Irish Freedom

Bulletin of the Irish Freedom Movement

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The Irish War in the nineties
TROOPS OUT NOW

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Join the struggle for Irish freedom

Build the Irish Freedom Movement

Welcome to 1990! 1989 has been a very good year for the Irish Freedom Movement. The year which marked the twentieth anniversary of the Irish War has been one in which the IFM has been more active than at any time in its existence. Apart from organising another successful annual anti-internment demonstration in August, we organised a national day of action on the first anniversary of the broadcasting ban (see page 4 for a full report); a national conference in February entitled 'When the war comes home'; and one of the most successful events of the year, an Irish film festival at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London which attracted over 400 attenders.

IFM supporters attended prison pickets, from Leicester prison to the Isle of Wight. Over 120 of us picketed Downing Street after Seamus Duffy was killed in Belfast by a plastic bullet. We gave Thatcher another earful in November on the fifteenth anniversary of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (see page 5).

But these events have been only a small part of the work of the IFM. Throughout 1989, IFM activists have held street meetings and stalls on almost every Saturday of the year. We have held numerous video showings and spoken at dozens of trade union and student union meetings throughout the year. We have sold thousands of copies of *Irish Freedom* outside tube stations, in shopping centres and at meetings. All this has served to raise the profile of the IFM and has attracted a lot of interest and support.

In 1990 we aim to take this further. Already we have received numerous invitations to speak at college meetings, educational institutes and trade union meetings. We aim to take the message of the IFM into hitherto unchartered territory.

If you want more information about our forthcoming activities or about the IFM's approach to building a solidarity movement in this country that can 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

Make 1990 the year the British establishment will remember as the year of Irish freedom. Get involved! Either write to us: Irish Freedom Movement, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX, or phone (01) 375 1702

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) 375 1702.

☐ I want to join the IFM
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Name .....

Address .....

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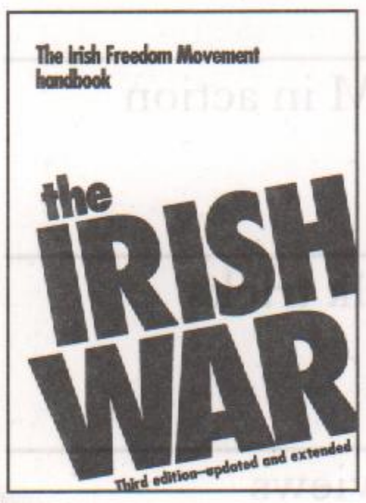
Make cheques/postal orders payable to IFM Association and send to IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX



Win the propaganda war!

The Irish War

Irish Freedom Movement Handbook
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Videos

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Behind the Mask

Twenty years on from the start of the present war in Northern Ireland, the IRA remains as controversial as ever. Even to examine its motives has been labelled as a crime.

Behind the Mask, which includes unique interviews with former leading IRA members who have recently been released from prison, does just that. Frank Martin, himself from West Belfast, says his film is 'asking the question: why did so many ordinary young men and women become involved with the Irish struggle? It looks at the people behind the headlines. Were it not for the extraordinary circumstances in Belfast, none of them would have become involved in politics. They would have lived normal lives. Unless an attempt is made to understand their motivations how can anybody understand the problem and work towards solving it?'.

The Longest War

This Irish Freedom Movement video 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 reveals the concerted attempt by the RUC, under British orders, to terrorise republican funerals and intimidate the opponents of British rule.

To arrange a video showing phone Alex Farrell on (01) 375 1702

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The January issue of Living Marxism includes articles on:

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Building a solidarity movement for the nineties

No more equivocation!

The image of the 'Thatchergate' – the new 10-foot high security gates at the entrance to Downing Street which fail to close properly and have to be held together with a makeshift padlock – sums up the last decade of Britain's war in Ireland. The fact that the 'Iron Lady' who vowed to crush the IRA ended the eighties isolated behind ill-fitting steel gates should warm the hearts of all those who support the struggle for Irish freedom. At the same time the 'Thatchergate' expresses the entrenched stalemate in the Irish War.

The Irish War represented the gravest threat to the British establishment in the eighties. The past 10 years have shown that the British state will go to any lengths to crush the threat to its authority in Ireland. Ireland matters to Britain, not because it serves any economic or strategic purpose, but for the crucial political reason that the unity and freedom of Ireland would mean dismantling the 'United Kingdom'. This would be such a devastating blow to the stability and authority of the British state that it is not surprising that no British government has ever seriously contemplated it.

The eighties have confirmed that Britain cannot impose any political settlement in Ireland. It is fighting a colonial war of occupation against thousands of Irish nationalists who want their country to be free and united. This core of republican supporters will not accept any British solution, no matter how it is packaged. The precondition for a British-imposed settlement is the complete defeat of the the Irish liberation struggle. But after 20 years of war even the *Economist*, the house journal of the British establishment, was forced to admit that 'the IRA cannot be beaten, only subdued for limited periods of time'.

The resistance of Irish nationalists should be an inspiration to us all, especially over a decade when so many in Britain seemed convinced that they were powerless to stop the advance of state repression over here. But it is not enough to stand back and applaud the Irish for their determination to be free. The central lesson of the eighties has been that the liberation struggle cannot be crushed – but neither can the Irish people win decisively while their struggle is contained within the Six Counties.

The challenge facing the British solidarity movement for the nineties is to break that isolation and stalemate, by winning the support of the working class in Britain for the struggle of the Irish people.

The British working class has every interest in standing with the Irish people against the common foe – the British state. The British state that denies Irish people their freedom is the same state that closes down hospitals and factories in Britain, whose courts declare that going on strike is a crime, whose police force harasses black youth, football fans and striking workers.

This is the common interest that exists between British workers and the Irish people. The eighties have proved conclusively that if we accept the denial of democratic rights in Ireland we can never fight for our democratic rights in Britain. However, if we take sides with the Irish struggle we are allying ourselves to the biggest threat to the British government.

These basic points are the foundation of the Irish Freedom Movement's approach to solidarity work in Britain. Since the IFM was set up after the hunger-strikes in the early eighties, we have argued that British workers should give unequivocal support to the Irish struggle. The growth of the IFM during the eighties is living proof that this approach works. We have learnt that there are no short cuts to building a solidarity movement. The only way to take the struggle forward is by convincing working class people to take sides in the Irish War.

The eighties have proved conclusively that if we accept the denial of democratic rights in Ireland we can never fight for our democratic rights in Britain

Unfortunately, this has not been the approach of many involved in solidarity work in this country. The main characteristic of the solidarity movement has been its attempt to avoid the issue of the war. During the hunger-strikes, for example, many on the left tried to win support for the hunger-strikers on purely humanitarian grounds – 'Don't let the prisoners die'. But the issue at stake was political status: whether the prisoners were political prisoners engaged in a struggle for democratic rights, or whether they were common criminals as the British state claimed. By avoiding this crucial issue the solidarity movement in Britain allowed Thatcher to win the argument and squandered an opportunity to build real support for the Irish struggle.

The response in Britain to the hunger-strikes set the tone for solidarity work throughout the decade. Thus when the Tory government introduced its broadcasting ban on Sinn Fein in 1988, the British left preferred to stress the issue of censorship rather than that of Irish freedom. And instead of trying to win working class people to the cause of Irish freedom, the left has preferred to appeal to middle class opinion and look for support from the more liberal sections of the British establishment.

The left's myopia was seen most acutely in its response to the Guildford Four case. The release of the Guildford Four was a most welcome way to end the decade. However, it is important that we draw the right lessons. Some on the left have compared the affair with other miscarriages of justice, such as the Carl Bridgewater case. Others have argued that pressure from the liberal establishment was the key in obtaining their release and that winning support from prominent figures is the only way to obtain the release of other framed Irish prisoners, such as the Birmingham Six.

But the framing of the Guildford Four was not an ordinary miscarriage of justice. The Guildford Four were victims of Britain's war in Ireland (see the feature on pages 8-10). As far as the British authorities are concerned all Irish people are guilty. So long as there is no solidarity movement in this country which can stand up to British terror, Irish people will continue to be harassed, abused and imprisoned for the crime of being Irish.

The government released the Guildford Four as an exercise in damage limitation. It recognised that any new appeal would have exposed the sordid details of the frame-up. The release of the four was an attempt to pre-empt the greater damage such revelations would have caused in open court. Establishment liberals like Lord Scarman and Ludovic Kennedy have campaigned for the Guildford Four because they were concerned that the case was damaging the image of Britain's judicial system. But when it comes to the war in Ireland, they have no hesitation in siding with the British state.

