowed them a completely free hand to do as they pleased in terms of framing us and then getting us convicted. Now it will be public opinion that ultimately gets us released. I therefore ask *all* progressive groups and organisations who are genuinely committed to the cause of justice to join and support our campaign, to highlight and publicise our case among as many ordinary working class people as possible.

'You know, since we were arrested in 1974 people's perception of the police in this country has changed considerably. I think that black people especially have always known what the British police are really like; but now even white working class people are beginning to wake up. The miners' strike in particular forced a lot of ordinary working class people to change their opinions of the British police. I think that today, as opposed to the time when we were first arrested, a lot of people are prepared to accept that we are the victims of a blatant injustice; all we now need is for more and more people to come out and support our campaign; because at the end of the day the struggle for justice in this country is the duty and responsibility of everyone.

'Over the years in prison one thing that I have come to realise and understand deeply is that our situation is but one dimension of a much wider thing involving the suppression of Irish people, and I suppose, ultimately we're talking about the suppression of whole groups of people by this system, both here and throughout the world. The campaign for our release is politically neutral, in the sense that it appeals to all sections of the population to support us; but although it is organised to support our particular case, it should also be an

instrument of mobilisation around the whole question of Britain's military involvement in Northern Ireland.'

Have you or your campaign received much support from the Catholic Church?

'We've had some degree of support from the Catholic Church in the Irish Free State, people like Cardinal O'Fiaich and Bishop Edward Daly in particular have been very good; but of course the Catholic Church hierarchy throughout the world is inherently conservative, and the Irish church is no exception. As far as the Catholic Church in England is concerned, forget it, we've received absolutely no support at all from that quarter. As far as I'm concerned Cardinal Hume is an Englishman first and a Catholic second; his ultimate loyalty lies first and foremost with the British political establishment. He hasn't shown the least interest in our case and has never once commented on it.'

You've been in prison 14 years; how are you treated by the prison authorities?

'Well, let's be absolutely clear about the fact that the prison authorities are fully aware of my innocence, they always have been; but of course they continue to keep me locked up.

'It's very difficult for me to describe the pain and anguish of being an innocent person locked up in prison for life; the agony and fear of growing older in this place, of watching my life pass away when I know deep in my heart that I committed no crime. After 14 years in prison that agony is becoming progressively worse. Prison is a killer—everything about it is designed to kill and destroy the human being; and if it wasn't for the love and support of my family, which itself encourages a continuing sense of hope, I'm not sure that I could have survived the last 14 years of this hell. The support of other prisoners has also been an important factor in my survival here.

'I often reflect on that now infamous statement by Lord Denning in which he said, in relation to our case, that it was better that innocent people should remain in prison rather than the integrity of the establishment be called into question, and I start to fear that maybe I'll be here in prison for eternity. That's why it's so vitally important that we receive the help and support of ordinary people as well as sympathetic and progressive movements. Without that support the truth about our case will forever be ignored or denied by the British government, and we shall remain and probably die in prison.'

This interview has been shortened for reasons of space.

Martina Anderson tells of prison torture

'I WAS CAKED IN BLOOD'

Mary McCaughey visited Durham prison to speak to Martina Anderson, an Irish republican prisoner, about life behind British bars

Martina Anderson was sentenced along with Ella O'Dwyer, also in Durham prison, to life imprisonment on conspiracy charges at the Brighton bomb showtrial at the Old Bailey in June 1986. Like all Irish prisoners in British jails, Martina Anderson has faced constant harassment from the day she was arrested, from physical abuse and strip-searching, to sensory deprivation and solitary confinement.

Ordinary prisoners do not have warders sitting in on their visits. But in Durham prison Irish prisoners like Martina have three. During my visit there were screws in the small room, making sure we knew that everything we said was being clocked. They are present to prevent physical contact and to make notes of the conversation. They will even interrupt to tell you what you can and can't discuss: for instance, Martina has been told she cannot talk about Ella O'Dwyer or other prisoners.

With the three screws listening to every word she said, Martina told me of the barbaric treatment she received just after having a D&C operation (scraping of the womb) in the local Queen Elizabeth hospital in Durham. Martina left Durham jail at 7.35am and went for her operation at 8 o'clock. At 8.20am she was woken up and told to get out of bed and walk. Totally confused by what was happening, she half-walked and was half-carried to the prison ambulance: 'All I had on was a paper gown and a housecoat pulled around me.

'I had no slippers, no pants, and there wasn't even a blanket in the ambulance that I could put over me.'