Yet so long as that war continues, the experience of the Guildford Four will be continually repeated. The cases of the Cheltenham Five, arrested in October under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, of the Winchester Three, of Nick Mullen (see page 5), and of countless others show that we will continue to see 'Guildford Fours' in the future. British injustice, frame-ups, brutality and repression are part and parcel of the British occupation of Ireland.

The only way to ensure that there are no more Guildford Fours is through winning working class support in Britain for the struggle of the Irish people. This is the task the IFM has begun to realise. Although we have a long way to go, we have already shown that such a movement is possible. Turning that potential into reality is the task we have set ourselves for the nineties. Join us!

Write to the IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX or phone (01) 375 1702 if you want to be a part of this.

action

IFM in the

Since the last issue of Irish Freedom the IFM has been active, campaigning throughout Britain for solidarity with the Irish struggle. The following pages report on some of the events we have organised at the end of the year which marked the twentieth anniversary of British troops being redeployed on the streets of Ireland

Challenging the Tories' broadcasting ban

Speaking out for Irish freedom

On Thursday 19 October, the IFM organised a national day of action to mark the first anniversary of the government-imposed broadcasting ban on Irish republicans. Thousands of people defied the Tories, the police, Labour councils, college authorities and the National Union of Students to protest against the Tories' attempt to silence dissent on both sides of the Irish Sea. From Bristol to Glasgow, thousands of people joined marches, picketed TV studios, and came to watch banned films.

In London a torchlit march to the BBC headquarters attracted 400 people. In Leeds and Manchester hundreds joined city-centre protest marches. There were pickets of BBC studios in Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham, Nottingham, Newcastle and Glasgow. And across the country hundreds of people defied the censors by coming to watch the banned films. The message at every protest was clear: 'Fight for Irish freedom. Stop British censorship.'

While the nationwide protests showed that many ordinary people are willing to stand up to government censors, Labour councils and the National Union of Students took sides with the authorities and extended the Tory ban. In Glasgow, police told organisers of a protest march that the route and time of the demonstration were unacceptable. When the organisers came up with a different time and route, the police accepted it, but Labour-controlled Strathclyde council decided to ban it anyway. Protesters held a loud and angry picket of the BBC instead.

In Birmingham, the Labour council insisted that the IFM could hold a picket outside the BBC's Pebble Mill studios only if it agreed to pay £5000 for the privilege of being hemmed in by police crush-barriers! We told the council what it could do with its invoice and went ahead with a lively and well-attended picket.

At Leeds University, management banned the IFM from showing republican videos, arguing that it would be 'a breach of the law'. The day before the video showing all the video machines at the university mysteriously developed 'problems'. The NUS executive went along with the management ban, claiming first that it would be illegal to show the videos, and then that it would be a breach of copyright laws.

In the end both management and union were forced to back down after IFM supporters called their bluff. We published a memorandum which showed collusion between management and the union in trying to enforce the ban. And after marching through the town centre to a rally at the BBC studios, demonstrators marched to the university, occupied the main hall and held a showing of the banned films.

In London similar events took place. From the Polytechnic of North London to University College London, management attempted to prevent the IFM from showing censored films. Posters were banned and ripped down, while IFM student societies were threatened with disciplinary action. Students were outraged by these attacks on their right to organise and fought back. Video showings went ahead.

The willingness of Labour councils and the NUS voluntarily to extend the government's broadcasting ban shows how extensive the culture of censorship has become throughout Britain. Labour politicians and student bureaucrats are so worried about stepping out of line that they are willing to outlaw protests that even the Tories have so far left untouched. In this situation we have to insist that the authorities have no right to interfere in our political activities. As our day of action on 19 October showed, the best way to defy British bans and censorship is by standing up for Irish freedom.

Hugh Mitchell

PANDORA ANDERSON

Bringing the message to Downing Street

Fifteen years of British terror

Over 150 people attended an IFM picket of Downing Street on Wednesday 29 November to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

The loud and lively torchlit protest was addressed by Paul Hill (photo above), one of the recently released Guildford Four. After expressing his support for the picket, Paul drew attention to the symbolic significance of the protest when he said:

'Fifteen years ago today I was being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. I was the first person arrested under the act and was subsequently convicted for a crime I did not do. We've got to keep fighting the PTA because there are still many people locked up as a result of it, like the Birmingham Six. We have to keep up the fight.'

Alex Farrell, speaking for the IFM, stressed how the PTA has been used to criminalise the struggle for Irish freedom. 'Fifteen years ago', he told the picket, 'the then Labour Party home secretary Roy Jenkins, when introducing the PTA, described it as a "draconian measure...designed to stem infection from Ireland". Jenkins was referring to the contempt of the Irish people for the British state, its laws, its repression and its hypocrisy. On the fifteenth anniversary of the PTA, the IFM pledges to continue spreading the Irish "infection" among British workers'.

Fiona Foster

The Holloway Road 30

Still fighting

Over the past two months, the Holloway Road 30 Defence Campaign has held two successful fundraising benefits to raise the outstanding monies for the defence of those arrested during the anti-internment demonstrations in August 1988 and 1989. We have now covered the costs of legal fees and fines arising from the arrests during the 1988 march.

Those familiar with *Irish Freedom* will know that after the 1988 march, we established a defence campaign to fight the attempted frame-up of demonstrators under the Public Order Act. Although we still have one appeal outstanding, we have succeeded in getting 20 convictions quashed. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those trade union branches, Labour Party wards, students' unions and solidarity organisations who have given us assistance and money to fight these cases successfully.

However, we still have eight cases from last year's march to contest, most of which have been postponed to the New Year. We still need money to take on the police and the courts. Please send any donations to the Holloway Road 30 Campaign (make cheques or postal orders payable to 'The Holloway Road 30 Defence Fund'), BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.

If you want further information, or would like to help in any way, please write to the IFM, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX or phone Charles Longford on (01) 375 1702.

The Nick Mullen Defence Campaign

No more frame-ups!

On 6 February 1989, the Zimbabwean government, acting on behalf of the British authorities, arbitrarily deported Nick Mullen to Britain. Mullen, who had been holidaying in Zimbabwe, was arrested by armed police who stormed his house. He was denied access to a telephone and refused legal representation or leave to appeal against his deportation. At Harare airport he was forced at gunpoint to board a flight for London.

At Gatwick airport, Mullen was arrested by the Special Branch and held illegally for seven days under the Prevention of Terrorism Act before being charged with conspiring to cause explosions. According to the police his arrest is in connection with the discovery of arms and explosives in a south London flat.

Shortly after he was charged, the authorities orchestrated an intense media campaign. Chester Stern of the *Mail on Sunday* depicted Mullen's house in Zimbabwe as 'an IRA safe house'. The article went on that the man who 'cannot be named because he is facing terror charges' was involved in a whole list of criminal acts including a supposed plot to kill Margaret Thatcher during her planned visit to Harare. Other articles claimed that Mullen planned to mortar-bomb Buckingham Palace. The attorney general ruled that the *Mail on Sunday* was in contempt of court – but insisted that no action should be taken against it.

Mullen's trial, originally scheduled to start on 4 September 1989, was deferred at the request of the crown prosecution service, which claims it needs more time to prepare its case. The new trial is scheduled to start on 25 April 1990. By then Mullen will have spent 15 months in jail. He is subject to frequent cell changes in a top security wing of Brixton prison and is forced to endure up to four strip searches a day.

The Nick Mullen Defence Campaign was established at the request of Mullen and enjoys his full support. The campaign intends to expose the tactics employed by the authorities and to show why there can be no justice for Irish people accused of political offences. The campaign believes that Mullen will be the subject of a carefully orchestrated showtrial, to serve as a warning to the Irish community in Britain.

The campaign will be as broad as possible and needs the active involvement of all who have pledged support. Anybody wishing to get involved can attend campaign meetings which take place fortnightly at the Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7, or phone Denis Ryan: (01) 375 1702.

When Tory Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Brooke told journalists last October that he would be willing to negotiate with Sinn Fein if the IRA abandoned the armed struggle, many interpreted this as a signal that Britain's resolve to remain in Ireland has been weakened. Many on the left welcomed Brooke's comments, regarding them as reflecting the growing strength of the forces for withdrawal. The right painted Brooke's comments as an act of betrayal which could only play into the hands of the IRA. Linda Ryan argues that both assessments are wrong and that British talk about negotiations and ceasefires with Sinn Fein is solely intended to confuse and divide the republican movement

The hysteria surrounding Peter Brooke's statement was predictable. Coming as it did a few days after the first anniversary of the broadcasting ban, it threw everyone into confusion. Brooke appeared to be stepping out of line and giving the republican movement the 'oxygen of publicity' denied to it since last October.

The truth is that the British government has no intention of pulling out of Ireland. Indeed, the motivation behind Brooke's statement was to consolidate Britain's position in its oldest colony. Far from reflecting the strength of the forces for withdrawal, Brooke's initiative confirmed the weakness of the withdrawal movement. And far from playing into the hands of the IRA, these political manoeuvres aimed to exploit republican malaise and confuse and divide the movement. It was a cynical imperialist ploy designed to trick the Irish liberation struggle.

Brooke gave his view on Sinn Fein and the IRA during interviews to mark his first 100 days as Northern Ireland secretary. His key remarks came in response to questions from Deric Henderson of the Press Association. He was asked whether the British government would ever sit down and talk to Sinn Fein. Brooke began by reaffirming the stalemate in the war, saying that while violence could be contained, the IRA could not be beaten militarily. He went on to say that the precondition for a flexible response from the government would be for the IRA to give up the armed struggle. Brooke cited the move towards independence in Cyprus as the precedent for such a scenario.

'Blunder'

Brooke's suggestion that the government might at some point in the future, and subject to certain conditions, sit down to talks with Sinn Fein caused an absolute furore. Tory MPs, Ulster Unionists and the Labour Northern Ireland spokesman, Kevin McNamara, were incensed by his statement. Brooke was accused of making a monumental political blunder and there were calls for his resignation. He was depicted as a blundering idiot who lacked the sophisticated touch required of ministers holding such a sensitive post.

There are good reasons for believing that Brooke's statement was not a cock-up but rather a calculated manoeuvre which was sanctioned at the highest levels of the government. Brooke never withdrew his statement and stood fast in the face of all the outcry. Significantly, Margaret Thatcher stood by her minister. If Brooke's statement was deliberate, his bumbling style was the perfect way to spread confusion about the intentions of the government. Having neon signs up saying 'trap' is hardly the best way to proceed. On the other hand, having Ulster politicians, the opposition and even Tories bleating for the minister's head tends to give the statement a certain credibility.

Divide and rule

The most important thing to grasp is that the only purpose of this manoeuvre was to confuse and divide the republican movement. If it simultaneously allowed the British left to sink further into its self-delusion about the 'strength' of the withdrawal movement, this was an added, but peripheral, bonus.

It would not be the first time that a British government has floated the idea of a ceasefire as a prelude to negotiations and a settlement. The aim of the exercise has always been to soften up the republican movement for a hammer blow by the state.

The last time the British tricked the IRA into a ceasefire, using the bait of a possible withdrawal, was in 1974-75. The Labour Northern Ireland secretary Merlyn Rees set up a series of contacts between Sinn Fein and senior civil servants, hinting at the possibility of a British withdrawal. These contacts led to an IRA ceasefire which lasted for much of 1975. This episode was subsequently regarded by the republican movement as one in which the British government tricked the IRA into believing it might withdraw and used the breathing-space to prepare for a crackdown against the organisation.

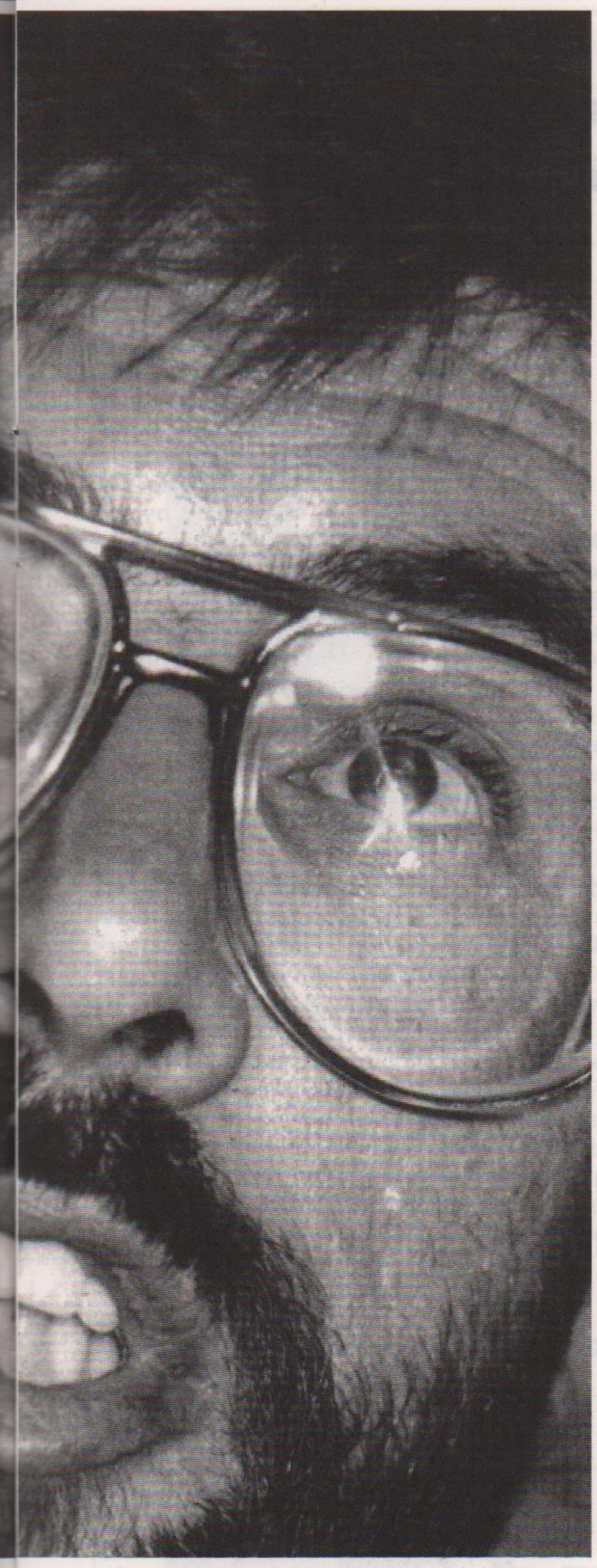
Rees' waffling style was a perfectly suited for an exercise that was designed to sow confusion in the republican movement. Commentators observed that 'Rees' bumbling performance was quite appropriate to a period in which obfuscation was central to state policy' (P Bew and H Patterson, *The British State and the Ulster Crisis*, 1986, p187). Bew and Patterson concluded that the British used the ceasefire to strengthen rather than loosen their grip over Ireland.

A military historian has agreed with this assessment. For the British, the ceasefire 'was all part of a deliberate policy of politicising the Provisionals, and aimed at the long-term stability of the province. The truce which was finally arranged with the Provisionals was therefore a boost towards this – and towards getting the

The wind down of the IRA's armed struggle allowed the British to introduce criminalisation against the most confused background possible...

Ceasefire talk

Another



...and probably came nearer at that time to defeating the republican struggle than at any time during the last 14 years.

(Gery Adams)

Army off the streets and the police back on to them' (D Hamill, *Pig in the Middle: The Army in Northern Ireland 1969-1984*, 1985, pp176-7).

The purpose of the ceasefire talks was to disorient and divide the republican movement as a prelude to the introduction of Ulsterisation. From 1974 to 1979 the Labour government engineered a policy of containment designed to isolate and crush the IRA. This strategy had three components. Ulsterisation involved replacing British troops with Ulster policemen: it aimed to localise the conflict as a 'law and order' problem and extricate British troops from direct combat.

Hand-in-hand with Ulsterisation went criminalisation and normalisation, familiar imperialist counter-insurgency techniques.

The former set out to present the IRA as ordinary criminals, by ending internment, withdrawing special category status from republican prisoners of war and introducing the conveyor-belt system of no-jury courts. Criminalisation was accompanied by a determined effort to project the Six Counties as slowly returning to normal. Hence the emphasis upon a return to normal policing.