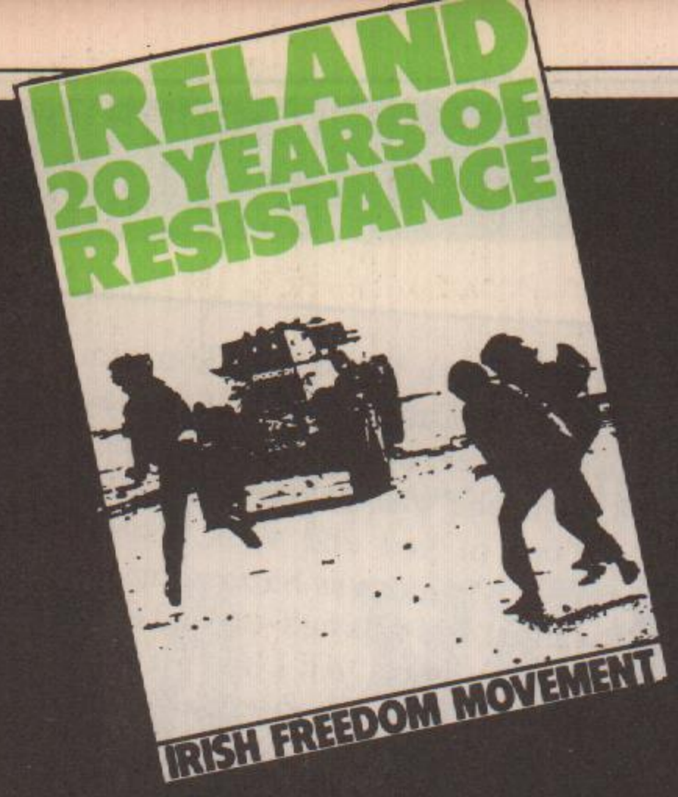
Less than an hour after she had left for her operation, Martina was back in the prison again at 8.30am: 'When I came in, the rest of the women on the wing thought I had been in a crash or an accident as I was still bleeding and was caked in blood.' The next day, Martina was ordered to move boxes from one cell to another, despite the fact that she had lost a lot of blood after her operation and needed rest.

After a D&C operation a prisoner is not supposed to move for 24 hours. But 20 minutes after her operation Martina was told to walk with no slippers and no clothing other than a paper gown. It would seem that the ethics of hospital doctors can be easily compromised when it comes to the treatment of Irish republican prisoners. Since the operation a month ago, Martina has lost a lot of weight, and is lucky not to have caught a serious infection. But she has no intention of collapsing under pressure from a prison regime which is designed to degrade her.

The British jailers in Durham recently got another Irish prisoner on whom to practise their barbarous techniques. Martina Shanahan, one of the three people sentenced to 25 years on a charge of conspiring to murder Tory Northern Ireland secretary Tom King in the most recent British showtrial at Winchester, is now in Durham.

While awaiting trial Shanahan was held in solitary confinement for six months, with the result that her IQ dropped to the subnormal level of 77.

The main demand of Irish political prisoners is for repatriation to Ireland. We need to show our solidarity with their struggle by fighting to end both the torture of Irish prisoners and the British occupation of Ireland which is the cause of their captivity. On Saturday 19 November the Irish Freedom Movement held a picket outside Durham jail. The vocal and well-attended picket demanded 'No more brutality! No more frame-ups! Prisoners out of jail! Troops out of Ireland!'



WHEN THE WAR COMES HOME

The Irish War in British politics

Irish Freedom Movement conference
Saturday 18 February 1989
10am–5pm

From media bans to legal clampdowns and political proscriptions to police shootings, Thatcher's Britain is acquiring a reputation for state repression to rival that of South Africa. For 20 years the nationalist people of Northern Ireland have known nothing different. They have faced internment without trial, torture, shoot-to-kill squads, supergrass showtrials and much more as a result of Britain's colonial occupation of their country.

Now people in Britain are getting a taste of the treatment meted out to Irish nationalists. Many people here have been shocked by the severity of the state offensive and the speed with which repressive measures are being implemented by the Tories. Hot on the heels of the decision to remove a suspect's right to silence, the government is planning to tighten up its own official secrets law. As well as strengthening their powers of censorship, the Tories are stepping up the use of the Public Order Act against their political opponents.

As civil liberties which people here have long taken for granted disappear overnight, there has never been a better time to discuss the significance of the Irish War in British politics. The Irish Freedom Movement has organised an anti-repression conference because we believe that there is much that we can learn from the Irish experience. Indeed, unless we learn the lessons of the Irish War, the British working class will never be in a position to challenge the accelerating state offensive.

We will be looking at all aspects of military and legal repression in Northern Ireland, and at how this impinges on politics in Britain. An opening plenary will address the broader implications of the current clampdown on democratic rights, with speakers from Ireland, the media, the legal profession, the black community and the Irish solidarity movement. A wide selection of workshops will look in more detail at different aspects of state repression in Ireland and in Britain. A final plenary will discuss how we can go about building a resistance movement.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

SPEAKERS INVITED:
Anthony Jennings, editor *Justice Under Fire: The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland*
Janet Clarke, Broadwater Farm
John Pilger
Sinn Fein
Holloway Road 30 Defence Campaign

MORNING PLENARY: State repression in Thatcher's Britain

WORKSHOPS:
- **The Prevention of Terrorism Act**
- **Britain's political prisoners**
- **The law and the Irish War**
- **Is Ireland a training ground?**
- **The wall of silence: media censorship**
- **Kitson's counter-insurgency warfare**
- **Political policing in the '80s**
- **The Falklands Factor in British politics**

AFTERNOON PLENARY: Building a resistance movement

Plus evening social

If you would like to come along to the conference, write to Charles Longford of the Irish Freedom Movement at BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX, or phone (01) 729 0414.