Weakened

The object of the whole ceasefire exercise was to trick the IRA into dropping its guard in the belief that progress was at hand, and then stick the boot in when the organisation was most vulnerable. The IRA was seriously weakened by the whole experience. In 1983 Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams revealed the devastating impact of the ceasefire strategy:

'The wind down of the IRA's armed struggle allowed the British to introduce criminalisation against the most confused background possible. They were able to withdraw some regular Army units, transfer more duties to the RUC and UDR and probably came nearer at that time to defeating the republican struggle than at any time during the last 14 years.' (*An Phoblacht/Republican News*, 21 July 1983)

The 1975 experience stands as a warning of the dangers of taking anything the British say at face value. The aim of every British initiative in Ireland is to undermine and isolate the republican movement; there has never been and never will be any question of Britain disengaging voluntarily.

The parallel with Cyprus which Brooke drew in his comments has confirmed many in their belief that Britain could indeed withdraw from Ireland. But is there really an analogy between Cyprus and Ireland?

In July 1954, colonial minister Henry Hopkinson announced that Cyprus could never expect independence from Britain because of its strategic importance in the Middle East. Greek Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios III together with Greek army colonel George Grivas formed Eoka (the National Organisation of Greek Fighters) to throw the British out of Cyprus and form a union with Greece. The British immediately began a counter-insurgency campaign in an effort to smash Eoka. By November 1957, in the wake of the Suez fiasco that thwarted Britain's grandiose ambitions in the region, Hopkinson was obliged to eat his words and London opened negotiations which led to the political independence of the Republic of Cyprus in August 1960.

Cyprus gained independence at a price. The British have kept two military bases on Cyprus as well as a GCHQ spy station. To keep a grip on the Mediterranean island's affairs, Britan has stirred up tensions between the majority Greek Cypriots and the minority Turks. United Nations forces intervened throughout the sixties and early seventies to restore order. Finally, in July 1974, fellow Nato member Turkey was allowed to invade and partition the island. So much for independence.

No comparison can be made between Cyprus and Northern Ireland. Despite its strategic importance for Britain's Middle Eastern policy, nobody has ever claimed that Cyprus was a part of Britain. Yet the colony of Northern Ireland is unique in that it is integrated into the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. The political independence of Ireland as a whole means the dismantling of the British state itself. No significant section of the British ruling class could ever countenance withdrawal from Ireland because it would severely undermine its capacity to enforce its interests over society.

What is at stake for the British establishment in Ireland is not merely its continued domination of another nation, but the maintenance of its own state apparatus. Defeat in Ireland would be a direct body-blow to the British state, which would seriously weaken the ability of the capitalist class to impose its will on society. This is why however much Brooke castigates the former colonial minister in Cyprus, Hopkinson's *never* will always apply in the case of a voluntary withdrawal from Ireland.

The only sense in which Brooke's analogy is apposite is that Ireland is indeed a colony of the British Crown just as Cyprus was. Brooke's admission that Northern Ireland is a colony is an embarrassment for the British authorities which have been trying to disguise this fact for 20 years. At the same time, Ireland is a colony with a difference. There is no possibility of Britain reaching a political settlement there as it did in its other colonies.

The only purpose of suggesting that such an option is possible is to trick the liberation struggle. This is the point that needs to be made forcefully to those in Britain who see the government's latest manoeuvre as a positive step. There is no way we can advance the cause of Irish freedom by looking to the British state to do anything progressive. Indeed we must expose the intrigue and plotting as the imperialist ploy that it is. The British state will never withdraw from Ireland voluntarily. It has to be forced out by a movement which is committed unequivocally to the cause of Irish freedom.

imperialist trick

The Guildford Four

The great British conspiracy

If you're Irish, you're guilty

The case of the Guildford Four has exposed the violence and corruption that passes for British 'justice'. In a special feature Charles Longford explains why the wrongful imprisonment of the Guildford Four was no one-off mistake, while Alex Farrell reveals that the conspiracy was not organised by a handful of bent Surrey police constables but came from within the innermost circles of the British establishment itself

Paul Hill, Gerard Conlon, Patrick Armstrong and Carole Richardson were the victims of a deliberate political conspiracy. Their case has become a glaring public exposure of a system which normally operates in secret behind a wall of media silence: the system of British injustice towards the Irish people.

All the power of the British establishment was mobilised against the Guildford Four. While the police beat and bullied the four into inventing confessions (and pumped Carole Richardson full of drugs during interrogation), the director of public prosecutions withheld vital alibi evidence from the defence counsel. The authorities suppressed statements by the IRA active service unit, the 'Balcombe Street brigade', in which the republican volunteers claimed responsibility for the 1974 Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings. And the powers that be pressurised Dr Douglas Higgs into withholding forensic evidence which linked the Guildford and Woolwich bombings with explosions that took place after the arrest of the Guildford Four – evidence which proved that Hill, Conlon, Armstrong and Richardson could not have been responsible.

The case of the Guildford Four shows that, in the eyes of the British state, all Irish people are criminals. The extraordinary

If you are Irish and you're arrested on a terrorist, political type of offence you don't stand a chance, you just don't stand a chance. (Gerard Conlon on the day he was released)

lengths to which the authorities went to incarcerate the Guildford Four can only be understood by placing the case within the context of the Irish War.

Since 1969, when troops reappeared on Irish streets, the British state has been at war with nationalists in Northern Ireland. An occupying army of 30 000 soldiers and paramilitary police uses everything from plastic bullets and SAS assassination squads to no-jury courts and TV censorship to keep Ireland divided and under British domination. In response, thousands of Irish nationalists who want their country to be free and united support the IRA in its war of resistance. During the 20-year struggle, the war has spilled over the Irish Sea. The 1974 bombings of pubs frequented by soldiers in Guildford and Woolwich were part of one of the first and most sustained IRA campaigns in Britain.

Since the seventies, the British authorities have sought to deny the reality of the war in Ireland. They have branded the popular liberation struggle there as a criminal conspiracy, and portrayed their own war of oppression as a local law and order campaign.

To sustain support within Britain for the occupation of Ireland, the authorities have conducted a frenzied propaganda war portraying all Irish people as a potential threat to British civilisation. The legal framework for this campaign is provided by the Prevention of Terrorism Act, introduced by the last Labour government after the Birmingham pub bombings in November 1974.

The PTA was never intended to catch and convict IRA volunteers. Its powers to detain people without charge and deport them from Britain without reason have been used to intimidate and criminalise all Irish people. Most are simply picked up, interrogated for a few days then released without explanation or apology, branded as suspected terrorists for the rest of their lives. The Guildford Four were not so 'lucky'.

The Guildford Four were the first people detained under the PTA. Their subsequent convictions, despite gaping holes in their forced and falsified confessions, drove home the message that the British state wanted popularised: 'If you're Irish, you're guilty.'

The release of the Guildford Four after 15 gruelling years in captivity is a cause for celebration. But it does not alter the reality of British injustice to the Irish. The Birmingham Six still languish in prison framed, like the Guildford Four, as part of Britain's anti-Irish conspiracy. And hundreds of Irish republican prisoners have been incarcerated in British jails because they took up arms to free their nation.

The British state has demonstrated that it makes no distinction between 'guilty' and 'innocent' Irishmen and women. We should adopt the same attitude, and demand the release of all political prisoners. It is no crime to be Irish. Nor is it a crime to fight for freedom.

Rotten from the head down

The key personalities involved in the Guildford Four case show how far the British establishment is prepared to go in its war against the Irish people. The backgrounds of some of these characters, their specific roles in the frame-up and their subsequent career leaps reveal the Guildford Four conspiracy to have been organised at the highest levels of the British establishment.

The Interrogator: IMBERT, Peter Michael Born: 27 April 1933

Career:
1953 Joined Metropolitan Police
1957 Joined Special Branch
1973 Joined the Metropolitan Police bomb squad (later renamed anti-terrorist squad) as deputy operational head

The conspiracy

In December 1974 Imbert interrogated Gerard Conlon and Paul Hill. Conlon's alibi witness, Charles Burke, gave a statement to the police in January 1975; the statement was suppressed by the police on instructions from Sir Norman Skelhorn, the director of public prosecutions. The defence was never informed that such a statement existed; the jury was told that Conlon had no alibi.

In December 1975 Imbert was in charge of negotiating the surrender of the four IRA volunteers at the Balcombe Street siege. Together with chief superintendent Jim Nevill, Imbert then interrogated the volunteers. Imbert therefore knew that they claimed the Guildford and Woolwich bombings, and that all the forensic evidence linked them to those attacks. These interrogations took place nine months before the Guildford Four trial. Nevill ensured that forensic scientist Douglas Higgs suppressed the evidence backing the Balcombe Street unit's claim to have carried out the Guildford and Woolwich bombings. The Balcombe Street men were charged only with attacks from December 1974 to December 1975 (after the Guildford and Woolwich bombings) – so as not to weaken the Crown case against the Guildford Four.

The pay-off

Imbert's part in the conspiracy proved to be a very effective career move. Shortly after the Guildford Four trial, he became assistant chief constable of the Surrey constabulary in 1976. A year later Imbert was promoted to deputy chief constable. In 1979 Imbert became chief constable of the Thames Valley police. The following year he was awarded the Queen's Police Medal, and – presumably in recognition of his services to truth and decency – appointed to the BBC general advisory council. In 1985, Imbert became deputy commissioner of the Metropolitan Police; two years later he took over as commissioner, Britain's top cop. Finally, in 1988, Imbert received a knighthood.

The Prosecutor: HAVERS, Robert Michael Oldfield Born: 10 March 1923

Education: Westminster public school and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

Career:
1941-46 Lieutenant in the royal navy volunteer reserve
1948 Called to the Bar
1970 Elected Tory MP for Wimbledon
1972 Received knighthood and was appointed solicitor general
1974 Became shadow attorney general when Labour returned to power

The conspiracy

In 1975 Havers led the prosecution of the Guildford Four. He connived with Sir Norman Skelhorn, the director of public prosecutions and bomb squad officers (Imbert and Nevill) to withhold the forensic evidence linking the Guildford and Woolwich bombings to the Balcombe Street unit. Havers suppressed Conlon's alibi. Havers explained the 154 contradictions in the forced confessions as a skilled and sophisticated counter-interrogation technique, designed to confuse and mislead the police.

In 1976 Havers led the prosecution against the framed Maguire Seven. Despite no identification or any other evidence linking them to any bombing whatsoever; despite the unreliability of the forensic test which allegedly established that they had all handled nitro-glycerine; and despite the fact no nitro-glycerine was ever found even though they had been under continual police surveillance at the time when they had supposedly handled it all seven were convicted.

The pay-off

In 1977 Havers was appointed to the privy council. After the Tory election victory in 1979 Havers was appointed attorney general once more. In 1987 he was made Baron of St Edmundsbury, county of Suffolk, and appointed lord high chancellor.

The Appeal Judge: ROSKILL
Eustace Wentworth. Born: 6 February 1911

Education:
Winchester public school and Exeter College, Oxford

Career:

1933 Called to the Bar
1962 Received knighthood
Appointed judge of the high court
1971 Became a lord justice of appeal and was made a member of the privy council.
Along with his fellow judges of the appeal court, Roskill turned down five appeals (a record) by two men given life for the 'Luton post office murder'; they were subsequently shown to have been wrongfully convicted and were released without a pardon and without compensation after 10 years in prison
1975 Overturned the jail sentence on Guardsman Holdsworth, who had committed a vicious sexual assault on a young girl. Roskill praised his record as a squaddie and released him back into the Army

The conspiracy In October 1977 Roskill headed the panel of judges which heard rthe appeal of the Guildford Four. The other two judges were Boreham and Lawton. Lawton, who was subsequently to reject the first appeal of the Birmingham Six, had been a founder member of the Cambridge University Fascist Association in 1932. Earlier in 1977 the same three judges had dismissed the appeal of the Maguire Seven.

The Guildford appeal revolved around the evidence which had come to light during the Balcombe Street trial in January 1977. First there was the forensic evidence of Douglas Higgs. Months before the original trial, Higgs had produced a report which showed that the Guildford and Woolwich bombings had been carried out by the same person or persons as the subsequent attacks in London and the South-east. On instructions from the DPP via the bomb squad, Higgs had cut out this aspect of his report, the prosecution regarding it as somewhat difficult to establish that the Guildford Four had carried out a bombing campaign while in custody on remand.

Then there was the fact that members of the Balcombe Street unit had claimed the Guildford and Woolwich bombings. Their evidence was described by Lawton as 'a cunning and skilful attempt to deceive'. The Guildford Four confession evidence, with its 154 discrepancies was, however, regarded as perfectly sound. Carole Richardson's entirely true alibi evidence bore, according to Roskill, 'all the hallmarks of concoction'. Roskill duly dismissed the appeal.

The pay-off In 1980 Roskill was elevated to the rank of lord of appeal in ordinary and made Baron of Newton.

The Trial Judge: DONALDSON
John Francis. Born: 6 October 1920

Education:
Charterhouse public school and Trinity College, Cambridge. Chairman of the Federation of University Conservative and Unionist Associations

Career:

1941 Commissioned officer in the Royal Signals
1946 Called to the Bar
1966 Appointed judge of the high court. Received knighthood
1971 Appointed president of the national industrial relations court, set up in 1971 under the Industrial Relations Act to enforce anti-strike laws
1972 Donaldson ordered the jailing of five docks shop stewards for refusing to call off a dock strike on his say-so. Five days later, a strike of two million workers forced the Tories to release the Pentonville Five

The conspiracy In September and October 1975 Donaldson presided over the Guildford Four trial. In passing sentence, Donaldson described the four as the 'warped dregs of humanity' for whom 'the quality of mercy is strained to the limit in attempting to feel anything but loathing and revulsion'. He told the police of 'our boundless admiration and gratitude for the vigorous and determined way they handled the case'.

In 1976, only a few months after the Guildford case, Donaldson presided over the case of the framed Maguire Seven. Apart from Donaldson's heavily biased summing-up, the main evidence in the Maguire case was a forensic test, which purported to have found traces of nitro-glycerine on the hands of all the accused. This test has subsequently been found to show a positive result after exposure to tobacco, the plastic coating on playing cards and various other substances.

The pay-off In 1978 Donaldson was elevated to the privy council and became a lord justice of appeal. In 1982 he was appointed master of the rolls, third only to the lord chancellor and the lord chief justice in the legal system. In 1988 he became Baron Donaldson of Lymington.

Director Of Public Prosecutions: SKELHORN
Norman John. Born: 10 September 1909

Career:

1931 Called to the Bar
1940-42 Trading with the enemy department
1942-45 At the Admiralty, latterly as head of the naval law branch
1964 Appointed director of public prosecutions
1966 Made Knight of the British Empire

The conspiracy From late 1974 through to early 1977, Skelhorn was involved in preparing the Crown cases against the Guildford Four, the Maguire Seven and the Balcombe Street unit. He ordered the suppression of forensic evidence which tied together the series of bombings from August 1974 to December 1975, claimed by the Balcombe Street volunteers, so as not to undermine the invented case against the Guildford Four. He also suppressed Gerard Conlon's alibi. He gave the go-ahead for the prosecution of the Maguire Seven on forensic evidence alone, which was later discredited.

In 1989 Skelhorn did the establishment his last and greatest favour: he died, thus making himself the perfect potential scapegoat – he could never be cross-examined or reveal who gave him his instructions. Outside the top levels of the British establishment, he was high up enough to take the rap, not so high as to drag down the top dogs with him and dead enough to keep his mouth shut. Throw in a few low-ranking coppers, and the authorities have high hopes that they can limit the damage from the partial revelation of their conspiracy to acceptable levels.

Twenty years of Irish resistance

Ballymurphy and the Irish War
Ciaran De Baroid
Aisling Publishers, 1989
£5.50 pbk

'In Easter 1970 war came to a small Belfast community.' *Ballymurphy and the Irish War* is the story of an ordinary working class community made less ordinary through their experience of war. This moving account of courage and defiance goes some way towards explaining the historic inability of the British state to crush the resistance of the nationalist people over the past 20 years.

Ballymurphy (known as the 'Murph' to its tenants), had problems long before the 'troubles' arrived. Built in 1949 with the cheapest labour and materials it was specially designed for Northern Ireland's second class Catholic community: poverty and overcrowding were endemic from day one. But despite constant pressure for better housing, the residents of the Murph only saw the developers in their area in the late sixties, when the British Army demanded changes to suit its war machine. The area was turned into a series of cul-de-sacs the aim of which was to reduce escape routes and to divide and fragment the community.

The authorities failed to achieve either of their aims. The events of the late sixties and early seventies only united and strengthened the community. The Ballymurphy Tenants Association (BTA), set up in 1963, had already proved itself a force to be reckoned with after staging occupations and other forms of direct action to force concessions from the local housing executive. The BTA dealt with the influx of Catholics burnt out of their homes by Loyalist mobs at the start of the 'troubles'. It commandeered schools and coordinated a major relief and rehousing operation. Ballymurphy itself became home for many of these early victims of the Irish War.

As the war escalated the people of the Murph distinguished themselves by becoming the first nationalist community to come into direct conflict with the British Army in Belfast. In Easter 1970, British soldiers revealed their true loyalties by collaborating with Loyalists in organising the traditional provocative Orange march through the nationalist enclaves of Belfast. Fierce battles ensued as Ballymurphy people made their stand, declaring that the time had come to fight back. The author of the book claims that this was an historic turning point: 'The first major engagement between the British Army and Irish nationalists for two generations was under way.'

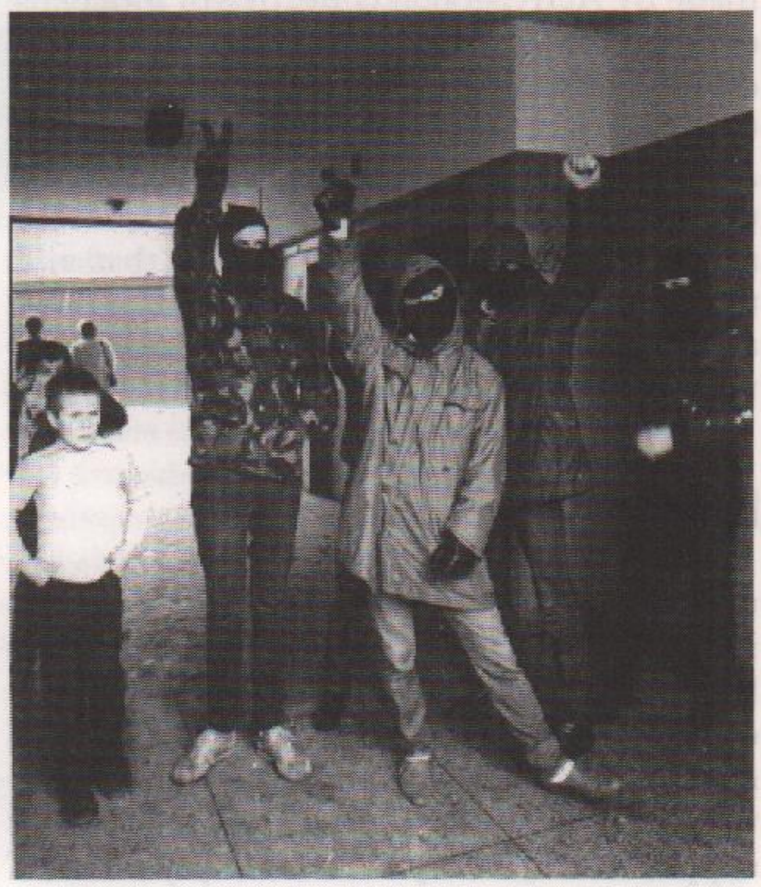
The British were physically kept out of Ballymurphy by barricades, manned jointly by the IRA and the BTA, and local community patrols. To the great annoyance of the Catholic hierarchy, which had formerly enjoyed much influence among the people, the experience of British repression helped radicalise and politicise the local community. As De Baroid puts it, 'the earlier confusion, evident when people in the Ardoyne were warned to watch out for "communists" but work for socialism, was now giving way to a coherent developing political ideology which was coming from the bottom up'.

This book leaves you with the sense of a people who have no more to lose and everything to win. Only outright victory can compensate for the suffering and losses of this community. The book provides a salutary picture of daily life in a war zone. Here we see kids who throw stones at Army barracks instead of playing football and whose favourite pet is 'Rebel', the dog who can smell British squaddies a mile off and barks a warning to locals. Here people mourn the deaths of nearly 100 friends and relatives killed in this latest phase of the Irish struggle – deaths which include that of young Kidso Reilly, whose murderer, a British soldier, served just two years of his sentence before returning to the Army.

De Baroid's achievement is to have captured the unique spirit of resistance of this community. Contrary to everything we hear from the British media, these ordinary people see the IRA as their only means of protection, their only hope of future peace: 'There is a purpose in life that had not been there before, a purpose encapsulated in two lines of graffiti on the wall of the BTA community centre, "the people are the Provos and the Provos are the people".'

Twenty years of British military might have not been enough to defeat the IRA or extinguish the popular struggle for Irish freedom. Read this book and you'll learn why.

Kevin Kelly



Burying the past to justify the future

The Civil War 1922-23
Eoin Neeson
Poolbeg Press Ltd, 1989
£9.50 pbk

Eoin Neeson is a prominent journalist, broadcaster and a former head of the government information bureau in the Irish Republic. Using material from contemporary sources (newspaper, archival, eye-witness accounts, interviews, field despatches) Eoin Neeson's *The Civil War 1922-23* provided the first authoritative narrative history of Ireland's civil war. In this, it was a pioneering work.

However, the purpose of Neeson's book, which was first published by Mercier Press in 1966, was not to analyse the civil war or the events that led to partition. In his concluding paragraphs Neeson spells out his real aim: '...young people who live for today and think for tomorrow; yesterday happened before they had memories....For them this book may help to fill the great, deliberate gap in Irish history books and with that gap bridged – with the skeleton taken out, examined and put away in its proper place in the cupboard – they may march onward, disregarding the woeful shadow behind them and old, cracked voices calling them backward, without saying why and wherefore' (p295).

Neeson, an upholder of partition as a victory for the Irish people, is open about what he wants to do: bury the past, particularly republicanism, and give the Republic some historical authenticity. This may have had some resonance in 1966, but in 1989, the year which marks the twentieth anniversary of the latest phase of the Irish War, Neeson's book represents nothing more than an apology for British imperialism and Dublin's collaboration in maintaining a divided Ireland.

Neeson's new introduction to the 1989 edition is remarkable. According to him, there is no link between the struggles of the early twenties and the armed struggle today. There is, says Neeson, a 'vast – and

Banned Irish video

Behind the mask

Behind the Mask
An Activision Irish project
VHS video, colour,
running time 65 minutes

Behind the Mask was first shown at the IFM's highly successful film festival As Not Seen On TV which took place in London last year. The film features interviews with former leading members of the IRA. We reprint here an edited version of a review of *Behind the Mask* by Grainne MacDara, first published in *Andersonstown News*; Andersonstown is at the heart of republican West Belfast.

'As the twentieth anniversary syndrome marches across our screens, analysing us, telling us about our struggle and why we still need the troops here in a variety of slick formats, but all with carefully concealed biases, it is a refreshing change to hear ordinary people speaking for themselves, clearly, simply.

Behind the Mask is a low-budget film made by Activision, a collective of independent film and video makers based in London. Whilst the collective never received Channel 4 workshop status, material for *Behind the Mask* was actively considered for transmission on the prime-time *Dispatches* series. The ban soon took care of that and the programme, like *Mother Ireland*, joined a still-expanding list of the unseen and unheard.

The film gives a rare insight into the reasons behind the birth and sustained existence of the IRA over the past two decades. It begins to answer why anyone would or could endure such levels of privation and why such palpably ordinary men and women would voluntarily put up with all the beatings, the years in jail and the loneliness with such little romanticism or social glory (more representative than Shane Paul O'Doherty but less convenient for the British establishment, unfortunately).

Brendan Hughes is clearly "the star" of the video, a reluctant recruit to the IRA in his youth – dragged, like many others, into an Armageddon not of his own making, his life irredeemably transformed by the litany of ghastly events which characterise our collective past. He speaks without rancour, with humour and with a compassion that comes from those who have suffered loss and have struggled to make sense of why. He speaks quietly of the "loving comradeship" which bonds prisoners together, of nights discussing sex and politics and the stars in the endless black nights of the hunger-strikes. A rare glimpse of men in desperate circumstances, told by a man without embarrassment.

"We were all weak and frightened. None of us wanted to die." Haunting images of a prisoner with listless, hungry eyes staring pitifully at a camera from a comfortless bed in a white cell. The picture of Brendan Hughes after weeks and weeks on hunger-strike, and the image of him standing at the peace-line between the Falls and the Shankill saying how much he wants the wall to be taken down and how much he abhors violence, are conveyed with authenticity. I believed him and I agreed with him when he said "this wall symbolises the British presence in Ireland – division".

It's an imperfect film too in many ways. Personally I thought the inclusion of Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison was superfluous, though others may disagree. I found the black backdrop against which most of the interviews were conducted rather dull, bordering on the sinister at times, and the archive footage overly interspersed in parts.

Perhaps the most fundamental flaw was the lack of coherent strength of a women's perspective and what it meant from a woman's point of view not only to have been in the IRA, but also what it was like to have had to live with someone who was. But that wasn't necessarily the film makers' fault. Perhaps somebody else will make that video in the future, and I hope it will be as absorbing as *Behind the Mask*.'

Behind the Mask *is available from Activision, c/o BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX. Individuals: £25, organisations: £40, institutions: £70. This includes p&p, cheques payable to Activision*

Burying the past...

unbridgeable – gulf between the men who fought the war of independence and brought honour and distinction to the name of the Irish Republican Army....and the abominable evildoers who today horrify the world by their despicable actions'. Neeson's support for the early IRA is simply a cover. Like any middle class Dublin politician, his lip-service to the past is simply a means of giving his pro-British imperialist outlook some radical credentials.

Neeson knows this. He knows too that the modern IRA exists because of the betrayals of the twenties. That is why Neeson cannot but end up sounding like a British government cabinet minister in his venomous condemnation of the IRA on the one hand, and his faith in a British solution on the other. The modern IRA, says Neeson, has 'the appearance of a kind of self-perpetuating, psychotic, multicamerate, viviparous and uncontrollable Frankenstein monster, related more to the crime syndicates of Chicago in the Roaring Twenties or to the anarchic brigades of the twilight zone of international "liberation" fronts, than to any motivations which gave rise to the movement for national self-determination at the beginning of the century, or its achievements' (p4).

IRA volunteers active in the fight for Irish freedom in 1921

And as far as the 'problems' in the North are concerned, of course Britain has nothing to do with them. We are told that in the North 'the hitherto institutionalised position of power and privilege enjoyed by the Unionist sector has been corrected (though not entirely) on a basis of improved social and democratic rights for the nationalist sector'. Although he acknowledges that Britain has some connection with the Irish problem he argues that is not 'unreasonable to look to Britain to take the initiative in justly solving it' (p12).

Neeson's book is an abject attempt to rewrite Irish history in order to justify the role of the Dublin government. Although it contains interesting material on the civil war itself, it is a book which is best ignored as this material is now widely available elsewhere.

Charles Longford

September-November 1989

War Diary

■ *Friday 1 September:* Two British Army corporals are shot and seriously wounded by an IRA unit in Munster, West Germany.

■ *Sunday 2 September:* Shane Paul O'Doherty, a former IRA bomber sentenced to 30 terms of life, is released from Maghaberry prison after serving 13 years.

■ *Tuesday 5 September:* Cameron Hastie, convicted of possessing photographs and car registrations of republican suspects with intent to pass them to Loyalist paramilitaries, is reinstated in the British Army.

■ *Thursday 7 September:* The IRA admits to mistakenly killing the German wife of a British soldier in Dortmund, West Germany.

■ *Friday 8 September:* Two members of the UDR are charged with the murder of Loughlin Maginn, killed by Loyalist paramilitaries using intelligence material from official sources.

■ *Tuesday 12 September:* Margaret Thatcher praises the UDR as 'a very, very, very brave group of men, who had done remarkably well' during a visit to Lisanelly barracks in Omagh, Co Tyrone.

■ *Wednesday 13 September:* A montage of photographs of IRA suspects, compiled by the security forces, is discovered in the home of a man charged with attempting to procure arms and ammunition for the UDA.

■ *Thursday 14 September:* The RUC confirms that a confidential security document has been 'forcibly removed' from a locked cabinet at a police station in Belfast.

■ *Friday 15 September:* John Stevens, chief constable of Cambridgeshire, is appointed to head an inquiry into the leaking of official documents to Loyalist paramilitaries.

■ *Saturday 16 September:* Gerard Collins, Irish foreign minister, warns that the Anglo-Irish agreement could fall if Britain failed to respond to nationalist concern about the impartiality of the security forces in Northern Ireland.

□ A British soldier is shot dead as he repairs a radio mast at a police station in Coalisland, Co Tyrone.

■ *Thursday 21 September:* The *Sun* newspaper announces that it has received pictures of eight men and a woman, along with an anonymous letter referring to them as known members of the IRA.

■ *Friday 22 September:* An IRA bomb kills 10 Royal Marine bandsmen at Walder, near Deal, in Kent.

■ *Saturday 23 September:* A photomontage of 25 republicans living in South Donegal is put through the letterbox of the *Independent*'s correspondent in Belfast.

■ *Wednesday 27 September:* A Scottish newspaper receives security force documents, giving details of 50 republican suspects in Belfast. This brings to over 200 the number of unauthorised disclosures of official documents.

■ *Sunday 1 October:* An RUC station in Randalstown, Co Antrim, is badly damaged in an IRA bomb attack. One RUC man is injured.

■ *Monday 2 October:* Irish police launch search for Patrick Sheehy, wanted by detectives in Britain since the discovery of a 'bomb factory' in London in December 1988.

■ *Wednesday 4 October:* The IRA admits that it mistakenly shot dead a 50-year old Catholic in North Belfast.

■ *Monday 9 October:* Sinn Fein councillor Brendan Curran is critically ill after being shot several times by Loyalist gunmen.

□ The IRA shoots dead a member of the Territorial Army at Kilrea, Co Derry.

■ *Thursday 12 October:* Five Northern Irish roofing workers are arrested and held under the PTA in Cheltenham.

□ The Irish director of public prosecutions, Eamon Barnes, announces that no charges will be brought against Father Patrick Ryan, sought by Scotland Yard on bombing and conspiracy charges.

■ *Sunday 15 October:* The *Sunday Tribune* publishes details of an unsuccessful attempt by British intelligence to recruit agents from within the Irish community in West Germany.

■ *Tuesday 17 October:* The crown prosecution service announces that it can no longer sustain the convictions of the Guildford Four and recommends that they be released.

■ *Wednesday 18 October:* The home office admits that the convictions of the Guildford Four were based upon confessions which were fabricated by officers in the Surrey police force.

■ *Thursday 19 October:* At a special sitting of the court of appeal, Gerard Conlon, Paul Hill, Carole Richardson and Paul Armstrong are freed after serving 15 years in prison, having been framed for the Guildford and Woolwich bombings in 1974.

□ The first anniversary of the government's broadcasting ban is marked by a national day of action which includes a National Union of Journalists lunchtime march and a torchlit demonstration organised by the IFM in London.

■ *Friday 20 October:* The British government defies a European Court ruling prohibiting the detention of terrorist suspects for up to seven days without access to legal representation.

□ Gerard Conlon describes how after being beaten, stripped naked, left in a cold cell and repeatedly assaulted, he cracked when a senior Surrey CID officer threatened to have his mother 'accidentally shot' in Belfast.

■ *Thursday 26 October:* The IRA shoots dead a Royal Air Force corporal and his six-month old daughter at a filling station near Wildenrath, West Germany.

■ *Thursday 2 November:* Defence secretary Tom King steps in to stop local Army commanders from cancelling the following week's Remembrance Day parades in case of IRA attacks.

■ *Friday 3 November:* Peter Brooke, Northern Ireland secretary, tells journalists that it is difficult to envisage a military defeat of the IRA and that Britain would be prepared to talk to Sinn Fein if the IRA laid down its arms.

■ *Sunday 5 November:* Charles Haughey, Irish prime minister, speaking at a Fianna Fail youth conference in Tralee, offers his services as a 'go between' between the British government and Sinn Fein if the IRA ends the armed struggle.

■ *Friday 10 November:* Two Belfast men serving sentences of 17 years and 20 years for plotting an IRA bombing campaign in Britain, are refused leave to appeal. The appeal court rules that there was nothing unsafe or unsatisfactory in the convictions of Liam McCotter and Patrick McLaughlin.

■ *Wednesday 15 November:* A plan by Loyalists to form four human chains across the province to protest at the fourth anniversary of the Anglo-Irish agreement ends in fiasco when only 300 demonstrators turn up.

■ *Thursday 16 November:* David Harte, candidate for the new Conservative Party in Northern Ireland, pushes the Official Unionist into third place with 23 per cent of the vote in a Belfast council by-election. The Democratic Unionist Party wins the seat.

■ *Friday 17 November:* The director of a company accused of supplying building materials to the British Army is killed by the IRA.

□ A part-time member of the UDR is shot dead by the IRA in Armagh town.

■ *Saturday 18 November:* A British Army staff sergeant is seriously wounded in an IRA car bomb attack in Colchester.

□ Three members of the Parachute Regiment of the British Army are killed near Mayo Bridge, Co Tyrone, when a 500lb IRA bomb blasts their landrover into a field.

■ *Monday 27 November:* Bombs explode at the Short Brothers complex near Belfast Harbour Airport, destroying one light aircraft and damaging two others.

■ *Wednesday 29 November:* Two Catholics are killed and another seriously wounded when Loyalist gunmen open fire on customers in a bar in Ardboe, Co Tyrone.

Colm Murphy

British 'professionalism' in action

No more Bloody Sundays!

'They have to put up with abuse and bricks and behave like you expect a Bobby on the mainland to behave. Staying calm in the face of such provocation is an issue of professionalism, the Marines are told. They pursue professionalism with quasi-religious zeal.' So wrote Mark Urban of the *Independent* in an article commemorating 20 years of British military occupation of the Six Counties. It is a view that the British media have peddled ever since the British Army reoccupied the streets of Northern Ireland in 1969.

Irish republicans take a somewhat less benign view of her majesty's armed forces. For them, the experience of the 'professionalism' of the British Army has been of a catalogue of harassment, torture and murder.

For the nationalist community of the Six Counties, Sunday 30 January 1972 remains the most brutal reminder of exactly what British Army 'professionalism' is really all about. This was the day on which the first battalion of the Parachute Regiment shot dead 14 unarmed protesters in Derry. Derry's Bloody Sunday remains the British Army's most brutal war crime against the Irish people in 20 years of terror. It demonstrated the barbarous lengths to which the British state was, and remains, prepared to go to maintain control of its Irish colony.

Civil rights

The road to Bloody Sunday began in the late sixties when Catholics took part in a peaceful movement for basic civil rights. The system of sectarian discrimination built into the artificial Northern Ireland statelet denied Irish nationalists the right to vote, the right to political representation, the right to equal access to jobs and housing. The civil rights marches were attacked by Loyalist bigots and the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The escalation of violence in the late sixties led the Six County regime to the brink of civil war. To restore British control Harold Wilson's Labour government sent troops back on to the streets of Northern Ireland in August 1969.

The British military occupation inevitably led to the revival of republican resistance. Although some Catholics initially welcomed British troops in the hope that they would provide some protection from the forces of the sectarian state, they soon lost their illusions. It was clear that the British Army was there, not to protect the Catholic community, but to suppress nationalist aspirations for freedom.

Internment

In August 1971 the Stormont regime exercised its powers to intern in prison camps, without charge or trial, anybody it suspected of active opposition to the state. Hundreds of Catholics were rounded up at gunpoint. Northern Ireland prime minister, Brian Faulkner, also imposed an immediate 12-month ban on all demonstrations. Internment and the ban merely intensified resistance. Protests began with rent and rate strikes. They continued with non-payment of television, car and even dog licences. Local government teetered on the brink of collapse. By December, as details of torture in the internment camps became known, civil resistance intensified.

On Christmas Day 1971, 4000 people marched through the snow from Belfast to the Long Kesh concentration camp 10 miles away. A large force of troops and RUC attempted to stop the march on the M1 motorway. The British Army was given instructions to break up any future demonstrations. This was the situation when an anti-internment demonstration was called by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association for Derry on Sunday 30 January 1972.

Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party demanded firm action against Catholic 'lawlessness'.The concern of the Loyalists was echoed in Westminster. Something drastic had to be done about the anti-internment marches. On 26 January 1972, Faulkner held talks with the officer commanding the occupying forces, General Tuzo. On 27 January, he was summoned to London for private discussions with Tory prime minister Edward Heath. On 28 January a high-level defence policy meeting was convened immediately after a session of the inner cabinet. Faulkner had a public commitment from the Army that 'action' would be taken against illegal marchers. On 29 January, Ian Paisley called off the DUP's planned counter-demonstration after receiving assurances that the civil rights march would be stopped 'by force if necessary'.

March

More than 30 000 people turned out for the march on that fateful Sunday. The British Army was well prepared. The first battalion of the Parachute Regiment was sent into the Bogside to prevent the march leaving the ghetto. The Army blocked the marchers from Guildhall Square with barbed wire and armoured vehicles. The demonstration was diverted to a mass meeting at Free

Derry Corner, 500 yards from the Army positions at William Street. As Bernadette Devlin addressed the huge crowd, youths threw stones in reply to CS gas and water cannon saturation.

Suddenly, near the end of march, the Army opened fire repeatedly into the crowd, then at people fleeing, then at others tending to the wounded. Thirteen civilians were killed, another was to die later from his wounds. Seventeen more were seriously wounded. Several had been shot at close range on the ground and more had been shot in the back. Eye-witnesses recounted the horrifying spectacle of seeing Bernard McGuigan being shot in the back of the head as he crawled on his stomach towards the dying Pat Doherty, of Gerald McKinney being shot in the chest at point-blank range as he stood still with his hands above his head, while those around him fled for their lives.

Planned

Bloody Sunday was no mistake, nor an uncontrolled response to sniper fire as the Army later claimed. It was a carefully planned and ruthlessly executed shoot-to-kill operation which was sanctioned by the Army command and the British government at its highest levels. This was British Army 'professionalism' par excellence.

Jim Wray from the Bogside was on the demonstration along with his oldest son Jim. When Jim junior came home, he was in a coffin with five British bullets in his body. In an interview with Mick Hume of the Irish Freedom Movement, Jim gave the view of nationalists from the Bogside as to what happened on 30 January 1972: 'The British government planned, at cabinet level, to put our people off the streets, to shoot them if necessary. They were prepared to take that chance, they took that chance, and they gave us Bloody Sunday.'

The events of Bloody Sunday catapulted Britain's brutal war in Ireland on to the world stage. Liberal opinion was outraged. Thirty thousand people marched on the British embassy in Dublin and burnt it to the ground. Twenty thousand people marched in London on 5 February carrying 14 coffins which they dumped over the barricades at Downing Street. The march was attacked by the police and 130 people were arrested.

Smoke-screen

The British government responded by banning Irish demonstrations from the Westminster area and instituting what has become its standard smoke-screen procedure – an official inquiry. Lord chief justice Widgery, a former army officer himself, was admirably suited for the subsequent whitewash. He fully exonerated the Parachute Regiment. He said they had been fired upon first although 'none of the deceased or wounded is proved to have been shot whilst handling a firearm or bomb'. He did, however, admit that some soldiers fired recklessly, but put this down to the strain of the job. The Army was not guilty of murder. No disciplinary action was ever taken against the officers and men responsible for the killings. Instead colonel Wilford was awarded an OBE for his distinguished services to the British Crown.

Since Bloody Sunday, the British establishment has followed the same strategy of brutalising the nationalist community and covering up its crimes with official inquiries. The Compton inquiry, for example, which examined allegations of torture and brutality against internees in Long Kesh, cleared the security forces. It concluded that forcible exercises inflicted on the men were 'devised to counteract the cold'. Compton in his summing up declared: 'We consider that brutality is an inhuman or savage form of cruelty, and that cruelty implies a disposition to inflict suffering, coupled with indifference to, or pleasure in, the victim's pain. We do not think that happened here.'

Inquests

More recently, the government has not even gone through the pretence of inquests. In 1984, for example, four SAS-trained police gunmen charged with the murder of six unarmed Irishmen in County Armagh were not only acquitted but congratulated by lord justice Gibson for bringing these unarmed republicans 'to the final court of justice'. After the SAS killings of the Gibraltar Three the government openly prevented the inquest from hearing evidence from the Spanish police that the IRA trio were unarmed and had no bomb. From Bloody Sunday onwards, the British state's investigations into its war in Ireland have been about as credible as a psychopath conducting his own psychiatric evaluation.

Bloody Sunday should be a reminder to us of what British 'professionalism' is really about. So long as British troops remain in Ireland, so Irish people will continue to be gunned down in the streets in cold blood. The only way to ensure that there are no more Bloody Sundays is to build a movement in solidarity with the Irish people that can get the troops out once and for all.

Colm Murphy

Bloody Sunday commemorative rally

The IFM will be holding a Bloody Sunday commemorative rally on Tuesday 30 January 1990. See the back page for details

Bloody Sunday Commemorative Rally

End British war crimes in Ireland!

30 January 1990 is the eighteenth anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

On that day, British troops shot dead 14 unarmed Irish marchers in Derry.

Today, behind the diplomatic façade of the Anglo-Irish agreement, British forces are still terrorising Irish people.

Tuesday 30 January, 7pm

Speakers ★ Social ★ Food

£5.00 inclusive

The McNamara Hall, The Irish Centre
Murray Street (off Camden Road)
London NW1

No more Bloody Sundays!

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